

INSPECTION REPORT

THE HAVEN HIGH SCHOOL

Boston

LEA area: Lincolnshire

Unique reference number: 120660

Headteacher: Mrs Madeleine Fox

Reporting inspector: Dr Kenneth C Thomas
3390

Dates of inspection: 19 – 22 November 2001

Inspection number: 199505

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Modern (non-selective)

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11 – 16 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Marian Road
Boston
Lincolnshire

Postcode: PE21 9HB

Telephone number: 01205 311979

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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Simon Spearing

Date of previous inspection: 2 March 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3390	Ken Thomas	Registered inspector		<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>How high are standards?</p> <p>a) The school's results and achievements.</p> <p>How well are pupils taught?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
11041	Marvyn Moore	Lay inspector		<p>How high are standards?</p> <p>b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
4677	Valerie Banks	Team inspector	Geography Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
10316	Norman Bertram	Team inspector	History	
22531	David Burbidge	Team inspector	Mathematics	
22695	Raymond Cardinal	Team inspector	Special educational needs	
19414	Janet Flisher	Team inspector	English Drama	
4372	Ralph Fordham	Team inspector	Religious education	
12331	Vera Grigg	Team inspector	Art	
23246	John Mitchell	Team inspector	Science English as an additional language	
23308	John Morrell	Team inspector	Music	
2183	Peter Thompson	Team inspector	Design and technology Information and communication technology	

4829	Ian Waters	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
18755	Roger Whittaker	Team inspector	Physical education	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The Haven High School is a mixed 11 - 16 secondary school situated in the town of Boston in Lincolnshire, which serves an urban area of multiple socio-economic disadvantage. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average and the level of social deprivation is recognised as being one of the highest in the county. Although designated a comprehensive school, higher-attaining pupils at the age of 11 are drawn off by two grammar schools and a few others are attracted to comprehensive schools serving more rural areas outside the town. Because of this the school has one of the county's lowest attainment profiles on entry. Almost half of pupils have special educational needs. This is well above the national average. With just over 500 pupils the school is smaller than most other secondary schools. There are very few pupils of ethnic minority origin, seven only, and four pupils with English as an additional language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school. The school is striving with considerable success to meet the challenging needs of the community it serves. The excellent leadership of the headteacher, well supported by other senior managers and governors, is bringing about much improvement and, although costs are above average, the school provides good value for money. Staff work very hard to ensure that all pupils are fully included in all that the school offers. Teaching is good overall and this enables most pupils to make satisfactory progress. For many pupils progress is good. This is reflected in the National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 9 and in the GCSE examination taken at the end of Year 11, which, although very low in comparison with national figures, are improving. Attainment is adversely affected by below average attendance.

What the school does well

- The exemplary leadership of the headteacher with effective support from other senior managers is ensuring that there is a sharp focus on raising standards and improving the quality of teaching which is good overall.
- There is a high commitment to inclusion and staff work very hard to ensure that all pupils, whatever their needs or the challenges they may present, are able to benefit from the opportunities the school provides.
- Pupils' progress and personal development are very well supported by systematic procedures for assessing and monitoring their learning and highly innovative ways of providing support and guidance.
- The school has strong links with the community and a very good range of extra-curricular opportunities enhances pupils' social and cultural development.
- The school has very good strategies for improving attendance, which is rising slowly and meeting targets set by the local authority.
- Very good support from the governing body, together with very good financial planning and management, is ensuring that the school makes the best use of its resources.

What could be improved

- Standards of literacy and numeracy are too low and impede pupils' learning.
- Standards of attainment in information and communication technology
- Uneven attendance and the behaviour of some pupils mean that pupils do not learn as much as they should in some lessons.
- The range of courses offered in Years 10 and 11 is not broad enough to cater for the needs and interests of all pupils.
- The personal, social and moral education programme is ineffective.

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 2 - 8 March 1998 and has made satisfactory progress since that time. The vigorous action taken by the headteacher, senior staff and governors has successfully brought about

improvements in teaching and learning. This is seen in standards of attainment in external tests and examinations, which, although very low, are slowly rising. The school is developing very good systems to raise standards of literacy and these are being applied effectively in all subjects. Standards of behaviour have improved, although the very challenging behaviour of a minority of pupils still disrupts teaching and learning in some lessons. The school has developed very good systems to reduce absence and attendance has improved, although it remains stubbornly below average. The key issues identified in the previous report have all been tackled systematically and the school is now well placed to make further improvement.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved at the end of Year 11 based on average point scores in GCSE examinations.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
GCSE examinations	E	E	E*	E*	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E

National Curriculum test results for pupils at the end of Year 9 show a gradual improvement over the past three years. Nevertheless, the 2001 results in English, mathematics and science were very low, putting the school in the bottom five per cent of all schools and of similar schools, based on the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals. These results need to be set against pupils' standards of attainment on entry to the school. Two selective schools draw off higher-attaining pupils and a number of other pupils are attracted to schools in more rural areas outside the town. As a consequence, standards of attainment on entry are very low.

GCSE results rose in 2001 to reach the targets set for the school. The proportion of pupils gaining at least five A*-C grades has risen over the past three years. Nevertheless, the overall results were very low and in the lowest five per cent when compared with all and similar schools. Results in English and mathematics were well below average in comparison with all and similar schools. Results in science, although well below average in comparison with all schools, were above in comparison with similar schools. However, for most pupils the GCSE results represented satisfactory progress from their Year 9 test results two years earlier. This is seen when prior attainment is taken into account in making comparisons with similar schools. When this comparison is made, results are average. The achievement of most pupils is satisfactory but impeded by low standards of literacy, above average levels of absence and the unsatisfactory behaviour of some pupils. Challenging targets have been set to raise standards further in 2002.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory overall. The school works hard to raise the aspirations of pupils and to encourage them to value their education. Most, but not all, pupils appreciate the support and encouragement they receive from their teachers and show that they want to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Overall standards of behaviour are unsatisfactory. Many pupils have little understanding of the impact of their actions on others and too many pupils, particularly boys, engage in thoughtless and sometimes aggressive behaviour.
Personal development and	Relationships are satisfactory. Most pupils relate very well to teachers

relationships

and non-teaching staff. They are provided with a number of opportunities to show initiative and to take responsibility for themselves and for others.

Attendance	Attendance shows sustained improvement since the time of the last inspection but remains below average. Absence from school and lateness in the morning and afternoon are interfering with the learning of many pupils.
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Teachers work very hard to establish positive atmospheres for teaching and learning in lessons with the consequence that behaviour in most lessons is satisfactory. However, even in the lessons where behaviour is satisfactory there are instances of inappropriate behaviour and in about a quarter of lessons behaviour is unsatisfactory and has an adverse effect on learning. Because of this pupils do not make as much progress as they should. Although attendance is improving and rose to meet the local authority target in the last school year, it remains below average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11
Quality of teaching	Good	Good

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

Teaching is good overall. This is an improvement since the last inspection and a result of the action taken to share good practice and improve the quality of teaching. Teaching is satisfactory or better in most lessons and good or better in over a half. There is slightly more of the better teaching in Years 10 and 11. Pupils' learning, although satisfactory, does not fully reflect the quality of teaching. This is mainly because of the unsatisfactory behaviour of a significant minority of pupils, most often boys, above average levels of absence and, in some instances, lesson activities that are not closely matched to the learning needs of pupils. Teaching is very good in art, music and drama and good in science, geography and history. Teaching is satisfactory in English, mathematics and all other subjects, apart from religious education, where teaching is unsatisfactory. There are examples of excellence in teaching in drama, music, English and mathematics. Most lessons are well planned to maintain pupils' interest through a variety of activities that are closely matched to pupils' learning needs. In the best lessons this is linked to skilful classroom management, and as a result, pupils' learning is good. Too often, however, late arrival at lessons, a reluctance to settle down and intrusive calling out interfere with teaching and learning. One of the strengths in teachers' planning is the care taken by teachers in virtually all lessons to extend pupils' literacy skills. Numeracy teaching in mathematics is good but there are too few planned opportunities to reinforce these skills in other subjects. Because the teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good, they make satisfactory progress in their learning. However, weaknesses in the planning of learning activities for these pupils in design and technology and ICT are often associated with unsatisfactory behaviour.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a good, socially inclusive curriculum with very good opportunities for pupils to enrich their experiences beyond lessons. The personal, social and moral education course is weak and needs revision. All pupils take a course in ICT but computers are not used enough in other subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory overall. Very good support for pupils with behaviour difficulties and very good strategies for improving literacy skills. Some weaknesses in planning to meet pupils' needs in Years 10 and 11.
Provision for pupils with	The four pupils with English as an additional language are well supported

English as an additional language	and have full access to the curriculum.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good provision for social and cultural development, and satisfactory provision for moral development. Provision for spiritual development is unsatisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils are well cared for. The school has very good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress and increasingly effective use is being made of this information to provide appropriate support.

With the exception of the daily act of collective worship, all statutory requirements are being met. Good curricular planning is resulting in a broader curriculum with better provision for pupils to study creative subjects. However, there are weaknesses in provision for the lowest-attaining pupils in design and technology and ICT. The school works very hard, but with limited success, to establish effective links with parents and to involve them in the life of the school. The school has very good relationships and makes effective use of its links with partner schools and further education colleges.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school benefits considerably from the excellent leadership and clarity of vision of the headteacher. Other senior and middle managers have responded well to the drive to improve the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are effective and supportive. They have a real commitment to the school and provide the school with a substantial amount of specialist help and advice.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Exemplary procedures for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school are helping to raise expectations and standards.
The strategic use of resources	Financial management and planning are very good. The school has effective procedures to ensure that all additional funding received is used for the intended purposes.

There are enough teachers to cover the curriculum but owing to regional teacher recruitment problems the school has to make use of some non-specialist teaching in mathematics. The quality of accommodation is good and allows the curriculum to be taught effectively. Although the provision of resources is satisfactory overall, there are not enough textbooks for science and a lack of access to computers is inhibiting progress in mathematics, science and art. Insufficient use is made of the library as a resource for learning and the stock of books is inadequate either to provide for pupils' leisure reading or to support the curriculum. The school has effective systems to ensure best value in all 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"> • The approachability of the school. • The good leadership and management. • Their children are expected to work hard. • The range of activities provided outside lessons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework their children are given. • Behaviour. • The progress their children are making.

These views were derived from 32 questionnaires returned from 500 sent out and from a small number of parents, eight only, who attended the pre-inspection meeting with the Registered Inspector. Inspectors support the positive views of parents and find some of their concerns to be justified. Unsatisfactory behaviour is impeding pupils' progress in many lessons. However, homework is set regularly in most subjects.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The overall results in the National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 9 in 2001 and those in each of the core subjects were very low, placing the school in the bottom five per cent of schools nationally. In comparison with similar schools, based on pupils' entitlement to free school meals, both overall results and those in each of the core subjects were also very low. About two-thirds of pupils failed to reach standards expected nationally in English and mathematics, and about three-quarters in science. Although results show a gradual improvement over the past three years, in 2001 a high proportion of pupils, about a third in mathematics and science and almost half in English, failed to achieve at the end of Year 9 the standard expected of them at the end of Year 6. In all other National Curriculum subjects, standards are also well below expectations.
2. Several factors contribute to low standards at the end of Year 9. Of greatest significance are the consistently very low standards of attainment of pupils on entry to the school. Although designated a comprehensive school, two local selective schools draw off the highest-attaining pupils and a number of other pupils are attracted to schools in more rural areas outside the town. Because of this the attainment profile of pupils in Year 7 is heavily skewed towards the lower end of the attainment range. The results of the National Curriculum tests taken in the last year of primary education by pupils who entered the school in 2001, for example, show that standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science were very low. In addition almost a half of pupils have special educational needs, with increasing numbers of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Comparisons of standards of attainment on entry to the school with standards attained at the end of Year 9 show progress and achievement to be satisfactory.
3. GCSE results rose in 2001 to reach the targets set for the school. The percentage of pupils achieving five or more A*-C grades has risen over the past three years and this is reflected in a rising average point score. Nevertheless, the percentage of pupils achieving five or more A*-C grades in 2001 was well below average in comparison with all and similar schools, while the average point score was very low and in the lowest five per cent of schools nationally. Results in English, mathematics and science were well below average, although results in science were above average in comparison with similar schools. Results in history were below average while in all other GCSE subjects they were well below. Although girls tend to achieve, overall, slightly higher standards than boys, the average point scores of both boys and girls are well below their respective national averages. Girls tend to achieve higher standards than boys in English while boys achieve slightly higher standards in information and communication technology (ICT), physical education, design and technology resistant materials, and graphic products. There are no consistent differences in attainment between boys and girls in other subjects.
4. Pupils with special educational needs achieve standards that are consistent with targets set in their Individual Education Plans. The achievement of pupils with English as an additional language is at least satisfactory and occasionally very good. For example, one such pupil achieved an A* grade in GCSE Russian and is studying nine GCSE courses.
5. The same factors influencing standards at the end of Year 9 have an effect on the GCSE results. This is seen when prior attainment is taken into account in making comparisons with similar schools. When this comparison is made the percentages of pupils achieving five or more A*-C grades and five or more A*-G grades are average, as is the average GCSE point score, while the percentage of pupils achieving one or more A*-G grades is above average. The GCSE results, therefore, represent satisfactory progress and achievement for most pupils from their National Curriculum tests taken two years earlier. Challenging targets have been set to raise standards further in 2002. Nevertheless, the progress and achievement of all pupils are adversely affected by above average levels of absence and the unsatisfactory attitudes and behaviour of some pupils.

6. Inspection evidence indicates that standards, although improving slightly, are well below expectations. In only about a quarter of lessons are pupils working at the level expected for their age. Only in one art lesson were pupils working above this level. Nevertheless, the achievement of most pupils is satisfactory and for some it is good. This is generally because the overall good quality of the teaching, and in particular the generally good classroom management skill of teachers, ensures that most pupils concentrate on tasks in lessons and put effort into their work. Standards are highest in lessons with a high practical element such as art, ICT, music, physical education and science and in lessons where pupils are actively involved in short, stimulating tasks that match pupils' attention spans.
7. Pupils' standards of literacy are very low on entry to the school and, although these show some improvement as pupils move through Years 7 to 11, they remain well below expectations in all years. Standards of spelling and punctuation are very weak and most pupils write in very simple sentences. Only the highest-attaining pupils have some understanding of how to use varied sentences to engage the reader's interest. Reading skills are also weak. Many pupils can read aloud with reasonable accuracy but do not always understand what they have read. Most pupils do not read willingly for pleasure and there are as yet too few opportunities in lessons for pupils to read independently. Higher-attaining pupils, particularly in Years 10 and 11, are developing the ability to read critically when teachers give them the opportunity to ask questions of the texts they study. Speaking skills are below average, although boys achieve higher standards than in reading and writing. Many lower-attaining pupils find it difficult to engage in any form of sensible discussion. Only higher-attaining pupils are able to explain their ideas and discuss their work with each other in a useful manner. A literacy co-ordinator has been appointed and a strategy is being implemented to ensure that all subjects contribute to the raising of standards of literacy.
8. Pupils' standards of numeracy are below national expectations in all years. Pupils enter the school with low numerical skills and action is being taken to raise standards of numeracy. A school numeracy strategy has been devised and a numeracy co-ordinator has been appointed to ensure that all subjects contribute to the development of pupils' numerical skills. However, the strategy has yet to be fully implemented. Some subjects are already making a positive contribution to this area of pupils' learning. For example, the National Numeracy Strategy has been adopted as a key element in lesson planning in mathematics and ways in which pupils' numeracy skills can be extended are identified and targeted in science. However, in other subjects these skills are not being developed in a systematic way. The school development plan identifies this as a priority target for improvement.
9. All pupils benefit from being taught computing skills and make satisfactory progress in specific ICT lessons. However, pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to develop these skills through their application in other subjects. This is largely because of a lack of planning to include the use of computers to support teaching and learning in many subjects. Recent improvements have been made in the provision of computers so that all subjects can use them more readily.
10. There has been a substantial improvement in provision for pupils with special educational needs over the past two years. Staff are more aware of these pupils and the targets in their Individual Education Plans. Pupils with special educational needs in regular attendance achieve well in withdrawal groups, and progress in lessons is directly linked to the quality of teaching. These pupils achieve well in lessons where teachers are aware of pupils' needs and plan and structure lesson activities accordingly. They also achieve well when good support is provided from learning support assistants. Pupils with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress in their work. They understand what is said to them and the fact that English is not their first language poses no barriers to their learning.
11. The school identifies higher-attaining pupils and their progress is monitored by the headteacher and the deputy head. From Year 10 onwards, individual programmes are established to support their progress. These provide good challenge and extension. There are clear indications from the improving GCSE results that these pupils are gaining much benefit from this additional support.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. The attitudes of pupils are satisfactory overall. The school works hard to raise the aspirations of pupils and to encourage them to value their education. Many pupils appreciate the support and encouragement they receive from their teachers and show that they want to learn. When given appropriate challenges they respond well and try hard to achieve their learning goals. This was evident, for example, in a Year 10 music lesson where pupils sustained concentration for long periods as they tried to identify the instruments being played in an ensemble. A similar high level of concentration was evident in a Year 9 mathematics lesson on scatter-graphs. However, in some lessons, particularly in Year 11, pupils are less interested and pay little attention to the teacher. Above average levels of absence indicate that a significant proportion of pupils are not keen to come to school. Pupils whose special educational needs are related to weak literacy generally display satisfactory attitudes. Although most need close attention to ensure they remain on task, in the main they respond well to the support they are given.
13. Teachers work very hard to establish positive atmospheres for teaching and learning in lessons with the consequence that behaviour in most lessons is satisfactory. However, even in the lessons where behaviour is satisfactory there are instances of inappropriate behaviour and in about a quarter of lessons behaviour is unsatisfactory and has an adverse effect on learning. Because of this, even though most pupils behave well, overall standards of behaviour are unsatisfactory and pupils do not make as much progress as they should. Unsatisfactory behaviour in lessons is sometimes associated with a lack of challenge and lesson tasks that fail to engage the interest of pupils. When this occurs lessons lack pace and behaviour deteriorates. The school has an above average number of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties and works hard to support these pupils so that they remain in full-time education. The number of fixed period and permanent exclusions reflects this. The number of fixed period exclusions last year, at 28, is below average for a school of this size and there have been no permanent exclusions for the past three years. However, the behaviour of some of these pupils is occasionally so challenging that even the most experienced teachers find it difficult to control.
14. Poorly developed social skills are the source of much of the inappropriate behaviour. Although relationships are generally satisfactory, many pupils have little understanding of the impact of their actions on others and too many pupils, particularly boys, engage in thoughtless and sometimes aggressive behaviour. Because the school does not have an effective personal, social and moral educational programme, too few opportunities are provided for them to examine the causes and consequences of their behaviour. The school takes a serious view of bullying, and the procedures for dealing with incidents of bullying are included in the staff handbook. Pupils interviewed during the week of the inspection reported that, although there are incidents of bullying, these are generally dealt with effectively by the school and they were confident that any future incidents would also be dealt with effectively. All pupils have a clear understanding of whom they should go to if they are being bullied and here the innovative work of the two youth workers employed by the school is particularly appreciated.
15. The majority of pupils understand the school rules. The school's code of conduct is based on rewards and an escalating series of sanctions that are well understood by pupils. In the main, pupils respect their own property, school property, and the property of their peers. The school is graffiti and vandal free, and the majority of pupils treat the school property, such as the musical instruments and computer equipment, with respect. Nevertheless, behaviour outside lessons and around the school generally is unsatisfactory, although it is good in the dining hall. Pupils' lack of social skills becomes particularly apparent in the public places at lesson changeovers. Although teachers exercise very close supervision at these times a significant minority of pupils act immaturely and behave irresponsibly and there are instances where pupils display impulsive behaviour and shout loudly at one another for little or no reason.
16. Pupils are provided with a number of opportunities to show initiative and to take responsibility for themselves and for others. Two pupils from each form are elected to the School Council, which debates matters of school and local concern and presents its views to the local authority. During the week of the inspection, a very successful School Council meeting was observed, at which the

chief executive of Boston Borough Council reported back to pupils on the positive impact of the comments they had made earlier to the borough council on the local environment and asked pupils to give the council further views on action that can be taken to improve the environment. The school has an effective prefect system and has employed an outside agency to provide prefects with appropriate training. These pupils carry out their duties responsibly and offer staff good assistance in the supervision of the school. Pupils also act as receptionists and library monitors and assist at school productions and at assemblies. They also help to provide refreshments at parents' evenings. Relationships within the school are satisfactory. Most pupils relate very well to teachers and non-teaching staff. Relationships with the two youth workers are excellent and an important underpinning to the effectiveness of their work. When given the opportunity many pupils are able to work harmoniously and effectively in pairs and groups. For example, in one of the better personal, social and moral education lessons, Year 7 pupils were able to discuss in a mature way the physical and emotional changes that occur with the onset of puberty.

17. Although attendance shows sustained improvement since the time of the last inspection, it remains below average. In the period prior to the inspection the attendance rate was 88.6 per cent and in the week immediately before the inspection rose to almost 90 per cent. The school uses an electronic system to record and monitor attendance and awards certificates and prizes to promote good attendance. The school recognises the adverse effects of irregular attendance on pupils' progress and achievement and is making determined efforts to improve attendance. The school was successful in meeting the local authority's target for attendance in the last school year. Nevertheless, absence from school and lateness in the morning and afternoon are restricting the learning of many pupils. This also affects pupils who come to school regularly and on time because they too end up wasting time. Lateness to individual lessons during the day is also a problem, even though the school has sensibly allowed a short period of time for movement between lessons. Many pupils, particularly boys, take a long time to arrive at lessons from registrations or when they move from one lesson to another.
18. The school has largely maintained the positive points noted in the previous inspection report. Attitudes remain satisfactory and there has been some improvement in behaviour, even though overall standards are unsatisfactory. The school is successful in maintaining pupils in full-time education and the attendance rate has improved. Most of the absence from school is unauthorised.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. The quality of teaching is good overall. This is an improvement since the last inspection and a consequence of the systematic action taken to share good practice and improve the quality of teaching. Teaching is satisfactory or better in 93 per cent of lessons observed and good or better in just over 50 per cent. Teaching was very good or excellent in 25 per cent of lessons. There is slightly more of the better teaching in Years 10 and 11. Pupils' learning, although satisfactory, does not fully reflect the quality of teaching. This is mainly because of the unsatisfactory behaviour of a minority of pupils, most often boys, lesson activities that are not always closely matched to the learning needs of pupils and unsatisfactory attendance.
20. Teaching is very good in art, music and drama. It is also very good in geography in Years 10 and 11. Teaching is good in history and in science and geography in Years 7 to 9. It is also good in mathematics and ICT in Years 10 and 11. Teaching is satisfactory in English, design and technology, French and physical education. Teaching is also satisfactory in mathematics and ICT in Years 7 to 9 and in science in Years 10 and 11. Teaching in religious education has been affected by a lack of permanent staff and is unsatisfactory. There are examples of excellence in teaching in music, English, drama and mathematics. Teaching of this quality had a significant effect on pupils' progress and achievement in the particular lessons. Teaching was unsatisfactory or poor in seven per cent of lessons, with similar proportions in both the upper and lower years. In Years 7 to 9 there were four unsatisfactory lessons, one each in design and technology, mathematics, physical education and personal, social and moral education, and one poor lesson

in religious education. In Years 10 and 11 there was one unsatisfactory lesson in religious education and one unsatisfactory and one poor lesson in English.

21. Many pupils do not find it easy to concentrate and this is especially so with boys. They often lack self-discipline and need the most skilful classroom management to ensure satisfactory behaviour, keep them on track and maintain progress in their learning. For example, late arrival at lessons, a reluctance to settle down and intrusive calling out sometimes disturb lessons. Teachers have to work very hard to control this behaviour and are often successful so that most lessons proceed without disruption. However, in some lessons the behaviour is so challenging that teaching and learning are seriously disrupted and tensions can run high. This is particularly likely to occur when temporary teachers take lessons or when the school's agreed approaches to discipline are not applied consistently. These were contributory factors to the unsatisfactory and poor lessons in English and religious education.
22. Most teachers' subject knowledge is good and used effectively to plan their lessons, provide clear explanations and give appropriate guidance to pupils. This was seen in an excellent Year 9 music lesson on syncopated rhythm, for example, where very good subject knowledge allied to high expectations, excellent control and well-structured learning activities led to very good attitudes and behaviour, high levels of concentration and rapid gains in learning. Specialist ICT teachers use their subject knowledge well to give clear explanations and ensure that pupils are fully involved in lessons. This helps to ensure that pupils' interest is maintained and behaviour is satisfactory in lessons. The good subject knowledge of science teachers is used effectively to provide a firm base for pupils' learning, particularly in Years 10 and 11 where progress is good. Good subject knowledge is a feature in modern foreign languages, where teachers' good use of French in lessons helps pupils to develop their understanding and use of the language. However, non-specialist teaching led to a lack of progress in the one unsatisfactory physical education lesson because lesson activities lacked structure and challenge.
23. The teaching of basic skills is good, overall. The raising of standards of literacy is a priority target for the school and a focus of much professional development work. The outcome of this work is seen in the care taken by teachers in virtually all lessons to extend pupils' literacy skills. The English department lays a very good foundation for the development of these skills and there is a high level of awareness in all subjects of the importance of raising standards of literacy. For example, there are opportunities for pupils to plan, draft and rewrite their own work in English, geography and history. Support for the development of pupils' linguistic skills through the use of key words is provided in most subjects. For example, in science, art and music pupils' vocabularies are extended through the regular use of precise technical terms. Pupils' reading skills are developed and consolidated through opportunities to read both silently and aloud in many lessons.
24. Pupils develop their numerical skills in many subjects. In mathematics, teachers include activities to improve recall and pupils' mental agility in their lessons. Numeracy is also developed through measuring and judging proportion in art, physical education and design and technology, through time keeping in music and through interpreting data in geography and science. However, because the school's numeracy strategy has yet to be fully implemented, pupils' numerical skills are not being developed in a systematic way in all subjects. The school has firm plans to implement the strategy in the near future.
25. Teachers have a clear understanding of the importance of careful lesson planning as a means to improving teaching and learning. Because of this most lessons are well planned and have clear learning objectives. Many pupils have short attention spans and in the best lessons pupils' interest is maintained through a variety of activities that are closely matched to pupils' learning needs and make increasing demands on pupils. When this is linked to skilful classroom management, as in an excellent Year 8 mathematics lesson, for example, then very good progress is made. Similarly, in a Year 11 geography lesson, some potentially challenging pupils made good progress in their learning because of the careful attention paid to the structure of the learning activities and the very good pupil management skills of the teacher. Purposeful and direct teaching that extends pupils' thinking by requiring considered responses was a feature of the very good teaching seen, for example, in geography, drama and music. Good lesson planning is also seen in history, where in one Year 9 lesson on the 'Triangular Trade' the careful sequencing of learning activities, including the effective use of ICT, resulted in good progress being made.

26. The need to raise teachers' expectations was identified as a key issue for action in the last inspection report and there is evidence of progress having been made in this respect. Most teachers have high expectations and achievement and behaviour are better in lessons where these are communicated effectively to pupils. For example, high expectations underpin the very good and excellent teaching in drama. The teacher has established control mechanisms, which pupils respond to rapidly. This, linked to confident and challenging teaching with a willingness to give pupils responsibility for organising their own learning, leads to pupils showing enjoyment in lessons and making very good progress. This high level of challenge was also seen in a Year 11 science lesson where pupils made very good progress in understanding the underlying chemistry of electrolysis. However, low expectations and a lack of challenge were common features of the unsatisfactory lessons in religious education and personal, social and moral education and led to inappropriate behaviour.
27. Teachers use a satisfactory range of strategies to enable pupils to learn and develop skills. Paired and small-group work are used well in many subjects. This type of work, which is used effectively in drama, English, music, science and physical education, for example, makes an important contribution to pupils' learning of social skills. The very effective use of a variety of teaching and learning strategies in music is one of the reasons why pupils' interest and concentration are high. Pupils benefit from opportunities to work with different partners when engaged in oral work in modern foreign languages. Small-group work is used effectively in English to discuss and extend pupils' thinking and to undertake investigations in science. Group work is also used effectively in physical education to develop pupils' skill levels. Teachers make good use of a variety of resources to stimulate pupils' interest and to make explanations clear. In history, for example, teachers use the overhead projector and video clips well when making demonstrations and to illustrate ideas. This underpins the development of new knowledge and skills and encourages progress. The use of a wide range of resources is a feature of teaching in modern foreign languages. For example good progress in a Year 7 lesson was linked to the effective use of flashcards, worksheets and the support available from the French language assistant. Visiting speakers are also well used in careers and personal, social and moral education lessons. Although satisfactory use is made of ICT in history and music, insufficient use is made of ICT as a resource for learning in other subjects. In most lessons teachers make good use of time and set deadlines for tasks to be completed.
28. The marking of pupils' work is well used in several subjects to give pupils clear information on the standard of their work and on what they have to do in order to improve it. As part of the school literacy strategy teachers are aware of the need to focus on spelling in their marking and this is evident in almost all subjects. Marking in mathematics, science, geography and history is regular and provides pupils with good feedback on what they have to do in order to improve the quality of their work. However, although marking in modern foreign languages and ICT is regular it does not provide pupils with sufficient information on how to improve. Marking in religious education is unsatisfactory. There are substantial amounts of unmarked work and few constructive comments in pupils' books. It does not provide pupils with the guidance necessary in order to raise standards. Homework is well used to consolidate and extend learning in most subjects. However, although homework is set regularly in design and technology, not enough is done to ensure that it is completed and handed in on time. Insufficient use is made of homework to consolidate and extend pupils' learning in religious education.
29. The teaching by special educational needs staff, whether in withdrawal groups or when providing support to individual pupils or groups of pupils in lessons, is good overall. Because of this pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in their learning. The withdrawal arrangements are good and produce a learning environment in which pupils gain self-esteem and confidence as they develop their literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers display a good knowledge of pupils' needs and Individual Education Plans are well used to guide lesson planning. There are examples of good collaboration between subject teachers and learning support staff in many subjects. The encouragement given by learning support staff often provides pupils with the confidence to undertake activities by themselves rather than waiting to be shown by the teacher. In a Year 9 science lesson, for example, effective use was made of the learning support staff to

manage small group activities so that pupils achieved a degree of independence in their learning. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is most effective when pupils develop self-confidence through experiencing success. This was seen in a Year 10 English lesson, for example, where the support and encouragement from the teacher enabled pupils to think about similes and represent them visually. This was also seen in a Year 8 drama lesson where a pupil with behavioural difficulties working with a support assistant was given responsibility for a video camera and became totally absorbed in the lesson. Consistently good support for pupils with special educational needs from class teachers and learning support staff is a feature of teaching in geography. In a Year 7 lesson on soil erosion, for example, the use of writing frames, together with an emphasis on key vocabulary, gave pupils with learning difficulties good access to lesson tasks. In music, the careful explanation of objectives, tasks of short duration and very good use of ICT consolidate learning well and enable pupils with special educational needs to make good progress.

30. Teaching is less effective when there is a mismatch between lesson activities and learning needs. This is a general weakness in the planning of learning activities for pupils with special educational needs in design and technology and ICT. In a Year 11 design and technology lesson and in a Year 7 ICT lesson, for example, this mismatch between lesson activities and pupils' learning needs was directly linked to poor behaviour in the lessons. Unsatisfactory behaviour resulting from inappropriate learning activities was also seen in a Year 11 English lesson and a Year 7 mathematics lesson. In a Year 10 physical education GCSE theory lesson, attitudes and behaviour deteriorated because the work required higher literacy skills than some pupils possessed.
31. The four pupils who are developing bilinguals are given good support from specialist teachers, native speakers and a school-based learning support assistant. This good level of one to one support ensures that they make good progress in learning English and enables them to have access to the curriculum in lessons when they do not receive additional support.

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

32. The overall curricular provision is good. The school provides a socially inclusive curriculum that is constantly reviewed in order to meet the needs of all pupils. There are very good opportunities for pupils to enrich their experiences beyond lessons. In its planning, the school has identified as its major concerns the low levels of literacy and numeracy, together with the desire to provide potentially disaffected pupils with a curriculum that interests them. The outcomes of this focus have been improved test and examination results, falling exclusion rates and rising levels of attendance.
33. Since the last report, good curricular planning has resulted in a broader curriculum with better provision for pupils to study creative subjects. Taking advantage of the new flexibility in the 14-19 curriculum, the school has arranged for higher-attaining pupils to take GCSE mathematics and science early and provided alternative provision for those less academically inclined. Guided by assessment information the school has made the appropriate decision to disapply pupils in Years 10 and 11 from studying a modern foreign language and design and technology, so that they can consolidate their literacy skills or embark on a work related course. Improved planning in almost all subjects, together with improvements in teaching, means that pupils experience more effective approaches that better meet their needs. Statutory requirements are now met, although there is still insufficient time for full coverage of the Agreed Syllabus in religious education in Years 10 and 11. The range of vocational studies to suit all interests and aptitudes is still too narrow and the programme for personal, social and moral development is unsatisfactory. The school is aware of these issues and they feature in school improvement planning.
34. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 study all National Curriculum subjects as well as religious education and personal, social and moral education. ICT is taught as a separate subject and drama is taught separately within English. The allocation of curriculum time to English and mathematics

appropriately reflects the school's priority for raising standards of numeracy and literacy. The literacy consultant has made a significant contribution to the development of strategies to address the low levels of literacy. Since her appointment in January 2001 she has worked tirelessly to raise standards. Planning to integrate ways of improving literacy into schemes of work and lesson plans has developed well. Pupils are systematically taught the use of specialist vocabulary and specific styles of writing for different purposes. The use of frameworks for writing helps pupils to do this more successfully. Subjects are increasingly using a range of different texts that are appropriate for different levels of attainment. Particularly good progress has been made in science, where every lesson uses effective methods, which teaches scientific vocabulary and helps pupils to write in appropriate styles.

35. The school has a numeracy strategy based on the National Numeracy Strategy and this guides curricular and lesson planning in the mathematics department. However, the strategy has yet to be fully implemented in all subjects. The school recognises the need for a more systematic approach to the development of basic numeracy skills in all subjects and this features as a priority in school improvement planning. Literacy Progress Units and the after school use of the Successmaker computer-based learning programme enhance the provision for lower-attaining pupils. A summer school has been running for the last three years to help Year 6 pupils coming into the school and this is much appreciated by pupils and parents.
36. In Years 10 and 11, most pupils follow a broadly traditional curriculum. They benefit from being able to study a flexible number of examination subjects, according to their ability. They study a common core of subjects, designed to provide a balanced range of experiences. This includes GNVQ Part 1 Information Technology at foundation or intermediate level. The core is enriched by options that include French and a good range of creative subjects such as art, music, drama, and theatre studies. These mainly lead to a GCSE or an equivalent vocational qualification. A Certificate of Achievement is available in some subjects for lower-attaining pupils. There is an alternative work-related programme in partnership with Boston College for those pupils uninterested in the traditional curriculum. This is effectively linked with the school's provision so that, for example, some pupils can progress if they wish from doing Childcare to studying GCSE Child Development. There is a successful skills-based course for lower-attaining pupils. All courses have the advantage of being certificated. It is intended that personal, social and moral education be taught through careers education, religious education and in the morning tutor time in Years 10 and 11. However, there is no curriculum plan indicating which elements are taught in which subjects and no monitoring to ensure that the programme is being fully covered. Because of this the programme is ineffective and does not make a sufficient contribution to this very important aspect of pupils' personal development. The school is tackling this issue and has appointed a new co-ordinator for personal, social and moral education, who takes up post in January 2002.
37. The weekly teaching time of 25 hours in all years is consistent with government recommendations. The teaching day is divided into five one-hour periods with four of the five lessons taught before and one after the lunch period. Although this makes for a long morning session the arrangement is effective as most of the teaching is done when pupils are most alert. Five minutes is also allowed at lesson changeover times to allow movement between classrooms. However, lateness in arriving at lessons is still a problem. As part of the school behaviour management strategy, the timing of the end of the school day is structured to allow all pupils who behave well throughout the day to be rewarded by finishing school at 3.20pm. Pupils who have misbehaved during the day are required to stay an extra 15 minutes to the formal end of the school day at 3.25pm. During this extra 15 minutes pupils are required to meet relevant staff and put right whatever issue arose in the day. This is an important part of the school's strategy for helping pupils to take responsibility for their behaviour.
38. There is a planned programme of activities, including a 'thought for the day', for assemblies and morning tutor time. However, not all tutors use this time constructively, nor do all tutors implement the 'thought for the day'. As a result the school is not meeting the requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship. Homework is set regularly according to a school timetable in most subjects.

39. Careers education is good and benefits from the use of the school's links with careers advisers, the local college, training providers and employers. Careers education begins in Year 9 and continues through Years 10 and 11. Pupils are given good advice at the time of making option choices in Year 9, and in Year 11 pupils are provided with good guidance on the options available to them after they leave school. Work experience is well co-ordinated and provided for all pupils in Year 10. There are also opportunities for longer experiences of work, for example with the Fire Service.
40. Curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. The main emphasis is on providing support for pupils in normal lessons and support staff are appropriately deployed to provide this support and to meet statement requirements. Pupils are withdrawn, as necessary, for individual and small group work to boost literacy and numeracy skills. The use of the computer-based learning programme 'Successmaker' provides valuable additional provision both during the school day and as an after-school activity. The very recently opened in-school education centre enhances provision for pupils with behaviour difficulties and others who find difficulty in following school systems and procedures. Provision for these pupils is further enhanced through the contributions of the full-time youth workers who are based in the school. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is organised to maximise opportunities for pupils with special educational needs. The study skills course offers good support to pupils who need to enhance literacy and numeracy skills; it also provides valuable additional support for GCSE coursework completion. Pupils have further opportunities through the provision of a work-related curriculum, including local college links. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory in most subjects and in some it is good. However, planning to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs is a weakness in ICT and in design technology. Gifted and talented pupils and those in the process of learning English as an additional language benefit from the good opportunities provided by the school. A Russian boy, for example, gained an A* GCSE grade in Russian and is now studying for at least nine GCSEs.
41. The school makes good use of the local community to enhance the quality of education. Many of the challenges the school faces arise from generally low aspirations and a lack of involvement in education in the community. Reaching out into the community to raise aspirations and participation in education is recognised as a development priority for the school if it is to be successful in raising pupils' aspirations. To this end the school is actively involved in a number of lifelong learning initiatives in the area. For example, the school offers very successful computer courses for parents and other adults, which are funded by lifelong learning. The school has an active partnership with Boston College and hosts a variety of adult education initiatives and courses. The school also provides facilities for a variety of community arts and other activities and festivals. The school makes good use of people from the community as visiting speakers. For example, the community policeman, school nurse, and local business people contribute to school assemblies, careers and the personal, social and moral education programme. The school has negotiated with the local fire authority to provide a modular based ten-week structured course for pupils who are on the school's behaviour support programme. The school has made a successful application for National Lottery funding to provide a new community education centre, which will increase the range of opportunities both for local people and pupils in the school. The very strong links between the school and the community has a very positive impact on the progress pupils make.
42. Curricular links with primary schools and post-16 institutions are good. The school literacy and numeracy strategies build on the strategies being implemented in the primary schools. Subject leaders visit the primary schools and there are particularly strong links in music and drama through joint productions and other activities. The school has innovated a very successful primary liaison project, which gives the primary schools access to the school's facilities through involvement in a large number of collaborative activities. This liaison project works extremely well and is much appreciated by pupils. Links with the boys' grammar school have been considerably strengthened through the application for joint technology college status. The success of this application would considerably enhance provision and raise the status of the school in the local community.

43. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities, in which a large number of pupils participate. The range of activities offered by the school not only enriches the curriculum but also extends the range of opportunities for pupils to achieve. Most subjects offer pupils the opportunity to develop their course work by attending extra lunchtime and after school sessions and a number of school based clubs support pupils' learning and personal development. Attendance at these clubs is rewarded by access to a residential study course at Belton Woods Hotel and Golf Club. There are regular school productions, which are well supported and well received by parents and the public. There is a very good range of sporting competitions and the school fields teams in most areas of competitive sport against other schools with some success. Musical activities include a variety of choir and small ensemble opportunities. There is a range of trips out of school both within the locality and abroad. In art, pupils have the opportunity to visit galleries. The school is keen for pupils to develop new interests and during the summer term the normal timetable is suspended for two days to allow pupils to sample a range of different activities.
44. Overall provision for pupils' spiritual development is unsatisfactory. Assemblies take place once each week for each year group, and every three weeks for lower and upper schools. The themes make no contribution to the spiritual development of pupils and do not constitute worship. There are no opportunities provided for pupils to reflect on life issues. A 'thought for the week' operates in tutor time based on the assembly themes. The material is used on a daily basis by tutors but makes little contribution to spiritual development. The statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship is not met. There is little evidence of planning in departments for spiritual development. The personal, social and moral education programme does not make a significant contribution in this area. In religious education the curriculum makes some contribution. Pupils are encouraged to consider and respond to questions about the meaning and purpose of life. One lesson in Year 8, for example, reflected on the life and teaching of Jesus and its significance for our lives today. This enabled pupils to develop an understanding of their own and others' beliefs. Some subjects make a contribution to this aspect. For example, in drama, there are opportunities to explore myths and ideas beyond our understanding. In one Year 9 class, for example, pupils dealt with rites of passage, rituals and symbolism. This enabled pupils to use their imaginative and creative faculties to explore meaning. In one Year 11 lesson in geography, pupils responded to the wonder of creation through the study of the awesome power of volcanoes. However, most subjects do not make any contribution in this important aspect of the curriculum. There has been no improvement in this aspect since the last inspection.
45. Provision for pupils' moral development is satisfactory. Opportunities are targeted largely through the personal, social and moral education programme. Topics such as attitudes to bullying, sex education, drugs awareness, alcohol abuse, vandalism and the police are covered in the programme taught in Years 7 to 9. However, these topics are not covered in a systematic way in Years 10 and 11. The school has clear expectations of pupils knowing right from wrong, but pupils' responses to being corrected are unpredictable. There are many instances where pupils find it difficult to identify right from wrong and this has an adverse impact on behaviour in a number of lessons. The headteacher and staff are good role models for pupils and assemblies make a contribution to the development of pupils' moral behaviour. Topics such as the family of mankind, freedom and trusting others provide opportunities for pupils to think through the consequences of their actions. Several subjects also contribute well in providing opportunities for moral development. In religious education, pupils are able to respond to aspects of morality using their knowledge of religious and ethical issues. For example, in one Year 10 lesson, pupils were invited to make judgements about the Islamic and Christian views on war and peace. Through geography and science pupils develop an awareness of ethical issues related to the environment. In ICT, pupils examine the impact of the use of technology on society, employment and changing job patterns. This helps them to form judgements about the wider consequences of actions. In physical education, pupils are encouraged to accept rules and to work in collaboration with others. This includes showing respect for the decisions of referees in various games. However, although there are many opportunities for pupils to develop a sense of conscience, justice and fairness for all, these appear to have little impact on the behaviour of many pupils on a daily basis.

46. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. Many pupils have poorly developed social skills and the school makes considerable efforts to enhance their social development. Through the School Council pupils are provided with opportunities to take responsibility and to discuss and reach conclusions on issues without rancour. Through the well-organised school prefect system Year 11 pupils are provided with training in how to respond to challenges by their younger peers and how to organise themselves and others. A common room is provided for the use of Year 11 pupils at breaks and lunchtimes in order to encourage mature and responsible social behaviour. Pupils' social development is enhanced through a wide range of visits and extra-curricular activities. By the time pupils leave school they will have had the opportunity to see three productions in London's West End. Pupils in all years are given the opportunity to widen their social horizons through travel abroad. For example, in the last school year pupils from Years 10 and 11 visited Paris and in February a group of thirty pupils made a visit to Washington DC in the USA. This was a very successful five-day visit, which included a tour of the White House. These visits and other activities are celebrated in excellent displays, which decorate the school corridors and draw pupils' attention to the very good social and educational opportunities the school provides. The school provides very good opportunities to promote pupils' social development and many pupils respond positively to them. Care has been taken, for example, to ensure that there are round tables in the dining hall to encourage social interaction while pupils are taking lunch and the atmosphere in the dining hall is generally relaxed and pleasant. However, for a significant number of pupils a lack of social skills is a major contributory factor to inappropriate behaviour in classrooms and public areas of the school.
47. Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. Since the last inspection the school has greatly improved the contribution made to this area of the curriculum through English, drama, art, science, geography, modern foreign languages, and, in particular, music. This has involved overcoming two major difficulties, these of a lack of cultural activities in the Boston area and financial constraints. The first difficulty is being overcome by taking pupils on visits to theatres, museums and arts centres in other towns and cities and by inviting artists, musicians and other performers to visit the school. The financial constraints are being overcome through grants from Boston Borough Council, funds raised by the Parent and Teacher Association and income from public events. As a consequence, the school is able to ensure that no pupil is debarred from taking part in any activity because of financial considerations. It is, for example, the only school in the area that provides pupils with free musical tuition.
48. A particularly noteworthy feature of the school's cultural provision is the monthly theatre visits organised by the drama department. Small groups of pupils are taken on an open invitation basis to theatres in, for example, Kings Lynn, Nottingham, Coventry, and Leicester. Through these visits pupils are introduced to the theatre and their cultural experiences widened as they see and discuss plays by different authors, such as 'Polygraph', 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' and 'Top Girls'. The department is now in the process of planning a production of 'The Children' by Edward Bond. Pupils' cultural development is also supported by visits abroad. The modern foreign language department, for example, organises biannual visits to Normandy. Visits to France are also organised by the French and science departments. In the summer of 2000, the school took a group of pupils to the USA and pupils submitted the results of their visit as part of their GCSE work in geography. The contribution made by the music department has increased considerably, with more external concerts and out of school activities. There has also been an increase in the involvement of surrounding schools in the department's activities. Regular concerts are given at Haven High School, which also include contributions from the primary schools.
49. The school was instrumental in organising in the summer of 2000 a visit to Boston of the 'Young Americans', a touring group of 30 talented performers who work with pupils to produce a musical show. The activity involves large numbers of pupils in intense and demanding work, which requires high levels of concentration and effort. The outcome was a successful performance in front of an audience, which did much to enhance pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem. The event was judged to be so successful that Boston Borough Council are supporting a second visit by the group in summer of 2002. Pupils are introduced to non-European cultural traditions through, for example, art, design and technology, geography and music.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

50. The school provides a good level of care and support for the wide variety of personal and educational needs of its pupils. A great deal of thought has been given to the establishment of systems and procedures that will support pupils' learning and raise their aspirations. Procedures for child protection and ensuring children's welfare and safety are satisfactory overall. The school policy on child protection is satisfactory and follows local authority guidelines. However, relatively few staff have received training in child protection and this is a matter that needs to be tackled. The school pays good attention to the health and safety of staff and pupils. The local authority has recently carried out an audit of the school's health and safety procedures and action has been taken with regard to the few items identified as requiring attention. Subject departments take their responsibilities for health and safety seriously and pupils are given clear guidance on safe procedures for using tools and machinery and for lifting equipment. However, there are a few areas in need of attention. The physical education department does not carry out regular risk assessments and written risk assessments are not carried out for some school visits. A sufficient number of staff hold up-to-date first aid certificates. However, although all accidents are recorded, they lack detail and the school policy with regard to the recording of the administration of prescription medicines is not always adhered to.
51. The school has good procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development. Continuity in care is provided through the school's pastoral system, which is built on the role of the form tutor. Form tutors, year heads and the heads of upper and lower school work closely together and receive excellent support from the two full-time youth workers employed by the school. The roles of the youth workers are highly innovative and much appreciated by staff and pupils. Their deep knowledge of the local community is invaluable to the school, as is the high quality counselling and advice provided to pupils. Their work does much to defuse tensions, which can arise when problems, which have their origins within the community, are brought into the school. Pupils are in contact with their tutors every morning when the tutor time is intended, in part, to be used for the personal, social and moral education programme. However, this is rarely the case and pupils often are often uninvolved in any purposeful activity at these times.
52. Pupils' behaviour is a major issue for the school and the school has developed good procedures for promoting and monitoring good behaviour. The standard of behaviour expected is made very clear to pupils and is understood by many. Staff work very hard together to promote good behaviour and to eliminate bullying when it occurs. In this context, the work of the two youth workers is invaluable. Appropriate use is made of rewards and sanctions and a reporting system is used to monitor and help pupils who find it difficult to behave well all of the time. The school's behavioural strategy is underpinned by the timing of the end of the school days, which allow pupils time to take responsibility for their behaviour. However, the school has an above average number of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties, who can disrupt teaching and learning in some lessons. The school carefully records data about behaviour, enabling support to be provided where necessary. In addition, the school has systems to ensure that support is immediately available from senior management whenever an incident of serious disruption occurs. The recently opened Learning Support Unit is intended to provide extra help for pupils who are having extreme difficulties in fulfilling the school's expectations and whose behaviour may lead to temporary exclusion. The school is mindful of its responsibilities for social inclusion and works very hard to maintain pupils in full-time education, including those whose behaviour in other schools might well have led to permanent exclusion. Because of this there have been no permanent exclusions for the past three years.
53. The school works very hard to improve attendance, which although rising and meeting LEA targets, remains stubbornly just below 90 per cent. The school adopts a positive approach to attendance and offers rewards in the form of certificates, prizes and excursions for pupils who achieve attendance targets. The school has introduced an electronic system for registering pupils, which provides the central office with instant information. Many of the unexplained absences are immediately followed up by a member of the administrative staff and later, year heads follow up serious cases with parents. Tutors, year heads and senior staff work closely with the education

welfare officer to follow up those pupils whose attendance and punctuality causes, the greatest concern. Improving attendance and punctuality remains a priority target for the school.

54. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are very good. The school identified assessment as a key development priority and is working in close collaboration with a partner school to make more effective use of assessment information to raise standards. Through this partnership the school has developed and introduced a system for predicting each pupil's attainment at the end of Year 9 and Year 11. The system is based on the transfer of information from the primary schools and in particular the results of the National Curriculum tests taken in the last year of primary education. This information is used to predict National Curriculum levels of attainment at the end of Year 9 and to monitor each pupil's progress towards targets term by term. This allows senior and middle managers and subject teachers to identify and intervene at a very early stage if any pupil is identified as underachieving. The same method is applied to Years 10 and 11, with Year 9 National Curriculum test information used to predict GCSE grades. Teachers are increasingly making good use of this information to plan lessons and help pupils. Work is regularly assessed and appropriate records are kept in subject areas. However, assessment arrangements are unsatisfactory in religious education.
55. Assessment co-ordinators have been appointed for each of the key stages. These co-ordinators provide a considerable amount of information for staff, which is accessible and retrievable, together with very good support to departments in their developing understanding of how assessment information can be used to raise standards. Additional support for this process is being provided through termly meetings between senior staff and heads of department to review progress in the use of assessment information. Good use is made of assessment to guide curricular planning. This is seen, for example, in the disapplication of pupils from a modern foreign language in Years 10 and 11 and the widening range of non-examination courses being offered in these years. The school has made very good progress since the last inspection, when the need to make more systematic use of assessment results was identified as a key issue for action. Assessment procedures within departments have also improved.
56. The assessment of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. Information received from the primary schools and from testing on entry to the school is used well to guide provision for most pupils. Individual Education Plans are of good quality. They are detailed, include realistic targets and are presented succinctly. However, learning and behaviour targets are not always closely linked. Because of this, when pupils display inappropriate behaviour there is a tendency to fall back on behaviour management systems without first examining the suitability of the learning tasks to the needs of the pupil. Individual Education Plans are regularly reviewed and review dates entered on the special educational needs register. Pupils are appropriately involved in target setting and reviews of progress. Procedures for statutory reviews meet requirements. The administration of assessments and record keeping is satisfactory.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

57. Parents have positive views of the school. A small number of parents, eight per cent only, responded to the questionnaire and only a few attended the pre-inspection meeting. Nevertheless, the views expressed through these channels showed that parents are generally happy with the school. They consider the leadership and management of the school to be good and would feel comfortable about approaching the school if they had any problems or concerns. They also feel that the school expects their children to do their best and that on the whole their children like school. The inspection supports these positive views. A small number of parents, however, have some concerns about aspects of the school's work. Some parents feel that behaviour is not good enough and that pupils are not given enough work to do at home. The inspection supports parents' views with regard to behaviour but not their views on homework, which is set regularly in most subjects. Additional concerns expressed by parents were the progress their children are making, both academically and socially, and the information the school provides. Inspection evidence with regard to these concerns is mixed. Most pupils are making satisfactory progress in their learning and achieving standards that are consistent with their previous levels of attainment.

However, unsatisfactory behaviour in some lessons does disrupt teaching and learning and restrict progress. The school makes strenuous efforts to help pupils become mature and responsible and to develop their social skills and many show good progress in their personal development as they move through the school. However, a large number of pupils enter the school with poorly developed social skills, which are very resistant to change. Thus, while many opportunities are provided by the school to enhance pupils' personal development, these appear to have little effect upon some pupils and are not reflected in their behaviour on a daily basis.

58. Inspection evidence does not support parents' concerns about the information the school provides. The school makes considerable efforts to provide good quality information for parents about the school and their children's progress. The school has produced a high quality professionally prepared prospectus, which meets statutory requirements and contains a good deal of information on the school's aims, the curriculum and other activities. Regular newsletters are sent to parents giving additional information about school events and parent activities being organised by the school. The newsletters also give parents information on what their children will be studying in the coming term and advice on how they can support their children's studies. Annual reports contain sufficient information for parents to understand what their child can do and where they need to improve in most subjects. However, there are weaknesses in this respect in the mathematics and physical education subject reports, which are vague and lack clear targets. Each year group holds at least one consultation evening for parents to discuss their children's progress. The school makes strenuous efforts to encourage parents to attend parents' meetings and staff are always willing to arrange alternative times for parents who cannot attend. Literacy evenings are held for Year 7 pupils and parents to support the school's literacy strategy. Links with parents of pupils with special educational needs are good. The special educational needs co-ordinator regularly liaises with parents, and they are invited to participate in annual reviews of pupils' progress to discuss the options available to them in pupils' Individual Education Plans.
59. The school welcomes the involvement of parents and a few come into the school to act as parent helpers. The Parent-Teacher Association, although small in number, is dedicated and tries very hard to raise funds for the school through social functions. The association has pledged £700 to support the school's application for technology college status. Parents subscribe to the home-school agreement and are invited to make comments on their children's progress on the planners provided by the school. Relatively few parents, however, take the opportunity to do so. The school encourages parents to contact them at any time if they have concerns about their children's progress, or wish to discuss specific issues. They are regularly contacted by the school regarding matters of concern, pupils' attendance, or if the school wishes to celebrate pupils' achievements and progress. However, although the school makes considerable efforts to involve parents in its work, the impact that they make on the work of the school and the contribution they make to their children's learning at school and at home is minimal. This is much the same as at the time of the last inspection.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

60. The overall leadership and management of the school are excellent. The head and senior management team provide excellent leadership and a clear educational direction for the school. In very challenging circumstances the headteacher, with very good support from other members of the senior management team, has developed an atmosphere in which there is a strong commitment to continuous improvement and the raising of standards in all areas. All staff work very hard to maintain a learning environment that offers all pupils the opportunity to achieve and experience success. The school's commitment to improvement is underpinned by an open-mindedness and willingness to apply good practice from a variety of sources. A good example of this is the way in which the school requested the support of the LEA in raising standards and during the last year made effective use of intensive support from the school improvement officer over a two-term period.
61. The school's drive to raise standards is supported by exemplary procedures for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school and by the high quality of the school's improvement planning. All

school improvement plans reflect the school aims, identify relevant priorities and cover both medium-term and long-term goals. Both school and department improvement plans are costed effectively and have clearly defined targets, tasks, success criteria, staff responsibilities and timescales. All school plans serve as working documents and provide the school with clear guidelines for continuing to improve the quality of education the school provides. An excellent example of the high quality leadership and strategic thinking being provided to the school is in the bid, in collaboration with Boston Grammar School, for Technology College status, which was submitted to the Department for Education and Skills earlier this term.

62. In order to monitor and support the work of departments, each member of the senior management team has line management responsibility for one or more subjects. Classroom observations are an integral part of the school's monitoring procedures and these are firmly embedded in the school's evaluation procedures. They are carried out by members of the senior management team and increasingly by heads of department. Good use has been made of advice and training from the LEA to ensure a common approach to lesson observations and consistency in evaluations. In order to monitor progress towards targets, all heads of department are required to provide reports to the headteacher detailing the monitoring activities and outcomes each half term. Through these reports and their own observations the senior management team have a very clear picture of the school's strengths and areas in need of improvement. Subsequent action directed towards the areas in need of improvement is having a direct impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning and raising standards.
63. The willingness of the school to identify and apply good practice is also seen in the very good progress being made in the use of assessment to raise standards. With advice and guidance from the partner school, the school has established a comprehensive assessment database and detailed analyses of pupils' performance are provided to subject and year heads, and class teachers. Procedures for the monitoring and evaluation of examination data, for example, are very good. The senior management team analyse examination results and seek explanations for any discrepancies in performance between subjects and over time. They then identify and agree on targets for improvement. Subject teachers are becoming increasingly aware of how assessment information can be used to monitor and support the progress of individual pupils and this is recognised as a school development priority. However, the potential of the roles of year heads and form tutors in the monitoring and support of pupils' academic as well as personal development is not being fully exploited.
64. The overall quality of management provided by heads of department is good. The quality of management and leadership in music, art and drama is very good and having a positive impact on standards. Very good leadership is also seen in geography, where the head of department has clear strategies for improvement and provides good support to non-specialist teachers. The new head of department in English, well supported by the literacy consultant, is providing good leadership to a team of committed teachers, who are now well placed to raise standards in the subject. Over recent years the science department has suffered from instability in staffing. The staffing position is now more stable and a new head of department, in post since the start of the term, is providing good leadership and has already identified clear priorities to take the department forward. Similarly, good leadership is being provided to the mathematics department and the effective support provided to the few non-specialists who teach the subject is helping to raise standards. However, the department suffers because of the difficulty in recruiting specialist mathematics teachers in this part of the country. There has, for example, been no response to the school's national advertisements to appoint a fourth specialist teacher. There is a similar staffing problem in religious education, for which there is at present no full-time specialist teacher and as a consequence no subject leadership. However, a full-time specialist has been appointed and will take up post in January 2002. The new appointee has already begun to formulate plans for the development of the subject and these show a clear sense of purpose and direction. Improved provision for religious education and personal, social and moral education is recognised as a school development priority.
65. The school's approach to special educational needs takes full account of the requirements of the Code of Practice. The governing body is appropriately involved, with a designated governor for

special educational needs. Progress since the last inspection has been disrupted owing to a lack of continuity in the co-ordination of special needs. Co-ordination has now been stabilised with the recent appointment of a new special educational needs co-ordinator. Clear and relevant priorities have been identified and systems for producing Individual Education Plans have been standardised. Links with senior management are good and links with subject teachers are in the process of being strengthened. The dissemination of information to staff is good and all staff receive a copy of the special educational needs register together with copies of all relevant Individual Education Plans. Record keeping is efficient and well managed. Support staff work well as a team. The school makes every effort to make the best use of external support services.

66. The governing body is effective and supportive. With the exception of ensuring provision of a daily act of collective worship, it meets its statutory responsibilities. Governors have a real commitment to the school. They take a keen interest in its work and provide the school with a substantial amount of specialist help and advice. Very good relationships exist between the governing body and the senior management team. Governors receive regular detailed reports from the head and other senior members of staff, and have a good level of awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The quality of financial management and planning is very good. Governors are actively involved with the head and the senior management team in financial planning and monitoring and are given good support by the school finance manager. The school has effective procedures to ensure that the principles of best value for money are applied in the use of its resources and all additional funding received by the school is used for the intended purposes. Only one minor weakness was raised in the most recent auditor's report, which has now been corrected.
67. Arrangements for the professional development of staff are very good. Close attention is paid to the identification of individual teachers' development needs and how these can be matched to the school's development priorities. A significant proportion of subject teachers lack the ICT skills necessary to be able to incorporate ICT into their subjects with confidence. This is having an adverse effect on standards. The school is aware of this issue and the development of teachers' ICT skills is included in the School Development Plan. Arrangements for the support and professional development of both newly qualified teachers and pupils undertaking initial teacher training are good and valued by participants, as are the induction arrangements for all new members of staff. The match of teachers and support staff to the needs of the curriculum is satisfactory and most teachers are suitably qualified in their main teaching areas. However, there is a vacancy in mathematics owing to teacher recruitment problems in the Boston area and there is some non-specialist teaching in the subject. When non-specialist teaching is necessary, the school makes every effort to provide these teachers with specialist support and the opportunity for further professional development.
68. Learning support assistants give good support to pupils with special educational needs. The full-time employment of two youth workers provides good personal support to pupils and allows year heads and other experienced teachers to spend more time in lessons. This enhances the quality of education the school provides. The number of specialist teaching and non-teaching staff is sufficient to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs. The secretarial and clerical staff provide a welcoming school office and contribute very effectively to the administration and organisation of the school.
69. The quality of accommodation in most subject areas is good and it allows the curriculum to be taught effectively. Subject rooms are grouped together and most have very good displays of pupils' work and subject-specific key words to support the school literacy strategy and teaching and learning in the subject. The welcoming main reception area and the school corridors contain excellent displays, which give public recognition to pupils' achievements in a wide range of activities. The site manager and team maintain the school premises to a good state of cleanliness and this makes a positive contribution to the ethos of the school.
70. The provision of learning resources is satisfactory overall. Resource provision is good in history, physical education, music, modern foreign languages and ICT. However, there are too few textbooks to support teaching and learning in science in Years 10 and 11 and some of the

equipment is in need of replacement. A lack of access to ICT resources is inhibiting progress in mathematics, science and art. The school has recognised this deficiency and has taken action to improve provision and access. The library is well supplied with ten computers and these are well used for research and homework. The recent appointment of a teacher librarian and a library assistant has improved the status of the library. They have identified a good strategy for developing the library into a more effective resource for teaching and learning. Currently, however, insufficient use is made of the library to support teaching and learning in all subjects. The stock of books is not sufficient either to provide for pupils' leisure reading or to support the curriculum.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

71. All of the following issues feature in school development planning. In order to raise standards and the quality of education provided, the governors, senior management and staff of Haven High School, with the help of the Local Education Authority, should:

- Strengthen the drive to improve basic literacy by:
 - improving the range of books in the library;
 - embedding the use of the library in teaching and learning in all subjects;
 - implementing a strategy to encourage pupils to make greater use of the library for personal reading and independent research.
(paragraphs: 7,70,73,74)
- Fully implement the strategy for improving basic numeracy through all subjects.
(paragraphs: 8,24,88,93)
- Raise standards in information and communication technology by ensuring that:
 - assessment of pupils' work is more closely linked to National Curriculum levels;
 - more effective use is made of assessment information in planning teaching and learning so that lesson activities are more closely linked to the attainment levels of pupils;
 - homework is used to both consolidate and extend the work done in lessons;
 - pupils are provided with opportunities to apply and develop their ICT skills in all subjects.
(paragraphs: 9,27,67, 70,89,92,106,112,118-119,123,129,137-139,142)
- Maintain the drive to reduce the above average levels of absence and to improve punctuality at the start of the school day and the start of lessons.
(paragraphs: 5,12,17,21,35,37,53,72,87,89,100,123)
- Improve standards of behaviour by:
 - ensuring that there is a close link between learning and behavioural targets in the Individual Education Plans of pupils with special educational needs;
 - ensuring that teaching and learning activities are closely matched to the attainment levels of all pupils;
 - ensuring that all teachers take greater responsibility for managing behaviour in their classrooms;
 - identifying and sharing effective classroom management strategies and areas for improvement;
 - providing appropriate training to ensure that the classroom management strategies of all teachers are brought up to the standard of the best;
 - providing middle managers with appropriate training to enable them to monitor and support behaviour management strategies in the classroom.
(paragraphs: 5,12-13,15,19,21-22,26,30,52,57,77,90-91,100,105,111,115,120,134,165-166,174)
- Extend the range of learning opportunities leading to alternative forms of accreditation for pupils in Years 10 and 11.
(paragraphs: 12,13,33,116-117)

- Improve provision for personal, social and moral education by ensuring that:
 - there is a broad and balanced personal, social and moral education programme that includes health education, sex education and attention to drug misuse and citizenship;
 - teachers are provided with appropriate training and resources in order to be able to teach the programme effectively;
 - there are clearly understood procedures for monitoring and evaluating the teaching of the programme;
 - the allocated curricular time is used effectively by all teachers.
(paragraphs: 14,36,51,64)

In addition, paragraphs 28,150,171,175 (marking), 38,44 (spiritual development), 50 (care for pupils), 58,93,167 (reports to parents), and 174-176, 178 (religious education) include weaknesses that have not formed the basis of 'Key Issues' identified above. The school should consider including these in the governors' post-inspection action plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	118
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	48

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	4	26	39	41	6	2	0
Percentage	3	22	33	35	5	2	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	501
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	108

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	18
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	228

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	55
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	42

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.8
National comparative data	7.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	5.2
National comparative data	1.1

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage (Year 9)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	41	53	94

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	6	8	14
	Girls	24	20	14
	Total	30	28	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	32 (20)	30 (40)	29 (23)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	1 (0)	16 (19)	4 (3)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	35 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	12	17	5
	Girls	31	32	13
	Total	43	49	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	48 (30)	53 (46)	20 (31)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	9 (8)	17 (23)	0 (3)
	National	31(31)	42 (39)	29 (29)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 (Year 11)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	58	58	116

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	10	35	50
	Girls	9	41	55
	Total	19	76	105
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	16 (11)	66 (52)	91 (80)
	National	(47.4)	(90.6)	(95.6)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	20.6 (15)
	National	(38.4)

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	8	57
	National		[]

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	3
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	495
Any other minority ethnic group	2

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	28	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 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	29.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.1

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	502.5

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	80
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	25.3
Key Stage 4	21.4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	1,572,050
Total expenditure	1,577,980
Expenditure per pupil	2,895
Balance brought forward from previous year	80,360
Balance carried forward to next year	74,430

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	12
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	11

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	500
Number of questionnaires returned	32

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	28	59	3	6	3
My child is making good progress in school.	44	41	12	3	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	22	44	19	6	9
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	47	19	9	3
The teaching is good.	28	59	3	6	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	47	38	9	3	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	50	47	0	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	53	38	6	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	44	38	6	3	9
The school is well led and managed.	53	41	0	3	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	38	47	9	6	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	34	50	3	3	9

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

ENGLISH

Overall, the quality of provision for English is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- The department now has a full complement of teachers after six years of staffing instability.
- The department is well led and managed.
- Changes to the curriculum are rapidly improving the quality of the provision.
- Standards in National Curriculum tests for pupils at the end of Year 9 and standards in GCSE are improving.
- Higher-attaining pupils in Years 9 to 11 have positive attitudes to the subject.
- Pupils' standards of literacy are being raised by good strategies now being used across all subjects.
- The department strives to include all pupils in the full curriculum for English.

Areas for improvement

- The proportion of pupils who leave school without a qualification in the subject is too high.
- In some lessons teachers pay too much attention to pupils whose behaviour is poor.
- The pace in some lessons with lower-attaining pupils is too slow.
- There is no alternative form of accreditation for those pupils for whom GCSE is not appropriate.
- Girls are often not given enough opportunity to speak in lessons because boys dominate discussions.

72. Pupils' attainment in English is well below average. Standards in the 2001 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 were well below the national average and well below standards in similar schools. However, they represent a considerable improvement on the 2000 standards. The standards achieved by girls are very much better than those of the boys. Attainment in GCSE examinations, although well below average, improved in 2001 because of the steps taken by the literacy co-ordinator and the second-in-charge of English, who took up appointments in January 2001. They instituted a rigorous approach to course work and developed an effective revision programme, which equipped pupils with better examination techniques. This doubled the proportion of A* to C grades. However, fewer than 75 per cent of pupils were entered for the examination, partly because of poor attendance patterns but also because GCSE is not an appropriate examination for many pupils. The department is now considering alternative accreditation for these pupils to ensure that more pupils leave school with a qualification in English.
73. Work observed in lessons, books and discussions with pupils during the inspection indicates that pupils, including those with special educational needs, are achieving satisfactory standards when their prior attainment is taken into consideration. Girls achieve higher standards than boys in reading and writing, partly because they have better attitudes in lessons and settle to their work more quickly. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress in learning English because of the good individual support they are given by external agencies and a learning support assistant. Pupils enter the school with very low levels of literacy but pupils now in Years 7 to 9 are benefiting from an improved curriculum closely based on the National Literacy Strategy and the National Curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to use dictionaries and most can do so effectively. However, apart from the highest-attaining pupils, standards of spelling and punctuation remain very weak. Most pupils write in very simple sentences and only the highest-attaining pupils understand how to use varied sentences to engage the reader's interest.
74. Reading skills are also weak. Many pupils can read aloud with reasonable accuracy but do not always understand what they have read. Most pupils do not read willingly for pleasure and although the new texts purchased recently, such as the Harry Potter books, are redressing this situation, there are as yet too few opportunities in lessons for pupils to read independently. Higher attaining pupils, particularly in Years 10 and 11, are developing the ability to read critically when teachers give them the opportunity to ask questions of the texts they study. For example, in a Year 11 lesson on Andrew Marvell's poem 'To His Coy Mistress', pupils were expected to devise questions that they

would like to ask the poet. The teacher then answered these questions as the poet and through humour based on excellent knowledge of the text she raised pupils' understanding of a challenging poem.

75. Speaking skills are below average, although boys achieve higher standards than they do in reading and writing. They are often very willing to answer questions but find it difficult to expand their responses or to explain what they mean. Girls are not given enough opportunities to talk because boys are allowed to monopolise class discussions except in those lessons when teachers make it part of their routine to ask questions directly of boys and girls in turn.
76. Because of these low standards of literacy and oracy, the school is taking very active steps to improve literacy across the whole curriculum. Since the appointment of the literacy consultant a year ago, planning to integrate ways of integrating literacy into schemes of work and lesson plans has been much improved. Pupils are systematically taught the use of specialist vocabulary and specific styles of writing for different purposes. The use of frameworks for writing helps pupils to do this more successfully. Subjects are increasingly using a range of different texts appropriate for different levels of attainment.
77. Many pupils have positive attitudes towards the subject and want to learn. There is, however, a significant minority of pupils in all years, usually boys, whose attitudes are negative. Most teachers manage this poor behaviour with some skill but in some lessons a few pupils are so challenging that their behaviour becomes the central concern of the teacher and prevents other pupils from learning. In such lessons, otherwise well planned, with work well matched to pupils' different needs, pupils' achievement is not as good as it should be. Older pupils in the school have suffered from a great deal of instability because of the staffing problems over the last few years and are understandably resentful of the way their studies have been affected. However, many now appreciate the improving stability in the department, and attitudes, particularly in top sets in Years 9 to 11, are much better. In these classes there is a shared determination to achieve higher standards and lessons are purposeful and characterised by good pace and focus.
78. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, and teaching observed during the inspection ranged from very good to poor. A strength in almost all lessons is the quality of planning. All lessons begin with a recapitulation of previous learning and the sharing with pupils of what they are to learn. Learning is planned in small steps and the learning objectives are revisited and reinforced at the end of the lesson so pupils are able to recognise the progress they have made. New schemes of work are making their learning more relevant to pupils. For instance, in a Year 9 lesson, pupils were engaged by the idea of writing the diary of a celebrity. The teacher used an overhead projector to remind pupils of the conventions of first person narrative writing and this enabled pupils to use these conventions in the written task. Lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs sometimes make good progress. In a Year 10 lesson the teacher had planned the work very well to match pupils' levels of attainment. Through a series of small steps pupils learned about similes and were able to write their own because the activities were practical and enabled them to achieve success. Pupils managed to retain a level of focused activity, helping each other to represent their similes in a visual form.
79. The department is committed to including all pupils in the curriculum. The good match of work to pupils' needs and the strenuous efforts of teachers to overcome the effects of disaffection exemplify this. Pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs are given good support. In one lesson the teacher celebrated the home language of a Portuguese pupil by writing words in his language on the board and sharing these with other pupils.
80. The rate of improvement since the previous inspection has speeded up with the appointment of experienced and qualified teachers. Almost all pupils are now making satisfactory progress and attainment is rising. Teaching has improved and tasks are now better matched to pupils' needs. Pupils are now given good support for external tests and examinations and teachers give up much of their own time to run additional sessions after school. However, much remains to be done. Attainment is still too low and ICT remains underused, both as a motivator and to help pupils to

improve their work. The new head of department, well supported by the literacy consultant, leads a team of committed teachers, who are now well placed to effect further improvement.

Drama

Overall, the quality of provision for drama is **very good**.

Strengths

- The teaching, which is consistently very good and sometimes excellent.
- Pupils' very good attitudes towards drama and good behaviour in lessons.
- Very good use of assessment in lessons to show pupils how to improve their work.
- Very good relationships.

Areas for improvement

- Attainment at the end of Year 11, at present well below the standards expected.

81. Drama has been only very recently included as an integral element of the curriculum for all pupils. Although attainment is below expectations at the end of Year 9 and well below at the end of Year 11, standards are rapidly rising because of the very good teaching and the good curriculum. In 2001 attainment in the GCSE examination was well below the national average but this was largely because these pupils had not studied drama in Years 7 to 9. Pupils in all years now achieve very well in lessons and are making very good progress. They rapidly gain sound knowledge and understanding of drama techniques and conventions and learn self-control through the clear routines laid down by the drama teacher.
82. Pupils display positive attitudes towards drama and behave well because they enjoy the work and are trusted to take responsibility. In one Year 8 lesson a pupil with special educational needs was able to video other pupils' performances and this increased his self-confidence. In Year 11, pupils preparing for an assessment had chosen to use some difficult texts such as 'Our Country's Good' and a 'Blackadder' script, an example of how the teacher encourages pupils to deal with challenging and adult themes.
83. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Lessons are underpinned by excellent relationships. The teacher trusts pupils and they respond by working at full stretch, collaborating well, often in mixed gender groups, to produce some impressive work. In a Year 9 lesson, pupils built up still images to depict a simple story line. The teacher's excellent questioning techniques drew from each pupil a clear picture of the character he or she had created. This enabled them to deepen their understanding of how to use posture and facial expression to convey what the character was feeling. Excellent use of assessment helped pupils to improve their images. Pupils were fully involved in this process and were capable of both giving and receiving constructive criticism. The process makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal and social development. A Year 8 lesson in which this was well demonstrated focused on how people deal with status. Pupils had planned and polished their improvisations, collected props and costumes and designed simple lighting to enhance their performances. These performances were characterised by good control, even when boys were depicting fights, audible speech and good audience concentration.
84. Drama, although a recent addition to the curriculum, is making a valuable contribution to pupils' personal development because the teacher conveys recognition of pupils as serious learners. The curriculum provides pupils with a relevant experience. It develops their self-esteem and self-confidence because they are expected to plan and develop their own work. The curriculum is enhanced by numerous opportunities to visit high quality professional performances and through opportunities to work with local and national professional theatre companies.

MATHEMATICS

Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- The leadership of the department and the commitment of the teachers to raise standards of attainment.
- The use of differentiation in text and teaching style, and the availability of additional teaching sessions to meet the needs of individual pupils.

Areas for improvement

- The further development and use of ICT within the subject.
- Ensuring the contribution of other subjects to developing pupils' numeracy skills

85. In the 2001 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9, results were well below average when compared with all and similar schools. Nevertheless, when attainment on entry to the school is taken into account, these standards represent satisfactory achievement through Years 7 to 9. Since the last inspection, standards have remained below the national trend and overall, boys have performed better than girls, although in 2001 the school correctly anticipated that girls would outperform boys. Test results mirror Teacher Assessment. The performance of the pupils in mathematics has been better than their performance in English and science.
86. In the 2001 GCSE examinations, the proportions of pupils achieving grades A*-C and A*-G were well below the national averages. The average point score was also well below the national average. However, when attainment at the end of Year 9 is taken into account these results represent satisfactory achievement and progress through Years 10 and 11. Since the last inspection standards have fluctuated. In 2001 nearly 25 per cent of the entry achieved the higher grades, an improvement over the previous year. There was no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls.
87. Inspection evidence indicates that the standards pupils achieve at the end of Year 9 are below national expectations. In work observed in lessons standards are higher than those obtained in the National Curriculum tests. Inconsistent attendance, by many pupils, affects the standards achieved in external tests. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment, with pupils in the highest sets making good progress. By the end of Year 9, the majority of pupils have made satisfactory progress in consolidating their number skills and many pupils use calculators appropriately and competently. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 9 understand correlation and are able to draw conclusions from a scatter-graph related to their hand span and height. They are able to write simple LOGO computer programs. Lower-attaining pupils are able to create tally charts and can identify mode and median numbers having read simple problems. Higher-attaining Year 8 pupils correctly substitute and calculate number in algebraic formulae involving squared and cubed terms. In lessons following the format of the National Numeracy Strategy, lower-attaining pupils show good knowledge of time in their warm-up activities. They are able to accurately read and use a bus timetable. Pupils respond well to varied learning activities and make particularly good progress when work is matched to their attainment levels. Effective use is made of resources and support is available for pupils with special educational needs. A higher-attaining group of pupils in Year 7 were able to determine the area of regular and irregular shapes by counting squares, and used this knowledge to design and cost a garden plan.
88. Pupils apply their numeracy skills in several subjects. In science, higher attaining pupils are able to read stopwatches to two decimal places, record results in a table and then choose an appropriate scale when drawing bar charts. Lower-attaining pupils require support for these activities, although they are able to draw irregular shapes to scale and accurately measure their perimeters. In mental activities a number of pupils have difficulty with a simple multiplication of 10. In geography, pupils' graphical work generally tends to be inaccurate when map-reading and lower-attaining pupils have difficulty with four figure grid references. The school has yet to implement the strategy to ensure the systematic development of pupils' numeracy skills in all subjects. A number of pupils are withdrawn from lessons to follow a Successmaker programme;

this causes a certain amount of disruption to the lesson when they their return. The school literacy strategy is supported through the spellings of mathematical terms, which are tested as part of the mental warm-ups to lessons. In order to improve literacy skills, key words are identified and defined in all lessons. Pupils read text to the remainder of the class and to each other. The use of ICT requires more consistent application throughout Years 7 to 9. Pupils with English as an additional language make similar progress to the remainder of the class.

89. Inspection evidence indicates that standards of attainment at the end of Year 11 are below average. In work observed in lessons, standards are higher than those obtained in external examinations. The irregular attendance of many pupils significantly affects progress and consequently the examination results. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment. For revision purposes, higher-attaining pupils in Year 11 make good use of previous examination questions to check their knowledge of the basics of statistics. Lower-attaining pupils are able to simplify and apply ratios and rates. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 10 are able to fix positions through scale drawing and the use of bearings. They use protractors competently and accurately. Lower-attaining pupils know the rules for calculating angle size when using parallel lines. In science, these pupils further develop their numeracy skills when, for example, applying their knowledge to the costing of a plant-growing scheme. Numeracy skills are sufficiently well developed to underpin coursework, which involves data handling and graph-work in geography. Although good attention is paid to the consolidation of literacy skills in each lesson, insufficient use is made of ICT to support teaching and learning.
90. Overall, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory. In Years 7 to 9 attitudes are satisfactory. In some lessons they are good or very good, while in others, mainly in lower sets, they are unsatisfactory. This pattern is repeated in Years 10 and 11. Most pupils in the higher sets are well motivated, show interest in their work and apply themselves well to their learning tasks. They co-operate well when working together and relate well to their teachers. Lesson planning takes full account of the needs of individual pupils and the contents of pupils' Individual Education Plans. Nevertheless, in a few lessons a small number of pupils showed total lack of interest in the learning activities, even though the activities were well matched to their learning needs, and attempted to disrupt the lessons by calling out and leaving their seats. The effect of this behaviour is to slow the progress of all pupils. The standard of presentation of pupils' work varies. Work is normally headed and dated. The learning objectives are clearly stated and homework is clearly identified. Some work reflects a great deal of care and attention. However, the use of biro for drawing diagrams or charts leads to untidy work and graffiti are evident on the covers of many pupils' exercise books.
91. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. In Years 7 to 9, teaching is mainly satisfactory, but on occasion good or very good and in one lesson it was excellent. Unsatisfactory teaching was observed in one lesson. In Years 10 and 11, teaching is never less than satisfactory and was on occasion good or very good. This leads to pupils making satisfactory progress in learning as they move through the school. Setting arrangements support the raising of standards of attainment in the subject. The lesson format of the National Numeracy Strategy is used in Years 7 to 10. Teachers' planning is detailed and includes a specific planning sheet to highlight opportunities to extend literacy skills. To assist pupils' learning, lesson objectives are shared with pupils at the beginning of each lesson and reviewed in a plenary. Good links are made with previous learning and homework. Teachers explain concepts clearly. Teaching is best when there is a good pace to the lesson, supported by a variety of short relevant activities. However, in the unsatisfactory lesson an introductory mental arithmetic exercise was extended for too long so that it lost its intended purpose of improving speed and accuracy in basic numeracy skills as pupils became bored and uninterested.
92. Teachers work hard to develop good relationships with pupils and to motivate them to learn. Homework is well used to consolidate and extend pupils' skills and understanding and pupils are provided with a special text to retain at home. Assessment procedures and the monitoring of pupils' progress are detailed and well used to monitor pupils' progress. Because of this pupils are aware of the progress they are making. Marking is generally thorough and follows the departmental marking policy. Teachers' comments provide pupils with helpful guidance, as does

the work record summary sheet at the front of each exercise book. The use of ICT is restricted by the lack of up-to-date computers and software available in classrooms.

93. The leadership and management of the department are good. The head of department provides a clear direction for the subject. The recruitment of specialist mathematics teachers is difficult in the Boston area. There has, for example, been no response to the school's national advertisements to appoint a third specialist teacher. Nevertheless, teachers are well deployed and good support is provided for non-specialist teachers who teach the subject. There is a strong commitment by all staff to raising standards of attainment. The format of the National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully introduced into lessons. It is now necessary to ensure the contribution of other subjects in the development of numeracy skills throughout the school. The provision of 'express' classes for higher attaining pupils, revision and extension sessions, and the proposed entry of Year 11 pupils for GCSE Statistics in 2003 form part of the department's strategy for raising attainment in the subject. Examination by graduated assessment provides motivation for lower attaining pupils. Reports for parents are detailed but do not provide sufficient information on what pupils know and understand and what they must do in order to improve. The department has close links with primary schools and post-16 institutions to support pupils' progress. For example, a 'maths trail' has been established to stretch higher-attaining primary pupils.
94. With the exception of ICT, resources and accommodation are satisfactory. The department has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. The quality of teaching in Years 7 to 9 has improved as have examination results at the end of Year 11. The department is capable of further improvement.

SCIENCE

Overall, the quality of provision in science is **good**.

Strengths

- The good quality of teaching.
- Teachers' high expectations of pupils and very good planning of work.
- The good achievement of pupils in Years 10 and 11.
- The departments' success in the development of scientific literacy.
- Good procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' academic progress.
- Good leadership and management.

Areas for improvement

- The attainment of pupils, particularly at the end of Year 9, at present too low.
- The unsatisfactory behaviour of some pupils, particularly boys in Years 10 and 11, which detracts from their learning despite the best efforts of teachers.
- The range of learning opportunities.
- The supply of up-to-date books for use with GCSE courses.

95. Standards at the end of Year 9 are very low in comparison with both all and similar schools. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 9 were slightly better in 2001 than in 2000.
96. Attainment as measured by the work of pupils seen during the inspection is also very low but there is a wide range. The work of some of the higher-attaining pupils approaches and, in some cases, exceeds national expectations. For example, some pupils in Year 9 show some understanding of what a reactivity series is and the meaning of a pH value. Lower-attaining pupils find significant difficulty in retaining knowledge of a range of topics, for example electricity, and many need continuous support for their learning. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, are beginning to gain a good grounding in experimental skills. For example, pupils in a Year 7 lesson competently carried out an experiment to distinguish between acids and alkalis. A strong focus on the development of scientific literacy is also beginning to have a positive impact on all pupils' understanding of the language of science.

97. Attainment by the end of Year 9 is well below the national average but the performance in GCSE single or double science in 2001 was well above the average for similar schools. More than half of the small group of lower-attaining pupils entered for a Certificate of Achievement in science gained an award. Approximately ten per cent of the year group were not entered for an external examination because they did not meet coursework requirements or because of poor attendance. Results in 2001 were significantly better than those in 2000. The performance of boys in 2001 was significantly better than that of girls but this is not consistently so.
98. Most of the work seen during the inspection was well below average, although there were occasional examples of work that was well above average. For example, in a Year 11 lesson on the electrolysis of water, some of the highest-attaining pupils were able to link events at the electrodes to the electron structure of the elements involved. At the other end of the scale, other pupils in Year 11 showed little retention of scientific vocabulary related to smoking and health, although a few were able to compose a satisfactory letter to a tobacco company complaining about the effects of cigarettes on health. Basic practical skills are less below expectations in Years 10 and 11 and some pupils do not demonstrate the safe working skills expected at this age.
99. The achievement of pupils by the end of Year 9 is satisfactory. Although recent national test results do not reflect the progress to be expected based on attainment on entry to the school, work seen during the inspection shows that pupils are making significant gains in their knowledge and understanding of the language of science and in the development of the skills needed for success in experimental and investigative science. This improvement results from recent initiatives to give a persistent and sharp focus to the teaching of these two aspects of science.
100. By the end of Year 11, achievement is good overall. The standards achieved by those pupils who took GCSE examinations in science in 2001 were well above expectations based on their attainment at the end of Year 9. The achievement of the small group who followed a course leading to a Certificate of Achievement in science was satisfactory. However, the achievement of some pupils is below expectations. This is mainly due to failure to finish the course because of poor attendance and a failure to produce any coursework. Good teaching is the main factor contributing to the achievement of pupils of all ages. Some pupils, mainly boys in Years 10 and 11, do not achieve their full potential despite the best efforts of their teachers because they show poor attitudes to work, immature behaviour and indifferent attendance.
101. Teaching is good overall. In two thirds of lessons seen it was at least good and some were very good. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. The department has, for the first time for some years, a full complement of well-qualified and experienced staff. The emphases on developing scientific literacy and improving experimental work are particularly strong features of the teaching. All teachers work very hard on behalf of pupils. Lesson planning is detailed and thorough and expectations are well matched to pupils' needs. Teachers manage pupils well with extreme patience.
102. Learning is also good overall. In almost all lessons, pupils learn effectively because teachers ensure that pupils are aware of the focus of the lesson and much effort is invested in developing their understanding of the language of science. In lessons in which learning is good or better, there is a well-planned variety of activities, often including experimental work so that pupils can learn by direct experience. For example, in a very good lesson for Year 7 pupils on distinguishing between acids and alkalis, the provision of a large colour pH chart on the wall helped pupils interpret their experiments and probing questions at the end clearly established what pupils had learned. Access to the curriculum for all pupils is helped by the effective use of well-prepared resources and there is good provision for pupils with low attainment and those with special needs, including the use of extra support material. Teachers know their pupils well and are able to focus effective support where and when it is needed. Very effective management of pupils creates a positive atmosphere for learning in the large majority of lessons so that there is a continuous flow of work, sometimes in spite of challenging behaviour.

103. Learning is strongly reinforced when sharply focused questions are used, not only to check gains in knowledge and understanding but also to further challenge pupils to think and increase their understanding. For example, in a Year 11 lesson on the electrolysis of water, a good demonstration was followed by a question and answer session, which drew out and developed understanding of how the production of the gases at the electrodes was linked to the electron structure of the elements involved. Marking is generally thorough and often helps pupils to know where they have gone wrong and what they have to do to improve. In some lessons, pupils are being encouraged to learn independently by carrying out well-focused searches on the Internet on, for example, alternative energy resources.
104. In many lessons, particularly but not exclusively in Years 7 and 8, pupils contribute significantly to their own learning by good motivation, positive attitudes and good powers of concentration and perseverance. Most pupils in Year 7 enjoy experimental work and carefully follow the well-taught safety practices. They responded very well to a visit from the science technician, who gave expert advice on the safe handling of acids.
105. In a minority of lessons, at least satisfactory in most respects, learning is less effective because some pupils show low motivation or challenging behaviour. In some, but not all, instances, a limited range of activities or a lack of pace causes the lesson to lose focus. For example, in a Year 11 lesson, the copying of notes from a book followed by a very limited practical exercise provided insufficient challenge and led the attention of some pupils to wander. The learning of some pupils, mostly in Years 10 and 11, is ineffective because they miss a good deal of work owing to random absence or because, despite the best efforts of teachers, they have little confidence in their own capabilities in science. Some of these older pupils lack safe practical skills.
106. Leadership and management by the new head of department, in post since September 2001, are good. The department has suffered in the past from substantial instability in staffing and three of the four teachers have been in the school less than two years. Priorities are now being clearly established and opportunities taken to move the department forward. The focus on the development of literacy and skills in experimental science are two good examples of recent initiatives that are beginning to have a positive impact, particularly with younger pupils. The curriculum is satisfactory but there is much work to be done on the development of schemes of work to increase the range of learning opportunities. Assessment and the monitoring of attainment are good. Effective records are kept and assessment is well used for pupil grouping. The department is experimenting with an on-line system of pupil self-assessment, which has potential to provide rapid and extensive feedback on performance across the whole range of the science curriculum. Teaching resources are adequate in most respects but there are not enough up-to-date textbooks for use with GCSE classes. Although some use is made of the ICT rooms, the department has no computers of its own and cannot cover data logging. Accommodation is good and the very good displays of pupils' work help to create an attractive learning environment. Very good technical support is provided by the recently appointed science technician, who has made a good start in carrying out a much-needed reorganisation of departmental resources.
107. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Teaching is much improved and marking is more consistent. The attitudes of most pupils are more positive and leadership is now good. Statutory requirements are now met in respect of experimental and investigative science. The department is now in a strong position to raise standards of attainment as greater stability, improved teaching and new initiatives begin to have a greater impact on pupils' achievement.

ART AND DESIGN

Overall, the quality of provision in art and design is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- The quality of teaching, which ensures that pupils make progress.
- Leadership and management, which give a clear focus to improvement.

- Assessment, which ensures that pupils know their level of attainment and how to improve.
- Visits, which enhance pupils' art experiences.

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient use of sketch books to raise standards in drawing.
- Insufficient use of ICT.
- Insufficient use of pupils' self-assessment.

108. Standards in art are well below average, but are improving. When pupils enter the school standards of attainment in art are very low. For example, few have experienced colour mixing and little observational drawing has been done. Teacher Assessments show standards by the end of Year 9 to be well below average. Nevertheless, given the very low standards of attainment on entry to the school these standards represent good achievement and progress from Years 7 to 9. This includes pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. The most recent GCSE examination results, although well below average, show an improvement on those taken in 2000. The percentage of pupils gaining A* - C grades doubled and the percentage of pupils gaining A* - G grades also improved to be very close to the national average.
109. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are overall better than shown in the results of the end of Year 9 assessments and GCSE examinations, although there is wide variation. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 have improved drawing skills, in contrast to Year 9, where drawing skills are poor. For example, portraits show that pupils do not have an understanding of proportion. Also, in Year 10, higher standards were seen than in Year 11. Standards have been affected by instability in staffing. However, in the last two years, staffing has remained stable and there has been an improvement in the learning environment. The improvement in standards is due to these factors together with the very good teaching and the department's determination to raise the status of the subject. This is also resulting in better motivation and attitudes to the subject.
110. By the end of Year 9 pupils develop a satisfactory range of skills. Pupils are, for example, able to create three-dimensional figures based on life-sized drawings. This was seen in a Year 9 lesson, where pupils were able to create figures that were realistic in shape and showed good judgement of proportion. Pupils also develop a satisfactory knowledge of artists and their characteristics, for example Picasso and Jackson Pollock. However, pupils' evaluations are poor and show little understanding of the importance of line, colour and tone, and of individual artistic style. By the end of Year 11, the observational drawing skills of most pupils are below expectations. Few realise the difference between drawing what they see, as against drawing what they know is there. Pupils use a wide variety of media confidently and are able to explain their preferences. For example, a Year 11 pupil was able to demonstrate the difference in his work when he used pastels as against crayon and explain how pastels gave his work texture when drawing grass on a cliff. Higher standards of drawing are seen in Year 10. Pupils are able to develop ideas to a satisfactory level, for example focusing on dragons after exploring fairy tales. They develop a good understanding of their strengths. For example, one pupil explained, by reference to his drawings of chains, how he preferred to draw shape and line. However, pupils' evaluations are poor. For example, a Year 10 pupil knew that the illustrations for the Pooh books were successful, but could not explain why. Nevertheless, with the exception of drawing, there have been improvements in all aspects of pupils' attainment in art since the 1998 report.
111. The quality of teaching is very good overall. Teaching is never less than satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and often good or very good. In Years 10 and 11, teaching is good or very good. This is due to thorough planning, where every minute is scheduled with a variety of activities that keep pupils motivated. This planning, coupled with the rapid pace of lessons, moves pupils on in their learning. Relationships are very good. This encourages pupils to ask for help when necessary and results in all pupils progressing well in lessons. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and the standard to be reached. With much positive feedback and encouragement, pupils strive to improve. Skills are very well taught and learnt, such as those relating to using clay, which was the result of detailed demonstrations. Questioning is very good and probing to make pupils think. Pupils are, for example, asked 'what else' and 'why', until they arrive at an answer that demonstrates full understanding. Pupils' efforts are valued, which contributes to the

commitment of pupils to art. For example, a pupil was asked to demonstrate to others how to create a hand from chicken wire. Where teaching, although satisfactory, does not reach the standard of the best, the pace is sometimes too slow, with too much time spent on one activity, and the consequence that behaviour deteriorates as some pupils become restless. Homework is regularly set but seldom involves drawing, as sketch books are retained in school in Years 7 to 9. The lack of drawing homework has contributed to pupils' low levels of attainment in this area. Support teachers are very well used, based on careful joint planning. Teaching has improved considerably since the 1998 report.

112. Pupils learn well in lessons and the majority make good progress. There are very few occasions where pupils do not work hard and quietly. They listen carefully to instructions and are excited about practical work. This was seen in a Year 8 lesson, for example, when a quiet cheer was given when the class were told that they were using clay. They are also reluctant to stop work and are eager to attend the after school sessions. They work well in teams and this is seen when they engage in collaborative group work.
113. The subject is very well led and managed and the department is now vibrant, as can be seen in the specialist rooms and in the attitudes of pupils. The thorough development of skills through new schemes of work has resulted in the recent improvement in standards. The curriculum is considerably enhanced by visits, for example to Coventry Cathedral, which allow pupils to explore features not seen in their own locality. Teachers give freely of their time, which allows pupils to continue their studies within the art room. Excellent use is made of assessment and pupils know the standard of their work and how to improve. Level and grade descriptors are clearly displayed on classroom walls and very good use is made of these in pupils' self-assessments. The art rooms provide a stimulating environment, with prominence given to pupils' work, which gives pupils pride in their achievement. Sketchbooks as an important resource for pupils are not given a clear priority and therefore they do not provide pupils with their own unique resource. This affects the homework set, as little was seen which included drawing, or collecting visual material. Pupils are not given sufficient encouragement to experiment and record: for example, only one research into texture was seen. A clear emphasis on their use is necessary to assist in the raising of standards. Insufficient use is made of ICT, although this is identified as a development priority in the department development plan. The lack of departmental computers hinders this development. Pupil evaluations are poor because too little emphasis is placed on encouraging pupils to develop and use art vocabulary to critically evaluate their own and others' artwork. Art makes a positive contribution to literacy, with an emphasis on learning technical language. It also contributes to pupils' cultural development through visits and the study of art of different countries and times.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in design and technology is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Teachers' knowledge of the subject and their planning of lessons.
- The use of assessment to support pupils' progress.
- A shared commitment to improve.
- The range of design and technology aspects offered.
- The accommodation and learning resources.

Areas for improvement

- Standard of attainment, particularly of those with special educational needs.
- The range of courses in Years 10 and 11.
- Pupils' behaviour.

114. Standards at the end of Year 9 are well below average, with only one in three pupils achieving the expected standard. Nevertheless, these standards represent satisfactory achievement for the majority of pupils in relation to their attainment on entering the school. There is little difference

between the achievement of boys and girls. This represents satisfactory performance on the part of boys, as in most schools girls perform better than boys. Attainment has remained broadly the same over the past two years.

115. The achievement of most pupils with special educational needs is poor. They are generally taught in mixed ability classes and given the same tasks as other pupils. The level of work is often too demanding for them and as a consequence they quickly lose interest and behaviour deteriorates. Poor behaviour slows the pace of lessons and as a result adversely affects the attainment of all pupils. When teaching is effective and the topic of the lesson is relevant to the learning needs of pupils, behaviour and learning are satisfactory. The use of setting and an alternative programme of study for lower-attaining pupils need to be considered in order to raise standards. Support given by learning assistants to individual pupils with special educational needs considerably enhances and improves attainment. The department has no arrangements for recognising gifted and talented pupils.
116. Standards at the end of Year 11 are well below average overall. Last year over two-thirds of pupils took GCSE courses but a quarter of them did not take the examinations. One in three of the pupils who were examined obtained the higher A*-C grades and nine out of ten A*-G grades. Many more boys than girls take the GCSE courses in resistant materials and graphic products and more girls than boys the courses in food and textile technologies. The performance of boys is significantly better than that of the girls. Other pupils opted to take either the GNVQ, Part 1 course in information and communication technology or the Alternative Skills Based Course. A new GCSE course in child development was successfully launched eighteen months ago and the progress of pupils on this course is satisfactory.
117. One in five pupils fails to achieve any certificated outcome from their studies, a poor achievement for these pupils. Most of the failing pupils and those who take the Alternative Skills Based Courses are predominantly boys with special educational needs. In a Year 11 lesson, 12 pupils with special educational needs were observed unsuccessfully preparing for a mock GCSE examination in resistant materials. A significant number of them had either low reading ages or other learning difficulties and could not cope with the standard of the work. The behaviour of these pupils in the lesson was unsatisfactory. Further alternative courses are needed to help raise the achievement of these pupils.
118. The quality of learning varies but is satisfactory overall. In Years 7 to 9 pupils learn to design and make using a good range of wood, metal, plastic, food and textile materials. Pupils learn to use simple hand and power tools safely. They also successfully learn to use simple mechanisms and control, and to design for batch production. In Year 9, pupils undertake interesting lessons in which they design and make cushion covers that reflect African themes. In a Year 7 lesson, pupils were able to select and mix ingredients to make muffins and, in a Year 9 lesson, to compare the relative costs of organic and non-organic food products. In another Year 9 lesson, pupils had a satisfactory knowledge of the properties of resistant materials and how to use different materials to design and make toy dinosaurs. In all lessons pupils learn key words and extend their technical vocabulary successfully. Pupils are given good opportunities to read out loud, listen to teachers' explanations of the work and write notes in lessons. They learn to sketch their designs and use dimensions, quantities and costs satisfactorily. However, insufficient use is made of ICT to support teaching and learning.
119. In Years 10 and 11 pupils satisfactorily learn to design and make in their chosen material. During the inspection pupils were observed successfully learning to prepare for the mock examinations in textiles and to design packaging for a disposable camera. Some of the satisfactory project work seen included the designing and making of lunch-time savoury snacks, garments for teenage fashion, cabinets for storing play-station games and videos, packaging for Easter eggs, and a board game. Project folders vary in standard but are generally satisfactory. The written texts in the folders are short and written in a basic style. Most of the designs are presented using freehand sketches. Not enough use is made of ICT to present work but computing was used well to display the results of questionnaires using pie and bar charts, research topics on the Internet and obtain digital images.

120. Overall, the standard of teaching is satisfactory. All teachers have secure knowledge of their subject, plan lessons well and use ongoing assessment to guide the help they give pupils in lessons. Teachers give considerable attention to, and expend a great deal of energy in, maintaining class control and caring for low-attaining pupils. Teachers satisfactorily introduce the work to be done, use textbooks and handouts well in lessons and involve pupils by asking them questions. Pupils are reluctant to engage in discussions. Teachers use good strategies for dealing with disruptive behaviour. Nevertheless, when the pace of lessons is slow it is almost always due to the effect of disruptive behaviour. Homework is set regularly but not enough is done to ensure that it is completed and handed in on time.
121. The department is well led by an experienced teacher, who has the full support of his colleagues. All teachers are well qualified and have a shared commitment to improve. Regular departmental meetings are held and minutes kept. There is a good departmental handbook. The accommodation is very good and whilst learning resources are generally good the acquisition of control equipment would enhance pupils' learning. The department has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection and broadly maintained standards.

GEOGRAPHY

Overall, the quality of provision in geography is **good**.

Strengths

- Strong leadership and management that have a positive impact on improving standards.
- Pupils' good achievement despite well below average standards.
- Very well-planned lessons, with a variety of activities designed to involve and maintain pupils' interest.

Areas for improvement

- The use of ICT, particularly to develop research skills.

122. Although GCSE examination results are well below average compared to all schools they have improved over the last few years. Pupils do better in geography than in the majority of their other subjects. The small number taking the examination in 2001 makes it difficult to make meaningful comparisons with national standards. However, almost everyone gained a grade and over a third achieved A* to C grades, this despite the department's having to contend with a small disruptive element and a few poor attenders who did not sit the examination. Those who entered achieved well in relation to their standards of attainment on entry to the course. This was due, in part, to good after school support to help them to revise for the written examination and to improve their coursework. More time was given to fieldwork to enable them to improve their skills. Their progress was monitored regularly. Numbers taking it as an examination subject are rising.
123. In the work seen during the inspection, attainment at the end of Year 9 was well below what is expected nationally, although about a quarter reach it. Pupils make satisfactory progress according to their standards on entry, since many start at the school with very low standards in the subject and experience difficulties in reading, writing and number work. Pupils who attend lessons regularly make good progress. Progress is slower for a minority of poor attenders. Year 7 pupils soon develop a sound grasp of basic techniques. Their standards of numeracy are only just adequate to support the development of geographical skills. They are good at finding places in the atlas but lower-attaining pupils in Year 7 have difficulties in using grid references to find them. Most have some understanding of geographical patterns and processes. For example, lower-attaining pupils in Year 9 were able to use information obtained from the Internet by pupils in Year 11 to locate and identify earthquake patterns. In Years 8 and 9, pupils are able to undertake simple research tasks: for example, conflicts over national parks. Higher-attaining pupils in a Year 9 lesson showed satisfactory understanding of the causes of global warming and could use evidence to suggest simple solutions. Middle-attaining pupils showed gaps in their understanding and the work of lower-attaining pupils was more descriptive than explanatory. Some pupils copied

work without understanding it. Many have difficulties in remembering work they have learned previously. Teachers' good emphasis on improving literacy skills is helping pupils to make progress. Most can use technical terms correctly and writing aids are helping them to organise their ideas better. Higher-attaining pupils in particular write better at length. Despite this focus, poor literacy skills are still key factors in depressing standards.

124. From lessons and the work seen, attainment at the end of Year 11 is well below average, although higher-attaining pupils reach an average level. Most have developed a sound range of basic techniques and use terminology correctly. This is demonstrated in coursework in which higher-attaining pupils show their understanding of settlement patterns by linking their practical work back to models well and reaching sound conclusions. Middle-attaining pupils reached plausible but less detailed conclusions. Their evaluations were weak. Lower-attaining pupils collected and recorded information but showed little understanding of the links between theory and practical work. Most have some understanding of geographical ideas, shown in work about population distribution. Progress is good, especially in Year 10 where teachers build well on work done earlier in the school. For example, in one Year 10 lesson pupils had to extend and apply what they had learned about Majorca. Using action plans, they were able to draw up a simple enquiry about tourism. Many still have poor literacy skills that affect their work. Throughout all years many pupils find it difficult to explain work they have learnt previously. Although the use of ICT is planned, it is insufficiently used because of restricted access to facilities. This should improve with the very recently opened dedicated ICT room for humanities.
125. Pupils with special educational needs and those at an early stage of learning English make good progress. Teachers and support staff work closely together to provide suitable work. Gifted and talented pupils make good progress. They are identified and well supported by the school. There was no difference seen in the work of boys and girls.
126. In general most pupils' attitudes are good and they want to succeed. Most work hard and behave well because their teachers expect good behaviour, are enthusiastic and use their knowledge well to sustain interest. They create a calm and purposeful working atmosphere in which pupils feel secure. The few incidents of disruptive behaviour in lessons were dealt with effectively. Most pupils get on well together, as shown in Year 11 group work. Their speaking skills are weak. Although they are keen to volunteer answers, they find it hard to sustain a discussion. Despite efforts by teachers a significant number are hard to motivate and find it difficult to work independently.
127. Overall, teaching is good. It is most effective in Years 10 and 11, where it is very good overall. Teachers are well organised so pupils settle promptly. In most lessons they use their expertise well to explain ideas clearly and ask pertinent questions building on pupils' answers to extend their knowledge and understanding. In one Year 7 lesson, for example, the teacher effectively used pupils' knowledge of Boston to build up a picture of land use patterns in towns. They plan lessons well to suit different abilities, using good supporting resources and a variety of interesting activities, which ensure that the majority of pupils work hard throughout lessons. Teachers have clear aims so that pupils are aware of what they have to do. There is a good balance between teachers' input and pupils' activity. Homework supports class work. Regular marking with helpful suggestions ensures that pupils are well aware of their progress and are involved in what they need to do to improve.
128. In a minority of lessons, some pupils were not refocused quickly enough when they were having difficulties or were spending too much time on an undemanding task such as colouring. Very occasionally not enough time is spent consolidating their understanding.
129. The subject is very well led and managed. The head of department knows what needs to be done and has clear plans for improvement. Good support is given to teachers whose first subject is not geography. Good progress has been made in addressing the issues in the last report. Planning is now very good and incorporates strategies for improving literacy. Lessons contain a variety of activities designed to give opportunities for personal research, involve pupils, and maintain their interest. Assessment and target setting are used well to plan suitable work and to help pupils

improve. Consequently, there has been good improvement in examination results. The proportion of pupils achieving A* to C grades has more than doubled. Teacher-assessed tests show that standards at the end of Year 9 are gradually improving. The need to make more use of ICT, especially for investigative purposes, is recognised as an area for attention. The department is well placed for further improvement.

HISTORY

Overall, the quality of provision in history is **good**.

Strengths

- Good assessment procedures that are used effectively to support pupils' progress.
- Good attention to individual pupils' learning needs.
- Good use of local site visits to develop the use of primary sources.

What could be improved

- Standards at end of Years 9 and 11.
- Writing throughout both key stages to enable pupils to present longer pieces of analytical work and raise standards in the GCSE examination.

130. Standards of attainment at the end of Year 9 are well below average. However, when standards of attainment on entry to the school are taken into account these standards represent satisfactory progress and achievement through Years 7 to 9. Standards at the end of Year 11 are below average. Results in the 2001 GCSE examination showed a slight rise in comparison with previous years, but nevertheless remained below average. Trends over time are broadly upward, though the small numbers entered make statistical comparisons unreliable. History results are normally among the best across the school and history is one of the strong areas of the curriculum at the ages of fifteen and sixteen. A few pupils have gained the highest A* or A grades in the GCSE examination in recent years.

131. Inspection evidence indicates that standards at the end of Year 9 are below nationally expected levels. Most pupils understand what is meant by evidence and understand that history is based on the use of evidence. By looking at and making comparison with the local town centre in Boston a Year 7 class understood how a Roman town worked, and how the Roman public health, such as sewerage, was very sophisticated. Most pupils used simple examples of published sources to understand the extent of the use of water and the importance that the Romans placed on cleanliness. Pupils' problems with writing at greater length hamper the development of analysis of ideas and drawing conclusions. They come to the school with very low levels of literacy and this is a great impediment to understanding and expression. During the course of the first three years at the school they make good progress and achieve well in relation to the levels when they came to the school. By the end of the first three years they know that the 'triangular' trade in cotton goods, slaves and sugar made many people in Britain in the eighteenth century rich at the expense of enslaving thousands of African people. The effective use of ICT in Year 9 enabled most of the class to see clearly the extent of the trade and its seasonality. They cover the basics of the National Curriculum Programme of Study and have a grasp of the passing of time, and the fact that people are affected by the changes that arise from the differences in society and they in turn affect these changes. They understand how the reform of the churches changed English society and the turmoil that resulted as well as the prominent people of that time, such as Henry VIII, his six wives, Mary Tudor and Elizabeth I.

132. In work seen during the inspection attainment at the end of Year 11 was below expectations for pupils of this age and slightly better in Year 11 than in Year 10. A substantial number of pupils in Year 11 are attaining the standards that are comparable with average GCSE grades, although few are at the highest levels. They are all able to use sources and describe them as primary or secondary, and make comments on their security as evidence from which to draw conclusions. Only higher-attaining pupils can accurately make a balanced argument, weighing the pros and cons of a case with any dexterity. For example, in Year 11 when looking at the causes of movement across North America to open up the West, all pupils understood what elements 'pushed' people into the West, and what 'pulled' them to the West, but they needed a great deal

of leading. Few had sufficient background knowledge to understand why flat, stoneless conditions would appeal to Swedish immigrants coming from a country where rocks and trees were a problem. In Year 10, when finding out about public health in Tudor towns in the study of the progress of medicine, most of the class identified elements of public health and began to explore evidence that supported the view that some Tudor people were aware of what caused disease. However, only a few were able quickly to identify opposing views and understand that these could be equally valid.

133. Pupils with special educational needs are well known to teachers. Because of the teachers' knowledge of the levels of attainment of all pupils and by giving personal attention, these pupils make the same rate of progress as the rest of the class to the targets set for them. This means that their achievement is also good. There is satisfactory liaison with classroom assistants in supporting pupils. During the course of normal teaching good attention is paid to improving literacy skills. Early use of writing frames to show how to tackle longer pieces of description is used, for example in Year 8 when looking at the work of monasteries. The relevant historical vocabulary is displayed on the walls of the classrooms and emphasised as it occurs in the lesson. Structured approaches to longer writing improve essay skills as, for example, when homework was given to a Year 10 class based on graded levels of answers to a GCSE question. Numeracy is underpinned by, for example, block graphs and use of time lines from BC to AD. Recent improvement in ICT provision has led to computers being well used to enhance teaching and learning in the subject. This is seen, for example, in the work on slavery and in the use of interactive programs in Year 10 to compare European and Islamic medicinal practices in the Middle Ages.
134. Pupils' attitudes to work are mixed. In one Year 7 lesson pupils had constantly to be reminded to keep concentrating on their tasks, which slowed down the overall progress made during the lesson. In one Year 8 lesson a few of the pupils entered the room with poor attitudes and this held back progress as the teacher had to take time to establish control before the lesson could proceed. Behaviour improves gradually in all lessons, although establishing control always occupies at least some of the teachers' time. When presented with interesting material pupils' motivation is better and this is most often seen in Years 10 and 11.
135. Teaching in history is never less than satisfactory and in most lessons it is good. Lesson planning is progressive and enhanced by the effective use of assessment to ensure that lesson targets are appropriate for the group and that both pupils with special educational needs and those of above average attainment are well catered for. Each lesson begins with a clear statement of the learning objectives and these are often displayed on the board. Because of this pupils know what is expected of them and most respond positively. Teachers make good use of a variety of resources to promote pupils' learning. For example, in one Year 7 lesson, the effective use of a video clip showing archaeological evidence of Roman toilets and printed material on aqueducts, together with extracts from Roman historical texts, helped to ensure that pupils' attention was retained during the hour-long lesson. The introduction of ICT when plotting data relating to the slave trade in a Year 9 lesson stimulated pupils' interest and involvement in the lesson. Homework is well used to prepare for following lessons as well as for the consolidation of material covered in lessons. Teachers lay great stress on the development of literacy skills. They pay attention to the extension of pupils' vocabularies in virtually every lesson and to the development of pupils' writing skills. They make good use of questioning to develop pupils' thinking skills but there is a tendency to rely on volunteers for answers rather than challenging the thought processes of all pupils through directed questioning.
136. The department is small but well managed, with particular strengths in assessment, recording and the use of assessment in setting targets. The book stock is up to date and has a wide enough range to match the pupils' levels of attainment. The department continues to be a strength in the school, as reported in the last inspection. The use of ICT has much improved, as has the use of assessment to guide lesson planning. The increased attention paid to the improvement of literacy is just beginning to affect standards and is central to the department's commitment to raising standards.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in information and communication technology is **unsatisfactory**.

Strengths

- Teaching, particularly in Years 10 and 11.
- The successful re-launch of the GNVQ, Part 1, course.
- Good accommodation and learning resources.
- The 'Family Highway' programme, which enables parents, pupils and other children to learn together.

Areas for improvement

- Standards of attainment, particularly of pupils with special educational needs.
- The use of ICT in other subjects.
- Assessment in Years 7 to 9.

137. Standards of attainment at the end of Year 9 rose slightly in 2001 but remain well below the average. Only one in six of pupils reach the expected national standard. This represents unsatisfactory achievement, even when the low standards of attainment of pupils on entry to the school are taken into account. Boys perform slightly better than girls. Frequent changes of non-specialist teachers and an inadequate Programme of Study are the main reasons for the under-achievement. The method of linking attainment in lessons to national attainment levels is unsatisfactory because it tends to underestimate pupils' performance.
138. Pupils with special educational needs are given the same range of work as other pupils and, while they are interested and often well motivated by the subject, a significant number find it difficult to cope with the standard of the work. Many have low reading ages and other learning difficulties, which means they find writing and some of the theoretical aspects of the subject difficult. The level of work is often too demanding for them and as a consequence they quickly lose interest and behaviour deteriorates. The wider use of setting and the provision of a different Programme of Study more suited to the attainment levels of those with special educational needs are necessary to improve attainment and behaviour in lessons. Help given by learning assistants to individual pupils considerably enhances provision and improves attainment.
139. Standards of attainment at the end of Year 11 are well below average. Last year over one in three of the pupils opted to take a GCSE course. One in four of the pupils taking the course obtained the higher A*-C grades and nine in ten pupils obtained A*-G grades. While these results are well below the national average, the achievement of this group of pupils was satisfactory in relation to their attainment at the end of Year 9. However, the course is not well suited to the learning needs of the majority of the pupils. All pupils took key skills and vocational courses but few completed the courses successfully. These courses have now been replaced by a GNVQ, Part 1, course that was successfully re-launched 18 months ago. It had been run for a number of years before last year and had been successful at that time. In 1999 the results for the small number of pupils who took the course were particularly good, with nearly three-quarters of pupils achieving a pass grade and one in five a merit grade at the intermediate level. This represented a good achievement for these pupils. However, the overall achievement of pupils is unsatisfactory because there are few opportunities to apply and develop their computing skills in other subjects. Computing is mainly applied in design and technology, English, humanities, art and music. The applications of computers in music are particularly good.
140. The quality of learning is now satisfactory and sometimes good in Years 7 to 9. The majority of pupils learn to use word processing, publishing, spreadsheets, the Internet and databases well. The work done on word processing and publishing is particularly good but more work is needed in the earlier years on databases. In all three years pupils learn satisfactorily about the impact of computers on society. In Year 7, pupils satisfactorily learn to design a ticket and poster for a pop concert, develop letter headings for a fictional company and write formal letters. In a good lesson in Year 8, pupils were observed developing slides to illustrate a Christmas present wish list. This involved using the Internet to obtain images and creating slides that combined them with text. Other interesting and satisfactory work in this year includes the design of a poster and menu for a

Halloween party. In Year 9, pupils develop an advertisement for a company which designs web sites, prepare business letters and undertake an exercise in proof-reading. Pupils undertake some interesting applications of computer-aided design in design and technology and of computing in science. Pupils have satisfactory opportunities to practise their English and to learn key words and technical language. The work done on databases involves the satisfactory use of numbers and simple calculations.

141. The quality of learning is now good and sometimes very good in Years 10 and 11. In a good Year 10 lesson, pupils were observed designing a corporate image for the fictitious company 'Trans-global Mobiles'. Other satisfactory work seen in the GNVQ, Part 1, course in Year 10 includes the writing of a letter to apply for a job, the publishing of a newsletter for 'Excellent Computer Solutions' and the design of company logos. In a very good lesson in Year 11 pupils on the GNVQ, Part 1, course pupils were observed learning about computer hardware and software. Other satisfactory work seen in Year 11 included the design of posters for the British Grand Prix and Swift Travel, and work on spreadsheets. Pupils satisfactorily apply computing in some other subjects; examples of its use in design and technology include displaying results of a questionnaire using pie and bar charts, researching topics on the Internet and obtaining digital images. Pupils are able to have adequate free access to the main computer rooms outside normal school hours to continue work on their course folders. The school runs the very successful Family Highway, a course on basic computing funded by the Boston Life Learning Partnership for adults, pupils and other children. During the inspection 60 participants were observed successfully learning to use PowerPoint.

142. Overall, the standard of teaching is always satisfactory and often good and has improved significantly over the past twelve months. Both teachers plan and introduce lessons well and have very secure knowledge of the subject. Other good characteristics of teaching include the demonstration of practical work using electronic white boards, use of questions to involve pupils more fully in lessons and strategies for dealing with poor behaviour in lessons. A particularly good feature is the care teachers take in supporting the work of low-attaining pupils. In a Year 10 lesson the teacher was seen giving individual help to a pupil who had been absent from the school for over six months, in order that he could restart his studies. Assessment is not well enough used to enable teachers to plan learning programmes that meet the needs of all pupils. Homework is set regularly but is almost always merely a continuation of the work done in lessons.
143. The subject is led and co-ordinated by an experienced teacher who has been responsible for building and installing new computer facilities during the last twelve months. Provision has been strengthened by the appointment of a second full-time teacher, who, although unqualified, is very experienced in the commercial use of computers. The computing facilities for ICT are very good, with a ratio of pupils to terminals much more favourable than the national average. There are good central computer rooms in addition to good dedicated facilities in the department of design and technology, humanities and music. Some progress has been made since the last inspection. The National Curriculum requirements are now met and the facilities have improved. Attainment and progress, particularly for those with special educational needs, continue to be unsatisfactory and more applications of computing in other subjects are needed. Recent improvements in teaching and learning are beginning to raise standards but alternative courses are needed for lower-attaining pupils to enable them to reach their full potential.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Overall, the quality of provision for French is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- GCSE results are improving.
- The department is well led and managed.
- Good use is made of resources and support staff.
- Provision for pupils' cultural development.

Areas for improvement

- Standards of attainment.
- Pupils' oral skills and increased accuracy in written work.
- The guidance provided to pupils through marking on how to improve the quality of their work.

144. The proportion of pupils attaining grades A* to C in the GCSE examinations in French in 2001 was well below the national average for all maintained schools. However, this represents an improvement over the previous year: taken over five years, the trend is rising year by year. All candidates for the examination in 2001 who attended the after-school classes regularly obtained a grade C: boys' performance in the examination was better than that of girls. All pupils who were entered for the GCSE examinations in 2001 obtained a grade in the A* to G range. Pupils achieve well during their course, although for over half of the candidates the speaking element of the examination was their weakest skill overall. Teachers' Assessments for pupils at the end of Years 7 to 9 show that pupils are well below the nationally expected standards. More girls achieved a Level 5 than boys. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, based on their prior attainment.
145. The context of French in the school is important. The amount of time devoted to the study of French in Years 7 to 9 is low by comparison with the national average. Pupils enter the school with low standards of literacy, so that more time in the curriculum is devoted to raising these standards. This means that pupils will not cover as much of the Programmes of Study in French during the first three years. The majority of pupils in Years 10 and 11 are disapplied from taking

French, a compulsory subject, in order that they may follow courses that are more relevant to their needs. Pupils may still choose French as an option, but the class sizes are small.

146. In work seen during the inspection, a few higher-attaining pupils are achieving appropriate levels in some of the attainment targets, but not in all of them. Overall, standards of attainment are well below the nationally expected levels, particularly in oracy. Although pupils can repeat what they hear in chorus work and can ask questions, answers tend to be short. Some pupils find the pronunciation difficult: many pupils lack confidence. In a Year 8 lesson, for example, pupils working with the French assistant could describe the weather but were unable to develop this by saying what activity they did in this weather. In many cases pupils are dependent on prompts as aids to speaking. In their written work in Year 9, pupils can write short paragraphs about their likes and dislikes, but they are not always accurate and sometimes the sentences do not make sense. When describing themselves or members of the family, many pupils find it difficult to make the adjectives agree with the nouns. Although higher-attaining pupils have covered the perfect tense, they cannot yet use it competently. Few pupils complete corrections or redraft their work in order to improve its accuracy. Pupils' understanding of the foreign language is generally sound. They understand the classroom commands in French and can retrieve information from cassette, with repetition. They recognise and understand the vocabulary of the topic that they are studying. Reading skills are better than might be expected. Several pupils in Year 8 read aloud reasonably well; all pupils in the different groups were able to match the weather phrases to the picture successfully on computer and also in a listening exercise.
147. Standards of attainment at the end of Year 11 are below average, but there are only three pupils in the class. They follow a modular course, but they have only one lesson a week and one after-school session with the French assistant for oral work. Oral responses to questions about a journey, in preparation for their oral presentation, were very short. In their written work, although they know the past tense, they do not always use it consistently. They also lack the constructions to develop their writing when they do use the past tense correctly. The Year 10 class is larger and pupils have the normal allocation of curricular time. Again, pupils lack confidence in speaking. In a lesson on opinions about school subjects, some pupils had to be prompted, although the higher-attaining pupils were able to develop the answers with the use of *parce que*. However, most pupils working as a group with the French assistant were able to understand the differences between the French and English school systems in a session that was well presented with the aid of an overhead projector.
148. Pupils with special needs learn satisfactorily at both key stages. When support is present pupils' learning is very good. In a Year 7 lesson, for example, pupils learned the colours and all pupils completed the colouring task correctly. They gave a very good response to the work with whiteboards. Teachers take their needs into account when they plan their lessons and support them in class.
149. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are usually good. They work well in pairs or groups or independently and use dictionaries and vocabulary lists of key words to help them in their work. They respond well to chorus work and quite well to questions asked by the teacher. In a Year 8 lesson, however, two boys had to be reprimanded on several occasions because their behaviour was slowing down the lesson. The teacher followed correct procedures and help from senior management was summoned. The boys were removed from the lesson and good order was immediately restored. Year 8 pupils responded well to tasks involving work with the computer in a lesson when groups changed tasks at regular intervals.
150. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers have a good knowledge of their subject and usually make good use of the foreign language in the classroom; this helps pupils to develop their understanding. In a Year 7 lesson, for example, much of the lesson was conducted in French and also involved the French assistant. Teachers plan their lessons well, taking into account the various needs of the class. Each lesson starts with revision of past work, so that pupils have to think back. The objectives of the lesson are shared with the class, so that pupils can focus on what has to be learnt. Pupils consolidate their topics in different activities and skills, which help them to maintain their concentration. Sometimes not enough time is devoted to

developing pupils' oral skills. Teachers use good strategies to motivate pupils, to help them learn new vocabulary or to consolidate it. Group work enables pupils to work at all four skills in the lesson. Chorus work is used well to reinforce words and phrases, but it could be followed by more challenge to individual pupils to repeat them. Good use is made of resources, particularly of flash cards and the whiteboard slates. Flash cards present a good visual image and are well used in guessing games, usually as a competition. The whiteboards, used in conjunction with the introduction of colours in Year 7, gave the teacher instant assessment of what pupils had retained. The French assistant, who only works at the school two days each week, is involved in many lessons at all levels. He works very well and very patiently with pupils and makes an excellent contribution to the department. Appropriate homework is set. Although the marking conforms with departmental policy, it needs to be made more meaningful – with helpful comments to show pupils how to improve, if necessary by setting targets. The presentation of some written work requires improvement.

151. The department is well led and well managed. Good liaison takes place between the two teachers and the French assistant. The department makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development with visits abroad, good displays in the classroom and the use of the French assistant.
152. Many changes have taken place in staffing and in the curriculum since the last inspection. ICT and assessment are being developed this year. GCSE results are improving. Attainment, however, is still very low and the department needs to raise the standard of pupils' oral skills and to help pupils develop greater accuracy in their written work. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

MUSIC

Overall the quality of provision in this subject is **very good**.

Strengths

- Very good leadership and management.
- Excellent contribution to the cultural development of pupils and community
- All teachers have very good subject knowledge and the quality of teaching is very good or better.
- Effective use of music technology to raise standards.
- Effective use of assessment to guide curricular planning and monitor pupils' progress.
- Pupils enjoy the subject and want to learn.

Areas for improvement

- The lack of multicultural instruments in the department.
- The standard of non-pitched percussion instruments.
- Opportunities for developing research skills in Years 10 to 11.

153. The 2001 Teacher Assessments show pupils' standards of attainment at the end of Year 9 to be below national averages. Pupils enter the school with a varying range of musical experiences and many of them have not achieved the standard required for that age. Some pupils have experienced working in groups and evaluating performances of compositions by other members of their class, but the majority of pupils have received little experience in performance or composition.
154. The 2001 GCSE results were above the school average and show an improvement on those of the previous two years and an increase in the number of pupils taking the examination. Over half of the candidates entered achieved higher results than those predicted by their results at the end of Year 9. The GCSE results are still below the national averages for pupils achieving A* - C.
155. Inspection evidence indicates that attainment at the end of Year 9 is now closer to national expectations. Although standards on entry are still below national expectations, more pupils are now able to fulfil the expected requirements. This is due to the quality of teaching over the past

three years and revisions to the scheme of work, which enable pupils of all abilities to participate in enjoyable musical activities and achieve an acceptable standard. Pupils in Year 7 participate in a range of activities that give them a comprehensive introduction to the basic elements of music, pitch and rhythmic notation. During the inspection pupils were observed discussing scales, singing, and using ICT to research into the sounds and names of Chinese instruments in preparation for a series of activities based on Chinese music. Pupils in Year 8 develop their knowledge of scales and notation by using major scales and chromatic notes in their activities. They explore music from the classical period, listen to the third movement of Mozart's Clarinet Quintet and discuss form in music, particularly ternary form. In lessons observed pupils were beginning to compose their own pieces in ternary form, with particular emphasis on good melody writing. Pupils in Year 9 discover the relationship between melody and harmony and devise chordal accompaniments based on chord progressions. They listen to Blues and analyse the chords used. During the inspection pupils in this year group used ICT to provide the Blues backing while they improvised melodies of an appropriate style over it. In all three year groups pupils are able to use and define musical terminology confidently through the use of key words and short writing activities that also contribute to their development in literacy.

156. Pupils in Year 10 are in the middle of their first term of their GCSE course and inspection evidence indicates that pupils are attaining the expected level. They are already working on their first composition using ICT, preparing pieces for their performances, and developing their listening skills to meet the requirements of the listening paper. In one of the lessons observed pupils were composing pieces that were beyond their own performing abilities, through the use of ICT. Their ability in this field has been developed through regular use of the medium since Year 7. In another lesson pupils were recognising the solo instrument playing in an ensemble and other aspects of the GCSE listening paper. There are no pupils currently taking GCSE in Year 11.
157. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and the higher attainers is good. Pupils with special educational needs work alongside their peers and achieve as well as or sometimes better. The logical progression between tasks, their suitability for pupils of all abilities, and the use of ICT to achieve them enable the less academically able pupils to produce good results in music and thus boost their self-esteem. A pupil with special educational needs explained how he was now composing at home using the computer. The confident use of technical language and musical description of his compositions was a credit to the work of the department in this field. The more able musical pupils receive extra challenge, not only through the free instrumental lessons and extra-curricular activities offered by the school, but also in lessons where they are encouraged to use their instruments in activities. Tasks also contain extension activities that the more able pupils tackle eagerly without being singled out by the teachers.
158. Attitudes and behaviour in music lessons in all year groups are good. They are sometimes very good or excellent. This is due to the friendly but professional approach of the teachers and their ability to engage the pupils in a series of interesting, worthwhile, practical activities during the lessons. Pupils enjoy their music. They respond well to the efficient organisation of the start of the lesson and this helps create a good learning environment. Pupils move purposefully from one room to another, eager to start on the next activity. They work without being reminded to by the teachers and address them politely. They respond well to questioning, pleased to show the knowledge they have learned, and always persevere even when tasks appear difficult. Pupils enjoy performing to the remainder of the class, owing to the secure environment that is built up, in which no one is ridiculed and all pupils' contributions celebrated.
159. Teaching is generally very good in all year groups. It is sometimes excellent. The philosophy of enabling pupils to discover learning for themselves is supported by a series of related interesting activities, which are achievable by pupils of all abilities. The teachers' knowledge of the subject, particularly in the use of ICT as an integral element of music teaching, is exemplary and this is used well to provide appropriate challenge for all pupils. Tasks are thoroughly discussed so that the pupils are able to start them knowing what they have to do and how to achieve it. Planning of lessons is very good, with careful preparation of resources, ensuring that teaching points are illustrated by examples to which the pupils can relate. Time is used effectively to ensure that all the aims discussed at the beginning of the lesson are fully covered, and the plenary at the end

revisits the aims and shows how the work covered relates to the next lesson. All lessons unfold at a suitably challenging pace. Very good use is made of questioning to assist revision of previous work or aid understanding of a new concept, and care is taken to ensure that all pupils participate, especially those who do not show the confidence of the rest. Reinforcement of knowledge is also assisted by the use of key musical words in discussion and short written tasks, although no opportunity was given for pupils to develop their use by using them in the evaluation of performances of compositions. Reference to mathematical words and their derivation, 'octagon and pentagon', is used to assist the recall of similar musical words, 'octave, and pentatonic'. During group activities the teachers circulate offering encouragement and evaluation, ensuring that each pupil knows how to make further progress. The majority of pupils with special educational needs attend music lessons without the need for extra teaching support. Two lessons were observed in which learning support staff were present, skilfully enabling those pupils in their care to focus on the tasks and make progress according to their individual abilities. They were familiar with the work being covered and felt that both the teacher and the pupils valued their presence in the lesson. Structured tasks involving individual research are set in Years 7 to 9 to either broaden the pupils' knowledge or to gain background for a new topic, but the historical work in Year 10 showed evidence of being dictated or copied from the board. Homework is set regularly, collected and regularly marked.

160. The accommodation for the music department is very good and comprises two main classrooms and three practice rooms, with more being converted. It is used well for curricular and extra-curricular activities, especially the classroom which has been converted into an ICT suite. The walls are decorated with displays of photographs of recent musical events, curriculum-related displays and key words, which relate to the musical activities in the curriculum. Resources are generally good, with those related to ICT being excellent. The non-pitched percussion instruments require replacing, and there are no multicultural instruments.
161. Since the last inspection, a new head of department has been appointed, who has continued and developed the work started by his predecessor. The curriculum and assessment have been thoroughly revised to incorporate the requirements of Curriculum 2000 and a new ICT suite set up. This has sufficient computers and keyboards for one between two pupils in the Year 7 to 9 classes. It is in regular use both during lessons and after school. Liaison with the four main primary schools from which pupils come is expanding, and now includes not only joint concerts but also joint visits to other musical activities. Letters have been received from the headteachers of these schools commending the organisation of these activities, their benefit to the pupils involved and the community at large, and the continuing striving of the head of department to raise standards and provide worthwhile musical experiences for the youngsters of the community. The extra-curricular activities and contributions to the cultural development of pupils in the school are very good. Instrumental lessons are provided free of charge by the school for over one tenth of the pupils by the Lincolnshire Music Support Service. Two of the teachers observed showed obvious commitment to the department's aims and were helping the pupils to work towards the development of their technical and musical ability. The department organises regular rehearsals for instrumental groups and pupils also benefit from the rehearsals organised by the Music Service. Last summer a group called 'Young Americans' visited Boston and worked with pupils from both Haven High School and surrounding secondary schools to produce a joint production. This was deemed a great success and the experience is due to be repeated next summer with funding from the local council.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Pupils' achievement in the GCSE course.
- Extra-curricular provision.
- A strong commitment to the moral and social development of pupils.

Areas for improvement

- The setting of clear learning objectives in lessons.
- Teaching of literacy, numeracy and ICT.
- Non-participants' inclusion in lessons.

162. Standards of work seen during the inspection were satisfactory. These standards reflect satisfactory teaching with a good response from pupils. Pupils' achievement by the end of Year 9 is satisfactory in relation to standards on entry to the school. In relation to standards of attainment at the end of Year 9, achievement at the end of Year 11 is satisfactory. While higher-grade GCSE results are well below national averages, results over the past two years show improvement and predictions for 2002 show a continuation of this trend. Most pupils' attitudes contribute positively to standards. Teaching contributes effectively to learning.
163. Inspection evidence indicates that attainment in physical education at the end of Year 9 is consistent with national expectations. Boys attain slightly higher standards than girls; this is consistent with differences that might be expected nationally. In work seen in lessons pupils can perform basic techniques in team games. Pupils in Year 8 show good understanding of body position and accuracy in passing and shooting in basketball but lose consistency when working under pressure of space or opposition. The proportion of pupils gaining A*-C grades is well below national average. The percentage of pupils achieving A*-C grades in the 2001 GCSE examination, while still well below the national average, showed some improvement. Inspection evidence indicates that this improvement will continue so that the percentage of pupils gaining A*-C grades by 2002 should be nearer to the national average. By the end of Year 11 pupils have developed an understanding of team strategies. In a Year 10 lesson, for example, pupils understood systems of attack in basketball and worked co-operatively to transfer this understanding to the game situation. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of physical education vocabulary are weak and restrict attainment in oral and written work. Comparison of standards of attainment on entry to the course and the standards achieved in the GCSE examination show that most pupils make satisfactory, and some good, progress through Years 10 and 11. Higher-attaining pupils are restricted by tasks set, which are not sufficiently challenging.
164. Most pupils' attitudes to learning are satisfactory and in some cases good. Instances of pupils' attitude and behaviour being unsatisfactory are mainly in Years 10 and 11, where concentration levels are low and lesson activities do not take sufficient account of pupils' weak literacy skills. Many pupils enjoy physical education and have a responsible attitude and approach to their learning. Participation levels and attendance are variable, which means that some pupils miss important parts of the curriculum. Many pupils are able to work effectively as individuals but also co-operate well when working in pairs and small groups. Pupils usually develop good relationships with other pupils and the teacher. Most are able to take responsibility within extra-curricular
165. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory and sometimes good. The strengths of teaching include good planning based on a secure knowledge of the subject, good organisational skills, positive interactions with pupils and a commitment to pupils' moral and social development. This means that pupils are able to learn basic techniques through appropriate activities and in an environment that encourages learning. Although procedures for monitoring pupils' progress are now in place, greater use needs to be made of assessment in order to ensure that teachers and pupils have a clear understanding of the progress being made. Teachers need to be clear about intended outcomes and share them with pupils at the beginning of lessons. This would help teachers to identify appropriate tasks so that pupils of different ability are making progress. There is also a need to ensure that non-participants are included in lesson activities. Greater attention needs to be paid to pupils' standards of literacy in planning lesson activities. In a Year 11 GCSE

theory lesson, for example, many pupils were unable to properly research newspaper articles because the level of the text was beyond their competence. Behaviour deteriorated as a result.

166. By the end of Year 9 most pupils make satisfactory progress. Pupils develop competence in basic gymnastics, basketball and soccer techniques. Their development of knowledge and understanding is enhanced by their ability to work co-operatively in pairs and small groups when developing basic techniques through Years 7 to 9. However, activities do not always allow pupils to develop their observation and assessment skills so that they can be clear about what they can do and are capable of. By the end of Year 11 pupils make satisfactory progress. Pupils' continued satisfactory progress in the development of basic techniques, as in Year 10 basketball, for example, enables them to transfer various passing and shooting techniques into full game situations. However, irregular attendance and a lack of participation in lessons by some pupils impedes progress. The progress of higher-achieving pupils is restricted by teachers' lack of consistency in the setting of challenging tasks and inadequate attention to their observation and assessment skills.
167. Leadership and management in physical education are satisfactory. The head of department has a clear vision for the future development of the subject, with a sharp focus on raising standards. More planned opportunities for pupils to assess their own performance against success criteria, improved teaching of numeracy and literacy skills and the use of ICT, together with strategies to reduce the number of pupils absent from lessons, are needed to raise standards more quickly. Reports need to clearly convey to parents how pupils can make progress. The department has a strong philosophy of care for its pupils and a focus on the social and moral development of pupils. The department is well organised and the department's handbook provides guidance on schemes of work, lesson planning and safety matters. The department does not have risk assessment data for all physical education activities and facilities. Both indoor and outdoor facilities are good. There are good resources, with good systems for maintenance and storage. The physical education curriculum meets statutory requirements. The department recognises the importance of extra-curricular activities that enhance learning. Some non-specialist teachers help with clubs and teams. Take-up by pupils is good, with some progressing to local and area teams and competitions. The department has made good progress since the last inspection in improving GCSE A*-C grades, transferring basic techniques to use in games situation and the development of pupils' planning skills. Time allocation for physical education in Years 7 to 9 is now the same as the national average.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

Strengths.

- The good contribution made to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The strategy for improvement.
- Good links made between the content of lessons and pupils' everyday experiences.

Areas for improvement

- The use of assessment to guide the planning of new work.
- The setting of detailed targets against which pupils' progress can be identified and sharing these with pupils.
- The staffing of the department.
- The limited time allocation, which makes it difficult to cover the Agreed Syllabus and, in Year 10, to fully cover the GCSE syllabus.

168. Attainment at the end of Year 9 is below expectations in relation to the Lincolnshire LEA Agreed Syllabus. Attainment at the end of Year 11 in the GCSE short course is well below expectations compared with national averages. However, when compared with the levels of pupils on entry to the school, achievement in the GCSE examination is satisfactory.

169. In lessons and work seen during the inspection, attainment in Years 7 to 9 is approaching national standards. There are many examples of pupils developing their knowledge and understanding of religious language, principles and concepts such as the importance of rites of passage, worship, customs and symbols. Pupils generally make sense of what they study and can relate it to their experiences of life. There were several examples of pupils achieving well and making satisfactory progress. For example, in Year 7, pupils developed a good knowledge of the important keywords in major world religions. This provided a valuable beginning to the course. In Year 8, pupils were able to provide useful links with their everyday experiences. In one lesson, pupils were able to reflect on the life and teaching of Jesus. Through the good use of questioning by the teacher, pupils developed an understanding of the concepts of persecution and Christian martyrdom. The good use of a vivid picture of crucifixion enabled pupils to understand the horrors of martyrdom.
170. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress, but the use of material matched more closely to their individual needs would help them to achieve more. In a Year 9 lesson, pupils were able to explore their feelings and judgement about religious and moral issues. One lesson looked at the marriage ceremonies in Christianity and Islam and, through the teacher's use of worksheets that were closely matched to pupils' learning needs, a class of pupils with significant special educational needs made satisfactory progress. The use of key words, technical language and discussion work by the teacher was useful in improving pupils' literacy and oral competency. Overall, learning is satisfactory.
171. Attainment in Years 10 and 11 falls short of national expectations. Some pupils achieve well and make significant progress. For example, in a Year 10 lesson, pupils demonstrated a developing understanding of religious principles through a study of the Jewish attitude towards old age. They were able to link these principles with everyday life, showing how current society treats the elderly. Some pupils found difficulty in developing a moral standpoint on this issue. In Year 11, pupils were able to make important links between religious attitudes and current issues. A good example was the way in which the events in the USA were explored in relation to the Christian and Muslim perspectives on war and peace. Learning *from* religion is a key feature in this year group. However, pupils do not make enough progress and their achievement is not good enough because the teachers do not have high enough expectations and they do not mark work thoroughly.
172. There are no significant differences in the standards achieved by boys and girls or pupils with different ethnic backgrounds. However, pupils with special educational needs or academic potential need to be provided with more specific work to match their particular needs.
173. Overall, pupils' attitudes to learning are satisfactory. Their behaviour is appropriate and most pupils apply themselves to the work. However, the behaviour of some pupils hinders the learning of others. In one lesson the application of the school's behaviour management system had little effect. Pupils' behaviour was characterised by shouting, being verbally abusive and ignoring instructions. They had little interest in religious education and saw the lessons as an imposition on their time.
174. Teaching is unsatisfactory, overall. There is at present no permanent teacher of religious education. A new specialist has been appointed from January 2002. Teachers are generally secure in their knowledge of the subject and display confidence in the use of material and resources. As a consequence, pupils are able to make gains in knowledge of individual topics. Planning is generally satisfactory and this assisted pupils to focus on information learnt in previous lessons. Lesson aims were shared with pupils in all cases. Teachers make satisfactory use of questioning to check current learning and to review previous work. They use a suitable range of styles, such as discussion, appropriate worksheets, and text material, that enable pupils to learn from as well as learn about religion. This assists pupils to maintain their interest and develop understanding of religious principles and concepts. Resources are used in an appropriate manner. These enable pupils with different needs to learn appropriately. Teachers management of pupils' behaviour, although it was satisfactory in most lessons, contributing to an appropriate climate for learning, was not always so. Extension work and homework are used to allow pupils to

reflect on the information they have gained in class. Teachers generally have clear expectations of pupils and these contributed to pupils' achievement. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, the teacher was unfamiliar with classes that included a large number of pupils with special educational needs and some with significant behavioural difficulties. Pupils' poor behaviour reduced the achievement of most pupils in these lessons.

175. The assessment of pupils' work is unsatisfactory. Few supportive comments are made in exercise books. The procedures provide a sound basis for assessing what pupils know and understand, but they are not always followed. A significant amount of the work seen was unmarked. In addition, not enough use is made of assessment to guide teaching and learning and the planning of new work. The department does not set detailed targets against which it can assess pupils' progress. Consequently, pupils are unclear about the standards they are reaching and what they need to do to improve. This is recognised as a significant area for development.
176. The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 is broad and balanced and meets the needs of the pupils and the requirements of the Lincolnshire LEA Agreed Syllabus. Schemes of work are well planned and appropriate but are currently incomplete. They are linked to the fundamental aims of the syllabus designed to assist pupils to both learn about and learn from religion. Lesson plans provide sufficient flexibility to allow for teachers' initiative in deciding the most appropriate approach to use in individual lessons. In Years 10 and 11, all pupils follow the GCSE short course. The syllabus provides continuity and is in line with the Locally Agreed Syllabus. However, the limited amount of curricular time in Year 10 reduces the ability of pupils to cover the course content effectively. In the light of the low attainment levels of pupils entering Year 10, there is a question as to whether the syllabus content is wholly appropriate for a significant number of pupils.
177. Religious Education makes a good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, so providing opportunities for pupils to explore world issues of justice, relationships and personal beliefs. The content of the curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to respond to religious beliefs and practices, and several opportunities for reflection. In lessons, the teaching encourages pupils to explore their personal views about religious and moral issues, and work on the major world religions necessitates discussion about the cultures that support them, so preparing pupils for life in a multi-faith and multicultural society
178. The subject presently lacks effective leadership and management. A full-time specialist has been appointed to take up post in January 2002. Staffing is a real issue in the department at present. The new appointee has been generous with her time and is developing plans to take the department forward as a priority. These plans show a clear sense of purpose and direction. The departmental development is well focused on the problems facing the department and forms a good basis for future action. Accommodation is satisfactory. The religious education room has some displays that celebrate pupils' achievement. Resources for the subject are generally satisfactory but require updating, especially with regard to the provision of appropriate material for all pupils.
179. Since the last inspection, attainment has improved slightly in both key stages. There has been some improvement in the contribution religious education now makes to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. The school has taken action to tackle most of the weaknesses identified in this report. Provision will be considerably strengthened by the appointment of the new head of department, who has clear plans to take the subject forward. Taking into account the action taken by the school, improvement since the last inspection is now satisfactory.