

INSPECTION REPORT

JOHN SPENDLUFFE SCHOOL

Alford

LEA area: Lincolnshire County Council

Unique reference number: 120648

Headteacher: Mr P. Kitson

Reporting inspector: Dr A. Swallow
12524

Dates of inspection: 12th – 16th March 2001

Inspection number: 208063

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Secondary

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11 to 16

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Hanby Lane
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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr G. Willoughby

Date of previous inspection: 16th November 1998

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Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
12524	A. Swallow	Registered inspector	Modern foreign languages	Information about the school The school's results and achievements How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9176	G. Barker	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
24260	D. Allenby	Team inspector	Provision for pupils with special educational needs	
4551	L. Banks	Team inspector		How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? How well does the school care for its pupils?
12600	C. Hesketh	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology	
12183	P. Ingram	Team inspector	Science	
30187	S. Johnson	Team inspector	History Provision for students at Key Stage 4	How well are pupils taught?
7958	G. Lewis	Team inspector	English Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	
28429	C. Maynard	Team inspector	Music	
17868	E. Metcalfe	Team inspector	Religious education Equality of opportunity	
15970	N. Waller	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology	
30978	E. White	Team inspector	Geography	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

John Spendluffe school is a mixed, secondary modern school with 507 pupils on roll. The catchment serves the town of Alford and the surrounding rural area. Many of the pupils come from outside the town, from homes economically disadvantaged. The numbers of pupils who attend the school are rising, year on year. Pupils' attainment on entry is improving, but is still below average as a result of the selection arrangements operating within the Local Education Authority. There are very few pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds. Almost one third of pupils have special educational needs. This is almost three times the national average. There are 153 pupils on the special educational needs register, 22 of whom have statements. A unit supports 22 pupils who have statements for learning difficulties. The unit acts as a resource for the whole school and pupils with statements are included fully in the life of the school. Almost 17 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals which is in line with national figures. Significant emphasis is placed on promoting a socially inclusive learning culture in which education is valued and in which pupils' self-esteem is high. The inspection of the school included a detailed inspection of overall provision for pupils with special educational needs.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an improving school, with clear educational direction, which offers all pupils an environment in which to learn effectively and fulfil potential. The leadership of the headteacher is of a very high quality. This is resulting in rising standards and good quality teaching. Overall, the school is now providing an effective education and no longer has serious weaknesses. Nevertheless, attainment is still well below national averages and expectations for secondary modern schools, and more improvement is required at Key Stages 3 and 4, at a faster rate. Personal support and guidance for pupils of all abilities is strong. Parents can have confidence in the quality of the school's work. It provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Teaching and learning are good; pupils are enthusiastic and have very positive attitudes to work.
- The school environment encourages very good relationships and all members of the school are valued and respected.
- The provision made for pupils with special educational needs is excellent.
- The quality of personal support and guidance for pupils is strong; personal, social and health education is highly effective.
- Vocational education at Key Stage 4 is good.
- The governing body fulfils its responsibilities well; financial control and administration are very efficient.
- The leadership of the headteacher is a major factor in strengthening the overall quality of education.

What could be improved

- Key Stage 3 attainment in English, mathematics and science, and in all GCSE subjects at grades A*-C.
- Monitoring of individual pupils' progress and the setting of targets, year on year.
- Provision for information and communication technology (ICT).
- The content of annual reports of pupils' progress to parents.
- The quality of teaching in art and design.
- Provision for a daily act of collective worship and for pupils' multicultural development.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good improvement overall since the last inspection in November 1998. Attainment at Key Stage 3 is now higher in English and science and at GCSE grades A*-C. Classroom standards in science are now good. Despite much support, standards in art and design remain unsatisfactory and need to be improved urgently. Good progress has been made in improving the use of information on pupils' starting points and on what they might be expected to achieve. Senior staff, subject leaders and pupils' managers are playing more prominent roles in monitoring regularly the work of teachers and pupils. The quality of teaching has improved significantly, and there is now much more good and very good teaching. There is still more work to be done on assessment arrangements, particularly to ensure that individual pupils are set targets, year on year, and that the progress they make is checked more closely. Very good progress has been made in revising subject schemes of work to improve pupils' literacy skills. A similar rate of progress is now needed to improve pupils' numeracy skills. Progress here has been less effective. There is a wider range of learning styles, more evidence of extended writing and less reliance on worksheets. There is still some way to go to ensure that pupils have regular opportunities for independent learning. Timetable arrangements are generally satisfactory, as is the setting of homework. Annual reports of pupils' progress to parents remain unsatisfactory.

STANDARDS

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

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

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

End of Key Stage 3 attainments in English, mathematics and science are well below national averages and outcomes for secondary modern schools. Since the last inspection improvements in English and science have been faster than national patterns; in mathematics standards have fallen each year. Pupils' performances at intake in English, mathematics and science are now rising and the progress now made by pupils in English and mathematics across the key stage, given their starting points, is satisfactory. Literacy is now a strength of the school. Most departments are using key literacy strategies to improve writing and spelling. Standards of numeracy are currently below expectations. The school is raising the profile of numeracy, but there is still the need for more subjects to teach numeracy skills.

Pupils' Key Stage 4 average GCSE points are well below national averages, as is the percentage of passes at 5 or more A*-C grades. Higher grade passes and average points scores are rising, however, at a faster rate than national trends, and are now in line with similar schools when compared with starting points. Attainment at 5 or more A*-G grades is above the national average and amongst the top 40 per cent of secondary modern schools. Attainment at 1 or more A*-G grades is just below the national average. Overall achievement in lessons and in the pupils' work seen at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with abilities and is satisfactory, but below average at Key Stage 4. In Years 7 and 8 achievement in lessons and pupils' work indicates higher potential outcomes in the future. Pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11 experience difficulty in writing, but content and presentation are improving. The oral skills of

all pupils are better than their written skills and are at least in line with national expectations. Reading is also more in line with national expectations. The school is beginning to add value at Key Stage 4 in relation to prior attainment outcomes. Appropriately challenging targets are set at Key Stage 4.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good; the vast majority of pupils are enthusiastic about learning and work hard in lessons. They enjoy coming to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good; the vast majority of pupils behave in a responsible manner, are courteous to visitors and show respect for teachers, other adults and friends.
Personal development and relationships	Very good; pupils are keen to do well. They act responsibly as prefects and take part willingly in the range of activities outside lessons.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory; overall attendance is below national averages and gives concerns in Year 11. The school has good strategies in place to improve attendance and levels of authorised and unauthorised absence are falling.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is good overall, confirming the belief of parents. It is slightly better at Key Stage 4 than at Key Stage 3. Teaching is at least satisfactory in 94 per cent of lessons, is good or better in well over 50 per cent lessons and is very good or excellent in just under 25 per cent of lessons. There is no poor or very poor teaching. This represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection when only 8 per cent of teaching was very good or better. Teaching and learning are frequently good or better in mathematics, English, modern foreign languages, music and science. The school has worked particularly hard to improve the quality of teaching in science, identified as a key area of weakness during the last inspection. Weaknesses remain in the teaching of art and design; unsatisfactory progress has been made here since the last inspection. The teaching of literacy is very good; the teaching of numeracy across the curriculum is unsatisfactory; the use of ICT to support learning across the curriculum is poor. Teachers enjoy very good relationships with pupils. In the vast majority of lessons good learning takes place. This is because pupils' attitudes are very positive and they are keen to participate. Teaching and support for pupils with special educational needs is of a very high quality. Planning to extend the skills of higher attaining pupils, is satisfactory.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory; there are strengths in literacy work and in the provision for pupils with special educational needs. Arrangements for personal, social and health education and for extra-curricular activities, are strong. Provision for science and planning for Key Stage 4 physical education have improved. The curriculum for ICT does not meet statutory requirements at either key stage; it is unsatisfactory in art and design.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Excellent; the school makes outstandingly good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers employ an effective range of strategies to meet the needs of statements and individual education plans and the deployment of learning support assistants is excellent.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory; although there are some errors in spelling and punctuation, the overall use of English is in line with national expectations. However, there is no systematic programme of work to assist in improving language acquisition.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good; provision for moral development is good. Pupils have high standards for themselves and the school's ethos is strong. Social development is good. A strong sense of community exists. Cultural development is satisfactory. Most provision centres around western traditions; there is too little reference to life in a multi-cultural society. There are good examples of spiritual development in several subjects and assemblies contribute to a strong spiritual ethos.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good; there is very strong support and guidance. Procedures for improving attendance and promoting good behaviour are very effective. The use of data is helping teachers and pupils to understand starting points and what pupils are capable of achieving. The monitoring of learning and progress, year on year, is not yet satisfactory to ensure that all pupils are achieving their potential.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Satisfactory; Parents are generally supportive of the work of the school, more families are selecting the school for their children and it is now over-subscribed. Annual reports of pupils' progress are unsatisfactory. More needs to be done to involve parents in the work of the school and in their children's learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good; the leadership of the headteacher is of a very high quality. It is resulting in rising standards and clear educational direction. Subject leaders and pupils' managers show a high level of commitment to school improvement. However, the development of ICT skills across the curriculum, the current arrangements for the management of art and design and design and technology, are unsatisfactory.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good; they support the school strongly, holding the school to account and acting as a critical friend. They understand the school's strengths and weaknesses and monitor progress effectively. However, they do not ensure quality annual reports of pupils' progress to parents or a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good; the school has very effective procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching, planning and pupils' work. There is detailed analysis of examination results. Monitoring of pupils' learning and progress is less secure.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory; financial control is efficient. Specific grants are used effectively. The school seeks best value in the use of finances. Spending on resources per pupil is high. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are adequate. The cost-effectiveness of spending is not yet evaluated in a systematic manner.

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 way the school expects their child to work hard and do his or her best. • The progress that their child makes. • The ease with which they feel able to approach the school. • The way the school is helping their child to become mature and responsible. • The good quality of the teaching. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The way the school provides information about their child's progress. • The closeness with which the school works with parents. • The range of activities outside lessons. • The amount of work done at home. • Behaviour in the school. • The quality of leadership and management.

Inspectors agree to an extent with parents' views. The pupils do work hard. The vast majority are making good progress. Teaching is good and the all round developments that pupils make are strong. Overall, the range of extra-curricular activities and visits is good. The amount of work that pupils do at home contributes to the progress that they make. Behaviour in the school is very good. Leadership and management are good. There is room for improvement in the information provided about pupils' progress and the overall involvement of parents in their children's learning and in the work of the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Analysis of data shows that pupils' performances at intake in English, mathematics and science are rising, year on year, but remain well below national expectations. Attainment trends at the end of Key Stage 3 are improving in English and science. GCSE results at 5 + A*-C grades are improving, and at 1+ A*-G and 5+ A*-G are in line with, and above national averages, respectively. Given the Year 7 starting points and end of Key Stage 3 National Curriculum tests' outcomes, there are clear indications that the school is adding value across both key stages. Overall, pupils learn effectively in most lessons and learning is good in over half of the lessons. Generally, it is better at Key Stage 4 than at Key Stage 3. In just over half of the lessons pupils attain in line with national expectations. Attainment in relation to pupils' age and expectations is higher at Key Stage 3 than at Key Stage 4, reflecting improved baselines. Planning across the curriculum is now meeting the needs of the higher attaining pupils to ensure that their progress and final achievements are more in line with their potential.

2. At the end of Key Stage 3, pupils' attainments in English, mathematics and science are well below national averages and outcomes for secondary modern schools, in the 2000 National Curriculum tests. Since the last inspection, however, improvements in English and science have been faster than the national pattern; in mathematics standards have fallen each year. Boys and girls' performances are lower in all three subjects than the national picture. 2000 teachers' assessments show attainment to be well below average expectations in all subjects except in French, music and physical education.

3. At the end of Key Stage 4, pupils' average GCSE points in 2000 were well below national averages, as was the percentage of candidates obtaining 5 or more higher grade A*-C passes. Improvements over the past two years since the last inspection for both higher grade passes and average points scores have risen at a faster rate than national trends. Nevertheless, outcomes are amongst the lowest 25 per cent of secondary modern schools, nationally. Based upon average GCSE points scores, girls' attainment is better than boys, although further away from the national average than the performance of boys. Attainment at 5 or more A*-G grades in 2000 was above the national average and amongst the top 40 per cent of secondary modern schools, nationally. Attainment at 1 or more A*-G grades in 2000 was just below the national average and amongst the lowest 25 per cent of secondary modern schools.

4. In the 2000 GCSE examinations, pupils' performances were well below national averages and those for secondary modern schools in all subjects with the exception of French, physical education and religious education.

5. Ambitions for further improvements are both realistic and achievable. There are clear strategies in place for meeting the needs of all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and those who are high attainers. The school has set suitably challenging targets for GCSE performance for 2001 and 2002, at all levels, but has yet to adopt a formal approach to the setting of targets for the outcomes of the Key Stage 3 National Curriculum tests. At present, the school is not making sufficient use of internal assessment data to monitor the progress of pupils of all ages and abilities, and to ensure that they fulfil potential.

6. Standards seen at the end of Key Stage 3 are in line with pupils' abilities and are satisfactory; they are below average at Key Stage 4. Standards in Year 7 and 8 indicate

higher potential outcomes for the future. Achievement in English is in line with national averages and those for secondary modern schools, at both key stages, but there have been substantial improvements, since the last inspection, in the teaching of literacy in English at Key Stage 3. These improvements are beginning to raise the standards of achievement of pupils, especially in Years 7 and 8, and on the overall attainment levels of pupils by the age of 14. Pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11 experience greater difficulty in writing what they know, but content and presentation are improving. The oral skills of all pupils are better than their written skills and are at least in line with national expectations. Reading is also more in line with national expectations.

7. Literacy was identified in the last inspection as a serious weakness. Literacy is now a strength of the school as a result of the way in which it has been embraced effectively by almost all departments. All Year 7 pupils now have a double literacy lesson per week and there are detailed schemes of work which form the basis of the lesson plans for the teaching of literacy. The literacy manager has provided every member of staff with a handbook to help in identifying strategies for improving literacy. Most departments are using the literacy strategies to improve writing and spelling in subject areas. Key words are displayed in many subjects and included in spelling books. Marking also reflects the emphasis on literacy. Modern foreign languages, science, music and design technology are areas where there is good practice.

8. Standards in mathematics are inline with national averages at Key Stage 3, but below national averages and those for secondary modern schools, at Key Stage 4. In lessons, achievement is satisfactory across both key stages. Pupils are developing their mental skills by being encouraged to recall quickly and explain their strategies for calculation. Higher attaining pupils can solve equations, evaluate expressions, and understand different forms of average. Lower attaining pupils interpret data from simple graphs and charts. Pupils of all abilities do not explain their mathematical reasoning well in writing. At Key Stage 4, pupils still have weaknesses in their written explanations, but their oral skills are improving. Higher attaining pupils have improved skills in using algebraic expressions to explain patterns they have found in their coursework.

9. Standards of numeracy are currently below expectations. The school is raising the profile of numeracy through a range of display, focused activities and links into subject schemes of work and lesson plans. Pupils use numeracy in ICT, special educational needs, science, English and French where pupils use and interpret information from graphs and charts. Pupils are manipulating algebraic formulae in science and ICT. In some tutor periods, numerical puzzles and games are being used. However, there is still a need to develop the awareness of teaching staff so that they can further develop numeracy teaching across the entire curriculum.

10. Attainment in science is well below national averages and those for secondary modern schools, at both key stages. Nevertheless, standards of pupils entering the school more recently are higher than those in Years 10 and 11 at the time of their entry to the school. In lessons, pupils achieve in line with expectations across both key stages. All pupils' listening and speaking skills are good and pupils read out aloud instructions for investigations confidently. Pupils' standards of writing vary from accurate writing to some with errors and incomplete work. There are good opportunities for the use of number and graphical skills throughout the course. Some pupils find difficulty in the choice of scales for graphical work and drawing the most appropriate line from the readings. All pupils are able to take measurements of time, temperature and distance to the required degree of accuracy for the experiment.

11. Standards reached by pupils in ICT, at the age of 14, are below those expected

nationally. Pupils are beginning to use computers more confidently, but keyboard skills are low. In Key Stage 4, most pupils follow a GCSE short or long course in ICT. No pupils gained GCSE higher grades, A*-C, in 2000. This is poor compared to similar schools, secondary modern schools and all schools nationally. Most learning in ICT takes place in separate lessons in the subject. There is very little use made of it in other subjects. Overall, achievement is unsatisfactory at Key Stage 3, but in line with expectations at Key Stage 4. For example, in manufacturing, GNVQ pupils are developing their ICT skills for use in their small businesses. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in lessons because they are provided with appropriate work and are well supported by teachers and assistants, who take time to explain tasks very clearly to them.

12. When GNVQ manufacturing results are added to the design and technology results, attainment of pupils at the age of sixteen is below national averages, but above those of secondary modern schools. Attainment at Key Stage 3 is below national averages and those for secondary modern schools. Although achievement across Key Stage 3 is below national expectations, there are clear signs that pupils are working, especially in folders, at a level in line with their ability. The folder work of most pupils shows a conscientious approach and good presentation. There is good use of a subject-related vocabulary in support of the school's literacy strategy and evaluation skills are strong. Practical work is more inconsistent. At Key Stage 4, practical work is suffering from a lack of fine detail in presentation and a narrow range of quality materials, but overall achievement is satisfactory.

13. Attainment in French, by pupils aged 14, is above national expectations. The range of extended writing assignments has improved significantly since the last inspection. By the age of 16, all pupils entered for the full GCSE course gain at least a grade A*-G. These outcomes are above national averages and those for secondary modern schools. The number of pupils attaining A*-C grades is in line with national averages and above those for secondary modern schools. Pupils' achievement at Key Stage 3 is good and satisfactory at Key Stage 4.

14. In history, attainment by the age of 14 is well below national averages. GCSE outcomes for pupils aged 16, at the higher levels, have declined over the past three years and are well below national averages and those for secondary modern schools. Across Key Stage 3 pupils develop their historical knowledge, their use of sources to answer specific historical questions and their understanding of cause and motive. At Key Stage 4, the use of primary sources to carry out investigations and to explain different historical interpretations is insecure. Overall achievement remains unsatisfactory at both key stages.

15. Standards in geography in Years 7 to 9 are improving, although attainment by pupils at the age of 14 is still below national expectations. In Years 10 and 11 standards have fallen since the last inspection. GCSE results at A*-C in 1999 were very low compared with national averages and those for secondary modern schools. Achievement at Key Stage 3 is satisfactory, but unsatisfactory at Key Stage 4.

16. Attainment in art and design is below national averages and those for secondary modern schools at both key stages. In the early years of Key Stage 3, pupils' work is of low quality in shape and construction. A considerable amount of work is unfinished and unmarked. Attainment in Year 11 is well below average, but work in Year 10 is more encouraging with outcomes clearly related to the study of famous artists' work. Overall achievement across both key stages is unsatisfactory.

17. Pupils' attainment in music at Key Stage 3 is generally in line with national expectations, but GCSE results at grades A*-C are below national averages and those for secondary modern schools. Achievement across both key stages is satisfactory. By the age of 14, pupils can create simple compositions, on keyboards, using a variety of stimuli as a

starting point. Pupils in Year 10 have good listening and appraising skills, are able to use ICT to record and enhance their compositions, and many of them are able to perform on their chosen instrument to a satisfactory standard. The practical music making abilities of Year 11 pupils are mostly poor.

18. Pupils' attainment in physical education by the age of 14 is in line with national expectations. By the age of 16 pupils' overall attainment is in line with national expectations and the percentage of pupils following the GCSE course achieving A*-C grades in 2000, was in line with national averages. Achievement across both key stages is satisfactory. Across Key Stage 3, pupils are able to develop basic techniques of strokes in badminton, movements on the trampoline and stick control in hockey through appropriate time being allocated to consolidating learning. The difference in attainment levels in Key Stage 4 is due to teachers demanding more of examination pupils through the use of more varied teaching and learning styles.

19. In religious education, standards of attainment at age 14 are below the standards outlined in the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Standards in the GCSE short course have fluctuated over the past three years, but recent outcomes at the higher grades represent good attainment when compared with other secondary modern schools. In relation to their other subjects, pupils achieve well in religious education.

20. Few pupils have English as an additional language. Although there are some errors in spelling and punctuation, the overall use of English is in line with national expectations. Achievement in English and in science is satisfactory. The Local Education Authority's English as an Additional Language Service provides one three quarter hour support session each week. There is no systematic programme of work to assist in improving language acquisition.

21. The special educational needs co-ordinator assesses the reading abilities of all pupils when they join the school in Year 7 and ensures that all teachers know how to help them improve. As a result, most pupils, including those with statements, make very good progress in their reading. They make equally very good progress in learning across the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs spend most of their time in school in subject lessons with pupils of a range of attainments. Because of the exceptionally high standard of the organisation and use of individual education plans in the school, teachers and learning support assistants help pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in most subjects. Pupils' progress in lessons is enhanced by the exceptionally inclusive approach to provision for pupils with special educational needs.

22. The school has tailored the curriculum to match the needs of a small number of pupils in Key Stage 4 to ensure that they make the best possible progress. By the time they are sixteen, however, almost all pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, achieve GCSE grades in a range of subjects. Overall provision for pupils with special educational needs contributes very well to improvements in one of the key issues identified in the last inspection.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

23. Pupils' attitudes towards the school are very good. The vast majority consider school a place where they are cared for as individuals and where their opinions count. Pupils' attitudes towards learning and their behaviour are at least satisfactory in almost all lessons. They are at least good or better in two out of three lessons and very good or excellent in one quarter of lessons. Pupils are generally enthusiastic about coming to school. They come to school equipped to learn, arrive punctually at lessons and engage quickly with their learning. For the most part, they contribute willingly to discussions, ask sensible questions, and respond positively to constructive criticism and challenge. Relationships in and out of lessons, between adults and pupils, and amongst pupils, are very good. Pupils show courtesy towards their teachers and towards visitors to the school. They listen patiently to their peers in lessons, showing a willingness to reflect on what they do and the impact that this has on others.

24. Pupils move purposefully around school, understand the daily routines and rules and comply with them. Parents expressed some concerns about poor levels of behaviour and bullying. Apart from isolated instances of boisterous playground behaviour, little unsatisfactory conduct was observed during the inspection. Permanent and fixed-term exclusions have fallen dramatically since the last inspection and the general school environment is one that is free from oppressive behaviour, including bullying, sexism and racism. Pupils show high levels of respect for school equipment and for each other's property. Levels of vandalism and graffiti around the school are low. The vast majority of pupils are trustworthy, for example when borrowing laptops from the school.

25. Many more opportunities have been created, since the last inspection, for pupils to show initiative and to take responsibility. The resource centre offers pupils a chance to act in the capacity of librarians; form monitors take pride in collecting and recording merits; pupils help to organise fund-raising and charitable events, such as 'red nose' day, and help each other in activities such as paired reading. The re-organised prefect system provides an opportunity for pupils to respect each other's differences and to understand better each other's feelings and values. Prefects are specially trained in dealing with the problems that younger pupils might encounter and write pleasant welcome letters to newcomers, to help with transition arrangements. The school council and the year councils are valued, allowing pupils a forum for open debate on issues such as the dress code and the behaviour code. Many pupils take advantage of the school's homework and revision clubs.

26. School attendance trends are improving slowly, but whole school attendance remains unsatisfactory at around 90 per cent. During the week of the inspection all year groups attained 90 per cent or above attendance rates, apart from Year 11. Attendance of Year 11 pupils gives serious cause for concern. Evidence shows that a small, yet persistent, core of regular non-attenders, is at the heart of this problem. Comprehensive strategies are in place to improve attendance, including first day contact and a range of rewards and incentives. The registration of pupils at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions is thorough and meets with statutory requirements. Registers are also taken regularly in lessons. Meticulous records are kept. Since the last inspection unauthorised absence has fallen from 1 per cent to 0.65 per cent. This is satisfactory. It is noticeable that events such as the Key Stage 3 national curriculum tests, mock GCSE examinations and formal GCSE examinations result in higher attendance rates.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

27. The quality of teaching is good overall, confirming the belief of parents. It is slightly better at Key Stage 4 than at Key Stage 3. Teaching is at least satisfactory in 94 per cent of lessons, is good or better in well over 50 per cent of lessons and is very good or excellent in just under 25 per cent of lessons. There is no poor or very poor teaching. This represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection when only 8 per cent of teaching was very good or better. Teaching and learning are at least good in maths, English, modern foreign languages, music, vocational education and science. The school has worked particularly hard to improve the quality of teaching in science, identified as a key area of weakness during the last inspection. Weaknesses remain in the teaching of art and design; unsatisfactory progress has been made here since the last inspection.

28. The vast majority of teachers have good subject knowledge and understanding and use this to good effect to enhance pupils' learning. This is supported by pupils' positive attitudes and good behaviour in class and around the school. Overall planning is good, with many teachers identifying precise learning objectives and using these at the close of lessons to check the extent of pupils' learning. Planning to extend the skills of higher attaining pupils, is satisfactory.

29. Overall, the teaching of basic skills is satisfactory. Most schemes of work now identify opportunities to support the development of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum. Strategies to reinforce and develop literacy are being effectively implemented in the majority of subjects. The teaching of numeracy skills across the school is unsatisfactory, limited only to a small number of subjects. The use of ICT to support learning across the curriculum is poor.

30. Teachers' expectations of pupils are good overall. Teaching methods have improved since the previous inspection and are now good. There is no longer an over reliance on the use of worksheets. There is a greater range of teaching and learning styles across the curriculum. Opportunities are provided for pupils to take part in discussion work in pairs, to undertake individual research and, particularly in science, to carry out investigative work. Opportunities for pupils to develop independent learning skills, although strong in modern foreign languages, remain too limited across the curriculum. Homework is now set consistently in most subject areas.

31. Teachers enjoy very good relationships with pupils. In the vast majority of lessons, they insist on and achieve high standards of behaviour. This enables good learning to take place. Overall, with the exception of art and design, teachers use time and resources well. Additional clubs, at lunchtime and after school, provide good support for pupils wishing to develop further their skills in particular subjects.

32. Across the curriculum, teachers offer significant levels of help and encouragement to pupils. All departments use prior attainment data to establish end of key stage targets, mark work according to agreed school procedures, record outcomes and report concerns to parents. The quality of teachers' oral feedback to pupils in lessons is often good, but the ongoing systematic assessment of individual pupils' work to monitor the extent to which they fulfil their potential, is unsatisfactory. There is developing good practice in modern foreign languages and in science. Overall, the school marking code, although now generally understood by pupils, is insufficiently focused on National Curriculum levels and GCSE criteria. Consequently, there are insufficient comments on pupils' work to tell them about the

progress that they are making in the knowledge, skills and understanding of subjects, and to tell them what they specifically need to do to improve their work and attain higher standards.

33. Subject teachers provide very good teaching for pupils with special educational needs in lessons throughout the school. They have very good knowledge of pupils' learning needs identified in their individual education plans and have developed clear strategies by which they help pupils to achieve well in their subjects. All teachers consider pupils' special educational needs in all of their lesson planning, identifying arrangements to give pupils additional support and the strategies to be used to help them make progress. Teaching in the Learning Support Base is very good, often characterised by lively questioning, brisk pace and teachers sensitively dealing with pupils' difficulties when they arise.

34. Learning support assistants promote very good standards of learning through the outstanding quality of their involvement with pupils' learning in lessons and in the Learning Support Base. They display exceptionally caring and purposeful attitudes in their tuition of pupils at all times, giving highly effective support to pupils having learning and behavioural difficulties. Learning support staff understand very well both the detail of what is to be taught in the curriculum because of their deployment to subject departments, and pupils' precise educational needs because of regular contact and meetings with the special educational needs manager. Meetings with the special educational needs manager provide regular opportunities to monitor and plan for pupils' changing needs. Learning support assistants provide excellent extension to teaching and learning at lunchtimes where they act as tutors and mentors to pupils with and without special educational needs at the Learning Support Base.

35. The very effective teaching of pupils with special educational needs results from the outstanding quality of work of the special educational needs manager. She makes real her vision that all pupils should be fully included in the life of the school without stigma and to this end leads an excellent team that influences teaching and learning throughout the school as well as attitudes and behaviour. The special educational needs manager ensures that high quality individual education plans and annual reviews of statements are used very effectively in classrooms. She achieves this by keeping staff very well up to date on pupils' needs and the ways that difficulties can be overcome in lessons. She extends the expertise of staff within her team and in the school as a whole, monitoring and supporting the work of teachers in the event of their experiencing difficulties teaching pupils.

36. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs throughout the school has improved since the previous inspection, particularly because individual education plans are now used very well and there is now very good consultation between mainstream teachers and specialists in special educational needs. These factors contribute well to improving pupils' progress and to reducing underachievement noted at the previous inspection.

37. The general ethos of the school encourages good learning. Pupils are keen to acquire new skills and knowledge and are willing to learn at a good pace to achieve high outcomes. They concentrate well, apply themselves conscientiously and, when given opportunities, demonstrate independence in their learning. The vast majority of pupils show interest and enthusiasm in all aspects of their studies.

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

38. The school's curriculum is appropriately broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements in all National Curriculum subjects and religious education except for ICT. Every pupil does now have access to ICT throughout Years 7 to 11, but the school is still not meeting statutory requirements at either Key Stage 3 or 4. Although the elements of 'monitoring and measuring' and 'control and feedback' are included in the ICT scheme of work, planning in various subject areas, especially design and technology and science, do not yet allow pupils to experience these elements. The time allocated to French in Key Stage 3 is insufficient to enable the National curriculum programmes of study to be taught, but the school is aware of this issue and is planning to increase time allocation in the next academic year. In Year 9, all pupils are offered the Basic Food Hygiene course to help them to obtain part-time and full-time employment. Pass rates are very high.

39. The school has developed satisfactory schemes of work for all subjects and planning in Key Stage 4 is much improved, except for design and technology where staffing shortages and limited facilities result in inconsistency of curriculum opportunity. Subject schemes of work in mathematics, science, modern foreign languages, religious education and music cater well for higher attaining pupils. Schemes of work for other subjects are not as well developed in this area. There is an appropriate range of options available at Key Stage 4 and the school is developing work-related and vocational courses which provide good quality educational opportunities. However, not all pupils have equality of opportunity to these courses, as the work-related programme has only been developed to meet the needs of lower attaining pupils and the GNVQ manufacturing course is aimed at the higher attaining pupils. All pupils can follow a single award science course in Key Stage 4, but the double award is only available as an option course. These arrangements are unsatisfactory. There are good arrangements for all pupils to participate in work placements in Key Stage 4.

40. The current timetable of an eight lessons day is not efficient. The school is aware of this and plans to move to a six lessons day in the academic year 2001-02. The move to a 50 minutes lesson will enable staff to plan lessons more effectively. Literacy skills are now being taught well throughout the curriculum, although effective numeracy work is only evident in mathematics, science, design and technology and the Key Stage 4 work-related learning course. There is good provision for health education which includes sex and drugs education, and appropriate provision for careers education and guidance. Citizenship has been introduced recently into Year 7, and the school is planning for a wider introduction by reviewing current health education and careers education programmes and conducting a whole school audit to map potential contributions from all subjects. A draft policy for multi-cultural education is in place. Although art and design, music, health education, religious education and Key Stage 4 humanities provide good opportunities for pupils to learn about multi-cultural issues, provision across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. The school meets statutory requirements for religious education, but does not meet the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship. Nevertheless, the content of the planned weekly assemblies do constitute acts of collective worship.

41. The school makes outstandingly inclusive curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs, not excepting those with statements whose needs are provided for by additional resourced funding. Up to the age of fourteen, the majority of pupils are taught in classes of mixed ability with additional support provided by learning support assistants. In Key Stage 4, some pupils, on the recommendation of their teachers and in consultation with their parents, are disapplied from modern foreign languages and science to follow programmes appropriate to their needs in work-related learning. Others study a reduced programme of subjects at GCSE so that they can attend supported study lessons. Pupils'

choice of subjects in Key Stage 4 reflects their individual needs and attainments and where they do not take GCSE courses, their learning is accredited by the Duke of Edinburgh scheme, the Lincolnshire Key Stage 4 Employability Graduation Award and GNVQ. All pupils study some GCSEs depending on their needs and attainment. The development of courses within a highly inclusive ethos is an improvement since the previous inspection when the school collected large amounts of data on pupils but did not use them to direct resources in the best way. The school reviewed the curriculum in respect of pupils unlikely to benefit from a full programme of GCSE courses, and now uses data on pupils' progress to plan curricular provision.

42. The outstanding vision of the special educational needs manager is apparent in the inclusive special educational needs policy and evident in the school as a whole. For instance, there is an exceptional range and quality of lunchtime clubs for pupils who do and do not have special educational needs, many held in the Learning Support Base and many involving staff managed by the special educational needs manager. Teachers have learned to devise strategies to teach effectively pupils with a range of needs in their lessons and the deployment of learning support assistants in lessons at both key stages is exceptionally effective in promoting the inclusion of pupils in the curriculum. The special educational needs manager organises withdrawal to minimise the loss of curriculum entitlement whilst ensuring that their specific needs, including those identified in their statements, are met. The inclusive ethos promoted by the special educational needs manager is evident in the outstandingly positive attitudes in lessons and elsewhere in the school by pupils towards pupils who have special educational needs.

43. The school's values and aims are centred on providing pupils with opportunities to develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally and on providing a positive environment which creates a caring ethos where pupils can achieve success by working hard. Provision for the spiritual, moral and social development of pupils is good. In science, music and religious education pupils are encouraged to reflect and consider issues beyond the material and to develop their own beliefs and values. Assemblies and religious education lessons contain good opportunities for spiritual development. A range of moral issues is considered in most subjects of the curriculum, but particularly in English, science, French, physical education, health education and religious education. The ethos of the school also teaches pupils to distinguish between behaviour that is right and wrong. Many subjects promote and teach social development through good relationships between staff and pupils, co-operative and collaborative working situations, lessons on resolving conflict and the inter-dependence of individuals and groups in society. Provision for pupils' cultural development is adequate, although there are insufficient opportunities to gain insights into multi-cultural issues. In religious education, the cultural aspects of major world faiths are explored well and positive role models are offered from black people and different cultures.

44. The school offers a broad range of extra-curricular activities during lunch-time and after school. These include study support and homework clubs, specific coursework and revision classes for Year 11 pupils, sports and recreation clubs. Some activities are targeted at specific pupils, for example the 'Toe-by-Toe' supported reading club, run by parents and Year 11 prefects to improve the reading levels of some Year 7 pupils, and the self-esteem course for some Year 8 pupils. The large number of pupils who are bussed in to the school means that these pupils cannot easily attend clubs and subject support sessions immediately before or after school. There are good links with around twenty local firms to support the GNVQ manufacturing course and good relationships with The Prince's Trust, the Alford Youth Advice Centre, and with local sports clubs, leisure centres and sports coaches. Liaison with feeder primary schools and post-16 institutions is effective.

45. The school is committed to promoting equal opportunities for all and has a good

Equality of Opportunity policy covering all the relevant aspects. The school meets the requirements of the Sex Discrimination Act and the Race Relations Act. There is no access for wheelchairs in the older part of the building, however, there is specialist help and provision for pupils with hearing, speech, sight and other special needs. The school has had a survey conducted by the occupational therapist and the sight impaired service. These specialists have helped staff and pupils to understand all the relevant aspects of equal opportunities. Teaching assistants have been on courses specifically aimed at giving the correct support to boys and girls, and to a range of special needs.

46. Citizenship and health education courses cover all equal opportunities issues formally to ensure that all pupils are aware of current practice. There has been formal examination of issues of ageism and male and female leadership roles on the staff. Displays around the school suggest an awareness of an ethnically diverse society and all groups are represented in non-stereotypical ways. Pupils are made aware of and are sensitive to the needs of others. They are educated to be aware of world-wide inequalities in religious education and in personal and social education.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

47. Teachers and support staff know individual pupils very well, including those with special educational needs. Teachers respond to pupils in a positive and supportive manner. The school has in place effective procedures to promote good behaviour, including a clear unequivocal statement on anti-bullying, and to support effective behaviour management. These procedures are effective in helping to create an orderly climate in which learning is valued. There are comprehensive strategies to encourage good attendance, including first day telephone calls to parents. Current attendance rates are 90 per cent and above in Years 7 – 10 inclusive. Attendance falls well below 90 per cent in Year 11 and is a cause for concern.

48. The welfare of pupils is ensured through effective arrangements for dealing with illness and accidents, appropriate child protection procedures and the widespread promotion of health and safety. There are very good links with a range of outside agencies and support services, for example the Police, Youth Advice Centre, the Hearing and Visually Impaired Service and the Educational Psychologists. A new health and safety policy has been implemented with appropriate risk assessments now undertaken in all subjects, except design and technology. During the inspection week a number of minor health and safety issues were reported to the headteacher. Appropriate arrangements were put into place immediately to remedy these concerns.

49. Very good individual support is available for pupils on the special needs register, particularly those with statements and individual education plans. These plans contain specific targets and helpful strategies for teachers to use with individual pupils. Teachers, pupils and parents know these targets and the accompanying strategies are used to good effect. Excellent deployment and use are made of learning support assistants during the school day, including lunch-times. These assistants are often well qualified and provide a highly valuable resource which is enabling the school to become a very socially inclusive establishment. Withdrawals from lessons are targeted carefully to minimise loss of

curriculum time and there is a positive attitude throughout the school, from pupils and adults, towards pupils with special educational needs.

50. The school has made some improvements in the ways in which it monitors pupils' academic progress. More quality information is now readily available with which to identify pupils' starting points and their potential final attainments at the end of both key stages. This is allowing for a better match of work, in particular, for higher attaining pupils. Procedures are also in place by which student managers and tutors can consult subject leaders about the performance of individual pupils. As yet, there are no effective whole school assessment arrangements to identify how well individual pupils are making progress in relation to their potential and in relation to personalised targets, year on year. The school marking policy does not encourage teachers to mark according to National Curriculum levels or GCSE criteria. This results in pupils not being as clear as they might be in all subjects about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Targets set for pupils tend to focus on personal development, rather than on subject specific knowledge, skills and understanding. Annual reports of pupils' progress to parents do not indicate what pupils are doing well in subject-specific terms, where there are gaps in their knowledge and understanding, and what they need to do to attain better. Subjects are not using regularly significant assessments of pupils' progress to guide lesson planning and to review schemes of work, although there is good practice in special educational needs.

51. Academic mentoring processes are in the early stages of development. The Year 7 student manager mentors the higher attaining pupils in Year 7 individually, and the headteacher has meetings with all higher attaining pupils across the school. Targeted mentoring of pupils is in place in Year 11. All teachers and learning support assistants are assigned four pupils each. Pupils are grouped into four categories and staff are matched to groups so that mentoring sessions can be held with groups, as well as with individuals. Due to the very short tutor group meetings, much of this mentoring goes on at break and lunchtimes. This is placing an added pressure on staff and pupils. It is too early to assess the impact of these arrangements on pupils' attitudes to learning and attainment.

52. Pupils are identified appropriately as having special educational needs when they come to the school because of good links with their primary schools as well as assessments when they visit in Year 6. Teachers carry out more thorough assessments in Year 7 to gain better knowledge of pupils' strengths and weaknesses. Further assessment of pupils' needs results from the strong links established with parents and the special educational needs manager's close monitoring of pupils' progress through the curriculum.

53. For those pupils who need them, individual education plans with good targets are written. Teachers address these targets in their lesson plans and strategies. Pupils are well aware of their targets in lessons because they stick them into their diaries. Learning support assistants and teachers use these targets to motivate and reward pupils in lessons. The management of individual education plans between reviews is consequently very effective. It is used very well by all concerned and has significant impact on pupils' progress in lessons across the curriculum.

54. The school meets fully the statutory requirements of pupils with statements. Annual reviews are well organised and external agencies make high quality contributions to guide and support pupils. Very good specialist advice is given to pupils and parents by the staff of external agencies on dealing with problems arising from disabilities, extra help in examinations and post sixteen training and employment. It is rare that parents do not attend subsequent annual reviews despite a large number of families living some distance from the school. Following annual reviews, individual education plans are amended. The additional resources required in statements are deployed properly and all requirements are met. Good

arrangements are in place to liaise with the speech and language therapists who provide resources according to the needs of statements.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

55. Parents are generally supportive of the work of the school, more families are selecting the school for their children and it is now over-subscribed.

56. Almost half of the parents responded to the inspection questionnaire and 30 attended the parents' meeting. Parents expressed a number of concerns about the work of the school. These included poor behaviour, the lack of homework, the limited range of activities provided outside of lessons, general communication problems, and the leadership and management of the school. Inspectors judged most of these concerns to be ill-founded.

57. Behaviour in the school is very good and relationships are very secure. There is a good work ethos and lessons are planned carefully to incorporate appropriate homework assignments. In well over half of lessons, pupils are making good or better progress. They are making satisfactory progress in almost every lesson. However, annual reports of pupils' progress to parents are unsatisfactory in that they do not provide sufficient information about how pupils are developing subject-specific knowledge, skills and understanding, and what they need to do to make further improvements. There is an appropriate range of extra-curricular activities and these are well supported by pupils in all year groups.

58. Communications between the school and parents are satisfactory. The school's prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents now meet statutory requirements. There are regular newsletters and consultation evenings. Very good communication is maintained with parents of children who have learning difficulties and with those engaged in the Key Stage 4 work-related learning programme. Parents are very aware of and fully involved in setting pupils' targets before pupils come to the school because, exceptionally, the special educational needs manager attends pupils' annual reviews in Year 6. It is rare that parents do not attend subsequent annual reviews despite a large number of families living some distance from the school. Special progress evenings are held for parents of children in Years 7 and 10. The large number of lessons that most teachers teach leaves little time to respond to issues raised by parents during the school day. Nevertheless, the vast majority of teachers make every attempt to contact parents at lunchtimes or immediately after school. Pupils' managers are particularly conscientious about the way in which they liaise with families. The school is beginning to consult parents about major aspects of its work.

59. A significant number of major staffing changes have taken place in the last two years, including the appointment of a new headteacher. His excellent leadership qualities and the strong partnership that he has forged with the governing body and other key post-holders throughout the school, have been strong factors in eliminating the school's serious weaknesses. The school recognises that there is still much to achieve in helping parents to understand better what is taught in all year groups and in providing information about how they can contribute more effectively to their children's learning, both at school and at home. The use of homework diaries is inconsistent and there is more scope for curriculum evenings, the use of the school's resource centre and website.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

60. The determined and focused leadership of the headteacher is having a major impact on improving the school's standards and attainment in all years. In a short time, he has succeeded in creating an atmosphere that encourages high quality teaching and guidance, and a belief that success can be achieved by all pupils through working hard. The school now

has explicit aims and values that are contributing effectively to a culture in which education is valued by everyone. These aims and values are generally reflected in all of its work. They are resulting in an inclusive, learning culture that aims to develop every child's self-esteem and confidence.

61. The headteacher has established a well-conceived series of key intents for the continued future improvement of the school. These are articulated clearly in a helpful, annual improvement plan. In its present format, this is a temporary document, designed to build on the former post-Ofsted action plan, until the end of the financial year. The new longer term plan will need to incorporate sharper evaluation strategies and more specific criteria by which to judge success. More detailed subject improvement plans are also required, to a similar format. These will then provide a firm steer for the school's work. The senior leadership team understands fully the concept of school improvement and self-evaluation. Senior leaders have introduced good systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, teachers' planning and pupils' work. They are using the outcomes of these systems effectively to promote higher standards.

62. There has been a significant improvement in the range and quality of available data on pupils' starting points and their potential attainment. Senior and subject leaders analyse carefully pupils' information on entry to the school and are now using this information to set challenging targets at the end of Key Stage 4. More work is still required to develop whole school and subject assessment and recording systems in order to set targets for individual pupils and to monitor their progress across each year.

63. The roles of subject leaders and pupils' managers have been reviewed since the last inspection and now contain appropriate expectations about ensuring pupils' progress and attainment. There is a good cycle of meetings with a particular focus on raising standards. Subject schemes of work are developing well and contain planned opportunities for the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, and in most cases, specific activities to cater for higher and lower attaining pupils. The policy for special educational needs sets out clearly the arrangements for meeting pupils' special educational needs within the school's exceptionally inclusive ethos. It sets out a seamless transition between provision in the school and the provision additionally resourced by the local education authority. The policy is very effective in practice. It results in very high levels of awareness of the staged approach to special educational needs throughout the school. The special educational needs manager makes outstanding arrangements to support pupils with special educational needs. She has a clear inclusive vision and gives a firm and inspirational steer to the school's work. However, overall planning for the regular assessment of all pupils' progress and for the development of their ICT skills across the curriculum, is unsatisfactory. The current arrangements for the management of art and design are unsatisfactory.

64. The governing body is very supportive of the work of the school and the chair of governors sets a good example by liaising regularly with the headteacher and ensuring a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors are kept well informed about pupils' examination and test results, the quality of teaching and learning, provision for pupils with special educational needs, and monitor closely the impact of the school's long-term plans. Via a comprehensive committees' structure, they discharge effectively their statutory duties, although arrangements for a daily act of collective worship for all pupils are not yet fully in place. The governors' annual report to parents and the school's prospectus now meet the necessary requirements. In particular, the report complies fully with the special educational needs code of practice and makes clear provision for children with disabilities. More work is still required to ensure that annual reports of pupils' progress to parents contain specific comments and targets related to subject knowledge, skills and understanding. At the moment, the content of these reports is unsatisfactory.

Governors are setting appropriate targets for the performance of the headteacher and deputy headteacher, and have taken the steps to introduce a whole school performance management policy. They link well with the headteacher and senior leadership team to provide good educational direction for the work of the school and are confident in holding the school to account for making the desired headway.

65. There have been significant changes in the staff of the school during the last two years, 12 teachers have left and 17 have been appointed. There is now a good mix of experienced teachers and those relatively new to teaching, the majority of which are teaching to their specialisms. There are exceptions in religious education and in history and geography, although new appointments have already improved this situation for the beginning of the next academic year. The school employs a high number of support staff compared with schools nationally of similar size. They are very highly skilled with an exceptional range of qualifications. Learning support assistants, in particular, offer excellent support to the pupils with special educational needs, enabling them to access fully the curriculum and to make good progress. Administration staff are suitably qualified and are making an excellent contribution to the day-to-day organisation of the school. Despite an increase in the technician's hours since the last inspection, the amount of technical support to design and technology and ICT is still unsatisfactory. The headteacher's clearly articulated commitment to raising the standards of teaching and learning provides a focus for the work of the senior leadership team and subject leaders. Where weaknesses in teaching are identified, an appropriate range of training and staff development opportunities are provided. All staff new to the school, including newly qualified teachers, are given a thorough induction, incorporating individual support from assigned mentors and training in whole school, departmental and pastoral policies and practices. Teachers understand that pupils' learning is of paramount importance. The school's strategy for performance management is appropriate. All teaching staff have agreed targets with line managers and arrangements are in place for the monitoring of lessons and the quality of teachers' work.

66. The quantity and quality of accommodation is very good in English, French and special educational needs. It is good in physical education. Accommodation is unsatisfactory and having a negative impact on standards in science, design and technology, art and design, music and ICT. It is satisfactory in the other curriculum areas. Plans are in hand to improve the quality of accommodation in science, ICT and the art and design areas. There are some very good examples of display that enhance the quality of the learning environment in mathematics, French, music and ICT. There is good display in science, religious education, physical education, health education and careers education and guidance.

67. Resources for learning are satisfactory in the majority of subjects. They are very good in French and physical education. The Learning Support base is very well equipped with computers and has the facility to loan laptop computers to pupils to enable them to complete coursework to a good standard. Resource levels are unsatisfactory in geography and poor in ICT, religious education and music. The designate subject leader for religious education has compiled an action plan to improve the shortage of resources, the geography department has a rolling programme of investment in resources and there are actions in the music department's improvement plan to invest in classroom percussion and ICT equipment. The current computer to pupil ratio of 1:13 is well below the national average, but the school intends to invest in new equipment in the next financial year. The resources centre contains a wide range of materials to support the curriculum but, as at the time of the last inspection, is still under-used.

68. The school is working hard to reduce a small deficit budget and governors are confident about setting a balanced budget for 2001 – 2002. The finance manager, chair of the governors' finance committee and headteacher prepare thoroughly the draft budget and work

well together to monitor spending, providing accurate and termly reports for the full governing body. Procedures for financial control are very efficient and effective. The most recent audit report indicates that they are fully compliant with all regulations. The governors' finance committee has clear terms of reference and is well supported by the school's administrative staff, especially the finance manager. Proper accounting records are in place, with traceable transactions.

69. Spending per pupil on resources is above the national average. Provision for special educational needs gives very good value for money, an improvement since the last inspection. The allocation of capitation is transparent and based appropriately on pupils' numbers, with individual subject weightings. Budget holders have ready access to monitoring reports. The majority of departments are well resourced to deliver the National Curriculum, but the ratio of computers to pupils is unsatisfactory and well below national expectations. The provision and access to computers is insufficient to enable all pupils to develop the full range of ICT skills.

70. All sources of earmarked funding are accounted for separately and used for their intended purpose. These promote the aims and values of the school and are related to school improvement priorities. There is an identifiable link between the school's annual budget and improvement plan. Spending is monitored regularly, but there is little evaluation, at all levels, of the cost-effectiveness of decisions, by weighing inputs against outcomes, and the impact of actions. Best value principles are applied well by governors and the finance manager in the securing of resources and services, but less so by subject leaders. Considering the effectiveness of the school in improving standards, from an unfavourable intake, at above average costs, it provides satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

71. In order to sustain and improve further the school's standards of education, the governing body, in partnership with the headteacher, senior leadership team and general teaching staff should:

- (1) Continue to raise attainment but at a faster rate at GCSE grades 5+ A*-C and at National Curriculum levels 5 and beyond at Key Stage 3, particularly in English, mathematics and science.
(Paragraphs: 1-3, 6, 10-12, 14-17, 19, 72, 79, 85, 90, 97, 105, 110, 116, 127, 139)
- (2) Improve the use of pupil data to enable closer monitoring of individual pupils' progress and the setting of individual targets across all years.
(Paragraphs: 5, 32, 50, 62, 76, 84, 107, 115, 126)
- (3) Improve urgently curriculum provision in ICT and in art and design by:
 - ensuring that there are adequate ICT resources to service the curriculum;
 - developing a scheme of work which covers the full requirements of ICT Curriculum 2000, specifically in the areas of physical control, monitoring and measurement of the environment and computer assisted design and manufacturing;
 - teaching ICT throughout the curriculum;
 - improving the quality of teaching and learning in art and design;
 - providing a broad, balanced and stimulating curriculum for pupils following art and design courses in both key stages;
 - improving the range of resources and the learning environment for art and design.
(Paragraphs: 11, 16, 27, 29, 38, 63, 69, 74, 84, 86, 90-94, 96, 107, 113, 117, 121, 126, 132, 146)
- (4) Ensure that annual reports of pupils' progress to parents contain:
 - information about the progress that pupils are making in all the subjects of the curriculum, referring directly to knowledge, skills and understanding, and providing examples of strengths and weaknesses;
 - clear subject specific targets about what pupils need to do to improve their work.
(Paragraphs: 50, 57, 63, 76, 84, 94, 104, 115, 126, 144)
- (5) Provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.
(Paragraphs: 40, 63)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	175
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	53

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	21	35	37	6	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	507
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	81

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	22
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	153

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	20
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	16

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	9.6	School data	1.0
National comparative data	5.9	National comparative data	0.4

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2000	51	45	96

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	18	23	21
	Girls	23	16	18
	Total	41	39	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	43 (35)	41 (42)	41 (32)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	17 (2)	11 (13)	2 (3)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	13	23	24
	Girls	24	19	19
	Total	37	42	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	40 (36)	46 (48)	47 (53)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	11 (4)	12 (20)	9 (22)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (28)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	2000	41	35	76

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	9	37	39
	Girls	4	32	32
	Total	13	69	71
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	17.1 (24)	92.1 (92)	93.4 (97)
	National	47.4 (46.6)	90.6 (90.9)	95.6 (95.8)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	28 (31.6)
	National	38.9 (38.1)

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	16	75
	National		N/A

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	501
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	8	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)	30.25
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7– Y11

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked per week	292

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	21.6
Key Stage 4	19.4

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	1 266 457
Total expenditure	1 225 578
Expenditure per pupil	2 456
Balance brought forward from previous year	(19 840)
Balance carried forward to next year	(18 961)

Figures in parentheses indicate negative values

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	512
Number of questionnaires returned	240

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	33	51	10	6	0
My child is making good progress in school.	35	49	9	3	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	24	46	16	8	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	47	21	7	3
The teaching is good.	20	58	11	4	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	18	45	26	9	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	39	43	7	7	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	45	44	6	2	2
The school works closely with parents.	16	46	25	10	3
The school is well led and managed.	17	46	15	9	11
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	19	60	11	4	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	17	40	16	11	15

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

ENGLISH

72. In English the results of pupils are well below the national average at both Key Stage 3 and at GCSE. Results show that attainment at both key stages is also lower when compared with similar schools and secondary modern schools. However, there are indications that the attainment levels at Key Stage 3 are improving with the present intake. The results over the past three years show that trends in results are moving up and there are signs that there will be further improvement as a result of the introduction of National Literacy Strategy in Year 7 and the implementation of a much more structured approach to schemes of work.

73. At present some pupils at 16 are not entered for GCSE English but it is anticipated that the present cohort in Years 7 and 8 will be able to achieve at least a grade G in the examination. A target identified by the head of department is for all pupils to be entered for the GCSE English examination. All pupils on the special educational needs register are making good or very good progress. Pupils with statements are well supported and in some cases achieving at either the national expectation for their age or better. Lower attaining pupils at stages 1-3 on the register are making good progress. Higher attaining pupils are achieving at above the national expectation for their age. Within the schemes of work, opportunities are identified to meet the needs of both lower and higher attainers.

74. Since the last inspection there have been substantial improvements in the teaching of literacy at Key Stage 3 which are beginning to have a positive impact on the standards of achievement of pupils, especially in Years 7 and 8. The two summer schools held have been actively followed up when pupils have returned to school in the September. The oral skills of all pupils are better than their written skills and are at least in line with national expectations. Pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11 experience greater difficulty in writing what they know. In work seen in Key Stage 3 there is a marked improvement in writing, both in terms of content and presentation. Reading is also more in line with national expectations. Pupils in a Year 8 class were heard reading with fluency and expression and showing understanding of the humour in the text. There were examples of extended writing in both key stages which were well presented and fluent. These samples are reinforced by many others across all subjects at Key Stage 3. The use of language across the curriculum at Key Stage 4 is not as well developed. Pupils' use of ICT is unsatisfactory with little evidence of word processing or accessing information from ICT sources. Some pupils with access to computers have used them to access information, but this was limited and not always focussed. Opportunities for independent study are unsatisfactory, but there are indications that there has been some improvement since the last inspection. Overall achievement at Key Stage 3 is satisfactory, but unsatisfactory at Key Stage 4.

75. The quality of teaching in English is good. Teaching styles include whole class teaching, group work, pair work and some independent and individual working situations. A good variety of texts is used; poetry, prose and drama with good use being made of grammar text books. However, there is little evidence of texts which reflect the multicultural nature of society. In all but one of the lessons observed, good order was maintained throughout. Pupils work well, often without direct intervention being necessary. Where lessons are good or better, the pace and structure of the lesson meets the pupils' needs well. Some imaginative approaches are seen in respect of both drama texts and vocabulary work. A lesson with a group of predominantly lower attainers, working on a cross word exercise, was especially interesting. They were able to use prior learning and to develop their understanding of the vocabulary in an exciting way. There was the potential for disruptive behaviour but the

methods employed and the discipline expected by the teacher ensured that outcomes were very productive.

76. The staff teaching English are well qualified; they work as a team and have schemes of work which are appropriate at both key stages. Although schemes of work identify the need to provide for lower and higher attainers, they are not sufficiently detailed to describe what might be used for 'extension' work or less complex texts. The learning support assistant and the special educational needs co-ordinator provide valuable assistance in meeting the needs of pupils on the special educational needs register. The learning support assistant is well qualified and well prepared in lessons in which support is available. Pupils with statements and those on the early stages of the register are identified in teachers' mark books and individual education plans identify clearly the strategies to be followed to assist learning. Teachers mark work regularly and use helpful comments to assist further development. There is a need for greater consistency in applying the mark scheme when using National Curriculum levels and GCSE grades. Moderation of test and examination papers does take place and the consistency and accuracy of marking have improved since the previous inspection. Some pupils are given the opportunity for self assessment and evaluation of their work, both in written and in oral situations. Assessment of pupils' attainment is not yet satisfactorily used to determine future learning and individual targets are not being set. Annual reports of pupils' progress to parents are characterised by comments which refer to improvements in behaviour and not what a pupil is capable of doing, and how s/he might do better. Homework is regularly set, but the quantity and the quality needs to be defined more effectively if it is to reinforce and extend prior learning. Opportunities for reinforcing and developing pupils' numeracy skills are weak.

77. Pupils are generally well behaved and show a high level of self discipline which ensures that learning and teaching are not disrupted. Pupils in Key Stage 3 classes are enthusiastic and keen to learn. They participate well in discussions and are able to recall past learning. Oral contributions are pertinent and help to build on prior learning. Pupils understand the teachers' expectations in relation to good behaviour and also respect their peers in their responses. Pupils at Key Stage 4 are a little more reticent in some of their responses, especially at the age of 16. Those who do actively participate are fluent and constructive in their comments and responses to questions. Pupils show a willingness to learn and enjoy the literary texts being studied. Lessons in which learning is good or better showed a higher level of interaction and greater understanding of the tasks set. The one unsatisfactory lesson seen lacked pace and clear explanation of the purpose of the lesson. When pupils are given clear instructions and the lesson objectives are explained, they respond very positively. In some of the lessons, the objectives were written on the board and left throughout the lesson, then reflected upon at the end of the lesson as a checklist to measure how successfully pupils had achieved. This proved very effective. Pupils respect the efforts of others and, in one particular lesson, were especially supportive of a reticent member of the group, actively encouraging and praising effort. Pupils listen carefully to teachers and to their peers sharing ideas and information. In pairs and group work they are supportive and help each other, discussing ways of doing things and bringing their knowledge to the situation.

78. The leadership of the department is good and reflects a quiet determination to improve results at both the age of 14 and 16. There is a shared commitment to maintain good teaching standards and to improve the skills and abilities of all pupils. Key Stage 2 national curriculum test results are being used to predict possible results at Key Stage 3, and some of the higher attaining pupils are being identified. Predictions for GCSE are being made from outcomes of Key Stage 3 national tests. Strategies to improve the grades at the GCSE C/D boundary have not yet been identified. There is good integration of learning support which enhances the learning of lower attaining pupils and those with English as an additional language. The departmental handbook defines the expectations of both the school and the

department, providing a satisfactory support to teaching, together with the schemes of work. These schemes are being constantly reviewed. Teachers are identifying areas for further improvement as they teach and annotating the schemes for future use.

MATHEMATICS

79. Results of the 2000 national tests in mathematics show that 41 per cent of pupils attain the national expectation by the age of 14. This is well below average compared to similar schools and all schools nationally. It is below the average of secondary modern schools. By the age of 16, 21 per cent of pupils achieved the higher A*-C GCSE grades, compared with 33 per cent for secondary modern schools and 47 per cent of all schools nationally. This is well below the national average.

80. However, almost three out of four pupils make the expected or better than expected progress during their time in Key Stage 3. In lessons and in their work, pupils are developing their mental skills by being encouraged to recall quickly and explain their strategies for calculation. By the age of 14, pupils are making satisfactory progress, although few pupils are working at the higher levels. They have skills in plotting co-ordinates points in all 4 quadrants, can estimate and use different measures and have a sound knowledge of shape. Higher attaining pupils are developing their algebraic skills. They can solve equations, evaluate expressions, and understand different forms of average. Lower attaining pupils interpret data from simple graphs and charts, but their skills in manipulating number and solving problems are unsatisfactory. Pupils of all abilities do not explain their mathematical reasoning well in writing. Pupils make less than satisfactory progress over Key Stage 4. In lessons and in their work, lower and average attaining pupils continue to develop their number competence, through improved recall of facts and tables, but they rely too heavily on calculators when given a choice. The standards they achieve, particularly in understanding place value, fractions, and decimals and in algebraic manipulation, are below the national expectation. Pupils still have weaknesses in their written explanations, but their oral skills are improving. Higher attaining pupils have improved skills in using algebraic expressions to explain patterns they have found in their coursework. They can solve linear equations and problems involving gradient. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language is good.

81. The overall improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory, even though standards have not improved. Pupils continue to make progress and there is an improvement in numeracy skills across Key Stage 3. Pupils are more confident in explaining their own problem-solving strategies and using the 4 rules of number mentally. Across the curriculum the use of number is restricted to only a few subjects and is not yet satisfactory. Teachers of mathematics plan for pupils' differing abilities, highlighting how they provide work for and support lower and higher attainers. They use homework more frequently to reinforce skills. However, systems to monitor individual pupils' progress have not improved.

82. The overall quality of teaching is good. It is marginally better at Key Stage 4 than at Key Stage 3. In all lessons, the teaching is satisfactory or better and it is good or better in half of these lessons. Teachers have high expectations; pupils are continually challenged and are prepared well for examinations. Teachers are hardworking, plan well and have a good knowledge of their subject. Relationships are very positive and pupils' attitudes to and behaviour in the subject enable them to concentrate on their work and to make satisfactory progress over time. Teachers encourage pupils to explain and reason, give clear instructions that help pupils to move forwards and use classroom display, real contexts and tell stories to aid pupils' understanding. They emphasise key words, set objectives and the assessment of pupils' work informs their lesson planning. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs helps them cope well with number problems in preparation for life out of school. When

teaching is only satisfactory, it is due to teachers not following lesson plans, spending too long on a task, not using starter activities and reviewing the lesson without involving the pupils.

83. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in mathematics are good. The majority of pupils are keen to do well, attentive, concentrate and apply effort. They are willing to explain or try to explain their strategies and work well in groups when given the opportunity. All pupils are confident in asking questions and older pupils talk to adults maturely. Some average to lower attainers concentrate too long on presentation at the expense of mathematics. A minority of pupils who disrupt lessons are controlled well by the class teacher. Too many pupils arrive late for lessons.

84. There is a new head of subject since the last inspection who has rationalised the schemes of work, improved lesson planning, organised resources and identified a range of strategies to raise attainment. These initiatives are beginning to improve standards in the subject. Schemes of work are clearly cross-referenced to school numeracy and literacy strategies, lesson plans cater for all abilities and support pupils' personal development. The variety of recommended teaching approaches, however, is not always adopted. Teachers assess pupils regularly and accurately, but marking and reports to parents are not used consistently to tell pupils what they are doing well and what they need to do to improve. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Targets are being set, based on a wide range of information, but the specific use of data to monitor individual pupils' progress is not yet in place. The department now needs to take a greater involvement in monitoring its work. The use of ICT, the application of the National Mathematics strategy, pupil monitoring systems and improving the teaching of numeracy across the curriculum require improvement.

SCIENCE

85. Pupils enter the school at present with standards well below national averages in science. Standards of pupils entering the school more recently are higher than those in Years 10 and 11 at the time of their entry to the school. Standards at the age of fourteen are well below national averages for all schools in the four years 1997 to 2000. They were very low in comparison with similar schools in 2000. The proportion of pupils obtaining level 5 in Key Stage 3 national tests in 2000 was slightly below the average for secondary modern schools, but the overall standard was well below that for secondary modern schools, due to the absence of higher grades. Nevertheless, over the last four years there has been an improvement in science and this remains faster than the national rate. At sixteen, standards as measured in GCSE are well below those for all and similar schools in the period 1997 to 2000. However, the proportion of pupils obtaining the higher grades of GCSE has improved threefold during that time. Standards were low in comparison with secondary modern schools in 2000. Pupils are entered at sixteen for either double or single award science and this makes comparison with other subjects difficult. However, in 2000 standards in science were below those in mathematics and above those for English. The proportion of pupils being graded in science is close to the national average between 1997 and 2000. At both fourteen and sixteen, standards for boys are comparable with those for girls. There has been an improvement in standards, as measured in national tests, since the previous inspection took place in 1998.

86. Achievement is satisfactory at Key Stage 3 but unsatisfactory at Key Stage 4. All pupils' listening and speaking skills are good and pupils read out aloud instructions for investigations confidently. Pupils are given a wide range of opportunities to describe experimental methods with predictions, observations and conclusions. Pupils' standards of writing vary from accurate writing to some with errors and incomplete work. Some extended

writing for investigations is presented with the aid of word processors. There are good opportunities for the use of number and graphical skills throughout the course. Some pupils find difficulty in the choice of scales for graphical work and drawing the most appropriate line from the readings. All pupils are able to take measurements of time, temperature and distance to the required degree of accuracy for the experiment. Higher attaining pupils have standards in line with national averages in using these skills and the attainment of average pupils is lower due to inconsistencies in their use. Opportunities for the use of ICT are unsatisfactory.

87. Overall, progress of pupils at both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 is satisfactory. In Year 9, pupils investigate leaves for the presence of starch and are able to observe and note the changes of colour during the investigation. They realise the importance of a control experiment in which leaves are not exposed to light before the experiment. In Year 8, pupils learn the proper use of laboratory apparatus and procedures in neutralising an acid with an alkali, noting colour changes and then reclaiming the salt by evaporating the solution properly. In Year 11, pupils carry out investigations into the effect of forces and how these change the motion of objects; they investigate the time for chemical reactions to take place when conditions are changed. In investigations, pupils are able to review earlier attempts, consider improvements in approach and check on their predictions. Pupils with statements of special educational needs and lower attaining pupils without statements make good progress throughout the school with respect to their prior attainment and this is reflected in the high proportion of pupils being graded in GCSE. During the week of the inspection, these pupils received very good support from learning support assistants who work closely with teachers. Alternative work on the same topic is provided for them. Pupils for whom English is not the first language make good progress.

88. Teaching in science is good. This represents the most significant improvement since the last inspection report. Seventy five per cent of teaching is good or very good, the remainder being satisfactory apart from one lesson, when it was unsatisfactory. Teaching is well planned and related to schemes of work and the needs of pupils. Teachers' expectations are high and this encourages keen interest by pupils in their own learning. Class and time management of lessons is generally very good so that behaviour of pupils is good and they remain committed to studies throughout seventy five minute lessons. Good questioning techniques by teachers throughout lessons promote good learning by pupils. For example, a Year 10 class in studying the action of the kidneys was prompted to think not only of their action but also that of related parts of the body in the course of the lesson. A Year 7 class increased their understanding of the purpose and shape of birds' beaks by carrying out a simple experiment and then by studying pictures of different birds. On the rare occasion when class management was insecure this led to some inattention and chattering by pupils to the detriment of learning. Teachers mark written work by pupils in line with school policy. Pupils are confident to answer questions in class and pupils' answers are commented upon by teachers. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good. Although test results are related to national standards at both key stages, this is not so for routine class and homework. Consideration should be given to a wider use of national curriculum levels and GCSE grades to increase awareness by pupils of their standards as they approach national tests at the age of fourteen and sixteen. The department records test scores and has made a forecast of further increases in attainment at fourteen and sixteen. The evidence of this inspection is that the forecast is realistic. Homework is set on a regular basis, which is relevant to the topic of the lesson. Alternative homework is set at Key Stage 4 for the foundation and higher levels of GCSE. There is a lunchtime science club for younger pupils and older pupils have the opportunity of extra lessons in preparation for GCSE examinations. Year 9 pupils visit the Science Fair at Alton Towers to wider their interest in science.

89. Since the appointment of a new head of department three terms ago, leadership of science has significantly improved. It is now very good. All teachers work as a team, committed to high standards of teaching. They are given good technician support. Teaching is based on schemes of work which have been revised to promote investigations by pupils and which meet the requirements of the national curriculum. Teaching is monitored by the head of department and senior school leaders. Science now has good quality information on the progress made by pupils, but has not yet had the opportunity to use it in judging the effectiveness of departmental planning, due to the many changes this year. The present number of pupils taking double award science is too low and the arrangements made for double award science as an option subject are unsatisfactory. This is recognised by the school and plans are being made to alter the situation. The number of specialist teaching staff is satisfactory and teachers are properly deployed. Resources are used efficiently. However, accommodation is unsatisfactory. Some science teaching takes place outside laboratories in rooms well away from them. Of the three laboratories, one is in a demountable building. This is too small for experimental work in classes larger than twenty and is in need of refurbishment. The two remaining laboratories are sufficiently large for all classes but one is in need of refurbishment. The unsatisfactory nature of the accommodation is recognised by the school and the local education authority. Science has made good progress since the last inspection and has the capacity for further improvement.

ART AND DESIGN

90. Teachers' assessment for pupils at the age of fourteen show that at least half are working at a level below the average for the subject. Just over one third of pupils are at the expected outcome, with only one in ten working beyond this level. This is well below the national expectations and those for secondary modern schools. GCSE A*-C attainment of pupils, at the age of 16, is well below national averages and those for secondary modern schools. In 2000, 39 per cent of pupils achieved a grade A*-C at GCSE and all pupils entered for the examination were successful in achieving a grade A*-G. Results, although below average, show a consistent improvement since the last inspection.

91. In Year 7 pupils can, after considerable practice, manipulate paintbrushes to create simple Lowry figures. Folders show that sketchbooks are used regularly to draw simple images, but the quantity and quality of work is at an unsatisfactory level. In Year 8, pupils are making a small papier-mâché statue that should reflect images already created in folders. No reference is made to folder work and very little resemblance can be made to the proportions of the human torso. Pupils' work is of low quality in shape and construction. Folder work here shows good early skills in the blending of crayon and painting, however there is clear deterioration in the quality of work being produced with a considerable quantity of work unfinished and unmarked. Year 9 work shows better skills in the use of line and space in producing a card stencil for use in printing. Attainment in Year 11 is well below average, but whilst there is evidence of recent imaginative investigation with paint, pupils are ill-prepared for the forthcoming final examination. Work in Year 10 is more encouraging with pupils having completed their first assignment on 'Seasons'. Here outcomes are clearly related to the study of a famous artist's work and, although research is superficial, an influence can be observed in some finished pieces.

92. Pupils are restricted in their learning due to the overall unsatisfactory quality of the teaching. Although pupils in Years 7 and 8 enjoy their work, the pace of lessons and the expectations of pupils in making a simple paper sculpture, are low. During one Year 7 lesson, however, pupils' understanding of depth in a painting was reinforced well by a sound introduction, and by using a rich subject related vocabulary, pupils became confident in identifying the important aspects of L S Lowry's industrial paintings. In Years 10 and 11, understanding of famous artists and movements is unsatisfactory and practical work is

narrow due to the selection of projects. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language, make adequate progress. Resources to support individual pupils' learning are mainly in the form of books and posters. No ICT facilities or resources are readily accessible. Personal studies are not sufficiently focused to engage pupils in research and investigations. Work produced is superficial, lacks depth and, in most cases, shows insufficient quality in the application of media.

93. Very little progress has been made since the last inspection. GCSE attainment is still well below national averages and those for secondary modern schools, and pupils at 14 are not reaching expected levels. Progress in learning for higher and lower attaining pupils remains low. Drawing skills are not developing at the required rate. The knowledge and understanding of Key Stage 4 pupils have not changed and they still require substantial guidance in preparing for the public examinations. Teaching is still unsatisfactory despite the significant levels of support and guidance provided by the school and local education authority.

94. The overall quality of teaching is unsatisfactory. There are weaknesses in demonstrating to pupils what is expected of them and low expectations regarding the quality and quantity of finished work. The general pace at which pupils learn is unsatisfactory. Often, lessons are not prepared in depth and the management of pupils is weak. Whilst relationships and general interactions with individual pupils are satisfactory, the learning environment does not encourage a positive and enthusiastic approach from pupils of all ages and abilities. The teaching of basic skills, particularly literacy and numeracy skills, is unsatisfactory. Assessment procedures reflect the whole school policy. Although marking of work does include comments for improvement, some work remains unmarked for many weeks. Annual reports of pupils' progress to parents lack detail of what pupils do well and what they need to do to further improve their work.

95. Pupils are generally enthusiastic and work together well to share resources. In all lessons relationships are positive with few instances of serious misbehaviour. Pupils are keen to do well at both key stages and recent classes given by a visiting artist for Key Stage 4 pupils, both after school and on Saturdays, have been well attended. The care shown to store folder work is disappointing. Appropriate homework is set and completed regularly.

96. The leadership of art and design is weak with a temporary teacher in post, at present. Schemes of work are being updated and reflect the National Curriculum guidelines. As yet, they are not referenced to the attainment target or levels for assessment purposes. Insufficient thought has been given to the balance of work to support two and three-dimensional studies and opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural qualities. Documentation to support the work of the department is unsatisfactory with many key policies missing from the handbook. The quantity of resources to support the schemes of work are insufficient and the quality of provision unsatisfactory. The learning environment is poor with very little interesting display to enrich and excite pupils. Many outdated projects litter the classroom, taking up valuable space which can be utilised far more effectively for storage purposes.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

97. When GNVQ manufacturing results are added to the design and technology results, attainment of pupils at the age of sixteen is below national averages, but above those of secondary modern schools. In 2000, 43 per cent of pupils achieved a GCSE grade A*-C and 94 per cent of pupils gained A* - G grades. Girls are achieving better at the higher levels than nationally. Teachers' assessment for pupils aged 14 in 2000, however, shows that only

42 per cent of pupils are working at national expectations or beyond. Over 90 per cent of pupils entered for the Basic Food Hygiene Award were successful at the end of Year 9.

98. Attainment in lessons at Key Stage 4 reflects this picture with pupils studying GNVQ manufacturing achieving at the higher levels. In graphics, most pupils are aware of their target grades, but are not yet producing work of which they are capable. Practical work suffers from a lack of fine detail in presentation and a narrow range of quality materials. The storage of larger projects is problematic in ensuring that they are not damaged whilst other groups are working. Many pupils find the cramped workshop conditions difficult in constructing their final project. In food technology, pupils achieving better. They can write a succinct report to describe their progress to date in the manufacture of a food product. A number of pupils can use nutritional guidelines confidently to work out the nutritional value of their products. Each pupil has an assessment profile at hand by which they can judge their present level of attainment. A small number of pupils are using this effectively to improve their work.

99. Although attainment across Key Stage 3 is below the national average, there are clear signs that pupils are beginning to work, especially in folders, at a level more in line with their ability. The folder work of most pupils shows a conscientious approach and good presentation. There is good use of a subject-related vocabulary in support of the school's literacy strategy and evaluation skills are strong. Practical work is more inconsistent. In a Year 8 class, where pupils are building bridges as part of a team, the majority can name the different members of a bridge, talk about the different forces in each member and construct with satisfactory attention to accuracy. In a Year 9 class, where pupils are making a mechanical face, their understanding of the materials that they are using is unsatisfactory. The use of tools, although not dangerous, is also unsatisfactory and the production of a template for manufacturing purposes below age-related expectations. Some pupils in Year 7 display close attention to the quality of their food products, when producing a fruit salad, and go on to complete a dish that is attractive and well-finished. Pupils' making skills are generally at a lower level than those shown in design and folder work. Pupils who have statements of special education needs and English as an additional language are well supported and achieve at the appropriate level.

100. There has been a significant improvement in GCSE results, since the last inspection, with the introduction of the GNVQ part 1 intermediate manufacturing course. This has raised attainment at grades A* - C to above the average for secondary modern schools. GNVQ lessons are very well presented with pupils accessing ICT equipment as and when necessary. Teaching styles engage pupils in their own learning and self and peer assessment is an integral part of their work. However, attainment for pupils at the age of 14 remains below national expectations. No changes to the accommodation have been made. The graphics and textiles areas are now too small for the size of group being taught. Overall access to technician support is still unsatisfactory, although a very good level of support is provided in the time available. The length of lessons has now been extended to give pupils double periods in most cases. This is enabling more time to be spent on the development of essential skills. Progress of pupils in Year 7 is now restricted due to a reduction in teaching time this year.

101. The majority of pupils make sound progress in most lessons. It is good where the teaching strategies give pupils increased independence in the tasks set. In a Year 7 class making a fruit salad, the boys showed interest in their practical work, they improved their understanding of the need for quality in producing their product and worked at a good pace. In the Year 8 class which was building bridges, pupils worked at a good pace, showed confidence in what they are doing, and moved around the classroom to access equipment

and folders in a sensible manner. They were fully aware of the time available for the completion of their project and were working efficiently to that deadline. In a Year 9 textiles class, pupils had a clear understanding of what was expected, had the relevant resources with which to achieve expected outcomes and were clearly motivated by the class teacher to work to those ends. Their work was purposeful with good progress in practical and folder work. Most progress can be seen in GNVQ manufacturing lessons, especially in Year 11. Here, pupils are aware of what is expected and have a clear strategy for improving and completing their work. In other Year 11 lessons, learning is less effective due to inconsistency in the completion of GCSE coursework.

102. Teaching is satisfactory or better in the vast majority of lessons. Just under a third of teaching is good or better. Where teaching is good, the lesson is well planned, a good range of well-sequenced activities is in place, pupils are clear of what is expected of them and teachers' interaction with pupils leads to improvement. In a Year 9 textiles lesson, all pupils are aware of the expected outcomes of the lesson due to the learning objectives set out on the blackboard and shared with the group. The teaching continues to refer to these objectives as the lesson progresses and individual discussions with the pupils also encourages evaluation of progress in relation to desirable outcomes. In a Year 7 graphics group, good teaching is evident through the conscientious level of preparation. Pupils' work and drawing equipment are already laid out as pupils arrive and a good, prompt start is achieved through a simple activity being given to pupils whilst the register is marked. Good use of subject-related language and praise to reward pupils' answers reinforces the enthusiasm that pupils show for design and technology. Learning support assistants are deployed effectively in supporting lower attaining pupils and those with statements of special educational needs. Good relationships are evident between all teachers and the great majority of pupils within the department. Where teaching is only satisfactory, some teachers are slow to deal with noise levels and the classroom management of large groups in small rooms presents unforeseen difficulties. One lesson was judged unsatisfactory due to a lack of clear understanding of health and safety procedures. All permanent teachers have good subject expertise that is being used effectively to support pupils to succeed.

103. Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are at least satisfactory in all lessons. In just under half of the lessons they are good and sometimes very good. Pupils of all ages enjoy design and technology. The vast majority of pupils are interested in their work and generally sustain concentration for the full length of the lesson. Most pupils work safely and show respect for equipment and each other. They work well together both within teams and as individuals. Movement in class is invariably purposeful and pupils collaborate well during end of lesson activities to tidy their work spaces. The attitudes of pupils to homework is positive and most complete their work on time.

104. At present, two teachers are sharing the leadership of design and technology, due to the long-term absence of the head of department. This arrangement has resulted in very little development work being undertaken during the last nine months and no monitoring and evaluation of teaching, other than by members of the senior leadership team. However, a data-base has been introduced for the recording of pupils' assessed work, at both key stages and, although this does not yet relate to National Curriculum levels at Key Stage 3, it does provide an approach for monitoring the progress of pupils across the department. Marking is unsatisfactory overall in identifying individual pupils' strengths and weaknesses, and in providing clear strategies for improvement. Schemes of work have not been fully re-written to reflect the latest National Curriculum Orders, to ensure that all pupils have an entitlement to wider subject experiences, and to reduce the length of projects in Years 7 and 8. A common layout for documentation is not yet used by all teachers within the department. Annual reports of pupils' progress to parents do not give sufficient information about what pupils do well and what they need to do better in order to continue to make progress. The department is in a

good position to develop further pupils' skills in the use of computer-aided design and manufacture, with the recent purchase of a computer controlled milling machine and sewing machine. At present this equipment is not being utilised due to a lack of staff expertise and identified opportunities in curriculum planning. The overall levels of resources are inconsistent, both in quantity and quality. Materials to support teaching in resistant materials, graphics and control are insufficient and are of an unsatisfactory quality. Hand tools are particularly in need of up-dating. Resources in the other strands of the subject are appropriate, although food technology would benefit from a wider range of new technological equipment. Health and safety procedures and hygiene are satisfactory, although the department has not yet provided written risk assessments for all areas. It is clear that teachers are giving oral guidance during lessons, but this now needs to be documented. There is no provision of demarcation lines or barriers around machinery to give greater protection for the user, as there is no non-slip flooring in these areas. Technician support remains insufficient in the number of hours available, but quality support is provided in the available time.

GEOGRAPHY

105. Since the last inspection, there has been some improvement in the outcomes of pupils in Years 7 to 9, although attainment by pupils at the age of 14 is still below national expectations. In Years 10 and 11 standards have fallen since the last inspection. GCSE results at A*-C in 1999 were very low compared with national averages and those for secondary modern schools. There was no improvement in 2000, although all pupils entered achieved a grade A*-G. Within the school, geography results are lower than those of other curriculum areas.

106. Throughout Key Stage 3 pupils make satisfactory progress. They make less than satisfactory progress at Key Stage 4. In Year 9, higher attaining pupils make good progress and achieve standards in line with their abilities. When comparing the level of development in a range of countries, they are able to make and test hypotheses using statistical data on life expectancy, gross domestic product per capita, adult literacy and patient doctor ratios. In mixed ability classes, however, there is not enough opportunity for higher attaining pupils to work at higher National Curriculum levels and little use is made of their abilities to raise standards within the group. Pupils of average ability make satisfactory progress. They are able to use geographical terms correctly when describing industrial location, settlement patterns and river systems. Written work reinforces learning and includes some pieces of extended writing. Pupils with lower levels of attainment, those on the special educational needs register and those with statements, make good progress. Pupils with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. The help that pupils receive from learning support assistants and classroom teachers is effective in enabling them to understand and complete pieces of work. Written work is of a good standard and pupils are able to describe geographical patterns clearly, as when talking about the water cycle.

107. Across Key Stage 3 teaching is at least satisfactory. Teachers prepare lessons carefully ensuring that subject matter meets the needs of most pupils. Teachers and pupils are clear about the overall aims of lessons, but not the detail of specific learning objectives; for example, the change through time to the factors influencing industrial location. This hinders progress. However, introductions to lessons incorporate good questioning to recap on previous knowledge and earlier studies, and to develop the use of geographical vocabulary. Pupils enjoy demonstrating what they know, for example in considering the conflicting demands of conservation and tourism, and in answering questions confidently and sometimes at length. There are some good examples of work sheets that allow higher attaining pupils to extend their knowledge and to enquire more deeply into the subject matter, as when considering the wider economic consequences of flooding in Bangladesh. More still

needs to be done to ensure that there is consistent planning to meet the needs of these pupils. The relationships between pupils and teachers are good and classes are managed well. Teaching is less secure at Key Stage 4, particularly in Year 10. The aims of lessons are not made sufficiently clear and teaching strategies are inappropriate to pupils' needs. As a consequence, discipline is unsatisfactory. Poor behaviour from a significant minority of pupils slows the pace of lessons and greatly impedes the progress of the majority. Year 11 teaching is satisfactory. A revision lesson showed that pupils had, as a consequence of this better teaching, fully understood the role of tectonic plates in earthquake activity, the impact of earthquakes, and the relationships between the size of earthquake measured on the Richter scale, location of the epicentre and damage or loss of life. Teachers are consistent in their efforts to improve literacy. All questions are answered in sentences, key words are featured in display and exercise books contain some examples of pieces of extended writing. The department makes some contribution to the use of numeracy skills through its work on data analysis and the use of graphs to display information on world climates. It makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through lessons on the impact of human activity on the natural environment. Exercise books are regularly marked but do not contain enough guidance to pupils about their subject strengths and what they must do to improve. A new system of pupil self-assessment has been introduced in Key Stage 3, but has yet to have an impact on levels of attainment.

108. Most pupils show an interest in the topics that they are studying. They arrive promptly to lessons and prepare quickly for work. The majority are keen to volunteer to read and answer questions. Most complete all the work set in lessons. They use the local library and the internet when searching for information to complete homework tasks. Written work is neatly presented and maps and diagrams are completed with care.

109. The faculty is recovering from a period of instability. This has resulted in few improvements being made since the last inspection to classroom learning styles and to the use of assessment outcomes to set targets and to monitor individual pupils' progress. GCSE humanities is being taken by a small number of pupils for the first time this year, and this subject is already making a very strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social, cultural development through the study of cultures and beliefs, the conflicts that can occur between cultures and the ways in which such conflicts can be resolved. Interim arrangements are in place for the management of the teaching of geography across Key Stage 3, and some progress has been made in monitoring the work of the department. New books have been purchased to facilitate the implementation of new schemes of work, but the overall quantity and range of learning materials are unsatisfactory. No opportunities are provided for pupils to develop and improve their ICT skills. Improvement planning is weak. The department must now, as a priority, look to improve the standards of attainment reached by all pupils when aged 14 and 16.

HISTORY

110. Teachers' assessments show that pupils' attainment by the age of 14 is well below national averages. GCSE outcomes for pupils aged 16, at the higher levels, have declined over the past three years and are well below national averages and those for secondary modern schools. GCSE attainment of the full ability range has improved since the last inspection, with 100 per cent of pupils achieving a grade A*-G. Attainment at this level is now above national averages and those for secondary modern schools.

111. Overall, achievement in lessons is unsatisfactory. Across Key Stage 3 pupils develop their historical knowledge, their use of sources to answer specific historical questions and their understanding of cause and motive. Year 7 pupils can explain, for example, why castles were built following the Norman Conquest and the factors influencing their location. Schemes

of work indicate increased opportunities for pupils to use primary sources to carry out investigations and to explain different historical interpretations. Pupils' work, however, shows that these skills, as at the time of the previous inspection, are not well developed. Achievement in lessons at Key Stage 4 remains below expectations. Progress made by pupils in most lessons at Key Stage 3 is sound. At Key Stage 4, progress is inconsistent and directly related to the quality of teaching. Pupils with special educational needs, however, make good progress across both key stages. Pupils with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress.

112. The quality of teaching is more variable than at the time of the previous inspection. At Key Stage 3 it ranges from good to unsatisfactory but is satisfactory overall. At Key Stage 4 it is satisfactory overall. In the best lessons the pace of learning is good. Lessons are planned around key questions with teachers identifying and communicating precise learning objectives and using these to gauge the extent of pupils' learning at the close of the lesson. This practice, however, is not yet consistent. There are occasions, also, particularly at Key Stage 4 when the pace of learning is slow, discussions are teacher dominated and there is little involvement of pupils. Teachers have good subject knowledge and most use questioning techniques effectively to determine the level of pupils' understanding and to extend their thinking. There is no evidence of pupils being required to copy. This is an improvement since the time of the previous inspection. Relationships are good and pupils have positive attitudes to history. But, as at the time of the previous inspection, the range of teaching and learning styles restricts opportunities for pupils to participate in pair or group work or for them to develop the skills needed to promote independent learning. Knowledge of, and support for pupils with special educational needs, particularly pupils with statements of special educational needs, is very good. Learning support assistants and resources are well targeted and teachers intervene effectively to ensure good progress. Planning, to ensure that higher attaining pupils are extended in their learning, is less consistent. Teachers are not using sufficiently the National Curriculum descriptors to pitch work at appropriate levels and to ensure that additional tasks extend rather than consolidate learning. As at the time of the previous inspection, therefore, the progress of higher attaining pupils is sometimes less than satisfactory. The use of homework to reinforce and extend learning also remains inconsistent. The marking of pupils' work, in most instances, is regular and according to school policy, but is insufficiently focussed on performance against National Curriculum levels or GCSE criteria to provide pupils with effective guidance on what they need to do to improve their historical skills. Much of the marking therefore remains uninformative.

113. Good attention is paid to the development of pupils' basic literacy skills. All members of the department are careful to explain and reinforce key historical language and support this through display of key words and useful sentence starters. Support for the development of numeracy, although planned in schemes of work, is less evident in practice. The use of ICT to develop and extend historical understanding is unsatisfactory, as is the use of fieldwork.

114. Pupils' attitudes to learning are predominantly good at Key Stage 3 and at least satisfactory at Key Stage 4. The vast majority of pupils are well prepared for lessons, remain attentive and display positive attitudes towards their work.

115. The department is in a stage of transition. As at the time of the previous inspection gaps in staffing and the use of non-specialist teachers make it difficult to build expertise and achieve consistency. The new head of department has improved the range of book resources and there is now less reliance on the use of worksheets, although the predominant use of work sheets is still an issue in Years 8 and 10 where there are still shortages of appropriate texts. The acting head of humanities has begun to develop schemes of work and to introduce common assessment tasks, but much of this work is embryonic. Schemes of work, for example, lack precision in intended learning outcomes. The use of the common

assessment tasks is also inconsistent and unhelpful in ensuring the accuracy of assessments at the end of a key stage. Currently, the department does not have the processes in place to monitor individual pupils' progress against their potential in a systematic manner. It is not in a position, therefore, to intervene at an early stage if pupils are underachieving. Although the structure of annual reports of pupils' progress to parents has improved, subject specific comments and targets for improvement are insufficiently focused on the development of specific historical skills, knowledge and understanding. There is insufficient focus on raising standards and developing assessment and monitoring procedures. Success criteria lack specificity, resource implications are not costed and there is insufficient detail on procedures for monitoring and evaluating the key actions.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

116. Standards reached by pupils at the age of 14 are below those expected nationally. Pupils are beginning to use computers more confidently, but keyboard skills are low. In Key Stage 4, most pupils follow a GCSE short or long course in ICT. No pupils gained GCSE higher grades, A*-C, in 2000. This is poor compared to similar schools, secondary modern schools and all schools nationally.

117. Achievement at Key Stage 3 is unsatisfactory. In Year 7 pupils can create a questionnaire on canteen food and in Year 8 a database of its results, including some pop-up menus. Pupils in Year 9 are beginning to understand the value of a spreadsheet and are modelling a simple wages bill, by entering values and formulae. These skills are developing, but pupils do not yet have the ability to apply them independently in ICT lessons or in other subjects of the curriculum. Higher attainers are able to present information in a range of bar and pie charts. With support, lower attaining pupils are able to achieve similar outcomes to their peers. Pupils do not achieve well in control technology or monitoring of the environment due to the lack of opportunities across the curriculum and insufficient resources. At Key Stage 4 achievement is satisfactory. Work seen during the inspection indicates some current higher attaining pupils have the potential to achieve the expected grades by the age of 16. These pupils have a better understanding of the uses of computer systems to manage small businesses. They use desktop publishing techniques effectively to produce colourful leaflets to advertise their business, a data-base to analyse a market research survey and a spreadsheet to plot results on a graph. Most pupils, including some with special educational needs, present work using more sophisticated image and text combinations and manipulate stored data. Nevertheless, the extent of formatted writing is narrow. There are far too few opportunities to use ICT effectively in all other subjects. This is a serious weakness. The inadequacy, for example, of resources to teach measurement and control restricts pupils' attainment in these aspects of the subject.

118. Improvements since the previous inspection have been restricted to the use of assessment to inform planning. The school has not kept pace with changes to the National Curriculum and the increasing levels of resources required to service the new curriculum. This is unsatisfactory. The capacity to improve depends upon the provision of resources, technical support and the capability of the new ICT manager to plan the development and implementation of ICT in all subjects.

119. The quality of teaching is good overall. Two-thirds of lessons are good and the remainder are satisfactory. Teachers use their subject knowledge to plan interesting and motivating lessons. Information and instructions are clearly communicated and are often supported by good quality transparencies which enable pupils to see exactly where and how to enter data. Teachers recognise the need to develop skills before pupils can work independently. Consequently, whilst pupils are encouraged to design and research for themselves, they are carefully guided in their use of the computer. Planning and teaching

emphasise key words and spelling and support the development of numeracy skills in algebra and data handling. Commercial homework sheets are marked regularly, as is coursework at Key Stage 4. Criteria for marking is beginning to be shared with pupils, and whilst the assessment of pupils informs teachers' planning for the next lesson, there is limited use of assessment to monitor individual pupils' progress against their personal targets for attainment. Teaching appears better than achievement due to the lack of opportunities for pupils to make progress across the curriculum.

120. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and they work purposefully under teacher direction. They understand the standard of behaviour expected of them in the ICT room and treat equipment with respect. Relationships in lessons are good and pupils are always willing to take new ideas and apply them, often helping each other. In Key Stage 4, in particular, pupils are developing independent learning skills and have a mature attitude to work. This was especially evident where GNVQ pupils applied skills learned in manufacturing to their GCSE ICT studies. As yet, many pupils do not have sufficient awareness of the potential of ICT to support their own learning, entering text and data into the computer without considering whether it makes sense or is accurate.

121. Leadership of the subject has just changed. The new post-holder is making good progress in curriculum planning and teaching which can be seen in improving classroom standards. However, prior to this, leadership had been unsatisfactory. The number of computers in the school is now well below national averages, the staff is only just beginning training in the use of computers in subject areas and there is insufficient development and co-ordination of ICT across the curriculum. With limited access to a technician, the time available for management activities and the support of teaching of ICT in other subjects, is restricted. The school recognises its resourcing problems and plans improvement.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French

122. End of key stage assessments and standards of work seen indicate that attainment in French, by pupils aged 14, is above national expectations. In lessons, pupils in Year 9 can carry out a survey to find out how their friends spend pocket money, making reference to recent purchases, future plans and everyday interests. They make themselves understood with little difficulty, using key phrases, with approximate pronunciation and intonation, to seek and convey information. The range of extended writing assignments has improved significantly since the last inspection. Pupils are able to write about holiday experiences using simple past tense, imaginative pieces about famous people in the present tense, and future plans, using simple sentences in short paragraphs that convey easily meaning. They show confidence in scanning short, factual texts, such as holiday brochures, using dictionaries judiciously to check the meaning of unfamiliar language. Schemes of work include regular opportunities for pupils to manage speech at near natural pace, for example listening to arrangements to go to the cinema, and for particular details to be noted, with some repetition. By the age of 16, all pupils entered for the full GCSE course gain at least a grade A*-G. These outcomes are above national averages and those for secondary modern schools. The number of pupils attaining A*-C grades is in line with national averages and above those for secondary modern schools. Almost three quarters of pupils, however, are not entered for the full GCSE award. Those who are entered for the short course achieve higher than national averages at A*-C grades and in line with national outcomes at grades A*-G. Teachers of French recognise the need to make provision for more pupils to study for the full award. The nature of most of the linguistic tasks in Years 10 and 11 allows pupils to achieve appropriately. Standards are in line with national expectations. Those with special educational needs and English as an additional language make good progress across both key stages.

This is largely due to the excellent support provided by learning support assistants and the effective way in which specialist teachers meet the needs of pupils' individual education plans.

123. Since the last inspection, attainment across both key stages has improved. Teachers now use National Curriculum attainment levels and GCSE criteria regularly in lessons to involve pupils in their learning and to share short-term improvement targets. Pupils make more progress over time in writing, especially by the time they complete GCSE coursework, where there is a good sense of audience and purpose, a competent organisation of ideas and a developing use of tenses. As early as in Year 7, there are many examples of short personal accounts, simple descriptions and brief diary extracts, in simple paragraphs, with easily understandable spelling.

124. Pupils make at least good progress in their learning in almost two out of three lessons across Key Stage 3 and in half of the lessons at Key Stage 4. Achievement is good at Key Stage 3 and satisfactory at Key Stage 4. In a Year 7 lesson, for example, they use previously learnt personal details, add two or three new characteristics, to produce simple descriptions of well-known personalities. By Year 9, they persevere well to use questions, as well as convey simple opinions, to exchange information in small groups and pairs about the use of pocket money. In Year 10, they spend high levels of time on task during independent activities focused on the French banking system, learning key language to change currency, as well as understanding the nature of exchange and commission rates. In Year 11, they grow in confidence to identify key points from aural, then written texts, about healthy eating.

125. Teaching is rarely less than satisfactory, predominantly good and often better. Teachers of French are well qualified, have very good linguistic knowledge and understanding, and enjoy very good relationships with pupils of all ages and abilities. They work well as a team and are fully committed to stimulating lessons to raise classroom standards. They ensure that all four language skills are covered regularly and provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to practise two or more of these skills in combination. Good attention is paid to pupils' use of key words, to the accuracy of spellings, to handwriting and overall presentation of written work. The use of the overhead projector, flashcards, mime and gesture, is particularly effective in sustaining the use of French as the main language for teaching and learning in most groups. Lesson planning is satisfactory, with clearly sequenced tasks and appropriate learning objectives. Where objectives are more general, focusing less specifically on linguistic skills and understanding, teaching is less challenging and restricts pupils' progress. There are insufficient occasions where National Curriculum levels are identified in weekly planning, and where opportunities to develop pupils' numeracy and ICT skills are articulated in detail. Teachers usually share learning objectives at the beginning of lessons and incorporate plenary sessions, at the end of lessons, to review the progress that pupils make. Some plenaries focus more on general content than on specific skills developed or understanding gained. This is a weakness. At present, higher and lower attaining pupils in many lessons are completing similar work, but are provided with additional support via learning support assistants, glossaries and specific frameworks, and additional time to meet their learning needs. All pupils are provided, generally, with time to practise and develop skills individually, in pairs and in small groups, although the 35 minutes lesson time does not always allow for as much practice time as is desirable.

126. The leadership of the subject is highly effective in providing very clear educational direction. Annual improvement plans include appropriate priorities, amongst which are to improve the access of all pupils to ICT and to increase entry to the GCSE full course. Nevertheless, criteria for judging the success of such priorities, and arrangements for the monitoring and evaluation of key actions, are weak. Schemes of work have been re-written at Key Stage 3 to reflect the requirements of Curriculum 2000 and now contain sufficiently

challenging activities to guarantee progression throughout Years 7 – 9. Similar approaches are scheduled for Key Stage 4 schemes. Good opportunities are planned for contributions towards pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. There are effective arrangements for visits abroad which enhance further the cultural dimension of the department's work. Pupils' individual educational plans and statements of special needs are used well to guide teachers' long and short-term planning, and specific activities have been identified to stretch high attainers. Arrangements for the assessment and recording of pupils' National Curriculum progress are satisfactory. There is good analysis of pupils' attainment at GCSE, taking into account end of Key Stage 3 starting points. As yet, not all pupils, in every year group, are set specific targets for end of year attainment, and annual reports of pupils' progress do not entirely meet statutory requirements. They do not contain sufficient subject information about pupils' strengths and weaknesses, nor do they contain specific targets to develop pupils' linguistic skills. The marking of pupils' work is regular and up-to-date. Comments on what pupils have done well and on what they need to do to achieve better, are not widespread. Formal systems for the monitoring of teaching and learning and for judging the outcomes of pupils' work, are in place. There is no subject handbook, however, to ensure consistency of practice in all areas of the department's work.

MUSIC

127. Pupils' attainment at Key Stage 3 is in line with national expectations and levels have been maintained since the last inspection. GCSE results at grades A*-C are below national averages and those for secondary modern schools. Standards in work seen across both key stages are satisfactory. By the age of 14, pupils can create simple compositions, on keyboards, using a variety of stimuli as a starting point. In one lesson for example, pupils compared and contrasted short excerpts of music from a range of cultures: Aboriginal, Indian, Spanish and West Indian, before using some of the ideas identified to compose their own melodies. Pupils enhance their compositions with good use of dynamics and by varying the tempo, and are able to listen critically to their own and each other's works offering suggestions for improvement or reasons why the music has a particular effect on the listener. The majority of the pupils are able to perform with confidence in front of their peers and they contribute with appropriate skill and enthusiasm in any singing activities. Pupils across the key stage are confident when describing or talking about music and are able to do so using correct musical language and terminology. The pupils currently in Year 11 are not in receipt of extra instrumental tuition and the majority are unlikely to attain the higher grades later this year as their practical music making abilities are mostly poor. Only one or two of the small group display listening, appraising and performing skills at the expected level and can, for example, identify which instruments are playing within a piece of music and describe accurately the musical devices being used by the composer. The other members of the group find this 'listening' aspect of the syllabus particularly difficult. In contrast, the pupils in the Year 10 have good listening and appraising skills, are able to use ICT to record and enhance their compositions, and many of them are able to perform on their chosen instrument to a satisfactory standard. They are mostly on line to achieve at least a grade C in their GCSE examination next year.

128. Pupils' learning in lessons is always good and often very good. Pupils of all abilities made sound progress in the lessons observed. The excellent support from the learning support assistant assigned to music ensures that pupils with special educational needs, particularly those with statements make very good progress. Pupils with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. In one lesson, a pupil assessed at level one for English, composed a short piece of music in two parts. The extract was well structured, displayed a variety of moods obtained through good use of dynamics and tempo and the pupil was able to perform this piece successfully to the rest of the class. This composition and his performance skills were commensurate with level three standard in music. Pupils are assimilating a good general knowledge of musical terminology as they progress through the key stages and they are able to apply this knowledge to new tasks successfully.

129. The teaching of music is always good and mostly very good. The subject is supported by excellent documentation including cohesive, well-structured and very thorough schemes of work. The teachers' subject knowledge is excellent and pupils are encouraged to think deeply about any subject being discussed, through skilful questioning. Lessons contain clear aims and objectives, which are shared with the pupils and revisited at the end of each lesson to review and reinforce the learning which has taken place. Every opportunity is taken to link the musical topic to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and to place the music historically and geographically. In one lesson, for example, which was using the 'Blues' scale and the development of jazz as a stimulus for composition, pupils were asked to consider the plight of the African slaves, what it was like to be subject to slavery and to reflect on the importance and relevance of music in their lives.

130. Lessons move at a brisk pace, contain a variety of tasks and strategies, which are accessible to and engage pupils of all abilities. Extension tasks for the higher ability pupils, not evident during the last inspection, are now included in the planning as a matter of course. Very good use is made of the excellent display material in the music classroom. This display contains examples of pupils' work from across the ability range and key stages, an extensive repertoire of musical terms and phrases, references to National Curriculum levels and how to achieve them and some suitable commercial posters. The teacher uses and refers to this display constantly during lessons by encouraging the pupils to work out answers and compare their work with the exemplars on display. The use of on-going assessment in lessons is good with pupils informed about their progress in National Curriculum levels. There is, however, less evidence of comments to inform pupils of their progress and levels, in their exercise books. Marking of written work, follows the school policy but is mostly confined to comments on presentation and effort rather than to guidance on how the work compares to the National Curriculum levels or how to improve. The teaching of literacy skills in music is good. Pupils are encouraged to use correct musical terminology, both in written work and in discussion. This is supported by an extensive display of appropriate music terms and expressions. Pupils are also given planned opportunities to develop creative writing techniques. Opportunities for pupils to develop numeracy skills are restricted to simple references to the subdivision of pulse and the numbers of players in an orchestra. The quality and quantity of the accommodation and resources available to the subject hinder the teaching and the progress that pupils make. The department has only one teaching room and suffers from a lack of classroom instruments. Pupils do not have the opportunity to engage in group activities, involving a wide range of instruments, other than in pairs at a keyboard. This was the situation at the last inspection.

131. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour to their music lessons are very good. They are enthusiastic about the subject and keen to become involved in all aspects of learning from written work to practically based activities. Pupils move from task to task within the confines of the music room sensibly and efficiently, they share equipment fairly and help each other appropriately. Pupils of all abilities, contribute appropriately to discussions and debates, stay on task in lessons and endeavour to produce high quality work whether it be written or practical.

132. The music department is very well led and there are good strategies in place to monitor the overall quality of teachers and pupils' work. Pupils are supported in their homework by a high quality web site which is not only visited by pupils at John Spendluffe school, but is also visited by pupils, students and teachers from around the world. For the department to move forward, the school will need to improve the quantity and quality of the accommodation and resources. The department contains only one computer, which is only used by pupils in Key Stage 4. The department has good links with the local education authority music service but only a small proportion of pupils benefit from violin, woodwind or brass lessons. Extra-curricular music activities are limited, at present, to a guitar club and a keyboard club, although a group which will cater for the woodwind pupils is in the process of being organised. Pupils were involved in two musical productions last year and the school plans another production later this year. The school does not benefit at present, from a choir or any large ensembles to offer the instrumental pupils additional musical experiences.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

133. Pupils' attainment in physical education by the age of 14 is in line with national expectations. This is due to sound teaching and because pupils have a responsible attitude and approach towards learning. By the age of 16 pupils' overall attainment is in line with national expectations. The percentage of pupils following the GCSE course achieving A*-C grades in 1999 was above national averages. This percentage of pupils achieving A*-C grades in 2000, while below the 1999 percentage, still remained in line with national averages.

134. Across Key Stage 3, pupils are able to develop basic techniques of strokes in badminton, movements on the trampoline and stick control in hockey through appropriate time being allocated to consolidating learning. This means that those pupils who are performing above national expectations have a good understanding of fitness levels and good techniques in performing aerobic and strength development activities in health related fitness. Pupils' development of knowledge and understanding is enhanced by their ability to work cooperatively in pairs and small groups when practising basic techniques. Pupils' attainment during Years 10 and 11 in core physical education lessons is in line with national expectations.

135. Pupils make sound progress through both key stages. Sound teaching makes sure that basic skills are acquired and that pupils work productively with one another. For example, there is good in learning a basic vocabulary of movements on the trampoline in which quality of performance is emphasised. There is also good progress in the development of skills in badminton. An understanding of exploiting space by varying strokes, according to opponents' position on the court, improves as pupils move through Key Stage 4. Pupils with special educational needs, and with English as an additional language, make good progress. This is because teachers know them well and make good use of their individual education plans. High attaining pupils are making sound progress as a consequence of good skill practices.

136. The quality of teaching is sound. In a significant number of lessons teaching is good. The strengths of the teacher include good planning based on a secure knowledge of the subject, organisational skills 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 which encourages learning. There is good planning and provision for pupils with special needs. Assessment procedures for monitoring pupils' progress have been developed since the last inspection, but all pupils still do not know what they can and cannot do and how to make progress. The integration of opportunities to consolidate and develop pupils' use of key language and general speaking and listening skills, is good. Opportunities for the teaching and reinforcement of basic numeracy skills are less than satisfactory.

137. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Pupils enjoy physical education and have a responsible attitude and approach to their learning. Participation levels are good. Pupils concentrate and therefore remain on task. They are able to work effectively as individuals but also co-operate well when working as pairs and in small groups. Behaviour is good. Pupils develop good relationships with other pupils and with their teacher. The standard of physical education kit is good. Pupils are able to take responsibility within extra-curricular activities.

138. The physical education curriculum now meets statutory requirements. Since the last inspection, progress has been made in teaching which enables pupils to develop observation and planning skills during Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 non-examination physical education. The Key Stage 4 curriculum now reflects the general requirements of the National Curriculum. The department recognises the importance of extra-curricular activities, which enhance learning. There is an appropriate provision of activities and take up by pupils is good. Leadership and management in physical education are now good. The lead teacher has developed a clear vision for the future. The subject development plan is good and has a focus on raising standards and pupils' attainment. The subject has a strong philosophy of care for its pupils. A good handbook includes systems and procedures for consistently good teaching and learning, assessment and health and safety as well as schemes of work for the activities covered within the curriculum. There is now a need to develop monitoring systems so that the lead teacher is secure about the consistency of the quality of teaching in order for pupils to make good progress. Indoor and outdoor facilities are good. There are good systems for the storage, movement and maintenance of appropriate resources.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

139. Standards of attainment at age 14 are below the standards outlined in the Locally Agreed Syllabus. This unsatisfactory attainment can be attributed, in part, to staffing problems, resulting in a lack of continuity in teaching. Until recently, there has been no permanent subject leader and most of the teaching has been done by non-specialists. Standards in the GCSE short course have fluctuated over the past three years, from a limited entry in 1998 where 36 per cent of pupils gained the higher grades A* to C to a much larger entry in 2000 where 30 per cent of pupils gained the higher grades. This represents good attainment when compared with other secondary modern schools. In relation to their other subjects, pupils achieve well in religious education at GCSE.

140. The majority of pupils in Key Stage 3 do not have an adequate knowledge and understanding of Christianity, but have some basic knowledge of the major world religions, particularly Judaism and Hinduism. Work in pupils' exercise books shows a wide range of practice from good work in some areas to unsatisfactory work overall. In class, pupils show much more confidence in their spoken answers than in their written work where they often copy part of the text in the book or the notes given, even when they have enough knowledge to answer in their own words. The majority of pupils have little sense of history, for example, confusing Judas and Moses, and modern situations with those in past millennia. Standards in lessons are much higher than are reflected in written work. In Year 7, pupils are able to identify concepts such as humility in the washing of the feet in the Last Supper of Christ and understand the denial and betrayal. Pupils in Year 8 study the origin and significance of the Jewish Festival of Lights in good depth and gain a knowledge of the historical background. In Year 9 pupils know the significance of the Hindu naming ceremony and the order of events in the early life of the child. This work is appropriately linked to modern life.

141. As at the time of the last inspection, all pupils follow the GCSE short course dealing with contemporary moral issues. Standards seen in lessons are a little below the expectation of the Agreed Syllabus. Work in exercise books shows a wide range of attainment, some of it unsatisfactory. This is due largely to the number of non-specialist teachers. However, in lessons pupils show sound understanding of the moral issues discussed. They can examine the morality of government spending on arms and investigate issues of violence and non-violence as responses to world problems. They understand the dramatic statistics presented by the teacher on population, wealth, poverty, resources and consumption. They can understand and give examples of relative and absolute poverty.

142. Across both key stages the achievement of lower attaining pupils, and at Key Stage 3 pupils with English as an additional language, is good. Teachers are aware of their needs and give help accordingly. This support is well structured. Many pupils on the special educational needs register have good standards of work. There is good provision for higher attaining pupils in homework and in the analytical nature of the questions examined.

143. Improvements since the last inspection in marking and assessment procedures are unsatisfactory. There is very little work in some exercise books and many pupils have had new books in the recent past and have no record of previous learning. There is a lack of academic quality in a significant proportion of the work seen. Marking has been poor with very little comment on how pupils can improve the quality of their work. There has been no monitoring of individual pupils' progress. Textbooks are still not available as whole sets, but orders are being submitted that will shortly improve this situation. The number of artefacts is still small, but some relevant examples were seen in the study of Judaism. Display has improved significantly. Some of this provides very good information on the six major world religions. Displays of pupils' work are used effectively to inspire and promote interest. There is a marked difference between the work done in the past and the work seen during the inspection week. With regards to all aspects of the subject there has been a very significant change for the better with the recent appointment of a new faculty leader who is a specialist in religious education. This teacher, who does not take up post officially until the beginning of the next academic year, has been "on loan" to the school for the past three weeks. This teacher is taking three quarters of all lessons and taught over half of the lessons observed in Key Stage 3. This teaching is very good and there is already evidence of significantly improving attainment in the past three weeks.

144. Teaching is now good in Key Stage 3 and very good in Key Stage 4. All teachers have very good class management skills and maintain discipline and a working atmosphere with apparent ease. They work hard to make lessons interesting and relevant. This contributes to the very good attitudes and behaviour of almost all pupils. The subject makes a good contribution to developing pupils' literacy skills, with good attention to extending subject-specific and general vocabulary. Some good work in numeracy was seen as the teacher and pupils calculated how many books or eye operations could be purchased for the price of one military aircraft. Annual reports of pupils' progress to parents are unsatisfactory. They do not give enough information on pupils' progress in religious education, nor do they indicate how pupils can improve.

145. Pupils have very good attitudes in all years. They listen attentively to their teachers and answer readily in class. They often volunteer to read aloud and ask questions appropriately.

146. The department has suffered from the lack of continuity and leadership in the past, but this is already being remedied. At present, the subject is taught by six teachers, some non-specialists with insecure subject knowledge. Nevertheless, with the appointment of a second full-time specialist, this weakness has also been overcome for the next academic year. Improvement planning is weak and there are insufficient action points, aimed at improving standards that have precise success criteria and specific targets that can easily be monitored and evaluated. There is insufficient access to and use of ICT, although pupils are encouraged to use ICT in homework. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT

147. Child development is taught in Years 10 and 11 as part of the optional programme offered to pupils. Results for pupils aged 16 in June 2000 show that 19 per cent of pupils entered achieved an A*-C grade. This is well below the national average of 42.7 per cent. All pupils save 1 gained a grade G or above. This is a very popular course that is very well structured to give pupils of all abilities opportunity to succeed. A variety of tasks and activities are arranged which provide pupils with practical opportunities to study first hand how children learn. A good range of contacts has been established with placements available at playgroups, gym clubs and a local primary school. Visiting speakers are also fully utilised to support learning and health visitors, the school nurse and a mother and baby group, meet regularly with the class. Teaching is very focused with a good range of resources at hand to support the resource tasks and personal study projects. Pupils are positive about their learning and show good enthusiasm in taking the interactive doll home to simulate caring for a baby overnight.

VOCATIONAL CURRICULUM

148. At Key Stage 4 the school offers GNVQ manufacturing at intermediate level for a targeted group of higher attaining pupils and a work-related learning course, based on the pilot of the Lincolnshire Key Stage 4 employability Graduation Award for lower attaining pupils. As provision does not currently extend to pupils of all abilities, there is inequality of access to vocational courses.

149. Attainment in GNVQ manufacturing, since its inception three years ago, is very good with 95 and 75 per cent of those pupils entered in 1999 and 2000 passing the course. The figures for 2000 are well above the national average. The results for the first two years show that pupils are successful in achieving at merit or pass level but, as yet, have not achieved at the highest level, distinction. A number of pupils in the present Year 11 are working at the higher level and are showing a consistency in their work that will result in good levels of attainment.

150. Selection for the course is completed following a review of work at the end of Year 9 and discussions with parents. Early work in Year 10 shows that most pupils have difficulty completing the wide range of tasks expected within the course. Through a structured approach and a wide range of activities and visits to develop confidence, understanding and language skills, pupils' work consistently improves, both in quality of presentation and maturity. Year 11 folders contain comprehensive information covering course content, assessment details, project outlines and ongoing diaries. Overall, pupils achieve well.

151. Current teaching of this course is being affected by a long-term absence of one of the key members of staff. However, the person with responsibility for the course has continued to plan lessons for the supply teacher to ensure that pupils are provided with a structured and planned programme. There is very little evidence to show that this has had a detrimental affect on the progress of pupils. In the lesson observed, although the teacher gave very little opportunity for group discussion, individual pupils continued to make satisfactory progress in preparing a draft report for their study of the use of new technology in industry. A number of pupils used ICT to develop this report.

152. The quality of teaching in GNVQ manufacturing is never less than satisfactory. Where the teaching is very good, Year 11 pupils are working independently on various tasks preparing for the manufacture of their final product. A number of pupils are completing a scientific test to ascertain the characteristics of the fabric they are to use, another pupil is experimenting with bread to gauge peers' opinions for the production of pasties for teenagers.

Many pupils are completing reports on their individual research in preparation for making. It is clear that pupils collaborate well and respect and trust each other's opinions. One pupil, having completed a sample of stitches to be used for a project, has asked a colleague to judge the quality of stitch. The teaching of these assignments is making a good contribution to the reinforcement of pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills. The teacher provides an extensive range of resources, is effective in discussing with individual pupils the quality of work, uses questioning effectively to extend understanding and to encourage independent thought.

153. The leadership and management of this course is very good and has provided a clear structure to help teachers and pupils to be successful. A good range of industrial links is in place and visits to Nottingham and Derby have been undertaken whilst the school was part of the initial pilot project. Unfortunately, funding to continue these visits is no longer available. Closer venues are used regularly for pupils' placements, studies and interviews. Local contacts are also used for the distribution of artifacts produced by pupils on the course. Pupils have made and sold products for a local primary school, a craft shop within the town of Alford. The teacher in charge of this course is aware of the need to develop further industrial links and is, at present, exploring opportunities in other nearby towns. Resources for the teaching of GNVQ are developing and four laptop computers are now available for pupils to borrow for ICT work at home. The course has also recently invested in other ICT hardware to update the computers in design and technology, thereby giving pupils better access during lessons. A narrow range of exemplar materials is available to develop pupils' understanding of project tasks. These require expansion to give pupils in Year 10 quicker access to the levels expected of them.

154. Teaching of the work-related learning course is consistently good and sometimes very good. Planning, which includes a focus on the development of basic literacy and numeracy skills, is based on precise learning objectives. These are consistently shared with pupils and used to gauge the extent of learning at the close of the lesson. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use questioning techniques effectively to engage all pupils and to develop their skills and understanding. Resources, including the use of learning support assistants for pupils with special educational needs, are very well organised and carefully deployed to support the learning process and to maximise pupils' involvement. Expectations are high. The quality of verbal feedback to pupils is good and forms the basis of short-term targets.

155. Relationships between pupils and all adults involved with the course, are good. The co-ordinator knows the pupils and their families well. This adds to the positive learning ethos. The vast majority of pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning and develop good listening and social skills, in addition to skills relating to specific vocational areas.

156. The management of work-related learning is very good. The lead teacher has established a coherent programme, based on the Lincolnshire Key Stage 4 Employability Graduation Award. This not only involves additional work experience, but also includes a range of alternative accreditation, including units of GNVQ, NVQ and Skill Power, in addition to GCSE or certificates of achievement in English and mathematics. Specific accreditation routes vary from pupil to pupil and, in some cases, because the course is new and the teacher wishes to build in as much flexibility as possible, accreditation for some elements are yet to be determined. Accreditation pathways comply with statutory requirements.

157. The course is delivered in partnership with outside providers, including a wide range of local business partners and the youth service. Schemes of work, written by the different providers, are satisfactory, with some good exemplar units. Planned provision for access to and use of ICT, however, is poor. Criteria for choosing pupils for this course are clear and

relevant teachers are involved in the selection process. Parents are contacted at an early stage and career plans put in place. Although career plans lack specific details on the exact nature of alternative accreditation, correct procedures for disapplication are being followed. Restricted access to the curriculum is deemed to be appropriate for the current cohort of pupils.

158. Communications with business partners, employers and parents are very good, as are systems for monitoring pupil's progress, both in lessons and on work placements. An improvement plan reflecting appropriate priorities is in place. However, criteria for judging the success of the plan are not specifically defined and procedures for monitoring and evaluating progress are weak.