

ERRATUM

Paragraph 16: please replace reference to **geography** with **design and technology**

INSPECTION REPORT

VIRGO FIDELIS CONVENT SENIOR SCHOOL

Upper Norwood

LEA area: Croydon

Unique reference number: 131280

Headteacher: Sister Bernadette

Reporting inspector: Sheila Browning
1510

Dates of inspection: 6th – 10th March 2000

Inspection number: 215520

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

© Crown copyright 2000

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	11 to 18
Gender of pupils:	Girls
School address:	147 Central Hill Upper Norwood London
Postcode:	SE19 1RS
Telephone number:	0181 670 6917
Fax number:	0181 761 4455
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Sister Betty Hampson
Date of previous inspection:	Not applicable

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Sheila Browning	Registered inspector	Art	Standards of attainment and achievement Leadership and management School improvement and effectiveness Resources for learning, staffing, accommodation
Michael McCarthy	Lay inspector		Pupils' personal development
			How well the school cares for its pupils.
			Partnership with parents
Barry Juxon	Team inspector	Mathematics	
Carole Worthington	Team inspector	Science	Curriculum, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
		Design and technology	
Joe Edge	Team inspector		Special educational needs
David Wasp	Team inspector	History	Equality of Opportunity
Ali Haouas	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
Geoffrey Binks	Team inspector	English	English as an additional language
Heather Housden	Team inspector	Physical education	
Bob Castle	Team inspector	Geography	
Eric Deeson	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
Sue Jones	Team inspector	Music	

The inspection contractor was:

PkR Educational Consultants Ltd.
6 Sherman Road
Bromley
Kent
BR1 3JH

Tel: 0208 289 1923/4/5

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

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

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7 - 12
Information about the school	7
How good the school is	7
What the school does well	7
What could be improved	7
How the school has improved since its last inspection	8
Standards	8
Pupils' attitudes and values	9
Teaching and learning	10
Other aspects of the school	10
How well the school is led and managed	11
Parents' and carers' views of the school	11 - 12
	Paragraph
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	1 - 16
The school's results and achievements	1 - 9
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	10 - 16
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?	17 - 26
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?	27 - 33
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	34 - 40
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	41 - 47
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	48 - 58
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	59 - 61
	Page
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	27 - 30
	Paragraph
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	62 - 141

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Virgo Fidelis Convent Senior is a small secondary school of 514 aged 11-18 girls. It is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic school. Attainment on entry to school at age 11 is reasonably well balanced with a significant number of above average pupils. The percentage of pupils identified as having special needs is 9.0; this is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils receiving free school meals, at 16.44 per cent, is broadly in line with the national average. There are many pupils of ethnic minority origin. The percentage of pupils with English as an additional language at 32 per cent is very high. Most are proficient in English.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good and effective school. Standards are good overall. The headteacher and senior staff provide clear and direct leadership. Teaching is satisfactory overall and it is good in the sixth form. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and this is a strength. The school demonstrates a strong commitment to the provision of equality of access to the full range of the curriculum for all its pupils.

What the school does well

- Standards in English and mathematics are well above average at the end of Key Stage 4. Standards in chemistry at Key Stages 4 and 5 are very high.
- Results in the GCSE 5+ A*-C grades are well above the national average.
- Standards in English are well above the national average, and are above average in mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 3.
- The quality of teaching in the sixth form is good. The quality of teaching in dance is outstanding.
- Provides a broad curriculum, particularly in the sixth form.
- Very good opportunities are provided through accelerated GCSE courses in chemistry, mathematics, modern foreign languages, art, dance and religious studies.
- Pupils enjoy school and attendance is high.
- A strength is the pupils positive attitudes and this contributes to their learning in most classes
- Behaviour and relationships are very good.
- Provision for personal development, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- The school works well in partnership with parents.
- Educational priorities are supported well through the school's financial planning.

What could be improved

- The content of a few curriculum areas and the organisation of the timetable at Key Stages 3 and 4 is affecting standards in design and technology and physical education at Key Stages 3 and 4, and in music at Key Stage 3.
- Provision for pupils with special educational need (learning difficulties) is unsatisfactory.
- The role of subject leaders, is insufficiently developed i.e. monitoring, evaluating and supporting teaching development.
- A greater variety of teaching methods in Key Stage 3 to cater for the needs of each individual child to improve standards further and more consistent use of assessment information to inform teaching and curriculum planning.
- Schemes of work are not fully developed in English, geography, history, information and communication technology and modern foreign languages.
- The use of information and communication technology across the curriculum.
- Statutory curriculum requirements for design and technology and physical education at Key Stage 4 and religious studies in the sixth form are not fully met.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has not been inspected before. Virgo Fidelis became grant maintained in 1997 and was actively brought through a transition from an independent to grant maintained and then voluntary aided status in 1999. Rapid change has taken place. There have been substantial alterations to the building to accommodate demand for places. New management structures are in place as well as a greater structural and administrative organisation. Despite these immense changes the academic standards of achievement have remained consistent throughout this time.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 14 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			Similar schools
	Year-1997	Year-1998	Year-1999	Year-1999
English	N/A	B	A	A
Mathematics	N/A	C	B	A
Science	N/A	C	B	A

Key

Well above average A

Above average B

Average C

Below average D

Well below average E

The 1999 National tests show that pupils achieve well above the national average in English and above in mathematics and science. Performance data shows an improving trend. When compared to similar schools standards in English, mathematics and science were well above average. Standards in numeracy, literacy and science are above the national average. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are as expected for pupils of this age. Standards of work seen overall are above average. Pupils are making steady progress. The accomplishment of pupils with special educational need in relation to that expected is satisfactory at Key Stages 3 and 4 and good in the sixth form.

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	Year-1997	Year-1998	Year-1999	Year-1999
GCSE examinations	A	B	B	A
A-levels/AS-levels	C	C	C	N/A

Key

Well above average A

Above average B

Average C

Below average D

In 1999 the proportion of pupils who achieved five or more GCSE passes at grades A*-C was well above the national average and for five or more GCSE passes at grades A*-G was well below. This was due to pupils being entered for examinations a year earlier and such data is not recognised by comparative tables. Almost all pupils entered achieved passes in five or more subjects. The strongest subjects being English and mathematics. Results reflect an improving trend and the standards seen during the inspection. Standards in science are above the national average. Some of

the entry numbers for subjects as information systems, single science, Greek, Latin, food technology, geography, music and physical education, were quite small and should be treated carefully. The average total GCSE point score per pupil was above the national average trend. The results reflected prior attainment at Key Stage 3 and attainment on entry to the school, when the school was independent and later grant maintained. The average A/AS level point score of pupils entered for two or more GCE A levels or AS equivalent was close to the national average. Reflecting a trend in line with the national average over the last three years.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to school are very good; they are keen to learn and are responsive.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good. Relationships throughout the school are very good.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is good. Pupils take advantage of opportunities for sharing responsibilities.
Attendance	Attendance is above average.

Pupils are interested in their learning. The majority work extremely hard and are co-operative. Pupils have good opportunities to develop independent studies, fewer opportunities are provided to discuss, and develop their own critical skills. Attendance levels are above average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged 11-16	Aged over 16
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Good

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

Teaching is satisfactory overall. It is satisfactory or better in 91 per cent of lessons of which 48 per cent are good and nearly ten per cent are very good or better. Nearly ten per cent are unsatisfactory, and are not in any particular class or key stage. The minority of unsatisfactory teaching is due to low expectations resulting in limited learning. The skills of communication, including literacy and numeracy are taught well. ICT skills are not sufficiently taught across all subjects. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of their subjects. Teaching methods are generally effective but lack variety and range, particularly at Key Stage 3. Work is not always well matched to the individual needs of different pupils. In most lessons pupils gained and advanced their knowledge skills and understanding. Most work with concentration and have positive attitudes to learning. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and relevant, but it is not balanced, in terms of time allocation and non-compliance. The curriculum offered for science is strong. Accelerated GCSE courses in chemistry, mathematics, modern foreign languages, art, dance and religious studies impact positively on standards achieved. ICT across the

	curriculum is underdeveloped. The sixth form curriculum is broad, balanced, relevant and good. Extra-curricular provision is good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Pupils needs are adequately met and they make steady progress. Procedures for identifying pupils with special educational needs are very new.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school has a high number of pupils with English as an additional language (EAL). The language competence of these pupils is sufficient, so that EAL does not impede learning.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Spiritual and cultural provision is satisfactory. Social provision is good: pupils are involved in many aspects of school life. Moral provision is very good. The very clear codes of behaviour ensure that pupils develop a good understanding of right from wrong.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures are appropriate, the school cares well for its pupils. Some aspects of academic care for pupils with special educational need (learning difficulties) are insufficient.

A particular strength of the curriculum is science. There is non-compliance in design and technology at Key Stage 3, games in Key Stage 4 and in religious studies in the sixth form. Provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good, including the arrangements for child protection. The support and guidance provided for pupils are satisfactory. The school works well in partnership with parents. The impact of parents' involvement of the school is very good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher, governing body and staff create a very good ethos. The senior management team works effectively together. The aims of the school are appropriate. The quality of management in curriculum areas by subject leaders is inconsistent from unsatisfactory to good, their monitoring of lessons, planning and assessment are at early stages of development.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governing body is very supportive and are actively involved in the strategic and decision making processes. They do not fulfil their statutory responsibilities in respect of some aspects of the curriculum.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school administers a range of tests to establish pupils' levels of ability and rates of progress. Many whole school policies and planning documents are new, as yet it is too early to review and evaluate their effectiveness. The school has identified some weaknesses in the curriculum and is addressing these.
The strategic use of resources	Good use is made of staff, resources and accommodation. Time is not always effectively used. Staff give an immeasurably good amount of time to the school. The school applies the principles of best value well. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

The headteacher and senior key staff provide clear and direct leadership and management. Their responsibilities are demanding and wide reaching. The governors are actively involved in leading the school forward. Accommodation, staffing and resources are satisfactory. Leadership and management have led the pace of change. The professional development of many of the subject leaders is at an early stage. The school applies the principles of best value well.

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 school expects the girls to work hard and achieve their best. • The pupils like school. • The girls are making good progress. • The school helps the girls to become mature and responsible. • The girls get the right amount of homework. • Behaviour is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school working more closely with parents. • Information about how their children are getting on. • More approachable with questions or problems.

Some fourteen written comments were also received from parents. Many were very positive about the standards achieved and the good quality teaching. A few were concerned about declining standards in a few subjects. Parents were unaware of a homework timetable, this does not exist. A few stated that bullying was not dealt with well and that the size of some classes was too large. The inspection team confirmed the parents' positive views of the school. The school is working more closely with parents and the information about how their children are getting on is improving. Standards in a few subjects are below those expected but this is mainly due to non-compliance in particular areas of the curriculum. Class sizes are large throughout Key Stage 3. No evidence of bullying was apparent and when instances do occur they are dealt with appropriately.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The 1999 national tests show that at the end of Key Stage 3 pupils achieve well above the national average in English and above average in mathematics and science. Performance data for Virgo Fidelis is available for the past two years only and the 1999 results show an improvement on those for 1998. When compared to similar schools standards in English, mathematics and science were well above average. Trends in results over time are not available. The schools targets are based on an accurate summary of pupils' prior achievement. They are realistic in terms of reflecting pupils' previous achievement, and are appropriate when compared with the local education authority and those nationally. Standards are high enough in all of the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.
2. Results in the General Certificate for Secondary Education (GCSE) have fluctuated over the past three years. In 1999 the percentage of pupils who achieved five or more GCSE passes at grades A*-C was well above the national average. The percentage of pupils who achieved five or more GCSE passes at grades A*-G was well below the national average. This was due to the fact that pupils were entered for examinations a year earlier and this data is not recognised by the comparative tables used. Almost all pupils entered achieved passes in five or more subjects. The strongest subjects at GCSE were in the core subjects of English and mathematics; they were well above average. Some of the entry numbers for subjects such as information systems, single science, Greek, Latin, food technology, geography, music and physical education, were quite small and should therefore be treated carefully. The average total GCSE point score per pupil shows an overall rising trend well above the national average. Results reflected their prior attainment at Key Stage 3 and their attainment on entry to the school, when the school was independent and later grant maintained. Results for 1999 show an improvement on the previous year.
3. The average Advanced /Advanced Supplementary (A/AS) level point score of pupils entered for two or more GCE A levels or AS equivalent was close to the national average. On the basis of the last three years the average A/AS level point score of pupils entered for two or more GCE A levels or AS equivalent was in line with the national average.
4. At the end of Key Stage 3, standards in numeracy and literacy in all subjects are above the national average. Standards of work seen are above average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils are achieving satisfactorily from a good entry level and they are making good progress. In English, pupils' reading and interpretation skills are well above national average. Pupils speak confidently and listen attentively; writing is above the standards expected for the age group. In mathematics, data handling skills are well developed and pupils calculate probabilities. Standards of work seen in science at the end of Key Stage 3 are above that nationally. Standards in art are in line with national norms, pupils develop a satisfactory understanding of different skills, experiment and explore and show a developing knowledge of art from different periods and cultures. In design and technology, current standards in resistant materials and graphics are well below average, because previously, the National Curriculum was not followed the school is

now addressing this. Standards are about average in food technology and textiles. In geography standards are just below the level expected of pupils of the same age nationally. This is because their understanding of many aspects of geography is less secure and concepts are underdeveloped. In history, standards are as expected, except in the top sets where it is higher. Pupils develop historical skills and rapidly become conversant with an understanding of chronology and source evaluation. Work in ICT is as expected for pupils of this age. In modern foreign languages standards are broadly in line with national expectations. In music, standards are unsatisfactory and are below national expectations because composing and performing skills are underdeveloped. Their knowledge and understanding of musical elements is good but they do not use musical vocabulary appropriately. In physical education, standards are below expectations, pupils have poor acquisition of basic skills in games and their knowledge of rules and conventions in games is very basic. Planning and evaluating skills are good but pupils' knowledge of health related fitness is underdeveloped. In dance, standards are above expectations, pupils choreograph simple dances and show good understanding of Laban movement principles, communication skills are well developed.

5. Standards in numeracy and literacy are above the national average at the end of Key Stage 4. Standards of work overall are above average. In English, pupils express opinions clearly and listen attentively, writing and presentation skills are particularly impressive. In mathematics, the majority of pupils reach high standards across the subject. Measurement and data handling skills are above average. Work seen in science at the end of Key Stage 4 is above that nationally. Pupils show very good knowledge of the properties of chemical elements and atomic structure. In physics, they make precise calculations of the amount of energy generated by electrical appliances in certain times. In biology, pupils have a very detailed knowledge of living things for their age. In art pupils' work to a good standard and work in sculpture is particularly good. In design and technology, standards are well below average due to the National Curriculum not being followed previously. In geography, standards are at the expected level pupils show good knowledge and improved understanding of geographical features. In history, pupils interrogate sources in more depth, and as a result standards are above national norms. Work in ICT is as expected for pupils of this age. In modern foreign languages, standards in French are in line with national expectations. In music, standards are in line with national norms, composing skills are underdeveloped, but pupils have good knowledge and understanding of different musical textures and well developed listening skills and show good standards of performance. In physical education, standards are below expectations, basic skills are not established, and pupils are unable to develop higher level tactics and techniques in games. In dance, pupils are working at high levels of understanding. They communicate their ideas skilfully showing good technical accuracy.
6. The standard of pupils' work in English in the sixth form is well above average and in mathematics and science it is above average. Pupils read confidently and show a detailed knowledge of characters and their relationships in the set texts. In the sixth form pupils can use the binomial distribution in a variety of situations to solve problems in mathematics. Pupils studying biology show good knowledge of genetic processes and those studying physics understand classic experiments to measure the radius and density of earth. Chemistry pupils identify specific chemical bonding correctly and relate these to the structure of larger molecules. In art standards are appropriate. In geography, standards are above the expected level, and pupils

show increased knowledge of plate tectonics and the many consequences these have on human geography. In history standards are high, pupils demonstrate very good levels when debating historical issues. In modern foreign languages, by the end of their studies pupils demonstrate good understanding and apply their knowledge and skills appropriately. In physical education, critical analysis and knowledge of information processing skills are good.

7. Pupils speak confidently where opportunities are given and they listen attentively. Much of the writing shows originality and imagination. In most subjects pupils use subject specific terminology well and with understanding. Pupils' presentation of work and their writing is good, including those for whom English is not their first language.
8. Pupils enter the school with above average standards of numeracy. They continue to improve their skills not only in mathematics lessons but also by using mathematics in some other subjects. For example, in physics they use graphs representing distance, velocity and acceleration; they evaluate formulae involving mass, density and volume; they calculate moments about a pivot and the efficiency of engines. In chemistry they balance formulae and calculate chemical energy. In geography they construct and interpret graphs and bar charts; they calculate birth and death rates and calculate the gross national product per capita. In these and other subjects pupils use their numeracy skills effectively and this assists their learning and progress. By the end of Key Stage 4 almost all pupils have well developed numeracy skills which they use confidently.
9. Standards achieved are sufficiently high, with the exception of some underachievement in geography, music and physical education in Key Stage 3 and in physical education in Key Stage 4. Some standards achieved are well below those expected for pupils in design and technology in Key Stages 3 and 4. The accomplishment of pupils with special educational need i.e. learning difficulties in relation to that expected is satisfactory and in the sixth form it is good. Higher attaining pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form they make good progress. In mathematics, geography, and some physical education lessons higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged resulting in some underachievement. In science, attainment shown by average pupils is a little lower in physics. Higher attaining pupils are usually well extended in science and history

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Overall the attitudes and behaviour of pupils is very good, as are their personal relationships. They are keen to come to school and attendance is good. Pupils are interested and involved in the school's activities. The extensive range of extra-curricular activities are very popular amongst the majority of pupils and many attend. A gospel choir, homework club, sports, dance club and chess are just some of the activities offered. There is an increasing demand for ICT provision and plans are in hand to address this need. Music and dance are particularly popular with the pupils and these also serve to reinforce the pride and positive ethos that the school enjoys. The school's emphasis on personal development based on a secure moral code, the encouragement of good work habits and high expectations on the part of both pupils and staff ensures that pupils' attitudes remain positive and optimistic and that they continue to focus on worthwhile goals.

11. As a whole pupil behaviour is very good. Classroom behaviour is predominantly very good with pupils quietly attentive. Movement between classrooms at the end of lessons is orderly with lunch and break times similarly reflecting the composed character of the school. Virtually all pupils are courteous and trustworthy. The pupils respect and care for their environment.
12. Bullying is uncommon but when it arises firm action in accordance with the school's bullying policy is promptly taken. A 'fast track' system deals with any incidents at the earliest opportunity with the Headteacher involving the parents of all parties, together with their children, in an exploration of the circumstances at the outset. Parents, pupils and staff view this system as a highly effective strategy and it remains a cornerstone of the school's anti-bullying policy. Pupils feel very comfortable in approaching any staff member in cases of worries or concerns regarding bullying or other problems.
13. Pupils form very good and constructive relationships with one another. They articulate their opinions well and display maturity in their dealings with teachers and support staff. Pupils are most considerate and show respect for each other. Within the multi-ethnic mix of the school and its diversity of religious faiths there is a high level of understanding and respect for others' beliefs.
14. Overall the range of opportunities for pupils to experience responsibility and develop initiative are very good. The school is divided into four houses and pupils exercise responsibility through a number of established positions increasing in accountability as they progress through the school. Such traditional roles as Head Girl and House and form captains, general prefects and monitors are supplemented by environmental prefects, bus stop prefects, library assistants and general helpers. These positions provide an extensive range of opportunity for pupils to develop initiative and sharpen their supervisory skills. Pupils enjoy coming to school and the high level of attendance confirms this.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

15. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. In 48 per cent of the lessons seen teaching was at least good and in 9 per cent it was very good. These better lessons occur more frequently at Key Stage 4, and in the sixth form. The teaching of dance is excellent. The best lessons were characterised by: teachers' confident in their subject knowledge; good class management; a brisk pace and focused teaching objectives. Planning is generally good and learning objectives are shared with the pupils.
16. A small number of lessons, nearly ten per cent, were judged to be unsatisfactory. As for example in a few mathematics, geography and physical education at Key Stage 3. In these lessons the teachers' low expectations of what pupils could do resulted in limited learning, and particularly lacked sufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils. Within the classes there is a wide range of attainment. In design and technology the work was pitched too high for pupils understanding. Also ineffective management of the behaviour of a few pupils in mathematics and physical education was detrimental to the learning of the whole class. Teaching methods were occasionally limited and did not fully or actively involve pupils. Recent staff changes have improved teacher continuity in aspects of design and technology, physical education and ICT, and standards are improving. Knowledge and skills are now more consistently reinforced.

17. Through confident introductions to lessons, clear explanations and relevant tasks, most teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge. All teachers show a good range of basic teaching skills although ICT is insufficiently addressed across the curriculum. The use of subject specific terms is particularly good. Teachers successfully develop literacy and numeracy skills well. Good examples of discussion, debate, sharing of opinions and views and group work were seen in a few English, science, history, art and philosophy lessons, however this is not a general strength of teaching. Daily planning is effective and is often reinforced by developing schemes of work. Schemes of work are insufficiently developed in English, geography, history, ICT and modern foreign languages. Lesson planning does not always indicate how the higher attaining pupils will be extended.
18. Expectations of pupils' learning are satisfactory to good in Key Stages 3 and 4 and are good in the sixth form. In the best lessons teachers set challenging tasks, as in science, history and art at both Key Stages and in the sixth form, and in geography at Key Stage 4. Work is usually matched to the ability of the pupils. The range of teaching methods used in Key Stage 3 is unsatisfactory: teaching is too often teacher directed and does not encourage pupil participation enough. This is not the case in either Key Stage 4 or the sixth form where teachers encourage pupil participation effectively. In both Key Stage 4 and the sixth form this is frequent and good practice. Explanations are clear and questioning is effective in moving pupils learning forward and helping them recall previous learning. The school has started to draw up effective strategies for raising teacher expectations such as, identifying and challenging higher attaining pupils, but as yet these are not widespread. Generally pupils are well managed. A range of visits and visitors to the school motivates pupils and promotes their learning.
19. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. The targets set within the individual educational plans (IEPs) however are too vague to assist teachers as to what they should do to alleviate learning difficulties.
20. Teachers generally use their time efficiently through careful planning and well-managed lessons. A few lessons started late and a few finished early, a few were disrupted by early lunches. Appropriate resources are used to support pupils' learning. This was seen in the effective use made of overhead projectors and video programmes. Insufficient use is made of information and communication technology to support other subjects.
21. On-going assessment of pupils' learning needs and developmental needs is satisfactory and is good in the sixth form. Most teachers give constant feedback, support and encouragement aimed at stimulating pupils to greater effort and improved learning. Assessment data and end of key stage results are effectively analysed by senior managers. The involvement of subject leaders is increasing but remains inconsistent. Homework is set appropriately and it is used well by teachers and makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning.
22. In most lessons pupils gained and advanced their knowledge, skills and understanding. Learning is satisfactory at Key Stage 3, good in Key Stage 4 and very good in the sixth form. Older pupils are well involved with their own learning and demonstrate well-developed learning skills. Pupils explore ideas at appropriate levels. Pupils' intellectual, physical and creative efforts are developing appropriately well.

23. The pace of lessons is often brisk but can also be unsatisfactory. Pupils settle well at the activities set by the teacher and often produce a high volume of work in the time given. Most work with concentration and are interested and are encouraged by good relationships and a positive attitude to learning. This was especially noticeable in English at Key Stage 3, when pupils read their own short plays and others listened attentively, and applauded. Teachers clearly state the learning objective for each lesson, and these are shared with the pupils. Older pupils have a greater understanding of what is required for them to improve their learning. When given the opportunity pupils work well together in small groups, in pairs or as individuals.
24. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Arrangements for and the setting of precise targets in the individual education plans is very new and untried. In science, progress is good because of the effective use of different tasks matched well to the needs of pupils. Other subjects lack well-established strategies to support pupils with learning difficulties. Support for pupils at Stages 3 and 5 of the Code of Practice is inconsistent and is teacher dependent. The school has a high number of pupils with EAL. The language competence of these pupils is sufficient, so that EAL does not impede learning.
25. Teachers give immeasurably good additional time to the school, after school and at weekends.

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

26. The curriculum is broad and relevant, but not entirely balanced at Key Stages 3 and 4. Statutory requirements for the National Curriculum programme for study for design and technology and for music are not fully met. In the former, there is limited provision and access to control technology (electrical, electronic, mechanical and pneumatic) although the school has started to address this. In music, too little time is allocated to cover the requirements of the National Curriculum since the subject is offered in rotation with ICT. Physical education does not fully meet national requirements at the end of Key Stage 4, due to insufficient emphasis on games. Personal social and health education is not taught discretely at Key Stage 4 and religious studies is not provided in the sixth form. Schemes of work are insufficiently developed in English, geography, history, ICT and modern foreign languages. Lesson planning does not always indicate how the higher attaining pupils will be extended. Adequate time is given to the core subjects of English and mathematics, and provision for literacy and numeracy across the whole curriculum is good. In Key Stage 3, all National Curriculum subjects are taught and provision is enhanced by the inclusion of Latin, dance, drama and martial arts. All three sciences are taught from Year 7, making good preparation for Key Stage 4. Sex education is sensitively taught through science and religious studies from Year 7, and continues till Year 11. Personal, health and social education (PSHE), which includes information on drug use and misuse, is taught in both Key Stages 3 and 4.
27. In addition to compulsory religious studies and National Curriculum subjects in Key Stage 4, extra subject options such as Ancient Greek, Latin, classical studies business studies, theatre studies, psychology, media studies and dance are available. Pupils have to complete at least a half GCSE in information and communication technology (ICT). In design and technology, many drop out from taking the examination, as there is also no choice in the design and technology subjects: pupils are allotted to food and textiles or resistant materials and graphics.

Pupils opting for three separate sciences are unable to widen their curriculum fully, since only one science is in the core, and two take up option blocks, reducing numbers in subjects set against them, for example history and geography. There is no discrete provision for PHSE in Key Stage 4, it is taught across and within a range of subjects. Currently, not all Year 11 girls are taking all three science subjects. In the past the school was independent when they started their courses, and did not have to follow the National Curriculum. There are no vocational subjects, such as General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQ), at present.

28. The sixth form curriculum is satisfactory in breadth, balance and relevance to the needs of the pupils who have been consulted on provision. However, religious studies is not compulsory in the sixth form, which contravenes statutory requirements. Provision for A and AS level courses is good in English, mathematics, chemistry, physics, biology, history and ICT, as well as more vocational courses such as business studies, media studies, accountancy, psychology and philosophy.
29. The basic subject time allocation of the curriculum is satisfactory, but its organisation via the timetable is not well matched. Some pupils, for example, experience up to six periods of science in one day which allows little time for future lesson planning to be changed on the basis of assessment in the earlier lessons. Single lessons are experienced in art for some year groups. There is a considerable imbalance in group sizes at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. At Key Stage 4, there are very small groups in classical studies, music, physical education and theatre studies. In the sixth form, there are very small groups in art, French, history, media studies and physics, but this does not impact negatively on standards. The school is currently in a state of transition and expansion. Funding from the Congregation has enabled the broad curriculum in the sixth form to be maintained and as a consequence it is not subsidised by the rest of the school. Particularly large classes throughout Key Stage 3 make increasing demands on teaching, learning and standards.
30. Provision for extra curricular activities is good with a wide range on offer, including animal club, chess club, choir (gospel and special) and some sporting activities which are all well attended. There is also good support for learning outside the school day, with many teachers holding accelerated classes after school and on Saturdays, for example art, dance, chemistry, mathematics and religious education, particularly for extending the most able girls.
31. The school provides satisfactorily for equal access to the curriculum and all pupils have adequate opportunity to succeed. Girls are streamed for ability on entry to the school, which enables work to be pitched more closely to ability, and this continues through the school. Pupil movement is possible in successive years. Basic literacy skills are emphasised so that all pupils, even those with English as an additional language, are able to read and understand textbooks clearly, and write good English. Computer skills, however, although taught to all, are not yet used equally in all curriculum areas so that pupils do not all have the opportunity to practise, even if they do not have computers at home. Pupils with special educational needs are given support in most subjects, but more closely matched work for individual need in the way of resources is not available in all, though this is good in science; well-matched resources are available in science lessons and this promotes pupils' progress effectively.
32. Careers education is generally good, but pupils choosing their options in Year 9 are

not given enough guidance regarding possible careers, which could influence their choices. Pupils in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form are given good guidance: pupils in Year 10 and the sixth form go on work experience for periods of two weeks which may be extended into holiday time. The school has successfully taken part in the 'Take your daughter to work' initiative. Sixth formers are given effective guidance on choosing universities. Pupils are encouraged to find more information about them by consulting videos and CD-ROMs. Good use is made of visitors from the community who talk about careers. Other valuable links with the community include involvement in the design of community projects, such as the new leisure centre, and voluntary work with children in the playgroup at St. Mary's Centre on site, where pupils learn about the needs of young children. The school enjoys constructive relationships with its feeder primary schools, though the passing on of assessment records from Key Stage 2 has only just begun.

33. The overall provision for personal development including spiritual, moral, social and cultural is good. Provision for moral development is very good and for social it is good. Pupils support many charities. They are informed about underdeveloped countries and, for example, the floods in Mozambique. They have discussed how they might help during form period. Pupils are aware of the impact of Western development and the implications this has for the Third World. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to take responsibilities. The School Council is actively run by sixth formers and there are further opportunities for responsibility for pupils through the House system. Pupils run a resources area and organise inter-house competitions. Provision for spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. A good example was seen in art. Pupils discussed the examination paper and developed ideas of spirituality which involved research of art from different cultures and periods, they then developed various themes which could be addressed. The discussion was mature with pupils well motivated and informed. Pupils have opportunities in English to study their own cultural heritage. The school arranges exchanges with Normandy and has regular trips to Italy. During the year there are also several trips to the theatre and places of interest.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34. Overall the school provides a satisfactory level of welfare, sound health and safety arrangements and secure child protection measures. The school demonstrates a strong commitment in the care of its pupils. It has established and comprehensive procedures for ensuring their protection and welfare. The Child Protection Policy follows Local Education Authority (LEA) guidelines and has additional advice on identifying the signs of physical, mental, sexual and emotional abuse in children. This is particularly helpful to both teaching and support staff. The headteacher is the designated officer for Child Protection purposes. The provision of in-service training and a regular input by the local education authority consultant on child protection ensures that the school's staff are aware of the policy and the prevailing practice. Members of the senior management team have also attended courses in related matters such as: 'Child Protection and the effects of divorce' and 'Racism in schools'. Members of both the teaching and support staff are encouraged to be observant and sensitive to pupils' physical and emotional condition and to report any concerns they have.
35. The health and safety policy of the school is well met in practice. A regular review of the premises is made and matters of concern documented and acted upon. An independent specialist company undertakes an annual health and safety risk

assessment and its report is assessed by the appropriate committee of the governing body. Fire notices are clear and fire drills and evacuation procedures regularly rehearsed. The documentary evidence supports the dependability of these procedures. Safety in the classroom is emphasised by regular reminders by teachers and technicians and pupils have a high level of awareness concerning hazardous chemicals and equipment. Lockers sited in some corridors potentially posed a danger to pupils in the event of an emergency evacuation and the open design of some staircases presented a potential risk to pupil safety. First Aid provision is good with sufficient staff members trained. The school has a comprehensive policy on drugs that includes guidance on the recognition of equipment used by drug abusers and symptoms of the use of both drugs and other substances, such as solvents. The school's PHSE programme deals with the subject in detail and emphasises the social, physical and mental implications of addiction.

36. There are good measures for promoting attendance. Both rewards and sanctions are used effectively to maintain and improve the school's good attendance. Certificates for good attendance are presented at the school's annual prize giving ceremony and are highly regarded alongside other presentations. The school's attendance rate is good being slightly above the national average for secondary schools and its unauthorised absence is minimal. Monitoring attendance is satisfactory in as much as teachers have a good knowledge of their pupils, an awareness of their family circumstances and a policy of following up unexplained absence. However, at the time of the inspection the registration procedures were insecure as a result of a malfunctioning of a commercial attendance monitoring computer system. A temporary triple registration system is in place but the potential for error in accounting for pupils or presenting accurate attendance data is high.
37. The school promotes an ethos of mutual respect and tolerance. Parents were in general agreement that the school is a moral community and that it effectively helped their children become more mature and responsible. A vigorous anti-bullying policy, the promotion of a racially harmonious community spirit and a commitment towards the protection of individual rights reflects the school's Christian Catholic ethos. The school has satisfactory procedures to deal with anti-social incidents and interpersonal disputes that would impact negatively on ethical and moral standards. There are also reliable systems for recording and monitoring them.
38. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are unsatisfactory. Insufficient use is made of assessment information to inform teaching and curriculum planning. As a result the progress of individual pupils cannot be monitored with sufficient precision either across the year groups or as they advance through the school. Insufficient attention is given to tracking pupils' progress in order to provide targeted learning support. Although parents expressed general satisfaction with the reports they received on their children, the school lacks an effectual system to monitor the quality and content of teachers' reports to ensure that the attainment and progress of pupils are clear and that achievable targets are set. In Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision there is compliance with the Code of Practice, although at Stage 2 the assessments are new and have not been reviewed. However, for Stage 3 and 5 pupils the reviews and assessments are thorough and relate meaningfully to their needs. The links with outside bodies in ensuring 'statement' provision is met are vigilant but gaps and delays in this provision require an even more firm approach towards these agencies.

39. The school has done much in a relatively short space of time and its systems meet statutory requirements but the lack of satisfactory arrangements to track the progress of pupils across the subjects limits its scope to take remedial action to raise achievement and inform future lesson planning. The school does not monitor the attainment and progress of different ethnic groups. The progress of gifted and talented pupils is monitored carefully and accelerated learning programmes are provided in mathematics, modern foreign languages, art, music and religious education. Public examination results are not monitored at present in terms of ethnicity.
40. Liaison with external SEN support staff, Health and Social Services Departments is good but teachers' knowledge of the use of Individual Educational Plans is unsatisfactory due partly to the fact that they are new to the school and the IEP list is not issued to staff. The comments in reports focused on attitudes and behaviour and not on what pupils needed to do to improve.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

41. There is strong parental satisfaction about the academic standards the school achieves and the high standards of behaviour that it promotes. There is a secure understanding by parents of the emphasis on the Catholic faith that underpins moral and ethical values but this doctrinal position does not deter non-Catholic parents from making the school their preferred choice. The parents' meeting and responses to the questionnaire attests to a high level of satisfaction with the way the school cares for and educates their children.
42. The majority of parents see the staff as a committed team dedicated to the task of educating and caring for their children. Parents associated the increased confidence and self-esteem of their children to the strategy of reward and encouragement. They consider that the positive attitudes of staff strongly influence the behaviour, values and self-awareness of the pupils and give them a sense of purpose and resolve. Overall parents considered that the school provides a safe and caring environment and that it looks after and educates their children extremely well.
43. The school has a good range of productive and consistent links with parents that help pupils learn. These links begin prior to a pupil being admitted to the school. A home/school agreement sets out the expectations of the school concerning them and the school's duty of care towards pupils. An extensive range of meetings both social and formal together with a well supported and active Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and committed governing body ensure effective links between the school and parents that clearly help pupils' learning and development.
44. The school involves parents in its planning and target setting as much as possible. Their views are noted and transmitted to the responsible committees of the governing body and the senior management team and form part of the decision making process. The school sees parental involvement in the education of their children as fundamental to the achievement of the higher standards that it has set itself. From the formal meeting with them and discussions during the inspection, parents consider they have much to offer in developing the school. Despite some comments concerning inconsistencies in homework the school succeeds in engaging parents as much as possible in its plans and activities and the overall impact of parents' involvement with the school is very good.

45. Overall the information provided to parents about pupils' progress is good. Information to parents through written reports, newsletters, letters, sectional meetings, homework diaries and social contact is extensive and of good quality. The details give a clear indication of what pupils need to do to improve their progress and what parents can do to help. The school's prospectus is a high quality document that is very clear and informative. All parents who responded to the questionnaire and those who attended the parents' meeting felt that they were very well informed about their children's progress.
46. Parents are generally satisfied with the level of homework their children have to do although there were some variations in responses across the age range. The school regards the contribution that parents make to children's learning as essential in its efforts to maintain the present high academic standards and the drive towards even better results. There is a very good level of co-operation between parents and the school and sound evidence of the maintenance of good behaviour and learning resulting from this supportive approach.
47. Home/school notebooks are used to maintain a regular dialogue: sometimes simply a note of a personal nature and others more detailed explanations of homework projects with suggestions of how a parent might assist their child complete it.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

48. Governors are very supportive of the school. The effectiveness of the governing body in fulfilling its responsibilities is satisfactory. They are fully involved and are informed of developments through the headteacher and senior management team briefings and through their designated links and visits to the school. Statutory requirements are not fully met in aspects of curriculum provision. The strategic role of Governors has increased considerably particularly leading up to the transition from an independent status to a grant maintained status and now voluntary aided. Governors play a key role in shaping the direction of the school. They fully understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are starting to be involved in monitoring and evaluation. The strategic direction of the school is clear and well focused on improving pupils' attainment.
49. The leadership provided by the headteacher and other key staff has impacted positively and ensures a clear educational direction. The school has a clearly stated and appropriate set of aims, intending to ensure that each pupil achieves her potential. It is largely successful in achieving these aims. It is important to note the changes that have recently taken place at Virgo Fidelis. The last two years have seen rapid growth; for example, the sixth form has grown from seventeen to sixty-eight. This expansion and the changing nature of the intake and status of the school has directly impacted upon the working practices of staff. Teachers have adapted to significant change, challenges and demands. Impact on the areas of provision, management, staffing, and resources have been quite considerable. In addition to this there have been substantial alterations to the structure of the school building in order to accommodate the demand for places. The school has coped well with these. The timetable has been adapted and many new staff appointed in order to ensure adequate staffing. Occasionally, efforts to secure new staff and ensure teacher expertise and availability has resulted in some unsatisfactory timetable organisation, affecting standards, teaching and learning, namely in science at Key Stage 3 and in art at Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form.

50. A tiered management structure was set in place, this has changed and has been adapted gradually over the last two years as numbers have increased each year by eighty to one hundred pupils. The monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance is satisfactory. The school develops and implements academic and curricular targets. The headteacher and two deputies have worked hard to strengthen the roles of those in posts of responsibility. Currently the tiered structure incorporates Heads of Year, Middle Management, and two deputies, one of whom has only recently been appointed. The delegation to staff with management responsibilities and their contributions is developing.
51. Heads of Year are effective and maintain a good overview of pupils' overall progress with form tutors. The management level is inconsistent in its monitoring, evaluation and development and support of teaching. This is due to a variety of factors, the allocation of subjects and responsibilities being too wide in some instances, and occasionally due to unforeseen staffing circumstances, the structure has changed recently. Thereby being too new to judge effectiveness. All subject leaders are not yet fully involved in first hand monitoring and evaluation of their subject areas. Some monitoring and evaluation of standards, teaching and learning has taken place in English, mathematics, personal, social and health education and ICT. Generally these are at early stages of development with the exception of science where it is well advanced and is used as a role model for other subjects. The school's strategy for appraisal and performance management is satisfactory.
52. During the past two years the staff handbook and development plan have been produced along with many new policies. The five year development plan is clear, coherent and well targeted; it is an effective tool for change. The overall performance of the school is monitored and occurs within a positive framework, the priorities for development are good. Staff work hard together developing whole school policies, which link into educational improvement and ensure continuity and progress in pupils' learning. The present equal opportunities policy is being updated and the deputy head monitors departmental policies to ensure consistency. Staff expectations have been raised through working with the headteacher and senior managers and this has empowered them with a clear vision based on improvement. The school's management has worked hard on developing strengths as well as monitoring progress. The sharing of good practice between each other and throughout the school is at the developmental stage.
53. All staff share common goals as exercised through the mission statement. Each core subject has an action plan with clear targets. Assessment data is collected but it is not yet used formally or consistently to support teaching and learning and to raise teacher expectations. Together, staff have reviewed the strengths and weaknesses of the school; the focus and analysis of further improvement has resulted in rising standards for example, a twenty per cent increase at Key Stage 3 at level 5 in the core subjects. The action taken to meet the schools targets is good. The school has recognised that much time has been taken researching and implementing behaviour management thereby equipping teachers for the changes in the intake.
54. The monitoring and evaluation and development of teaching are part of an ongoing cycle. A few regular classroom observations of teaching and learning take place; additionally appraisal is linked to classroom monitoring. Curricular targets are in place for each of the core subjects.

55. The match of qualifications and experience of teachers' to the school's curriculum is satisfactory. The science department is well supported by technicians, but there is insufficient technician time to prepare practical work. Arrangements for the professional development and performance management of staff are satisfactory. The school is in the process of buying-in advice with regard to supporting new subjects in the school. A good staff development policy is in place. Training is planned, and after consultation it is linked to the priorities of the school and personal professional development. The school has a very successful mentoring scheme in which new staff are allocated a senior member of staff. Currently although there are new staff there are no newly qualified teachers.
56. The accommodation is adequate and the school is generally clean and well maintained. The display, which celebrates pupils' achievement, is not a strength. To date there has been a very large outlay on capital works and many of the facilities have improved to accommodate demand for places. Space is at a premium in one art studio, food technology rooms are awaiting refurbishment, work surfaces are not very hygienic and the textile room is very small with no proper benches for sewing machines. Some minor health and safety issues were drawn to the attention of the headteacher, the coil stair case is exposed with low railings which are potentially hazardous, lockers, when used, congest the corridors, and the ventilation in the computer rooms is unsatisfactory.
57. Appropriate resources are being put in place, and resources are generally adequate. Design and technology has out-of-date graphics facilities and has no access to computers. Learning resources are inadequate in music, and the subject is ill equipped for ICT, which impacts on standards achieved. There are insufficient modern computers to be used effectively as a tool in most subjects. The ratio of computers to pupils in the school is average however there are insufficient modern computers to be used effectively as a tool in most subjects and there have been some technical problems. ICT is insufficiently used across the curriculum. New computers are installed in the library but are not yet in use. A lot of furniture has been replaced but much of the remaining is old. Due to refurbishment of the site, the library has been out of action for the best part of two years. It has not made a proper contribution to the development of pupils' literacy skills, except as a private study area for sixth form pupils. There are approximately 12,000 – 14,000 books, very few recent additions, at least two thirds of existing stock is too old to have any current value to pupils. The school effectively analyses its outcomes and plans the acquisition of new resources appropriately.
58. The extent to which the best value principles of comparison, challenge, consultation and competition are applied is good. Educational priorities are well supported through the school's financial planning. The governors look closely at present provision in terms of curriculum development, raising standards and pupil progress and the quality of the environment. The effectiveness of the schools use of new technology is unsatisfactory. Specific grants are used effectively for their designated purposes such as capital funding. The Congregation has undertaken to sponsor the school particularly the sixth form until it reaches full capacity and has also contributed significant amounts to supplement capital works. Educational priorities are supported through careful financial planning. The financial management of the school undertaken by the Bursar is good. The governing body reports to parents about the provision and effectiveness of work for pupils with special educational needs appropriately.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

59. In order to raise further standards of work and quality of education provided, the governors, headteacher and senior managers should:

1) Improve standards of attainment by:

- addressing the content of English, geography, history ICT & modern foreign languages
- improving the timetable organisation at Key Stages 3 and 4, particularly for design and technology and physical education at Key Stages 3 and 4 and in music at Key Stage 3
- meeting statutory requirements for design and technology, physical education at Key Stage 4 and religious studies in the sixth form. (Paragraphs 4,5,9,26,28,29,48,83,90,117,128).

2) Improve the provision for pupils with special educational needs by:

- ensuring that the targets in the individual educational plans are specific and that teachers understand how to provide suitable support
- ensuring all parents of pupils on the register of special educational need, are kept suitably informed in line with the guidance in the Code of Practice. (Paragraphs 19,24,38,103).

3) Improve monitoring, evaluation and support of teaching, learning, the quality of the curriculum and whole school policies by:

- ensuring that middle managers and subject leaders monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning,
- considering a greater range of teaching methods
- providing a closer match of work for pupils of all abilities
- developing schemes of work in subjects. (Paragraphs 16,17,18,51,53,66,68,72,73,92,100,119,121,128,136,137).

The school has plans to address these matters in the school development plan.

4) Improve the use of ICT across the curriculum and develop the role of the subject co-ordinators by:

- focusing on the improved use of ICT across the curriculum by providing INSET
- developing the role of subject leaders. (Paragraphs 51,52,57,85,88,93,112,128).

The school has plans to address these matters in the school development plan.

60. A few minor health and safety concerns were raised with the headteacher. (Paragraphs 56).

61. In addition the governors should consider the following minor weaknesses:

- Teachers are not sufficiently vigilant in getting to lessons on time.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	155
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	49

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	7	48	54	11	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	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	514
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free [school] meals	63

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y13
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	6
Number of pupils on the [school]'s special educational needs register	6

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	168

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	6.9
National comparative data	7.6

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	1.1

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	99(98)	n/a	109	109

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Girls	100	83	80
	Total	100	83	80
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	[School]	94 (90)	78(52)	76 (60)
	National	63 (65)	62 (60)	55 (56)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	[School]	32 (38)	32(33)	25 (19)
	National	28 (35)	38 (36)	23 (27)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Girls	91	92	83
	Total	91	92	83
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	[School]	83 (74)	84 (58)	76 (59)
	National	64 (62)	64 (64)	60 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	[School]	34 (44)	40 (36)	28 (22)
	National	31(31)	37 (37)	28 (31)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	99 (98)	n/a	30 (32)	30 (32)

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	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Girls	20 (23)	24 (23)	25 (25)
	Total	20 (23)	24 (23)	25 (25)
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	[School]	67 (72)	80 (72)	83 (78)
	National	48 (46)	89(88)	96 (93)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	42 (41)
	National	38 (37)

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

Attainment at the end of the sixth form

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year Who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	n/a	23	23

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
[School]		14.8	14.8		2.5	2.5
National	17.7	18.1	17.9	2.7	2.8	2.8

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	70
Black – African heritage	56
Black – other	63
Indian	46
Pakistani	28
Bangladeshi	7
Chinese	3
White	201
Any other minority ethnic group	40

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	13	
Black – African heritage	5	
Black – other	5	
Indian		
Pakistani	1	
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	6	
Other minority ethnic groups	30	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7– Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	33.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.3
Average class size	23.6

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	96

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999
	£
Total income	1542290
Total expenditure	1522839
Expenditure per pupil	3098
Balance brought forward from previous year	9076
Balance carried forward to next year	28527

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	514
Number of questionnaires returned	102

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	36	7	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	44	45	5	4	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	41	40	11	2	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	45	13	4	2
The teaching is good.	41	4	8	5	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	21	47	19	13	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	40	36	16	5	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	67	30	1	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	24	41	21	10	5
The school is well led and managed.	46	33	8	7	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	42	43	7	2	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35	45	11	4	4

Other issues raised by parents

Some fourteen written comments were also received from parents. Many were very positive about the standards achieved and the good quality teaching. A few were concerned about declining standards in some subjects. A few stated that bullying was not dealt with well and that the size of some classes was too large.

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

ENGLISH

62. The achievement of pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 is well above the national average. In the most recent National Curriculum tests, at 14, the proportion of pupils reaching level 5 or above was well above the national average and the percentage reaching level six or above was above average. The average test scores in English are higher than those achieved by the same pupils in mathematics and science and they are well above the average scores of pupils in similar schools. Pupils' achievement in the GCSE examinations at the end of Key Stage 4 is also well above the national average in both English Language and English Literature. Over eighty per cent of pupils achieved higher grade A* - C passes in 1999 in both subjects. In 1999 and in 1998, when results were similarly good, there were more grade A passes in the literature examination than in the language examination. This reflects the strong emphasis seen in pupils' folders during the inspection on writing in response to poems, plays, novels and stories. The high success rate in the GCSE English examinations is similar to what pupils achieve in the other main subjects. All of the five students entered for GCE A level in 1999 passed the examination, as did the three who were entered in 1998. In the most recent examination three of the five were awarded grades A or B passes, a proportion higher than the national average.
63. Achievement is similarly high in the English lessons seen at Key Stage 3. By the end of the key stage pupils' reading and interpretation skills are well above national average. Pupils observed in Year 9 read aloud a previously unseen poem by D. H. Lawrence with considerable skill, and in another group read very confidently their own short plays, written to feature minor characters in *Romeo and Juliet*. They speak with confidence in all the lessons where opportunities are given. They listen attentively to teachers and fellow pupils, usually applauding generously when an individual reads or performs their own work. A survey of pupils' writing across the key stage showed that it is above the standards expected for the age group. Much of the writing in response to literature shows originality and imagination. Most of the writing is completed accurately even in first drafts.
64. The work in progress in Key Stage 4 is of a similarly high standard. Relatively little was seen of the Year 11 pupils as most lessons had occurred on Monday morning before the start of the inspection. In a sample of their essays, however, pupils write perceptively in depth on the theme of law and justice in relation to the novel *'To Kill a Mockingbird'* as part of their coursework. In the only Year 11 lesson seen, pupils read and discussed the poem *'War Photographer'* by Carol Duffy with skill and maturity. Pupils express opinions clearly and listen attentively to other views. Particularly impressive writing and presentation skills are present also in Year 10. The depth of understanding expressed by some Year 10 pupils who were seen performing a monologue they had written to articulate the feelings of key characters from *'Of Mice and Men'* was of a very high standard. The careful selection of texts such as these and *'Macbeth'* and *'An Inspector Calls'* allow pupils to explore in depth important moral and social issues.
65. The standard of students' work in the sixth form is high. Students in Year 12 seen reading Jonson's *'Volpone'* have made an impressive start to the course. Their confident reading of the text and their detailed knowledge of characters and their

relationships have been helped by good teaching and by seeing an excellent production of the play. Year 13 students showed similar confidence and skill in a lesson where they were preparing to read and present the final part of Eliot's 'The Waste Land' to the whole group. Group discussion and reading of the text were of a high standard, helped by good guidance in interpreting the complexities of the text by a skilful teacher.

66. English teaching is generally of a good standard. No lessons seen were unsatisfactory; a few reached a very good standard. Literacy skills are taught well throughout the Key Stages. Teachers use their subject knowledge well. They have particularly good knowledge of the literary texts studied for A level and GCSE examinations and often use these texts effectively to develop wider opportunities for discussion and writing. Teachers maintain good control of classes and in most lessons they have developed good relationships with pupils. In the lessons where teachers use a variety of teaching methods this often leads to productive group activities with groups or individuals presenting information to the whole class with considerable skill. Teachers use time effectively in most lessons. In a few lessons too many teacher interjections prevented pupils finishing a writing or discussion exercise before listening to further information and instructions. In a few cases also, the lesson planning was over elaborate and this led to younger pupils becoming confused as to how they should proceed. In the cases where teaching is shared by different teachers, the long term planning is not adequate at the moment and does not ensure that the syllabus is covered effectively. In the survey of samples of pupils' writing the marking of books and essays was thorough and helpful. GCSE and A level work was graded accurately. Teachers all note the needs of pupils with special educational needs and make good efforts to support them. Only in one lesson out of fifteen, however, was additional support seen.
67. Pupils' behaviour in English lessons is good. Most pupils are conscientious and hardworking and produce their homework on time. They enjoy opportunities to read aloud, to present information and to discuss important issues.
68. The English department has made good progress in the last two years to meet the changing circumstances of the school. Sound leadership has led to the maintenance of good standards of teaching and learning. New teachers have been supported well and encouraged to make a valuable contribution to the development of the subject. A number of areas need improvement. The outline schemes of work, for Key Stages 3 and 4 are underdeveloped and they do not indicate clearly what must be covered in relation to National Curriculum and examination requirements or indicate what methods of approach and which resources would be most appropriate. The existing documents do not provide sufficient guidance for teachers. At the moment there is no pattern of regular formal meetings of English teachers to allow matters such as these and other business matters to be discussed and decided upon. A good initiative has been taken to collect and file pupils' completed written work in Key Stage 4 in centrally filed portfolios.
69. Pupils' literacy and oracy skills throughout the school are high overall. A number of subject areas other than English make valuable contributions to the development of these skills. In science, for example, pupils are expected to set out and write up investigations accurately and they do this regularly. Teachers highlight new scientific and technical terms in lessons: errors in written work are corrected carefully by teachers in biology, chemistry and physics. In subjects such as history and geography there are opportunities to develop written skills in other areas. Good

opportunities are created for extended project writing reflecting pupils' own interests in medieval history in Key Stage 3. In geography, some lessons require different forms of writing such as the drafting of a letter to press a case for the development of leisure facilities in a case study on Scotland. Literacy skills are developed well in modern foreign language teaching and in art lessons where teachers encourage discussion and the acquisition of new terms. The school identifies and records those pupils for whom English is an additional language. Most of the pupils speak, read and write English fluently and do not receive additional support. Basic literacy skills are taught well so that all pupils, even those with English as an additional language, are able to read and understand textbooks clearly, and write good English.

70. In recent times the school library has not made a proper contribution to the development of pupils' literacy skills. At the moment it remains out of action during a period of refurbishment, except as a private study area for sixth form students. Much of the existing book stock is too old to have any value to current pupils, other than for the small careers and university entrance section.

MATHEMATICS

71. Results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 are above the national average and an improvement over 1998 results. They are well above the average for similar schools. When compared to national averages they are below the results obtained by the same pupils in English and science. GCSE results in 1999 were well above the national average, although below those in 1998. A high proportion of pupils obtain A and A* grades. A-level results in 1999 were below those of previous years.
72. In lessons and other work the overall achievement of pupils at both Key Stages 3 and 4 is above the national expectations. By the end of Key Stage 3 almost all pupils have acquired basic number skills. They use fractions, decimals and percentages appropriately. They construct and interpret graphs and bar charts and solve linear equations. Data handling skills are well developed and pupils calculate probabilities. Higher attaining pupils calculate areas and volumes of regular shape and use Pythagoras Theorem in right-angled triangles. When insufficiently challenged higher attaining pupils do not reach their full potential. By the end of Key Stage 4 the majority of pupils reach high standards across the subject. They solve simultaneous and quadratic equations, using algebraic and graphical methods. They conduct investigations, generalising and testing their results. Higher attaining pupils understand and use negative indices including standards form. They use trigonometry including the sine and cosine rules. Measurement and data handling skills are above average.
73. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and in over a third of lessons at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form it is good. It is occasionally unsatisfactory at Key Stage 3. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught well throughout the Key Stages. Most teachers plan their lessons well. They introduce them clearly giving appropriate examples to illustrate methods. For instance in a Year 11 lesson the teacher sketched several different graphs on the board. This enabled pupils to understand the relationship between the shape of a graph and its algebraic equation. In another Year 13 lesson it assisted pupils to solve second order differential equations and enhanced their progress. In other lessons teachers use questioning effectively and this enables pupils to clarify their understanding. For example in a Year 12 lesson it helped pupils to appreciate the wide use of the

binomial distribution in a variety of situations. Pupils then were able to use it to solve problems. Class management is effective in most lessons, although some teachers find difficulty in catering effectively for the wide range of attainments in some classes. This sometimes results in the lack of sufficient challenge for the highest attainers. Some teachers use on-going assessment well: errors are identified and pupils are encouraged to correct their mistakes. In other lessons marking is less effective and some errors are left unchecked. Homework is set regularly by most teachers. It is particularly effective in promoting the learning of A-level pupils. In other classes its' use is satisfactory.

74. The majority of pupils have positive attitudes to their lessons. They are attentive during class teaching and sustain concentration whilst working independently. The behaviour of most pupils is good, although a small minority of pupils will take advantage of weak teaching to misbehave. Relationships with teachers are generally very good and many pupils appreciate the help they receive.
75. The department is led by the deputy headteacher who does not, at present, teach mathematics. He combines this role with many other duties and his relationships with the mathematics staff is good. This system has evolved from a time when the school was much smaller and is not now sufficiently effective in developing a cohesive department to meet the present situation.

SCIENCE

76. Analysis of the 1999 GCSE results shows that compared with national results for individual science subjects, biology was below average, physics about average and chemistry very high: 100% achieved A*- C grades. For the very few pupils taking combined science, results were about average. Compared with the national figures for combined science, biology was average, physics was above average, and chemistry was very high. Compared to similar schools results are above average. Results have been similar during the last three years, with some fluctuation. All pupils did not take all three sciences, however, and the current Year 11 are still not complying with the National Curriculum as they began the course when the school was independent. This has been rectified in Year 10 where all pupils take either all three sciences or combined science.
77. Key Stage 3 tests for 1999 show that the number of pupils achieving level 5 and above was well above the national average, and level 6 and above was close to the national average. National comparisons are only available since 1998 when results were about average. They rose sharply in 1999 after a concerted effort; the school trend is rising much faster than the national trend. Compared with similar schools in 1999, the average National Curriculum levels were well above average.
78. Because of the very small numbers taking 'A'-level, it is not possible to make comparisons with national results. The pass rates have been generally high for all three sciences: it is one hundred percent this year in the modular science courses so far. Standards are above average. Chemistry in particular has never had less than one hundred per cent over the past two years.
79. Work seen during the inspection was of a similarly high standard. In chemistry, there is meticulous and very extensive coverage of the curriculum at a very high level. Pupils in Year 11 show very good knowledge of the properties of chemical elements and their atomic structure. They produce balanced chemical equations

and carry out practical investigations well, for example on the rate of reaction, and produce accurate graphs to illustrate different rates. In physics, Year 11 pupils show very good numeracy skills in making precise calculations which involve, for example, the amount of energy generated by electrical appliances in a certain time. Biology pupils have a very detailed knowledge of living things for their age, able to understand, for example, the respiratory process in producing energy, and the function of enzymes in bodily reactions.

80. Pupils studying biology at A-level show good knowledge of genetic processes, and describe the structure and function of parts of the cell, such as chromosomes and mitochondria, in detail. Those taking physics understand classic experiments to measure the radius and density of the earth. Chemistry pupils readily identify specific chemical bonding in infrared spectra and relate these to the structure of large molecules.
81. At Key Stage 3, standards are above average in all three sciences. Pupils enter the school with about average knowledge of science, though literacy and numeracy are above average. There is evidence of well above average work in Year 9, especially in chemistry in pupils' knowledge, for example, of the order of displacement of metals from solutions containing their ions. In biology, above average pupils show good knowledge of relationships between living things and the energy flow through an eco-system. Standards shown by average pupils is a little lower in physics; they needed help from the teacher to help them remember work done on the laws of reflection, particularly with vocabulary for lateral inversion of an image in a plane mirror. Lower attaining pupils show satisfactory knowledge of the structure and function of parts of the eye, such as the retina. Practical skills develop well with concentration on them during this key stage. This investment helps achieve good investigative skills in future for examination work.
82. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Most teachers have good or very good subject knowledge, and motivate pupils well, maintaining a good pace and productively covering as much work as possible. Pupils respond by working hard and strive to do their best. Pupils respect teachers' knowledge and they feel comfortable with the structured nature of most teaching. All teaching seen was satisfactory or better. Eight out of seventeen lessons seen were good or better, with no real difference in any key stage. In less successful lessons seen, behaviour was rather noisy because pupils did not feel sufficiently challenged, for example the revision of magnetism which they thought they had done before. The best teaching was in chemistry, where one excellent lesson was seen in Year 9 who were looking at chemical patterns. The teacher showed excellent subject knowledge and taught in a didactic fashion, which suited the class very well. Planning was excellent and not a minute was wasted. Learning was broken up very effectively into stages and pupils very quickly reached level 7. Some brighter pupils were extended to even higher thinking about the patterns in reactions of metals, allowing them to predict general patterns. They fluently made equations from their predictions. Attainment in Year 9 is consequently well above average in chemistry. Teachers' planning in all subjects is always good, and in Key Stages 4 and 5 it is very good. In a Year 10 biology lesson, for example, planning showed awareness of the special needs of certain pupils, and homework was well matched to pupil ability and the teacher could assess pupils' achievement accurately. The best lessons show careful timing, which is meticulously followed. This was well exemplified in an A-level chemistry lesson where girls were constantly urged to complete work and move on to the next piece. The rate of progress was very fast. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is very good in science. Teachers pay great attention to vocabulary and the quality of

written work in all subjects is very good as pupils communicate knowledgeably. Teachers' marking is satisfactory and their assessment is good in Key Stage 3 through frequent tests and examinations. In Key Stages 4 and 5, it is very good. Pupils are guided well in carrying out effective self-assessment by considering the marks they achieved in their tests, and how they could improve them.

83. Streaming has a good effect on standards, and work is well matched to individual pupil ability. Pupils with special educational needs are provided with suitable work, even in homework, which allows them to learn effectively. The brightest pupils are given extra lessons and cover a great deal of work to achieve a very high standard. The nature of the school timetable sometimes results in certain classes having up to six periods of science with one teacher during the day. This has an adverse effect on the rest of the curriculum and impacts on standards. Some overlap of the teaching of skills causes inefficiency and makes the excessive time allowance for each science superfluous.
84. Science is a very well led department, with a clear vision for the development of each subject and consistent aims to raise standards. Some effective monitoring of teaching is helping to achieve this. The department comprises a close-knit team of teachers - well supported by technicians - who work together well and who use a variety of teaching methods.
85. Resources are generally good, except for ICT equipment, such as sensor boxes. There are insufficient modern computers that can be used effectively as a tool in science for monitoring experiments, for example, nor for effective research using CD-ROMs. Consequently, ICT skills relating to science are poorly developed.

ART

86. Recent GCSE examinations show that results in A*-C grades have been above national averages, although the number of entries has been very small. In lessons and work seen during the inspection, standards of achievement are in line with national norms by the end of Key Stage 3. In all lessons pupils develop a satisfactory understanding of different skills and techniques. As their work progresses they become more confident and explore and experiment with ideas and a range of media. In Key Stage 3 pupils create interesting collage landscapes, and work small fine clay figurines based on drawings. At Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form there are good examples of large-scale three-dimensional masks, and large-scale animals and figurative studies using a variety of media. There is good evidence that sculpture is developing well. Drawing and painting shows influence from the study of art and artists from different periods and cultures. Pupils use subject specific terms accurately. Some of the critical studies of different artists and research of art from different periods and cultures is of a very good standard. These standards are maintained at Key Stage 4, where pupils build on their knowledge and skills. Some work reflects gaps in the pupils' previous knowledge and experience due to a lack of continuity in teaching at Key Stage 3. Figurative and observational drawing skills are not always as proficient and initially pupils' personal responses to ideas and topics are often reliant on the teacher providing stimuli and the way forward. Teachers are addressing this weakness well and the situation is a rapidly improving one. As a result, standards of attainment are at least satisfactory and are improving by the end of Key Stage 4. There are a small number of pupils studying A-level and standards are appropriate in these lessons. A good lesson was observed discussing the examination paper developing ideas of spirituality, which involved research of art from different cultures and periods and developed

various themes which could be addressed. The discussion was mature with pupils well motivated and informed.

87. The quality of teaching is often good and occasionally very good. Lesson planning is clear and detailed. The aims of the lesson are shared with pupils and are constantly referred to and reinforced. Specialist teachers have a secure understanding of subject knowledge and this enables and promotes pupils understanding. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is very good in art. Good opportunities are provided to share views and develop pupils' critical analysis and to develop independent learning skills. Teachers have good expectations, they are very good in the sixth form. Classroom management is very good, the atmosphere in studios is positive, lively and hardworking.
88. Pupils make good progress at both Key Stages and in the sixth form. Higher attaining pupils are encouraged to develop skills through individual research. Pupils have good opportunities to study art through the accelerated GCSE courses provided, and many take advantage of this. Lower attaining pupils are well supported, teachers take great care to promote their confidence and skill development. Pupils respond positively, it is evident they greatly enjoy the subject. Opportunities are not afforded for information and communication technology (ICT), although plans are in place to address this, it is a missed opportunity. There is evidence of pupils using ICT for research at home and this work contributes well to their portfolios.
89. The department is well managed and subject documentation is thorough, with good schemes of work developing. Target setting is a constant feature in lessons and pupils understand how well they are progressing, particularly those pupils studying GCSE and A-level courses. Marking of sketch books and pupils' work is informative. Information and communication technology is underdeveloped at present. The art department has coped well with the whole school transitional changes and has maintained good standards. Teachers offer an immeasurably good amount of time after school and at weekends to provide pupils with additional art classes. Timetable organisation resulting in single lessons is unsatisfactory for some Key Stage 3 classes and sixth form classes. One studio used for clay is very cramped, although well organised and managed the size restricts the scale of work and is reliant on pupils being aware of and responding to such a reduced working space. There are no blackout facilities in either studio. Display in the studios although ever changing and display about the school does not adequately celebrate the achievements of the pupils.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

90. Analysis of the GSCE results is not possible because there have been very few entries in the past three years. Of the three candidates in 1999, two achieved grade C; of the five entries in the home economics short course, none achieved A*-C. Although every pupil has begun to follow a short course since 1998, most have dropped out, due to previous related circumstances and the allocation of pupils, rather than option choice, to food or resistant materials in Key Stage 4 causes a lack of motivation. In Key Stage 3 teacher assessment 1999, only just over half the candidates achieved level 5 and above. About one fifth achieved level 6. This is well below the national average for teacher assessments for girls. Current achievement in Year 11 is well below average. Only two pupils remain on the food technology course. The three remaining pupils who are studying graphic products have

unwittingly followed much of a resistant materials syllabus. Achievement seen during the inspection at Key Stage 3 is about average in food and textiles with some well finished evening bags completed with applied design, such as beading. Year 9 pupils have learned some of the factors which affect textile needs and choices, for example the influence of a pop star's way of life. They have gained a satisfactory understanding of the design process by writing a specification based on their own research, and have started to plan their own practical tasks in a logical way. Other pupils have examined existing food products and are currently doing some satisfactory research by devising an effective questionnaire relating to a product suitable for the school canteen. Current achievement in resistant materials and graphics is well below average, because the National Curriculum requirements were not implemented previously. There is no evidence of completed design and 'make' projects in these areas at Key Stage 3.

91. Design and technology was not considered a compulsory subject when the school was independent. It only comprised home economics and woodwork, and a few pupils took it. Now that the concept of design and technology is beginning to be understood, recent planning for Key Stage 3 food and textiles is good and some suitable projects are being undertaken, for example designing and making base ball caps, and evaluating commercial products such as pizza. Pupils are learning specific techniques such as tie-dyeing and acquiring knowledge such as the importance of food hygiene in manufacturing and in the home. In resistant materials the teacher has only been in post for five days and has begun an ambitious project in Year 9 on a toy with two moving parts. However, this project is very difficult to conceive with the level of expertise of the pupils, which is very low due to the previous lack of skills teaching in Key Stage 3. Current 11-14 year olds have little knowledge, of the design process in the resistant materials area of the curriculum. Many pupils lack motivation in the resistant materials and graphics area of the curriculum. Work scrutiny reveals they covered very little in Key Stage 3 and then were arbitrarily allocated to either a food or a resistant materials short course at GCSE. Consequently, girls were often uncooperative, for example in bringing ingredients to school or paying for materials. Most gave up when the pressure of work in other subjects became too much for them.
92. The lack of available work for scrutiny and the quality of that seen show that progress has been unsatisfactory for some time. Better progress is currently being made in food and textiles. A suitable scheme of work has been devised. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. Teaching seen was satisfactory or good in food and textiles. The teacher is developing good understanding of the underlying design process as applied to food and the importance of considerations when marketing a product. Conversely, most lessons seen in resistant materials were unsatisfactory. The new teacher in this area had only been in post a few days before the inspection, and had little evidence of the girls' progress up till then. A good lesson was seen in Year 10 graphics in which pupils were designing and producing a film poster, some to a specified task and others to an individual design, showing the teacher had considered the varying expertise of the pupils. Unsatisfactory lessons were seen when the teacher pitched work at too high a level for the girls to understand, not fully aware of the low level of their skills. Leadership is now improving with the appointment of a new line manager who has expertise in design and technology, and has begun to address the problems of the department. The school realises that developing schemes of work and monitoring curriculum delivery are very important to raise standards, and that pupils need to be challenged and allowed some choice at Key Stage 4.

93. There is no technician to prepare practical work, and all the rooms are awaiting some refurbishment. The food room surfaces are not very hygienic and the textile room is very small with no proper benches for sewing machines. The resistant materials room is unsuitable at present with dated machines, such as an oven and a circular saw, and poor ventilation. The room is dirty and there is no proper storage for wood. The department has out-of-date graphics facilities and has no access to computers. Research facilities are limited because of the library closure and there is no access to CD-ROM or the Internet. There are no schemes of work in place for resistant materials and graphics, and the subject does not comply with the National Curriculum, as there is no apparent work on structures being done, and no control systems in resistant materials or textiles.

GEOGRAPHY

94. In the end of Key Stage 3 teachers assessments in 1999, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level was just below the national average. In 1999, from a very small cohort, the proportion of pupils achieving GCSE grades A*- C was well above the national averages. However, the very small cohort makes any comparisons, either nationally or against other subjects, invalid. A very small cohort of pupils successfully take AS and A level GCE. Very low numbers again make any comparisons statistically invalid.
95. In the work seen during the inspection, the standards achieved at the end of Key Stage 3 at the age of 14 were just below the level expected of pupils of the same age nationally. By the age of 14, pupils understand some of the traditions and customs of Italy. They use data to decide the boundary between the rich and poor areas of Italy. They have good knowledge about the physical geography of Japan and the consequences this has for life in Japan. They have a basic understanding of earthquakes and volcanoes, which assist understanding the geography of Japan. Higher attaining pupils understand that bridges and roads are built to withstand earthquakes and typhoons. Lower attaining pupils compare the climates of Japan and the United Kingdom. Although many pupils copy text, diagrams and make notes, pupils' attainment is below national expectations because their understanding of many aspects of geography is less secure and concepts are underdeveloped for pupils' aged 14.
96. In the work seen during the inspection, the standards achieved at the end of Key Stage 4 at the age of 16 are above the level expected of pupils of the same age nationally. By the age of 16, pupils build on work from Key Stage 3, they show good knowledge and improved understanding about the process of plate tectonics. They know the reasons for the location of earthquakes and volcanoes throughout the world. High attaining pupils understand that when plates are working against one another earthquakes occur rather than volcanoes. Pupils effectively assess the advantages and disadvantages of living near an active volcano. They begin to understand ways to measure the extent to which a country has developed using infant mortality rates, birth rates and the gross national product when comparing less economically developed countries with more economically developed countries.
97. In the work seen during the inspection, the standards achieved in the sixth form are above the level expected of pupils of the same age nationally. One pupil studies GCE A level. At A-level there is evidence which shows an understanding of how development and location of Hi-Tech industries no longer rely upon close proximity

to raw materials and markets but depend upon the more complex human and economic reasons. Also of increased knowledge of plate tectonics and the many consequences these have on human geography.

98. Attitudes to learning are good and very good in the sixth form. They show mature attitudes to the subject and enjoy their lessons. Most pupils are well motivated and respond positively. They behave well, respect their teachers, and get on with their work purposefully sustaining concentration to the end of the lesson. Relationships are good, and most pupils are courteous. The majority of pupils in both Key Stages are dependent on their teachers for learning, but, when given the opportunity, many show a willingness to take responsibility for their own study.
99. Good relationships, positive attitudes and good geographical knowledge ensures all pupils including pupils with special needs, those for whom English is an additional language and the gifted and talented, make satisfactory progress in their learning at Key Stage 3 and good progress in Key Stage 4. Pupils through Years 7, 8 and 9 develop and then consolidate new map skills, geographical knowledge and start to use correct geographical words. For example, well-drawn diagrams and sketch maps are appropriately labelled; spider diagrams are well laid out in order to categorise brain-storming ideas; charts and graphs illustrate simple data; pupils use correct geographical vocabulary. However, in Key Stage 3, pupils work and responses do not always show good geographical understanding. Geographical skills and knowledge are built upon in Years 10 and 11 in order to formulate geographical concepts. In Key Stage 4, pupils begin to successfully link cogent reasons together linking the human, economic and physical reasons, for example, using different criteria to measure the development of a country.
100. Overall, the quality teaching is satisfactory; it is good at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection. The strength of the department is their good knowledge and understanding, for example, knowledge about ways of measuring development of less and more economically developed countries. In-depth knowledge of this nature enables teachers to challenge and extend pupils knowledge and understanding especially at Key Stage 4. However, on occasion, pupils in Key Stage 3 pupils are insufficiently challenged resulting in some underachievement. Teachers' enthusiasm for geography and enquiry is effectively transferred to the pupils. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. Information communication technology is yet to be developed to improve geographical enquiry and tracking pupils' progress. Assessment is developing but does not yet impact upon target setting or inform curriculum planning. At times, especially in Key Stage 3, there are insufficient strategies of a practical nature to involve pupils more in their learning, for example, problem solving, partner work to reinforce and consolidate learning and understanding. The range of tasks is insufficient in order to meet the needs of the range of abilities in a class. Systematic monitoring of teaching in order to share good practice is developing. Geography contributes successfully to the moral and cultural development of pupils, for example, when studying Japan and Italy.
101. The geography subject leader shows positive leadership and management with a good clear educational direction. Over the last three years the department has worked hard to develop the geography curriculum. Documentation is clear. The school understands that the departmental plan needs review with specific criteria, yet it forms a good foundation for further development. Teachers are committed to improving levels of attainment.

HISTORY

102. In recent GCSE examinations, results in both the A*-C and A*-G range have been above national averages, although the number of entries has been very small. In lessons and work seen during the inspection, standards are in line with national norms by the end of Key Stage 3, except in the top sets where standards are higher. In all lessons, pupils develop historical skills from an early stage and rapidly become conversant with an understanding of chronology and source evaluation. They also use historical terminology correctly and can write for a variety of purposes, for example narrative, descriptive and empathetic. These standards are maintained at Key Stage 4, where pupils learn to extend their writing skills and are able to interrogate sources in more depth. As a result, standards are above national norms by the end of this key stage and it is heartening to note that more pupils are now studying history to GCSE level. There are a small number of students studying the subject at A-level and standards are also high in these lessons. In this context, a very good lesson was observed in which a small group of year 13 students debated the notion that Philip II of Spain was an absolute monarch. The subsequent debate was mature, wide-ranging and very impressive in its attention to detail.
103. The quality of teaching in the subject is satisfactory, often good and sometimes very good. Lesson planning is thorough with clear aims and objectives. Specialist teachers have a very sound grasp of subject knowledge and this enables pupils to display their own learning skills, particularly in class discussion. This was seen to good effect in a Year 11 lesson, during which pupils discussed their individual answers to a recent test paper and were encouraged by the teacher to develop these answers to a greater depth. Pupils are also given opportunities to develop independent learning skills, particularly at Key Stage 3, through an emphasis on project work, and some detailed and well-presented examples of this were seen from Year 7 pupils. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good. Teachers have high expectations and classroom management is strong, with a focus on raising standards. Pupils make good progress at both Key Stages and in the sixth form. Higher attaining pupils are encouraged to develop their subject skills through extension and project work. Lower attaining pupils, and those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress but need a wider range of materials to suit their differing needs.
104. Pupils respond well at all times and show a keen interest in history. They have very positive attitudes and participate willingly in class discussion. This was demonstrated to very good effect in a Year 8 lesson in which pupils debated the reason for the failure of the Spanish Armada with skill, commitment and maturity. Pupils do not benefit from the deployment of a wider range of teaching and learning techniques, including group work and the use of information and communication technology, in order to build on this positive picture.
105. The department is managed efficiently and subject documentation is thorough, although schemes of work need further development in detail. At present, the programmes of study do not provide a unit on a non-European society, but this element of the National Curriculum is being introduced in the next academic year. Target-setting is now a feature of the department's work and this includes a commendable element of pupil self-assessment. The marking of pupils' work, however, is not sufficiently systematic, to give pupils a clearer indication of how they might improve their standards. There is a full programme of visits to enhance the

taught curriculum, but the use of information and communication technology is as yet underdeveloped within the department.

106. Overall, the history department has coped very well with the multiplicity of recent changes and standards have remained high. A key challenge now is to raise the profile of history within the school in order to increase the uptake of the subject at GCSE and A level.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

107. The teachers' assessment of the pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 shows that around three-quarters reach, or surpass, the target of level 5. The national figure is below 60 per cent. GCSE results provide the benchmark at the end of Key Stage 4 - here every entrant reaches the target of grade C or better, the national figure again being below 60 per cent. However, while every girl follows a Key Stage 3 course in the subject, only around two-thirds enter for GCSE, and of those most are candidates for the short (half) exam. Even so, they are clearly achieving good outcomes at the end of both Key Stages. Pupils also follow an A-level in the sixth form; as 2000 will be the first year a group enters for the examination, we cannot formally judge the school's achievement in the subject at this level.
108. In almost all Key Stage 3 lessons seen, pupils are achieving at least to national expectations. Thus, even early in Year 7, all are fluent users of Windows and the mouse; they also know how - and why - to save and print their work. Through the key stage, they make rapid progress in word processing and good progress in the use of spreadsheets and databases, and by the end of Year 9 many can use a wide range of techniques well. Even by the end of Key Stage 4, however, only a minority of pupils is truly fluent in these three types of software and almost none can properly design a word processed document, a spreadsheet grid and a database file to meet defined information processing needs effectively and efficiently. Also, pupils in neither of these Key Stages have much knowledge - let alone real understanding - of the techniques of sensing and process control. Even so, National Curriculum requirements are met at both Key Stages.
109. Pupils at A-level are much more successful at designing and implementing solutions to information handling problems; most too can describe and discuss the thinking behind the overall design process and its different stages, though their grasp of objective solution testing is rarely secure. Most are fairly fluent users of word processors now and, in this context and others, have at last reached the stage of using special effects only where appropriate as tools for effective communication rather than to impress a poorly defined audience.
110. Throughout pupils' attitudes to this subject are positive and a number sometimes use home computers to help develop their school work. However, there is rarely real enthusiasm in even the Year 7 classes, while signs of boredom are not uncommon throughout Key Stages 3 and 4 this is directly linked to the previous staffing difficulties in this subject.
111. The school has encountered major problems with teaching staff in this subject area in recent months and by the time of the inspection was only just starting to reach a satisfactory position. The subject's only qualified full-time teacher started the week before the inspection and there is still some contribution from another teacher. Even so, many teaching strengths are clear and the teaching in almost all of the lessons

observed was satisfactory; indeed it was quite often good - even very good or excellent. In the best lessons, the teacher has clear learning objectives and opens and closes with a fast-moving recap that involves every pupil. Teachers keep up a high pace through the theory and practical aspects of the lesson and use a variety of techniques and resources effectively to aid learning. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. Teachers assess how each pupil meets the learning objectives and tailors the interactions with each individual to that pupil's specific learning needs. Appropriate homework tasks are set which allow all pupils to reinforce and develop their learning

112. Every pupil in Years 7 to 11 receives at least a formal ICT lesson a week on average; those choosing at the start of Key Stage 4 to work towards a full rather than a half GCSE have four extra periods a week. This provision is generous compared to the situation in most schools. However, in most schools computer-based work in many of the other subjects studied is co-ordinated to ensure that every learner has plenty of opportunity to practise, reinforce, explore and develop the knowledge, skills and understanding met and to be effectively assessed in the knowledge, skills and understanding. Other curriculum areas are not yet meeting their own National Curriculum requirements in the use of ICT. While there is much goodwill among the staff to move at speed in this direction, and some good plans, there are barriers caused by the computers not yet being networked and by the restricted access to them both during lesson time and outside of that. It is also unclear that the fast-developing systems for Internet access and technical support have yet been fully planned.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

113. By the end of Key Stage 3, standards in both French and Spanish are broadly in line with national expectations. In Key Stage 4, GCSE results in French in 1999 were well above the national average with a rising trend over the last three years. Spanish was introduced in the last two years and is taught as a second foreign language in Years 8 and 9 with the first cohort due to sit GCSE in a year's time. A-level entries for French in 1999 were very small and therefore not comparable to the national average.
114. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils understand a range of classroom language and passages made up of familiar language. Higher attaining pupils demonstrate a good grasp of interactions and a range of grammatical features. In speaking, pupils take part in exchanges with the teacher, demonstrate knowledge of language and adapt their responses by substituting single words and phrases. However their pronunciation is often approximate. This is due to the lack of planned opportunities to practice and rehearse language orally with a focus on meaningful communication and appropriate intervention to guide pupils. When reading, pupils identify main points but few read fluently. They use context to deduce meaning or tackle authentic material. This is due to the lack of emphasis of reading as a regular activity and the limited range of reading provided. Higher attaining pupils write in paragraphs and use a range of structures and tenses correctly. Written work is well presented. Lower attaining pupils draw on familiar language. The majority of pupils use dictionaries regularly to inform their learning.
115. Standards by the end of Key Stage 4 in French are in line with the national average and the major reason for the difference with recent exam results is the increasingly wider ability intake in the current Year 11 cohort due to the changing nature of the

school intake. Higher attaining pupils demonstrate good knowledge of vocabulary and a grasp of past tenses with good examples of extended writing. Pupils develop skills in using idiomatic expressions and suggestions of starting, developing and finishing compositions. In speaking, lower attaining pupils take part in exchanges in pairs and substitute items as they build up language to develop scenarios on shopping, stating their reasons for where they buy different items.

116. By the end of their studies in the sixth form, pupils demonstrate good understanding of authentic texts adapted from newspaper articles. They take part in sustained discussions, rising to the challenges set to tackle demanding texts for study. They apply their knowledge and skills to write at length on a number of topics. Pupils make satisfactory progress with a good consolidation of skills using an increasing vocabulary and idiomatic expressions.
117. The majority of pupils including those with special educational needs achieve appropriately. They use resources like textbooks and references in their exercise books effectively. However while achievement in both Key Stages 3 and 4 is appropriate in listening, in speaking and reading pupils are not performing at the levels they are capable of, mainly due to insufficient opportunities to develop these skills. In Spanish, pupils make relatively satisfactory progress within the constraints of the time allocation, the organisation of the curriculum in half term blocks and the inappropriate allocation of time is having a negative impact on continuity and progression. Pupils in the sixth form achieve well and benefit from the small group discussion and the high expectations and demands displayed in teaching.
118. Pupils show very positive attitudes to the languages studied across all Key Stages. They show interest, listen attentively and apply themselves well. When given the opportunity, they work responsibly in pairs, using time constructively. They respond positively to the teacher's use of the target language but rarely take the initiative to use it themselves.
119. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and better in just over three-quarters of lessons. It is unsatisfactory in nearly a quarter. Where teaching is good, planning is focused, language is used to develop fluency and communicative competence. Activities which are challenging and build on pupils' previous learning. This was well exemplified in a Year 10 French lesson on sports where the teacher focused on consolidating previous knowledge, enabling pupils to rehearse the language in role play and extend the activity through listening. The teacher recapitulation quickly checking that the pupils fully grasped and retained key patterns and set homework reinforced this. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, it was often unfocussed with activities mainly driven by the content of the textbook and unrelated to specific skills which focus on communication and engage pupils' interest and relate to their own experience. The range of teaching methods used in Key Stages 3 and 4 is narrow. It does not provide opportunities for pupils to practice oral language thoroughly, or develop sufficient fluency and confidence in the target language. Teaching in the sixth form is challenging and harnesses pupils' study skills and motivation to good effect. This is often reflected in pupil's perseverance in textual work and their response in discussions. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory.
120. Planning of the curriculum in Key Stages 3 and 4 does not take account of the various aspects of the programmes of study. It is mainly driven through topics and the context of textbooks used. This results in a lack of clarity about how these skills are featured within each year group and the lack of appropriate assessment of how

pupils meet the demands of the different attainment levels within and between Key Stages. Some aspects of cultural awareness arise and are positively supported through an exchange with a school in Normandy but this aspect is not addressed systematically in the schemes of work. The analysis of assessment and test results is not used to set targets for individuals and groups and does not include analysis by ethnicity and background to compare the attainment and progress of different ethnic groups.

121. Development planning is insufficiently focused. The range of book resources is good and the majority of pupils keep a textbook and this has a positive effect on their learning. Teachers in the department are committed to improving provision and plans are in hand to develop the role of the subject leader.

MUSIC

122. Three weeks prior to the inspection the teacher in charge of music at the school died in tragic circumstances. All lessons observed during the inspection were taught by a full-time temporary supply teacher who was meeting and teaching the majority of the pupils for the first time.
123. In 1999 one pupil was entered for AS level music and achieved grade C. There were no candidates entered in the previous two years. GCSE results in 1999 were lower than in previous years but reflected the abilities of the small group of pupils entered for the examination. Comparisons with national figures are not reliable because of the very small entry numbers.
124. Standards at the end of Key Stage 3 are unsatisfactory. Standards are below national expectations because composing and performing skills are underdeveloped. Work in exercise books indicates that pupils' listening skills are well developed. Their knowledge and understanding of musical elements are good but pupils do not use musical vocabulary when talking and writing about music. Their skills in using staff notation are underdeveloped. In Year 9 lessons only the higher attaining pupils, who receive instrumental tuition, were achieving in line with national expectations for performing. When taking part in group and whole class performances of 'All I have to do is dream', they fitted their parts in successfully with the rest, showed an awareness of balance between the parts and sang expressively.
125. In Year 11 the GCSE music group is very small; achievement is in line with national expectations overall. Listening and solo performing skills are above national expectations. However composing skills are underdeveloped, as are those of pupils in Year 10. None of the pupils in Years 10 and 11 had any completed coursework for the composing component. The two Year 10 pupils have good knowledge and understanding of different musical textures and well developed listening skills. They have achieved good standards of performance. There are no pupils studying A or AS levels in the sixth form.
126. Pupils are very courteous and polite and their behaviour in lessons is good. They work co-operatively and collaboratively together on tasks and use the instruments with care. Those who participate in the various school choirs show great commitment.
127. The quality of the teaching observed during the inspection in Key Stages 3 and 4 is

satisfactory. The topics for each unit of work in Key Stage 3 lessons have been well chosen and effectively planned. As a result, in a Year 8 lesson on the Blues, pupils were interested in their work, sustained concentration well and had made good progress with their performing task by the end of the lesson. In a Year 11 lesson, the teacher skilfully questioned pupils about compositions, which encouraged them to think independently and increased knowledge and understanding so that they knew how to improve the pieces. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is generally satisfactory.

128. There are several factors which contribute to unsatisfactory achievement at Key Stage 3:
- The double period of music every other week has a detrimental effect on the continuity of learning
 - Departmental schemes of work are in outline only. They do not show the development and progression of composing, performing, listening and appraising skills across the Key Stages and are not related to the National Curriculum programmes of study.
 - There are no clear procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in the two National Curriculum attainment targets: performing and composing, listening and appraising.
 - Learning resources are inadequate for the effective delivery of the National Curriculum programmes of study.
 - The department is not adequately equipped to deliver the ICT requirements of the National Curriculum eg. there are no keyboards or recording equipment with multi-tracking facilities or computers with music sequencing software that would enable pupils to compose more effectively.
129. The music accommodation at the school has recently been improved to provide a large teaching room, two practice rooms and a music office. This now gives adequate space to enable smaller groups of pupils and individuals to work on their performing and composing tasks. The sound system for playing cassette recordings is of poor quality.
130. Extra-curricular provision is good and has a positive effect on developing pupils' performing skills. The school provides lessons on a range of traditional instruments and singing. Pupils can develop their performing skills further by participating in activities on offer during lunchtimes: various choirs, including a Gospel choir, guitar group, recorder group and orchestra. The standard of performance of the choirs is very good and they make a significant contribution to the spiritual life of the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

131. All eight pupils entered for GCSE for the first time in 1999 obtained a pass grade. Two pupils obtained higher level grades B and C and six lower grades D and E. The number of entries is too low to make significant comparisons with national statistics. However, results compare less favourably than with those in other subjects within the school.
132. Standards at the end of Key Stage 3 are below expectations. From evidence seen in lessons and in extra-curricular activities too few pupils achieve the very highest high standard and the majority of pupils underachieve. This is largely due to deterioration in standards of teaching and learning and of pupils' attitude and behaviour during the time without a subject leader. A teacher in charge has only

recently been appointed. In new games such as badminton and basketball poor acquisition of basic skills is depressing pupils' progress. In basketball most pupils have not grasped the basic skills of dribbling the ball, of using a variety of passes and using space effectively. Most of these skills should have been learnt in netball in Years 7 and 8. Pupils' knowledge of the rules and conventions in games is very basic. In badminton higher attaining pupils were able to combine smash and volley strokes effectively. Planning and evaluating skills are good but pupils' knowledge of health related fitness is underdeveloped. This is because a progressive programme of health related fitness is not written in to the schemes of work. However, most pupils know the names of large muscles and the components of a rigorous warm up.

133. At age 16 pupils' achievement is below expectations. In netball many pupils have still not acquired the basic skills and some pupils do not know the positions or zones of the game. Due to lack of basic skill acquisition, pupils are unable to develop higher level tactics and techniques. Pupils following the examination course are meeting course requirements mostly at the lower grades. There are considerable gaps in their knowledge. In a test on badminton it was evident that they had not adequately learnt the rules of the game. It was not possible to analyse their written work as only one pupil out of four brought their work in as requested by their teacher.
134. The A-level sports' studies group is small and is meeting course requirements. Critical analysis skills are good, as are knowledge of information processing. Written work is less secure.
135. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are broadly satisfactory. Standard of dress and levels of participation is good. The need to re-establish basic standards have created a degree of resentment among a minority of older pupils who, at best, tolerate lessons. The take up of extra- curricular activities is good in Year 7. For the size of school, numbers of pupils who follow examination physical education and dance courses is good. Pupils are always willing to take responsibility whenever they are given a chance.
136. The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory at both Key Stages 3 and 4 and satisfactory in the sixth form. Half the lessons seen were satisfactory and none was better. Teachers' knowledge is good. A strong feature of all lessons is the opportunity for pupils to lead warm ups. Planning and evaluating skills are taught effectively. For example, in a Year 7 lesson in football, pupils were given opportunities to evaluate their work and to implement improvements. Individual tutoring of sixth form both in and out of school has enabled them to make steady gains in knowledge and understanding. The main weaknesses in teaching lie in poor lesson planning, limited teaching methods, low expectations, poor use of time and, in some instances, weak pupil management. Lesson planning is insufficiently focussed on what pupils will know, understand, or do by the end of the lesson. Lesson planning is also weak on how content is to be taught and on strategies to reinforce learning. As a result many pupils are unsure of the purpose of the lesson and often leave the lesson dissatisfied with their achievements. Most lessons are too teacher directed. Lack of suitably challenging work and a slow pace of lesson often leads to unsatisfactory progress. The teaching of literacy is satisfactory. Since pupils enter the school with levels of attainment that are above expectations, their lack of progress represents considerable underachievement. Pupils with special educational needs and different ethnic groups also make unsatisfactory progress. There is insufficient time in short games lessons to satisfactorily develop new work.

137. The curriculum does not fully meet with National Curriculum requirements at Key Stage 4, as the requirement to continue with a game is not made explicit. The Key Stage 3 curriculum is broad and balanced but does not include the teaching of gymnastics. The Key Stage 4 curriculum is underdeveloped. Provision of extra-curricular activities such as judo and fitness is satisfactory but provision for competitive inter-school games is weak. Schemes of work are not in place and the range of activities offered is too narrow. The leadership of the department is in an early stage of development. Good progress has been made in putting in place departmental procedures, policies and schemes of work at Key Stage 3. There are no schemes of work at Key Stage 4. Much work has still to be done on consistency of policy and practice between the joint departments of physical education and dance. For example, there is some good practice in self-assessment, and other on going assessment procedures in dance that could be used in physical education.

Dance

138. Pupils' attainment in dance is above expectations at age 14 and well above at age 16. At age 14 all pupils can choreograph simple dances individually, in pairs and in small groups showing good understanding of the Laban movement principles of use of time, weight space and flow. Their communication skills are well developed and they show good sensitivity both in responding to others and to dance stimuli. At age 16 pupils on the examination course are working at high levels of understanding. Higher attaining pupils are moving with poise, clarity of body shape and technical accuracy. In the lesson seen most pupils could describe how 'bound' and 'free flow' was used to simulate ebb and flow of the sea. They communicated this skilfully through their dance by use of explosive and controlled movements. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress at both Key Stages. Examination pupils make very good progress.
139. The quality of teaching is excellent. Lesson planning is strong method, content and challenge. In all lessons observed the stimuli used be it music, poetry or art was perfectly relevant to the interest, concerns and background of pupils. The teaching of literacy is good. For example, in a Year 8 lesson comprising pupils from different ethnic groups the theme of 'refugees' was used to express through movement the longing for home versus the pull of safety, security and a better future. Significant progress was made, not only in terms of movement but also in knowledge of world affairs building on pupils' prior knowledge and experience. Pupils respond very positively to physical, intellectually and emotional challenges.
140. Teacher/pupil relationships are very good and pupils want and are given responsibility for their learning. Dance groups perform works of spiritual, moral and ethical significance both as part of liturgical worship within the school and to groups of people outside school. A group of pupils performed 'Flander's Poppy' based on the sacrifice of soldiers in the Second World War. Dance contributes very positively to the school's catholic ethos.