

INSPECTION REPORT

BURLEIGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Loughborough

LEA area: Leicestershire

Unique reference number: 120236

Headteacher: Mr John Smith

Reporting inspector: Mr Martin Beale
19385

Dates of inspection: 18th - 22nd September 2000

Inspection number: 223728

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 14 - 19

Gender of pupils: Mixed

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr John Bassford

Date of previous inspection: November 1995

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	10
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?	12
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?	14
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	16
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	17
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	19
BOARDING, COMMUNITY LINKS, SIXTH FORM	20
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	23
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	27

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Burleigh Community College is a larger than average mixed school for pupils from 14 - 19 years of age. There are 1275 on roll including over 370 in the Sixth Form. As it is a community college, there are many other regular users of the school's facilities. Additional funding is received, as the school is a specialist sports college and a community college. Almost 25% of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, including a small number of refugees. 336 have English as an additional language, a high figure compared nationally. Although the proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs is close to the national average, an above average number have statements. Over 20% of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above the national average. Most pupils transfer from three local high schools and their overall attainment on entry to Burleigh is broadly average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an increasingly successful school with many strengths and some areas for development. Management has focused successfully on improving teaching, raising standards to the national average and creating a calm atmosphere in which pupils can learn and feel secure. The very good administration of the school enables this complex organisation to run smoothly. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- High standards are achieved in all modern foreign languages.
- A high proportion of the teaching in the Sixth Form is good or better.
- Target-setting, the analysis of examination data and the monitoring of teaching have contributed to rising standards.
- There is a calm atmosphere around the school, with well-behaved pupils who mostly respond well to the school's provision for their personal development.
- The school provides a wide range of courses to meet the needs of all its pupils.
- There is good provision, support and teaching for pupils with English as an additional language, which enables them to make good progress.
- The strong community links enrich the curriculum and have a beneficial effect on standards.
- Boarding arrangements are very good.

What could be improved

- National Curriculum requirements for information and communication technology (ICT) are not being met and standards are below average.
- There is a considerable proportion of unsatisfactory teaching of science at Key Stage 4.
- There are weaknesses in the curriculum, including not fulfilling requirements for the teaching of religious education in the Sixth Form.
- There are weaknesses in the provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Attendance has improved but remains below the national average.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress since the last inspection in 1995. Results at GCSE have improved. A Level results have varied, but in 1999 they were similar to those at the last inspection. Steps have been taken to improve attendance, and although absence has decreased, it remains above the national average. The weaknesses in the arrangements for boarding were tackled immediately and are now very good. Health and safety practices are secure. Monitoring and evaluation procedures have improved considerably and have had a major impact, along with improvements in assessment and the use of data, on standards in the school. National Curriculum requirements are still not being met for ICT at Key Stage 4 and religious education in the Sixth Form.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
GCSE examinations	D	D	D	B
A Levels/AS Levels	C	D	B	

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

GCSE results in 1999 (the latest year for which comparative information is available) were below the national average but above average when compared with similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving 5 or more A* - C grades increased in 2000, meeting the school's agreed targets, and is now considerably higher than at the last inspection. The trend in the school's results from 1994 to 1999 was broadly in line with the national trend. Results in French, German and business studies have consistently been better than the national average and the best in the school. Girls have achieved better results than boys overall, with the gap being greater in the last two years than seen nationally. All pupils entered for vocational qualifications at the end of Key Stage 4 have achieved at least a pass grade in the last two years.

A Level results in 1999 were above the national average, and they were better than in the two previous years. The results for 2000 were similar to those in 1999. One weakness has been that a high proportion of pupils who start courses either drop out during the two years or fail to achieve a pass grade. This has been tackled by tightening entry requirements to courses and monitoring the pupils' progress closely. Above average results have been achieved in the last two years in mathematics, German and art but below average results in biology, general studies and psychology. Advanced GNVQ results improved in 2000, having been considerably below average in 1999; however, the proportion of pupils passing Intermediate GNVQ fell from being above the national average.

The work seen during the inspection largely reflects these examination results. Pupils are making satisfactory progress at Key Stage 4 and good progress in the Sixth Form. Language skills are satisfactory, but along with number and ICT are not being developed across the curriculum. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress, but some pupils with special educational needs are making unsatisfactory progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Most pupils come to school keen and willing to learn. They are attentive in class, settle quickly to tasks and respond well to their teachers.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good, which leads to a calm and relaxed atmosphere. The pupils are polite and willing to help visitors.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good. Pupils mostly show respect for their teachers and for each other, and willingly accept responsibility when the opportunity arises.
Attendance	Although much improved, attendance remains below the national average, with an above average proportion of unauthorised absence. Punctuality is

	good.
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Behaviour in the school has improved considerably in recent years and although exclusions have risen since the last inspection, this is because of a more rigorous application of this sanction. The actions taken by the school to improve attendance have been effective; however, the school inherits a number of pupils from its feeder schools who already have a history of poor attendance with whom its procedures have limited impact.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 14-16 years	aged over 16 years
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 good or better in a half of lessons and very good or excellent in 20%. Teaching is unsatisfactory in 5% of lessons. There is a greater proportion of the good teaching in the Sixth Form and more of the unsatisfactory teaching at Key Stage 4. English and mathematics teaching are satisfactory at Key Stage 4, but there is a considerable proportion of unsatisfactory science teaching. The lack of school policies for literacy and numeracy results in an inconsistent approach to the development of these skills. The needs of pupils with English as an additional language are met well, both in small groups and when supporting their learning in other subjects. In spite of very generous staffing in some classes, some pupils with special educational needs are not learning as well as they should, because insufficient is expected of them. Very good subject knowledge is used well in modern languages. Some teachers are very skilled at questioning and have an enthusiasm that engages the pupils and develops an interest in learning. High expectations and the very good relationships in many classes help to create an effective working atmosphere and develop a willingness in the pupils to give of their best. Some teaching when staff are working outside their specialist areas is not as good as when the teachers are working in their main subjects.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	A wide range of courses is provided to meet the needs of all pupils, but some statutory requirements are not being met. Community links are used very effectively to enrich the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory, but the diagnosis of their needs, the deployment of staff and the quality of advice to subject teachers need to be improved.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The good quality of the support in classrooms and in small groups ensures that progress in the acquisition of language is good. Learning programmes are based on a thorough identification of the pupils' needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for personal development is good, although more consistent opportunities are needed for pupils to reflect upon their personal beliefs and understanding.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a high level of support and guidance both for prospective pupils and after the pupils join the school. Health and

	safety procedures and practice are very good.
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National Curriculum requirements are not met for the teaching of ICT at Key Stage 4 and for religious education in the Sixth Form. Insufficient attention is paid to developing literacy, numeracy and ICT across the curriculum. Timetabling arrangements have resulted in several split classes. The monitoring of behaviour and pupils' development is thorough and has a positive impact on the pupils' learning. Parents and pupils are confident that the school is a safe environment and that any occasional problems such as bullying are dealt with quickly and effectively. The school works hard to encourage parental involvement. Parental support for school matches and concerts is very good. Information provided to parents is satisfactory and is to be developed further with a new community newsletter.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Senior management, supported by middle managers, has successfully tackled the need to raise teachers' expectations and improve standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The Governing Body is strong and effective. Governors share the commitment to continued improvement and fulfil their role to the considerable benefit of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The increasing analysis and use of examination data, coupled with regular observations of teaching, have been instrumental in changing the school culture and bringing about improvements in standards.
The strategic use of resources	Financial planning is secure. Staff are not always effectively deployed, with some very small classes and contact time that is well above the national average.

The newly appointed principal has already made clear that improving teaching and learning will be the immediate priority for the school. The school has gone through a period when the budget has been very tight. This has resulted in shortages in learning resources, most significantly for ICT. Accommodation is unsatisfactory overall and particularly so for science and drama. The principles of best value are understood and used by governors when purchasing goods and services.

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 pleasant atmosphere around the school. They are happy that their children are treated as young adults. The teaching and standards in modern languages. The use of target grades. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inconsistencies in the setting of homework. Some parents who returned the questionnaire feel that the school does not work closely with them and they would like more information about their children's progress. This view was not shared by those attending the parents' meeting.

The inspection team supports the positive views expressed by parents of the school. Responses to the questionnaire produced more negative views than those in the parents' meeting, although each represented only a small percentage of the parent body. In some cases the views were contradictory. Parental concerns expressed about homework were not borne out by pupils or by observation during the inspection.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Considerable improvements have been made in GCSE results in recent years and these are now substantially above those at the time of the last inspection. The proportion of pupils achieving five or more A*-C grades in 1999 (the last year for which comparative data is available) was close to the national average and above the average of similar schools (those with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals). The average points score achieved by pupils was below the national average, largely because the proportion of pupils achieving A*-G grades was well below average. Some pupils have poor attendance records and others take Certificate of Achievement courses. The trend in the school's results from 1994 to 1999 was broadly in line with the national trend, although not consistently from year to year. Results in modern foreign languages have consistently been the best in the school while those in history, geography (both from small cohorts) and humanities have been the worst. Results in French, German, Spanish and business studies have been consistently above the national average. The overall 2000 results were considerably higher than those in 1999 and matched the national average for 1999. Considerable improvements in results were seen in art, drama, English language, humanities, mathematics and physical education in 2000. The targets set for GCSE results were achieved in 2000.
2. Boys have consistently achieved lower results than girls; however, the overall difference in their results was greater than nationally in 1998 and 1999, reversing the picture of the previous two years. The school has analysed data comparing results at GCSE in 1999 with Standard Assessment Test (SAT) results for the corresponding group of pupils in 1997. There was a greater acceleration in the rate of progress (from Key Stage 3 SAT results to GCSE) for girls than for boys at the school than nationally, so that boys fell even further behind. The need to raise boys' achievement has been identified as a major priority for school development, and various strategies have been introduced, such as single-sex teaching in science. The overall gap between boys' and girls' results was reduced in 2000, with a particular improvement occurring in the boys' performance in English. The school's analysis of its own data shows that Gujarati-speaking pupils have achieved better results than other pupils while Bangladeshi boys' results have been low.
3. The school enters pupils for the Diploma in Vocational Education (DVE). In each of the last two years there has been a 100% pass rate, with considerably more credits and distinctions in 2000 than in earlier years. Pupils are also entered for NVQ Manufacturing with 19 out of 26 candidates entered in the last two years achieving either a merit or a distinction.
4. Overall A Level results in 1999 were above the national average. This was an improvement over the previous two years; however, they were lower than results at the time of the last inspection in terms of the total average point score. The 2000 results were similar overall, but with a slightly higher proportion of A and B grades and fewer passes. The best performances in the last two years have been in art, German and mathematics while there have been below average results in biology, general studies, music and psychology. Although results in physical education were also below average, the pupils who took the examination had lower overall prior attainment and achieved better results than in the other subjects that they took. There is no direct correlation between overall A Level results and the corresponding GCSE results for the same group of pupils. For instance, the best set of A Level results achieved in 1996 came from the weakest GCSE results whilst the weaker 1998 A Level results came from stronger GCSE results in 1996. One weakness, which has been recognised by the school, has been that a small but significant proportion of pupils who start courses either drop out during the two years or fail to achieve a pass grade. Steps have been taken to reduce this by a more rigorous application of the entry requirements for courses and better monitoring of the pupils' progress. This is reflected in the slightly improved standards seen in A and A/S Level classes during the inspection.

5. The results in GNVQ Advanced courses improved in 2000, having been significantly below average in 1999; however, the proportion of pupils achieving the Intermediate GNVQ fell from being above the 1999 national average to below it. The strongest performance, in terms of merits and distinctions, has been in the business Advanced GNVQ course, although there have also been the greatest number of failures here. Of the Intermediate GNVQ courses, art and design has achieved the highest proportion of distinctions and merits, with few failures.
6. The pupils' language skills are satisfactory overall at Key Stage 4 and are good in the Sixth Form; however, there is an inconsistency of approach between and within faculties to the development of language skills. Many pupils speak confidently, including those in lower sets. Boys are now more confident speakers than girls, which is the reverse of the picture at the last inspection. Speaking is good in the Sixth Form. Listening skills are good throughout the school. Pupils are taught subject-specific vocabulary and use it well when speaking and writing; however, there is an inconsistency in the approach of teachers to encouraging accuracy in writing, and not all teachers provide opportunities for the pupils to write at length. Writing is satisfactory at Key Stage 4 and good in the Sixth Form, where note-taking and the organisation of written work are strengths. Reading is satisfactory at Key Stage 4, with a particular strength in comprehension. The location and use of information is particularly good in the Sixth Form.
7. Standards in mathematics are close to the national average overall, and in almost all lessons progress is at least satisfactory; however, number skills for many pupils are insecure. Excessive use is made by pupils of the calculator, which is masking some weaknesses in basic number skills, particularly the speed and accuracy of mental recall. Some steps have been taken to rectify this, but there is no agreed policy on how number skills are to be developed either within the mathematics faculty or throughout the school.
8. Information and communications technology (ICT) skills are also not being furthered by the school. Skills that have already been mastered are developed but little new learning occurs. Insufficient use is made of ICT to support pupils' learning across the curriculum. Pupils at Key Stage 4 have reasonable wordprocessing skills and can use the Internet; however, standards are below expectations, and requirements for teaching and developing ICT skills across the curriculum are not being met. Sixth Form pupils are more confident users of ICT particularly for communicating information and also when handling data.
9. Evidence from observing pupils in lessons and scrutinising their work during the inspection shows that attainment mostly matches that of the most recent GCSE results at Key Stage 4. Most pupils are making at least satisfactory progress and are achieving the standards that are expected of them when their prior attainment is taken into account. Standards are highest in modern foreign languages largely as a result of the high expectations of the teachers and lively and interesting lessons. Many pupils have good listening and speaking skills. They understand and respond quickly and accurately in the target language during lessons. They also write and present their work accurately in all languages. Progress in science is being held back by some weaknesses in teaching, and higher standards could be achieved.
10. Some pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress, taking account of the learning difficulties that they have; however, for others – the majority in some Year 10 and 11 classes – unsatisfactory attitudes and attendance prevent progress, and insufficient work is expected by some teachers from some pupils. Attendance difficulties also mean that some pupils for whom English is an additional language make uneven progress at times. More generally however, they make good progress in their language acquisition, largely as a result of effective support in lessons and good teaching in small group work.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Pupils behave very well and in a mature way both in lessons and around the school. This is reflected in the very quiet, calm, relaxed atmosphere that prevails even when large numbers of pupils are moving from place to place. Most pupils are polite and willingly help visitors.

12. Pupils are attentive and responsive in lessons, quickly settling down to work. Most listen well to others' views and show respect to the teachers and each other. Very occasionally these high levels of good behaviour slip if the teaching lacks pace and challenge, or if most of the pupils present have special educational needs relating to behaviour difficulties. The number of exclusions has risen since the last inspection, but an analysis shows that this is because of the more rigorous application of sanctions rather than any deterioration in levels of behaviour. Most pupils have positive attitudes to their learning, and the extensive use of target-setting helps them to focus on their progress and improvement. Occasionally in less interesting lessons pupils have a tendency to lack motivation.
13. The pupils' personal development is good. Target-setting encourages them to think beyond examinations and focus on their aims beyond school. Many pupils have clear ideas about a career path and what they need to do to achieve this. The pupils willingly accept positions of responsibility and take these seriously. In a Sixth Form council meeting, pupils discussed the issues in a mature way and respected the authority of their elected chairman. Subjects such as physical education, art and ICT encourage the development of leadership and supportive skills through work with younger or less able pupils.
14. Pupils, with few exceptions, enjoy good relationships with their peers and staff. There is a warm, friendly atmosphere and group dynamics are good in and out of lessons. Year 10 pupils, only three weeks into their first term, already feel very much part of the school and get on well with new, as well as old, friends. This is a tribute to the good preparation by the pastoral staff before pupils enter the school.
15. Attendance has improved significantly since the last inspection, but is still below the national average. The comparison with the national average is not entirely valid in a school without pupils in Years 7-9 when attendance is often higher nationally than for older pupils. The school also admits some pupils who have already established patterns of poor attendance in their previous schools. Nonetheless, more needs to be done to raise attendance levels, which remain unsatisfactory. Punctuality is good. Most pupils arrive at school on time, some coming early for breakfast. During the inspection nearly all lessons started on time.
16. The attitudes to work and school of pupils with special educational needs is generally better in Year 11 than in Year 10, where they are mostly unsatisfactory in the classes specifically arranged for these pupils. The better attitude in Year 11 classes indicates that the school has a beneficial effect on some pupils. Those pupils for whom English is an additional language have a good attitude to their work.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

17. Teaching is at least satisfactory in 95% of lessons. It is good, very good or excellent in over half. Teaching is better, overall, in the Sixth Form than at Key Stage 4. A greater proportion of teaching that was very good or excellent was observed in the Sixth Form and more of the unsatisfactory teaching occurred at Key Stage 4. There was good or very good teaching in all subjects during the inspection, and particularly so in modern foreign languages. There was a higher proportion of unsatisfactory teaching in science at Key Stage 4, where teaching in a fifth of lessons was unsatisfactory. Some staff who teach ICT are not fully trained for this task, which resulted in some unsatisfactory teaching.
18. Many teachers have a high degree of expertise and use this to good effect to provide interesting and stimulating lessons. Much of the best teaching occurs when the teachers inspire and challenge their pupils' thinking. This was observed in a Year 11 expressive arts class preparing group assignments, and resulted in the pupils making a considerable mental and creative effort. The excellent use of the target language in a Year 12 French lesson, where the pupils were working in small groups on oral tasks, helped to generate a lively atmosphere. The teacher also made good use of the time available by circulating from group to group, monitoring their progress

and offering suggestions for improvement. The pupils took part fully in the session, collaborating well with each other and speaking confidently in French. This sense of interest and purpose was also generated in a Year 10 English lesson where the pupils were writing emotive newspaper headlines.

19. Many teachers use questioning well to draw out thoughts and ideas from the pupils. This, and the enthusiastic approach adopted engages the pupils' interest and helps them to understand new work quickly. Rapid questioning in a Year 10 Spanish lesson challenged the pupils to use the language that they had recently learnt to describe their personal characteristics. Praise and encouragement helped all pupils to have the confidence to participate and answer, even though they had only been learning the language for a few days. The use of questioning to support, reassure and encourage was also evident in a Year 12 GNVQ pottery class. The warm relationships, high expectations and purposeful activities also helped to sustain the pupils' interest. Very good questioning, which was rigorous yet encouraging, enabled the pupils in a Year 13 English lesson studying *King Lear* to identify crucial points about Shakespeare's use of language. The pupils were constantly challenged by the teacher and they produced fluent and thoughtful responses.
20. The high expectations that some teachers have of their pupils are reflected in the challenging tasks and activities that they provide. This was seen in a Year 10 basketball lesson where the teacher set a good pace to the lesson, kept the pupils involved and gave a sharp focus to their learning. Very high expectations that were both challenging and motivational gave the pupils in a Year 11 dance lesson the confidence to be successful. Very high expectations coupled with an enthusiasm for the subject were transmitted to the pupils in a Year 13 graphics lesson. The tasks set were at a high level and no time was wasted as the pupils were moved rapidly to new activities once one was completed.
21. Very good relationships have developed in many classrooms between the teachers and their pupils, built on mutual respect and a clear understanding of what is expected of the pupils. This has helped to generate a good atmosphere in which learning can take place free from any distractions. This fosters the pupils' motivation and their readiness to give of their best as in a Year 11 mathematics lesson on the application of percentages to everyday problems. The pupils responded well to their teacher, participated fully in the lesson and made tangible progress through the clear explanations given. An effective atmosphere that had been achieved in a Year 13 textiles lesson, coupled with excellent planning, ensured that the pupils were clear about what they needed to do to achieve well in the lesson.
22. Clear lesson planning with objectives for learning that were shared with the pupils were a feature of several successful lessons. These lessons were well structured with good reference to previous work undertaken. This enabled the pupils to consolidate what they had already learnt and build new skills and knowledge rapidly and in a logical sequence. This was seen to good effect in a Year 12 history lesson and in a lower French set in Year 11, where a clear sequence to the development of the language occurred and the pupils made very good progress.
23. There are a few weaknesses in teaching, including those that caused lessons to be unsatisfactory overall. Some teaching when staff are working outside their specialist areas, is not as good as when the teachers are working in their main subjects. This is the case in some ICT, design and technology and religious education lessons. In some lessons excessive teacher direction is leading to a poor use of time and a slow pace to pupils' learning. This slower pace is also to be seen in lessons where pupils work individually at a relaxed speed and with little class teaching to provide interest. This results in lessons becoming monotonous and time being wasted as the enthusiasm of the pupils is lost. There are some inconsistencies in the quality and usefulness of marking of pupils' work. Marking is carried out regularly and in many cases, such as in English, includes helpful comments to show the pupils how they can improve their work, to which they generally respond. This is not always the case, with some marking being minimal and of little value to pupils.
24. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall, but there are

weaknesses despite the generous staffing of some classes. Activities are sometimes varied to match the different levels of the pupils, as in a small Year 11 mathematics lesson. Some of the in-class support provided in mainstream lessons is effective. The principal weakness is not ensuring that all pupils are working effectively, taking account of their difficulties. Some work is not based on the teachers' sound knowledge of what the pupils' precise educational needs are. In some cases, despite very small teaching groups, some pupils do little, and in a few cases no, work in one-hour lessons; insufficient is being expected of some pupils. The consequence is that many pupils are not learning as well as they should do. The teaching of pupils for whom English is an additional language is good, both in supporting their learning in other subjects and in small group activities. The teachers' planning and preparation is good and activities are securely based on a careful identification and analysis of their individual needs. Expectations are high and relationships are good. Consequently the pupils apply themselves well and make good progress.

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

25. Much development has taken place since the last inspection in order to improve the quality and range of the Key Stage 4 curriculum, but significant weaknesses remain. The key skills course is used effectively to develop the pupils' experiences and understanding of careers and the world of work. It is also used well to involve pupils in reviewing their own progress and setting targets, as well as developing the skills of research and independent study. There is also provision in this programme for the development of ICT skills. Unfortunately the teaching of the programme is not effective, sometimes because of technical difficulties and sometimes because teachers lack the necessary expertise. Furthermore, many subject departments make insufficient use of ICT to support learning in their subjects and develop the pupils' skills across the required range of study. Statutory requirements for ICT are consequently not met. The development of language and number skills is inconsistent across subjects, with no coherent strategy for their improvement across the school. Intervention sessions, where the normal timetable is suspended so that larger groups of pupils can all focus on one topic at the same time, are used to cover aspects of personal, social and health education, including sex education and drug misuse. Again, however, it is not clear how these activities relate to the work of departments and what the complete experience of each pupil is in this area.
26. The school is about to embark upon a thorough review of the Key Stage 4 curriculum. Within this review there is a need to explore the current contribution of all subjects to the development of ICT skills, literacy, numeracy and personal, social and health education, identify any gaps and weaknesses and then implement a programme to rectify them. There is a need to reduce the number of classes shared between teachers. This is having an adverse impact on the progress made by pupils in many subjects, including mathematics, art and design and technology.
27. A wide range of courses is provided in the Sixth Form to meet the increasing numbers of pupils staying on into Years 12 and 13. Over 20 A Level courses are taught in Year 13 and a corresponding number of the new A/S Levels are offered in Year 12. GNVQ courses are provided at both Intermediate and Advanced levels. The one weakness, which remains from the last inspection, is that pupils do not have the opportunity to follow a course of religious education, a statutory requirement.
28. The variety of courses and accreditation available for pupils, including those with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language, is a strength of the school. This variety helps to ensure that the needs of individual pupils are generally met well, providing equality of access to the curriculum and the opportunity to succeed. Further consideration needs to be given, however, to increasing the variety of aesthetic activity available in the Year 10 physical education programme to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met. The teaching of the core humanities course is too inconsistent to ensure that all pupils gain equal access to the intended curriculum for religious education. More consideration needs to be given to ensuring that higher-attaining pupils are fully challenged in some subjects such as religious education.

29. The impact on the curriculum of the school's status as a specialist sports college is inconsistent. There are improved links with Loughborough University and with the Lawn Tennis Association centre, with some boarders involved. Several pupils have adapted timetables to accommodate their training schedules. The participation in extra-curricular sporting activities has increased, with a considerable number of staff from outside the physical education department running clubs and taking teams. There are increased opportunities for pupils at Key Stage 4 and in the Sixth Form to take accredited courses, including national coaching awards. Work with feeder high schools and local primary schools is developing. There has been less impact within the general curriculum provided by all subjects, where developments to include a health or sports content need to be strengthened.
30. The provision for small groups of pupils who have attendance or other difficulties is good, through a combination of lessons in the school, work experience and college placements. Provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language is also good. The good quality of support in classrooms and in small group work ensures that the progress made in their acquisition of language is correspondingly good. The English as an additional language team is also successfully helping faculties to review and develop written materials to ensure that they are as accessible as possible to all learners. Provision for pupils with special educational needs, however, needs to be more tightly managed, with a better distribution of staffing and greater rigour in some teaching, for the intended benefits to be enjoyed by a higher proportion of pupils.
31. A good range of extra-curricular activities attracts many pupils on a daily basis. About a third of pupils participate in some sporting activity through the year. Sessions are beginning to cater for pupils of all levels of attainment, whilst still allowing high performers much opportunity to practise their sport. Good use is made of the school's facilities at break and lunchtime in a range of areas including sport and art. The use of the sports hall at break times for basketball activities is excellent, with an impressive uptake by the pupils. The school is carefully nurturing the development of a boys only lunchtime club for dance. Good use is made of trips and visits to extend the curriculum in some subjects, such as humanities.
32. The school cultivates the pupils' personal development well, although there are some weaknesses in providing for their spiritual development. The school does not have a daily act of collective worship and the teaching of religious education is too inconsistent to ensure a coherent contribution to this aspect. Some departments, such as mathematics, do not recognise that they could make a broader contribution and the approaches taken in some lessons, in science for example, do not encourage or enhance the pupils' sense of curiosity and reflection. Although the programme for personal, social and health education needs to be more coherent to ensure consistent development, the school is good at promoting a moral code throughout its activities. The pupils are, for example, encouraged to develop a sense of fair play when involved in sporting competition. Several texts used in English have a strong moral component, and moral issues play a significant part in drama. There is a good emphasis on fostering personal responsibility by maintaining high standards of presentation, avoiding graffiti and completing homework. Teaching methods in some subjects, notably languages, promote interpersonal skills and good relationships. Key elements of the humanities course aid the pupils' understanding of society. Some texts in English also provide good opportunities for pupils to explore issues related to culture and race. There is also a very good focus on cultural and contextual issues in art, with a good balance of western and non-western influences. More opportunities could be taken to visit museums, galleries and theatres to further strengthen this aspect.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

33. The high standard of pastoral care of the pupils at Burleigh is a significant strength of the school. The system of year heads, division heads and form tutors of groups of around 20 ensures that pupils are treated as individuals and teachers know them well. Tutors are well informed before pupils enter the school because of the good quality of information from the high schools and the high level of contacts between Burleigh College and these schools. The good communication between staff and two trained counsellors, who are readily available for pupils with personal

problems, further advances pastoral provision.

34. The school takes great care to ensure the welfare of pupils who are ill whilst at school. Safe procedures are followed and the computerised pupil medical records are easily accessible. The receptionist, who has initial responsibility for sick pupils, is trained in first aid, as are many staff, and there is always a member of teaching staff on call. Child protection measures follow the local educational authority guidelines and teachers are well informed of procedures to be followed. Health and safety provision has improved since the last inspection and the issues raised then have been resolved. The school health and safety committee operates a forward thinking policy with thorough risk assessment and efficient record keeping leading to speedy reaction to any concerns. No health and safety issues were raised during the inspection.
35. Monitoring of behaviour is thorough with appropriate sanctions used consistently. The new principal is considering alternatives to exclusion as a means of reducing the number of times it is used. A system of obtaining signatures leading to certificates promotes good behaviour and effort and is valued by the pupils. There are a few incidents of bullying but parents and pupils confirm that these are not tolerated and are dealt with firmly and effectively. The good behaviour seen during the inspection reflects the effectiveness of the measures in place. Form tutors play an effective role in tracking the pupils' progress. Target setting is initiated in tutor periods, pupil planners are regularly checked and a system of blue slips between tutors and subject staff keeps teachers well informed of any possible problems.
36. Procedures for monitoring attendance have had a beneficial impact on reducing absence. The appointment of a pastoral administrator enables a response to absence and truancy to be made on the same day. The school intends to improve the rigour of its procedures through the introduction of an electronic system of registration. The school already analyses attendance figures in order to target groups or individual pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern. The current support from the educational welfare service is good and the two vice principals meet with the welfare officer each week. A staff member trained in dealing with long-term absentees has joined the special needs department to work with disaffected pupils. Despite efforts by the school, it has proved difficult in the past to establish positive relationships with parents of these pupils in order to prevent condoned absence.
37. The school has in place effective overall assessment practices to identify how well pupils at both key stages are progressing in all subjects with the exception of ICT and religious education. Assessment procedures are most effective in modern foreign languages and design and technology where they make an impact on standards and contribute effectively to the pupils' success. Procedures for assessing ICT key skills have yet to be devised and there is evidence that some teaching lacks the necessary skills, knowledge and confidence to assess pupils' progress. Religious education, which is taught as part of humanities, is insufficiently assessed to ensure discrete detailed coverage. While assessment is closely linked with national criteria for external examinations in physical education there are some inconsistencies in recording assessment across the programmes of study in core physical education.
38. Assessment is satisfactorily used to guide the teachers' planning overall where there is effective practice in departments. On entry to the school pupils are given a minimum grade for GCSE through sophisticated target setting processes based on results in Key Stage 3 SATs. These are regularly monitored and upgraded in line with developing performance and staff are appropriately made aware of how their pupils are doing in comparison with other subjects. There are some inconsistencies, however, in how some departments make use of the assessment data to raise the achievement of different groups of pupils.
39. There is insufficient testing of pupils with special educational needs, both to diagnose their precise learning needs and to assess the effectiveness of the teaching methods and the pupils' progress over time. Testing is mostly limited to gaining special consideration for those entered for public examinations. The individual education plans prepared for many pupils do not provide class teachers with clear evidence of what is being done by the special educational needs department, so that the subject teachers cannot complement and reinforce that work. Learning programmes

for pupils for whom English is an additional language are securely based on a thorough identification and analysis of need.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

40. Burleigh College believes strongly in the value of a working partnership with parents as a means of co-operating in solving problems and raising achievement. Support by many parents has a positive impact on the pupils' learning, but there is scope to develop their involvement in the work of the school. The Parent Staff Association (PSA) has been given a higher profile as a Governing Body committee. Both the school and the PSA are evaluating the effectiveness of the partnership through parental surveys and feedback from parents' meetings. An initiative of information evenings in conjunction with the Governors' Annual General Meeting has resulted in greater numbers attending. Although they do raise money for the school and support individual pupils, for example in response to requests for travel grants, they consider their primary function to be the encouragement of parental involvement in the school. The parents' attendance is good at school functions such as sports matches and concerts where their children are directly involved. Parents' evenings are well attended. The school is committed to greater involvement with parents of ethnic minority pupils and to this end held a special evening for new parents, with translators available. Although only a few attended, those who did expressed their appreciation. The school is determined to build upon this. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are invited to attend and participate in annual reviews.
41. The parents' views of the school are variable. At the parents' meeting most responses were favourable and parents were supportive of the work of the school and had noticed improvements over the last few years. Parents, who attended the meeting have yet to be convinced that the status of sports college has had a significant impact on their children. More negative answers were given in response to the questionnaire. It must be noted that in each instance the numbers of responses were only a small percentage of the total parent body. The main areas of concern are the lateness or inefficiency of information about pupils' activities outside lessons and inconsistencies in the setting of homework. The pupil planners are a good source of information, giving pupils' targets, details of the homework timetable and homework set, dates of newsletters and a record of attendance. They can also be used as a means of exchanging information and are regularly checked by form tutors. The principal has plans in place to develop more efficient use of pupil post, translation of letters for ethnic minority groups where necessary and to introduce a professionally produced community newsletter to include more information. Parents are encouraged to contact staff at the school if there are any concerns. The home/school agreement makes clear the expected responsibilities of the school, parents and pupils. Annual reports are good and contain pupils' targets and personal constructive comments on attainment, progress and areas for improvement. The governors' annual report to parents and the school prospectus both meet statutory requirements.
42. During the week of the inspection homework was set in accordance with the homework timetable and pupils spoke of how much they valued this. Regular monitoring would ensure that this consistency is maintained. There is some flexibility in the issuing of homework for individual pupils who have after-school commitments that may put them under greater pressure to complete homework on given days.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

43. The drive and leadership provided by senior management and governors over the last few years have ensured that the vision for the school is firmly based on higher achievement. The former principal (the new principal only having been in place for two weeks by the time of the inspection), ably supported by senior managers and governors, has moved the school forward in many areas. Complacency and low expectations have been successfully challenged, with the consequence that standards have risen considerably at GCSE, and good progress has been made since the last inspection. Senior managers and governors share a common view for the future direction of the school. The appointment of the new principal with a remit to concentrate on improving the

quality of teaching and learning is crucial to this vision. There is a commitment to further improvement and greater challenge, as the belief is held that standards are now only reaching where they ought to be as a minimum, not where they could be.

44. A major reason for the recent improvement in standards is the detailed analysis of data that now takes place to assess the attainment of pupils when entering, and throughout their time in, the school. This has demonstrated that pupils were not doing as well as could be expected. The information obtained has been used to identify where pupils were being successful and where more work needed to be done. This analysis, along with the careful and systematic monitoring of the work of faculties and individual teachers, has enabled steps to be taken successfully to eliminate weaknesses, improve the quality of teaching and raise standards.
45. The Governing Body is well organised and effective. It exercises most of its responsibilities well, although some National Curriculum requirements are not being met. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and support the drive to raise standards, recognising that the next priority is to concentrate on improvements to the quality of teaching and learning.
46. The period since the last inspection has also been characterised by a very tight budget. This has resulted in staffing levels below the national average, with teachers having less time to carry out their management responsibilities than in other schools. The school has operated with a relatively small senior management team. The effectiveness of heads of faculty and heads of year has improved considerably, but there is room for a development of the role to strengthen middle management. The small management team, although very hard working, committed and with considerable expertise, is stretched, having taken on, albeit on a temporary basis, important roles previously carried out by other staff. It is a testament to the quality of all involved that the momentum for change and improvement has been maintained. The appointment of the new principal provides the school with the opportunity to review the roles and responsibilities of senior and middle management.
47. Financial planning processes are good and are effectively supported by the school development planning cycle. The complexity of the budget, including community and sports college funding, is handled very well. Systems of financial control are good. A detailed analysis of income and expenditure is undertaken and very valuable data provided to inform decisions taken by senior managers and the Governing Body. The monitoring of expenditure is particularly good. The administration of the school is a strength, ensuring the smooth running of a complex organisation.
48. The sports college aspect is now benefiting from good leadership by one of the vice principals, who is acting as director of sport; however, this is an interim arrangement pending the appointment of a new director. Limited progress had been made until recently in fulfilling the sports college objectives. The director acts effectively as the contact between the school and the governors' sports committee and handles the sports college budget. The expertise and personal interests of the chair of this committee, who has a background in physical education at Loughborough University, has a bearing on the recent progress made. Weaknesses remain that need to be tackled, not least of which is that the head of physical education plays little part in the management of the sports college, and communication needs to be strengthened between the physical education department and sports college managers.
49. There is a need for the management of special educational needs to be tighter, with a better match of staffing resources to classes, more testing to diagnose the pupils' precise needs and to assess their progress, and more monitoring in classrooms to provide management with greater knowledge of the effectiveness of what is being done. The teachers who support pupils for whom English is an additional language are well managed and there is a good focus to their work.
50. Most teachers are adequately qualified for their teaching role. Where this is not so, there is support from the head of department and the subject staff. This is evident in the humanities department where, although all teachers are qualified in a humanities subject, they are, at times, teaching outside their specialist area, particularly in religious education. There is also a lack of

confidence and competence in teaching ICT on the key skills course across the college. New Opportunities Fund (NOF) training is available to them and accessing this should be treated as a matter of urgency. Several art staff teach design and technology and, whereas this does not affect standards in resistant materials and graphics, it does have an adverse effect in food technology. The policy for the professional development of staff is satisfactory but there is an imbalance in the take-up of this between departments. Newly qualified teachers are well supported by the departments in the college and by the local education authority.

51. The deployment of staff for special educational needs is unsatisfactory and inefficient. The number of staff in some withdrawal classes is excessive; during the inspection, for example, two qualified teachers were seen with five pupils, and three qualified teachers with four pupils. Meanwhile, pupils with serious learning difficulties were unsupported in subject lessons. The department is able to show an equitable, planned access to teaching time by pupils on the special educational needs register, and the propriety in allocating resources is not in question. The need is for fewer teachers in some withdrawal classes and more in support of pupils in mainstream classes. All teachers, to be effective, must have a greater knowledge of the pupils' precise needs.
52. The accommodation overall is unsatisfactory, although there are a few strengths. Physical education accommodation is very good, and modern foreign languages is strong; however, there is insufficient accommodation for ICT and the food technology room is badly sited. There are significant problems with the science accommodation, which are being dealt with by the school. The temporary accommodation, in spite of efforts to improve it, still provides an inappropriate, inflexible and cold space for much teaching and learning. The drama studio at the back of the hall is too small for the numbers now taking the subject at A Level. Most rooms contain lively and stimulating displays and this is a feature of the corridors surrounding art, design and technology and modern foreign languages. Many of the remaining corridors are rather bleak. The dining room for the Sixth Form is too small, with many pupils standing to eat their meals.
53. A large room is available for teaching smaller groups of pupils with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language. Bookcases and shelves are used to provide a larger number of teaching areas. A large office is attached. The accommodation is used effectively, but the lack of more substantial dividers sometimes prevents pupils for whom English is an additional language from hearing necessary emphasis and inflection.
54. Overall resources are poor, in spite of very good resources in physical education and modern languages and good resources in geography. Music technology is also well resourced now. The science department has significant problems with resources including old and broken equipment, and insufficient equipment for the increased numbers at A Level and the new A/S Level. Further investment is needed in ICT equipment and software, to provide greater access to computers for all pupils and to improve the opportunities to use ICT to support their learning, particularly in mathematics and modern foreign languages. There are also insufficient mathematics books for pupils in Year 11 to take home. There is a satisfactory level and good variety of resources to support pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language.
55. Although small in size, and with deficiencies in some subject stocks, such as books for Punjabi and Gujarati in modern foreign languages, the library has much to offer. Many faculties value and use the support given by the full-time librarian. She responds effectively to curriculum initiatives in the various subjects. Most faculties make good use of the library and of the computers, which are all linked to the Internet. Borrowing rates for books are good. The librarian is well supported by two part-time administrators and efficient use is made of computerised booking systems.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

56. To build on the good progress made since the last inspection and to continue to raise standards, the school should:

- 1) raise standards in information and communication technology (ICT) by:
 - ensuring full compliance with National Curriculum requirements for the teaching of ICT and for the use of ICT to support learning in subjects
 - improving the expertise of all staff
 - increasing accessibility for all pupils to computers and other ICT equipment
 - requiring all subjects to indicate clearly in their curriculum plans how they are to provide opportunities for pupils to use ICT to support their learning, as set out in the new National Curriculum, and monitoring rigorously the implementation of these plans;

- 2) improve the teaching of science at Key Stage 4 by:
 - monitoring teaching more rigorously, particularly in relation to lesson planning, the pace of lessons, the use of resources and inappropriate copying by pupils from the board
 - ensuring that marking indicates clearly to the pupils how to make greater progress
 - making sure that teaching and learning styles are adapted to meet the different needs of single-sex groups
 - greater use of ICT to support learning
 - increasing the quality of both the accommodation and the learning resources available for science;

- 3) use the forthcoming curriculum review to remedy weaknesses in the curriculum by:
 - developing and implementing policies for the promotion of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum
 - ensuring that all pupils are taught a coherent and progressive personal and social education programme (PSHE)
 - reducing the number of classes that are split between different teachers
 - providing practical subjects, in particular, with more suitable lengths of time for their lessons
 - fulfilling requirements for the teaching of religious education in the Sixth Form;

- 4) improve the provision for pupils with special educational needs by:
 - increasing the monitoring in classrooms to provide management with greater knowledge of the effectiveness of what is being done
 - ensuring a better match of staffing resources to classes
 - undertaking more testing to diagnose the pupils' precise needs and to assess their progress
 - ensuring that class teachers receive precise guidance on how to support pupils in their lessons;

- 5) improve attendance and reduce the high proportion of unauthorised absence by introducing procedures for the electronic registration of pupils as soon as possible, following rigorous testing of the system and staff training in its use.

BOARDING

57. Field House, the boarding house for both girls and boys, had 27 residents at the time of the inspection. It provides a comfortable home in a well-decorated and well-furnished attractive old mansion. The school's aim, that the House should replicate as far as possible the best features of family life, is achieved. The pupils are confident in their relationships with staff. Behaviour is good. Pupils have opportunities to leave the house under arrangements that safeguard their welfare whilst allowing them reasonable freedom to enjoy social, sporting and shopping needs. The facilities for study are good, with proper supervision of younger pupils and independence for older ones. Pupils have adequate access to computers, and to books in the House library that provide both general reading and access to A Level course texts. There are satisfactory recreational facilities. The pupils would benefit from having greater responsibility for the organisation of trips. The planned staffing levels will allow the maintenance of the present good standards of supervision and support for the pupils' welfare. The House contributes to the school's role as a sports college, by providing accommodation (and education at the school) for young people admitted to the Lawn Tennis Association's national coaching facility at the

university. The arrangements to accept financial responsibility for Field House from the local education authority are soundly based, although dependent on at least a small increase in the number of boarders.

58. The living conditions are good. Although most pupils, except the oldest, share bedrooms, these are mostly spacious. The pupils are allowed, within quite liberal limits, to put up posters and otherwise personalise their rooms. Bathroom facilities are more than adequate for present numbers and are well maintained. There is one anomaly that persists from the previous existence of two separate houses and which should now be ended: girls wash their own clothes, whilst boys have the option of washing their clothes or having them washed by staff at no cost to themselves. The sick rooms are inadequate. They do not have washing and toilet facilities and one is quite distant from staff. Otherwise, arrangements for the pupils' welfare are good. There are some health and safety faults that need attention and these have been brought to the attention of the school.
59. Field House is a very good facility that is meeting the needs of pupils from several countries as well as Britain.

COMMUNITY LINKS

60. There is a very clear and purposeful direction to the community programme. It is managed by one vice principal who successfully links programmes of activities, events and courses.
61. The college mission statement "Learning for Life" is successfully promoted in several ways. In assemblies members of the local community and business are involved in the life of the college, and pupils regularly see members of the community about school at all times. There can be as many as two hundred adults using the college during the school day. Adults work alongside pupils in Sixth Form classes and in GCSE language classes; as a consequence the pupils' behaviour, attitudes and motivation improve and learning is enriched. Different groups are based at the college, for instance, The University of the Third Age has an interest group which is involved in school life and a day care centre exists for those with disabilities. Different adult groups help to generate an ethos of everyone working together. During the evenings a significant minority of pupils attend evening courses in order to learn subjects such as law and sign language, which they are unable to follow at college in the daytime. There are very good examples of college courses being enhanced by community involvement, for example, humanities make good use of senior citizens who talk to pupils about their lives and experiences. Employers and other local colleges are involved in partnership with Burleigh on a work-related curriculum involving thirty pupils; these courses are linked to national vocational awards. The college has a well-developed work experience programme; this involves a large number of local businesses in partnership with the college.
62. A co-ordinated programme of courses, activities and events is based on a systematic analysis of need. The community association gives guidance to the senior management team; community users review courses and give feedback, and as a consequence new courses and initiatives are developed, for example, courses getting adults back to work, courses for the blind and those with various disabilities. There is very effective monitoring of achievements and drop out from courses according to age, gender and ethnicity. The college works hard to involve different ethnic groups with moderate success. Over two thousand adults attend college courses during the year and over twelve hundred adults go on to take examinations or awards. This demonstrates the success of the community programme. As a consequence of regular and careful monitoring the college undertakes outreach work. Burleigh's specialist Sports College has undertaken a careful and detailed analysis of the community's sporting needs. The Sports College involves not just the college but Loughborough University, post 16 providers and the private sector. Representatives from these groups come together on a regular basis to monitor sports provision. Many agencies are involved in the co-ordination of this programme and on occasions, the communication between the various agencies is less than effective.

63. The college liaises with the adjacent secondary school over provision of courses in order to support one another, for example, running economical groups at GCE A Level in music, sport studies, and good links with employers and business people. Good co-ordination ensures some standardisation and avoids duplication of courses, events and activities within the community. For example, Italian is taught at one centre; fees are standardised; co-operation between agencies is very good.
64. Overall the college serves both the community and itself very successfully; both are enriched as events, activities and courses support and complement one another. College and community are very well knit together. When assessing the impact of community links there are very few weaknesses. The communication with outside agencies is not always efficient; extensive use of facilities, by both college and community can constrain the teaching programme. Overall, the advantages greatly outweigh the disadvantages. College/community links are of a very good quality and they are a strength of the college.

SIXTH FORM

65. The Sixth Form curriculum provides good progression routes for pupils of all levels of prior attainment. Most subjects offered at Key Stage 4 can be taken through into the Sixth Form, although staffing difficulties currently make this impossible in Spanish. Additional subjects such as sociology and psychology extend pupil choice further. A good range of vocational courses is also offered at Advanced and Intermediate Level, although some departments such as science do need to re-evaluate the contribution they could make to the breadth of provision. Some links exist with other local establishments, although this is mainly to allow pupils from other schools to access the variety of courses on offer at Burleigh. All Sixth Form pupils are encouraged to participate in sporting activities, but the school does not at present ensure that they do so through timetabled sessions. As at the time of the previous inspection, there is no religious education for all pupils, although the General Studies course does encompass moral issues and questions.
66. The school admits that guidance and recruitment onto courses in the Sixth Form has not always been as rigorous as it needs to be. In addition, the expectations placed upon some pupils, to be in school and to use private study periods effectively have not been as high as they should be. As a result a significant proportion of pupils has failed to complete the course, or has ended the course without gaining accreditation. The relatively new head of the Sixth Form has worked hard and successfully to improve its ethos and raise expectations.
67. Most Sixth Form pupils use their private study periods effectively. They make good use of the facilities available. Some would welcome an additional work area so that they can sometimes work in absolute silence and sometimes discuss aspects of their work quietly with their peers.
68. Management of the Sixth Form is improving the expectations and requirements placed upon pupils. There is a good focus on raising attainment and maximising opportunities for individuals, through one to one discussions between pupils and tutors for example. The data on value added performance being developed by the school now needs to feed into this process more routinely. The popularity of courses in Year 12 has resulted in some groups being very large and limiting the resources available. This is adversely affecting the quality of learning of some groups, for example, in science. The school needs to ensure that Sixth Form pupils have greater access to ICT resources to support their independent study. Sixth Form provision is cost effective, with an appropriate proportion of the school's resources directed to it.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	213
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	52

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5	16	31	42	5	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	Y10 – Y11	Sixth Form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	862	413
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	158	

Special educational needs	Y10 – Y11	Sixth Form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	43	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	197	36

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	336

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	24
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	76

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.5
National comparative data	7.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	5.0
National comparative data	1.1

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15-year-olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	190	204	394

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	65	149	170
	Girls	90	183	195
	Total	155	332	365
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	39 (42)	84 (84)	93 (91)
	National	46.6 (44.6)	90.9 (89.8)	95.8 (94.6)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	33.4 (33.6)
	National	38.0 (36.8)

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

Vocational qualifications	Number	% success rate	
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	95	100.0
	National		n/a

Attainment at the end of the sixth form

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A Level or AS Level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	86	86	172

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	18.4	15.9	17.3 (15.2)	1.6	1.8	1.7 (3.7)
National	17.7	18.1	17.9 (17.6)	2.7	2.8	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	1
Black – African heritage	4
Black – other	3
Indian	172
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	97
Chinese	12
White	877
Any other minority ethnic group	34

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian	3	
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi	3	
Chinese		
White	75	1
Other minority ethnic groups	1	

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y10 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	80.35
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y10 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	23.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	519

Deployment of teachers: Y10 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	81.4
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Average teaching group size: Y10 – Y11

Key Stage 4	21.2
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Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	3517335
Total expenditure	3456166
Expenditure per pupil	2763
Balance brought forward from previous year	15570
Balance carried forward to next year	76739

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1233
Number of questionnaires returned	73

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	21	61	10	6	3
My child is making good progress in school.	30	59	7	4	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	25	51	10	1	13
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	17	51	22	10	0
The teaching is good.	20	63	11	1	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	24	50	21	6	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	36	50	8	3	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	36	47	12	1	3
The school works closely with parents.	15	49	29	6	1
The school is well led and managed.	18	54	12	7	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	22	64	8	3	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	23	51	9	3	14

Other issues raised by parents

The views of the parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting did not support those in the questionnaire, although both represented only a small proportion of the parent group.

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

ENGLISH

69. Overall attainment in English is broadly in line with national averages. There has been an improving trend in GCSE English results since 1998. This year's results were a significant improvement on the previous year's, rising from well below the 1999 national average for A*-C grades to a proportion just above this figure. Boys' attainment in particular has improved, although there is still a gap compared with girls'. The proportion of A*-C grades rose from well below the 1999 national average for boys to just above. This year's GCSE English literature results, in contrast, have shown a slight decline since 1998 and were considerably below the national average for 1999. Boys' results were well below the 1999 national average for boys and there was a wide gap between boys' and girls' achievements in this subject. Comparative data from 1999 indicates that the pupils' performance in English and English literature that year was worse than in the average of all their other subjects. Good results were obtained this year by the small number of pupils who were also entered for the Certificate of Achievement in English: 18 out of 26 gained distinction or merit grades. A Level English literature results have risen significantly since 1998, as has the number of entries. The proportion gaining A or B grades this year was nearly double that of 1999, when it was in line with the national average. The high average points score for 2000, well above the national average for 1999, reflects a good proportion of high grades: nearly a third of the entries gained grade A. The results for A Level communication studies rose steadily from 1997 to 1999, with the proportion of A and B grades above the national average for 1998. There was, however, a sharp drop in 2000, when the number entered for the examination was low, and less than one-fifth gained grades A-B.
70. These results were generally reflected in the work seen during the inspection and in the lessons observed, except that in many lessons the discrepancy between boys' and girls' attainment noted in examination results is not so apparent. Standards are generally satisfactory at Key Stage 4; there is a good standard of listening, and pupils, including those in lower sets, are mostly confident speakers. Boys are frequently more forthcoming than girls in oral work, but many boys are reluctant to engage in reflective writing. Reading comprehension is usually satisfactory, although in some low sets, poor vocabulary restricts understanding. Many pupils show good insight into literature and make perceptive comment on literary texts. Pupils in higher sets are able to develop their ideas in considerable detail in writing. They express themselves fluently, and the standard of accuracy, while variable, is satisfactory overall. Writing is still the weakest skill of many pupils in low sets. Most can write in simple sentences, but there is little extended writing. In the Sixth Form many pupils speak fluently, and are helped by the opportunities provided by teachers to give presentations, particularly in the communication studies course. In A Level groups, higher-attaining pupils show perceptive observation and develop a sophisticated written style, as well as greater confidence in making analytical judgements. Weaker pupils show good insight into the texts studied, but their language skills are not always sufficient for a clear expression of their ideas.
71. There is as yet no formal policy for the development of language skills in all areas of the curriculum and few subjects refer to the promotion of literacy in their schemes of work. As a result, there is inconsistency of practice and in some subjects opportunities for improving different aspects of literacy are missed. The standard of literacy is generally satisfactory at Key Stage 4, and good in the Sixth Form. The pupils' skills in speaking and listening are fostered in many subjects, but particularly in humanities, where presentations are encouraged. Most pupils' reading skills are sufficient to cope with the demands of the curriculum, and many but not all subjects teach information retrieval and note-taking and note-making skills. In many subjects, pupils learn the vocabulary appropriate to that subject and make competent use of it in speaking and writing. Not all teachers, however, have a consistent approach to the encouragement of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar, and not all provide opportunities for pupils to write at length.

72. Overall progress in English at Key Stage 4 is at least satisfactory. Good and very good progress is seen in lessons where the pace is brisk, and pupils respond positively to their teacher's energetic and frequently humorous approach. This was seen, for example, in a Year 11 lesson with a low set who were looking at emotive language in newspapers: the teacher's lively style engaged the class and stimulated the pupils into working productively. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress with teachers who combine warmth and humour with a rigorous insistence on pupils answering questions fully, on maintaining close concentration and on taking care over presentation and accuracy in writing. Most pupils for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory and often good progress, helped by structured teaching with a particular emphasis on vocabulary development. Progress is unsatisfactory when insufficient attention has been paid to the timing of activities in lessons, and the pace is slow. Progress in Sixth Form lessons is good, mainly as a result of the teachers' very good subject expertise and some stimulating teaching. In an excellent A Level lesson with a Year 13 group studying *King Lear*, the teacher's enthusiasm and challenging questioning generated a high standard of intellectual discussion and enhanced the pupils' understanding of the subtleties of the text.
73. Teaching is generally at least satisfactory at Key Stage 4 and good in the Sixth Form. Overall, the teaching in more than half the lessons seen was good or better with only a very small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching, mainly because of the setting of inappropriate tasks leading to pupil inattention, poor behaviour and poor progress. Most teachers mark regularly, with detailed constructive comments, to which pupils respond.
74. Homework is for the most part used purposefully to consolidate and extend the pupils' learning. There is insufficient use of IT to enhance work in English and develop pupils' ICT skills; this is particularly noticeable in the A Level communication studies course. Attitudes are good in the majority of lessons. Pupils are well motivated, relationships with each other and with their teachers are good and there is a productive working atmosphere in most classrooms. In a few instances, pupils who are relatively new to the school or to the course lack the confidence to speak publicly and are reluctant to contribute orally, despite encouragement from their teachers. In such cases, progress during the lesson is less than it should be.
75. The strong leadership and good management of the department have undoubtedly contributed to improvements since the last inspection. There has been some monitoring of work in the department, including observation of teaching, but there is a need for this system to be strengthened. Since the last inspection, the various measures put in place to raise attainment have brought some success. More challenge is offered to higher-attaining pupils by changes in approach at A Level, and supported by the broad setting arrangements introduced at Key Stage 4. There is now little sign of the reluctance by boys to take part in oral work noted in the last report. Boys' achievements at GCSE English show a slight improvement, although more still needs to be done to narrow the gap between boys' and girls' achievements. Teachers encourage all pupils to pay greater attention to accuracy in spelling, punctuation and sentence structure, partly through detailed marking and partly through refinements to the target-setting procedures. The Bridging Project, linking work in feeder high schools with the start of new courses in Year 10, has been helpful in enabling pupils to settle more quickly into their GCSE courses. The department recognises that there is still a need to raise attainment, particularly in GCSE English literature and in A Level communication studies. Greater use should be made of ICT in curriculum planning at Key Stage 4 and in A Level communication studies. Teachers should plan their lessons more rigorously so that pace is not lost and better use is made of time in lessons.

MATHEMATICS

76. The pupils' attainment at Key Stage 4 is average and, in the Sixth Form, it is in line with expectations for Advanced Level. In 1999 the GCSE results fell just short of the national average for the higher grades A*-C. The girls' performance was better in this subject than in the average of their other subjects while the boys' was broadly the same as in their other subjects. The GCSE results of 2000 were the highest of recent years and rose above the 1999 national averages and

also for those achieving the higher grades A*-C. The mathematics results are in line with those in English and in science. The proportion of the cohort entering the mathematics GCSE examination was below the national average particularly for the boys. The 1999 A Level results were above the national average. In 2000, the proportion gaining grades A or B at A Level matched the national average while the proportion gaining grades A to E remained slightly above the average.

77. Current standards are close to the national average with the number of classes where the pupils' attainment is above average closely matching the number below average. This picture changes little across each of the Years from 10 to 13. By the end of Year 10, pupils can use tree diagrams to solve problems in probability while the ablest pupils can use the sine, cosine and tangent ratios in trigonometry. In the Year 11 lessons seen, the pupils displayed widely varying levels of competence with percentages. The ablest pupils in this cohort are increasing their understanding of the gradient and intercept properties of algebraic linear graphs. Year 12 pupils progress rapidly and by the end of the year they have completed the greater part of the A Level syllabus. In the Year 13 lessons observed the pupils were mainly at an early stage in new topics introduced at the start of the new term. Most pupils at Key Stage 4 have insecure skills in number and are particularly weak with mental arithmetic; this is a consequence of the excessive and often unnecessary use of calculators. The teachers have started to rectify this but much more effective action is needed to avoid the pupils being handicapped in the newly introduced non-calculator elements of the GCSE examination. The skills of mathematics are used in such subjects as design and technology and science although this is mostly at a low level. More generally the application of numeracy beyond mathematics lessons is not properly developed. This calls for more effective promotion of numeracy in all subjects.
78. Most pupils are progressing satisfactorily. In almost all of the lessons seen the pupils' progress was at least satisfactorily and in a quarter it was good. Analysis of records of the pupils' attainment on entry in 1998 and their subsequent success at GCSE in 2000 indicates that the ablest pupils in this cohort progressed satisfactorily. The progress being made by the weaker pupils is less consistent. In a Year 10 lesson, pupils were working with obvious interest on graphs and, despite their difficulties with the subject, they were making a whole-hearted effort because the teacher's vigorous approach and encouraging style set a lively pace and fostered a sense of achievement. In contrast, weak pupils in some other lessons were working individually mainly at a relaxed speed because there was no class teaching to offer stimulus and to set a good pace. This led inevitably to monotony, with some pupils losing interest and wasting time to the detriment of their progress. In such classes teachers are neglecting opportunities to exercise their professional skills to foster and consolidate the pupils' learning. Some of the classes at Key Stage 4 are taught by more than one teacher; this is unhelpful to the continuity of teaching and of learning. The school is unable to provide textbooks for Year 11 pupils and consequently, in the crucial final stages of their preparation for GCSE, the pupils lack this important encouragement and support for independent study. The pupils with English as an additional language mostly make satisfactory progress particularly when additional support is provided in the lesson. Insufficient help is given to those pupils with special educational needs in mathematics; this is because the pupils' specific learning needs are not properly identified and consequently classroom support is not properly focused.
79. The pupils are strongly committed to learning. This is reflected not only in their positive attitudes in class but in the good quality of written work throughout Key Stage 4 and in the Sixth Form. A vital contributory factor in all lessons is the very good relationships with teachers, and this strongly encourages the pupils to give of their best as seen in a Year 11 lesson on income tax. A further factor is the school's arrangements for target-setting, which ensure that the pupils work towards a clear objective.
80. The teaching was at least satisfactory in almost all of the lessons seen, and in a third it was good or occasionally very good. This is a better picture than that reported in the previous inspection and reflects the effective leadership of the faculty. Just one lesson was unsatisfactory; this was because significant time was lost at the start of the lesson when the teacher was not adequately prepared. The teaching was good in nearly a third of A Level lessons, as in a Year 13 class on

statistics where the teacher's skilful use of probing questions effectively fostered pupils' thinking and insight. The teaching was good or very good in more than a third of lessons at Key Stage 4; this often occurred when the teachers' animation and enthusiasm enlivened the learning process and ensured the pupils' enjoyment and full participation, as in a Year 10 lesson on algebraic factorisation. There is no significant use of computers at Key Stage 4 to enhance the pupils' learning in mathematics, and the school is therefore not meeting a requirement of the National Curriculum. The teachers' marking, although regularly undertaken, is uneven in its helpfulness to pupils and there has not been sufficient improvement in this respect since the previous inspection. For example, while some teachers make good use of written comments to help and encourage pupils, this practice is not properly developed across the department. The school has made a satisfactory overall response to the mathematics report from the previous inspection report, although particular points, as indicated above, still call for action.

SCIENCE

81. At the end of Key Stage 4, the attainment of pupils in double award science is above the national average for A*-C grades. Boys achieve a higher proportion of A*-C grades than girls. Single award attainment is well below that nationally. Over the last three years the standards achieved in science have been improving. The pupils achieve lower standards in biology at A Level than in other subjects in the school. Over the last four years, the number of pupils taking biology has fallen, as has the proportion of higher grades, with a marked fall in A and B grades over the last two years. Chemistry results have improved over the last three years, with an increasing proportion of higher grades. Physics results have also improved but remain below those in other subjects in the school. The 2000 A Level results are the best since 1997. Human biology underachieves compared with other school subjects. Over the last 3 years, the proportion of high grades has fallen.
82. Key Stage 4 setting arrangements and the use of predicted target grades have enabled the pupils to work and achieve at a level appropriate to their targets; however, this is their minimum target grade. Some shortcomings in teaching are holding back progress, and pupils could achieve higher standards. Science coursework is appropriate in content but should pay greater attention to the integration of scientific knowledge with planning and analysis. There should be a greater number of assessed investigations.
83. Sixth Form pupils are producing appropriate A Level work. The visit to an alternative energy centre and the 'Engineering Enterprise' challenge offer stimulating and challenging approaches in physics; however, there is a need to offer a broader range of more stimulating experiences to pupils in all science subjects. There is also a need to explore the teaching and learning strategies required for pupils to achieve higher marks on new courses. Previous syllabus changes have had a negative impact on pupil grades.
84. In over a fifth of the lessons at Key Stage 4 teaching was unsatisfactory. In the Sixth Form over 90% of teaching was satisfactory or better. The good lessons were taught by enthusiastic teachers. The work was challenging, interesting and taught at an appropriate pace. Teachers employed a range of teaching methods, which gave the pupils the opportunity to interact with each other, the teacher and the concepts being studied. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, there was too little interaction between pupil and teacher, inappropriate copying from the board, poor use of the overhead projectors, a slow pace, a lack of stimulating material and inadequate planning to ensure that pupils were able to learn effectively. The response of pupils to their work is good; they work co-operatively with each other and teachers. Some single-sex groups have been created in Year 10. This requires more thought by the department on methods of teaching boys and girls separately in order to avoid discipline problems which were beginning to emerge in one group of boys.
85. The department monitors pupil progress regularly and sets targets. This is having a beneficial effect on raising standards. Work is marked regularly but the use of supportive comments to improve work is inconsistent.

86. Liaison over pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory. Although staff know the problems that the pupils have, they are not able to make good use of support teachers because pupil entitlement and the availability of support are unclear. There is good use of number in the department and key words are displayed in classrooms to aid language development.
87. There are significant problems with accommodation and resources all of which has an impact on learning, the health and safety of the people who use the department and the ease of working in it. The location of rooms, inadequate storage facilities and equipment make work more difficult for staff. The provision of textbooks for Key Stage 4 is unsatisfactory. Scientific apparatus for GCSE work is insufficient in quantity and much is out-dated. The large number of pupils in the Sixth Form has increased the demand for apparatus. The provision of ICT equipment in the department is inadequate and learning is constrained. Technical support is also barely adequate for the number of pupils studying science.
88. Since the last inspection, progress overall has been unsatisfactory. Efforts have been made by the faculty to improve those areas under its control; however, several major problems require the support of the governors and senior management team. There are many matters to be tackled in order that standards might be improved in science. Resource levels, accommodation and the use of ICT all need attention. Teaching, particularly at Key Stage 4, must be improved. A review should be undertaken of the purpose and methods to be used when teaching single-sex classes and liaison improved with the special needs department. Marking should become more useful and pupils involved more in their learning. These developments should be evaluated by more rigorous monitoring of the work of the faculty.

ART

89. GCSE results in art examinations since the last inspection, whilst below the national average, have been on a rising trend. In 1999, 50% of pupils achieved A*-C grades, compared with the national average of 61%; however, the 2000 results show a considerable improvement with 69% attaining A*-C grades. Girls perform better than boys in art. The percentage of pupils attaining A and B grades at A Level has been above the national average since the last inspection, and all pupils have gained A-E grades in the last two years. GNVQ Intermediate results have been average or above since the last inspection with a high proportion of distinctions and merits in 1998. No GNVQ course was offered in 1999.
90. In the lessons and work observed, the attainment of 16-year-olds in art is in line with expectations. In pottery, pupils show above average standards in modelling and construction as a result of effective and enthusiastic teaching and interesting resources. This is evident in an impressive display of slab and coil pots made by pupils in Year 11 which show a high standard of observation, an increasing understanding of form and decoration and a growing knowledge of different cultures. The pupils experiment and organise materials to develop ideas, for example in building up a relief surface in papier-mâché and mixed media. From these they create expressive masks based on primitive and modern designs, many of which show above average attainment as a result of thorough research and well-planned lessons. Most pupils understand colour theory and identify artists through knowledge of their styles, though artists' techniques are inconsistently investigated and used to improve the pupils' painting techniques. Many pupils mix and control colour with increasing confidence, as observed in Year 10 lessons where pupils made good progress in creating landscape moods and in experimenting with warm and cold colours to build up a portrait. By the end of the key stage, pupils' painting skills are generally underdeveloped because less time is given to the systematic development of technique. Most pupils draw from still life with average results, though drawing and recording skills for some average and lower-attaining pupils are below expectations as a result of inconsistent use of sketchbooks as a studio tool to improve overall confidence. Pupils with special educational needs are making good progress because they are given effective support, whilst the more able are encouraged to look closely at artists' work so that they extend their techniques.
91. Attainment in the Sixth Form is above average. Pupils are encouraged to express their own ideas

in a wide range of materials including textiles and relief construction. All achieve high standards at A Level, including pupils with English as an additional language. This is as a result of effective teaching and support and the well-organised flexible working areas which enable the pupils to extend their skills independently. In Year 12 textiles, for example, pupils develop an understanding of texture and surface pattern through the creative use of dyes in batik and wax-resist. They produce preparation sheets and sketchbooks, which show a good standard of planning, preparation and presentation. In fine art lessons, the pupils display enthusiasm for working independently and most show adequate competence in developing an idea from an initial analysis; however, many draw from magazines, which is limiting their understanding of form. Split lessons are impacting unfavourably on the progression of skills overall and there is a lack of opportunity for pupils to see original art and design and record their observations from first-hand experience because lessons are timetabled in single periods. GNVQ pupils are achieving high standards in three-dimensional studies because there are good quality resources and artefacts to complement their research.

92. The quality of teaching overall is good at both key stages. The teachers' expertise and confidence are very good. Lessons are well planned and inspiring because they have good links with contextual issues and language development through effective questioning. In the best lessons, challenging tasks are progressively built up to provide an enjoyable and worthwhile experience for the pupils, so that they are motivated to tackle problems and improve their skills. Where teaching has any weaknesses, work is less demanding and the pupils' understanding of concepts is insufficiently checked. The quality of constructive, focused feedback to pupils is very good, though group evaluation is inconsistent in a few lessons. Homework is appropriately linked to projects.
93. Improved methods of raising attainment at GCSE through more rigorous assessment have been managed effectively in the department since the last inspection; however, there are constraints in the quality of information technology provision across both key stages because computers are out of date. Boys' attainment in art now needs to be raised and the impact of split classes across the key stages on pupils' progress should be recognised and tackled. Other key points for action are the provision of sketchbooks at Key Stage 4 so that pupils can plot the progress of their research and investigation work more rigorously, and the inclusion of ICT opportunities in all schemes of work.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

94. In 1999, the proportion of pupils achieving grades A*-C at GCSE was close to the national average. Pupils in food studies, graphics and textiles gained good results, but few pupils gained an A*-C grade in resistant materials. In 2000, the proportion of pupils gaining A*-C grades within each subject was close to the 1999 national average, with the exception of resistant materials. In resistant materials the proportion gaining A*-C grades was below the 1999 average, but this was an improvement on the previous year. New staff are involved in teaching the subject. Pupils taking NVQ Manufacturing have all passed; however, there are no national comparisons in this subject. Results in graphics at A Level have been consistently very good. The proportion of pupils gaining A and B grades in 1999 was three times the national average while all pupils gained an A to E grade. Standards were lower in 2000 and there are now new staff teaching the subject. The standards achieved in the 2000 examinations were matched by those seen during the inspection, with the exception of resistant materials, which has improved and graphics A Level, which is again of a very high standard. Standards seen in the new A/S Levels are satisfactory.
95. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 4 is never less than satisfactory, with almost half the lessons being good, and nearly a third very good. Teaching is never less than good in the Sixth Form, with a quarter of lessons very good, and a further quarter being excellent. All lessons are well planned. In those lessons that are good or better, no time is wasted and there is a high level of challenge. For example, in a Year 10 graphics lesson, pupils were handed a far more challenging task as soon as they had finished drawing isometric circles. Thorough demonstrations ensure complete understanding, and this was seen when the cover of the band

saw was removed. This enabled pupils to see the continuous cutting edge of the saw, and understand its limitations and associated safety issues. Planning and organisation are very good. For example, in a food technology lesson pairs of pupils cooked and observed each other for breaches of health and safety regulations. This was an effective method of teaching, which ensured that pupils gained knowledge and understanding. Questioning is also good, and this was seen in an imaginative lesson when the pupils examined the construction of children's outdoor play equipment. They were closely questioned about the type of joints and materials, for example whether moveable joints would use ball bearings. This made the pupils think and showed them which features determine the type of joint to suit different equipment. Secure subject knowledge also contributes to good lessons. All staff have good relationships with the pupils, which results in no time being wasted. In the very good and excellent lessons, the enthusiasm of the teacher for the subject results in a high level of motivation and achievement by pupils. Homework is an integral part of lessons, and the high level of challenge, expectation and feedback contributes to the pupils' attainment.

96. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieve well. There are pupils taking the different subjects at Key Stage 4 who have not studied them previously, and they make rapid progress in gaining knowledge and skills. The pupils behave well and are motivated to succeed. This is seen in the extensive research undertaken and the enthusiasm for the subject.
97. The department has a recently appointed head of department after a period of instability. All staff work as a team, which contributes to the pupils' achievements. Issues raised in the last report have been tackled. The pupils provide alternative solutions, and there has been an improvement in workshop practice. Assessment is very good, and the involvement of pupils leads to a high level of self-evaluation. The curriculum for Key Stage 4 is very good, with subjects on offer which match the pupils' individual aptitudes and attainment. There are split classes and non-specialists teaching design and technology, which does not contribute to high standards for those pupils. Also the single periods make the attainment of higher standards difficult, because practical subjects require time for setting up and clearing away. The food rooms are separate from the main technology block, which mitigates against good communication in the department. The need to provide for gifted and talented pupils is an aspect which has been noted, but it has yet to be developed. Improvements in the provision in this area would assist in raising standards further.

GEOGRAPHY

98. Standards at GCSE in 1999 were well below the national average with 34% of pupils entered achieving A*-C grades compared with 53% nationally. Comparison does not give a true picture of geography, as a large number of pupils successfully follow a core humanities course at GCSE level. In 1999, the proportion of pupils achieving A or B grades at A Level was well above the national average; however, the very small cohorts of pupils taking A Level in 1997 and 1999, and none in 1998, makes any statistical comparisons unreliable. There are no significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls.
99. All pupils at Key Stage 4 study aspects of geography within the humanities course. A small group of pupils in Years 10 chose to study a GCSE course in geography in addition. In the geographical work seen during the inspection in the humanities and the GCSE course, the standards achieved are at the level expected of pupils of the same age nationally. By the age of 16, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, understand the terms associated with economic development and some of the underlying reasons for poverty in less economically developed countries. Pupils successfully design practical activities in order to explore the issues of inequality. Higher-attaining pupils understand that there are consequences of increased poverty if the more economically developed countries do not reduce debts. Simple, well-drawn diagrams and sketch maps are appropriately labelled and spider diagrams are well laid out in order to categorise brainstorming ideas. Charts and graphs are used to represent data. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress as they move through the key stage. Geography, taught within the humanities option at Key Stage 4,

successfully encourages pupils to link aspects of physical, human and economic geography; however, geographical skills of cartography, understanding geomorphology and geographical analysis are underdeveloped.

100. In the work seen during the inspection, the standards achieved in the Sixth Form are just above average. Currently, fourteen pupils in Year 12 follow a course at A/S Level and three study A Level in Year 13. Year 13 pupils understand how an ecosystem functions. They successfully explain how the atmosphere, lithosphere and hydrosphere provide nutrients for the ecocycle, and the impact which humans have, through such things as deforestation and fertilisers, within the cycle. Pupils are given data to calculate employees in agriculture, manufacturing and financial business services across different regions of the United Kingdom. The skills of evaluation of material, producing hypothesis and testing are not well developed.
101. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at both key stages. Teachers show good knowledge and understanding of their subject, which allows confident presentations to extend the pupils' horizons. Staff usually challenge and demand high standards; however, there are times when expectations are insufficiently high. At times, questions do not sufficiently probe the pupils' understanding, which constrains learning. Teaching strategies do not sufficiently involve pupils in their learning. This limits their understanding. For example, when investigating employment patterns the pupils are too reliant on the teacher. Lesson planning does not always show different strategies for the full range of pupils in the lesson. Geography makes a satisfactory contribution to literacy in the use of geographical words, but little contribution to the development of number skills. There is a range to the quality of marking. The best is thorough with detailed comments encouraging pupils to do better; however, a minority of the marking seen is minimal. Pupils listen and contribute well to question and answer sessions, which enhances their understanding of the issues. The pupils' behaviour is good and they show positive attitudes. All pupils, including those with learning difficulties, make satisfactory progress throughout Key Stage 4 and in the Sixth Form.
102. The department has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. Many of the issues have been tackled. Documentation has been successfully reviewed and amended. There have been improvements in marking, assessment and the use of ICT, although enquiry through information technology is under-developed at Key Stage 4 and in the Sixth Form. Geography being taught within the humanities core programme has inhibited some improvements. The monitoring of teaching is undertaken by the head of faculty and is not developed sufficiently to include the head of geography; improvements in the monitoring of teaching would help to disseminate good practice in geography.

HISTORY

103. In 1999, the GCSE results were in line with the national average. These were the best results of the previous three years and were considerably higher than those of 1998. Even so, the pupils entered in 1999 still did worse in history than in the average of all their other subjects. There were no candidates in 2000, which was the first year that all pupils were entered for humanities at GCSE. The relative success at GCSE in 1999 was offset by the worst results at history A Level over a three-year period, which were well below the national average. Whereas previously, a third of the candidates had achieved the two top grades, only one of the eight candidates did so that year. The decision had already been taken to change to a modular course at A Level and this has proved very successful. This summer the pass rate was 100%, compared with an average of 67% in the previous three years, and seven of the thirteen candidates gained A or B grades.
104. Attainment at Key Stage 4 is above national expectations on the GCSE course. This is partly because the single classes studying the subject in each year consist mainly of higher-attaining pupils who have chosen history in addition to the compulsory humanities course. It is also the result of good teaching that encourages pupils to get fully involved in lessons. For example, at the end of their study of advances in medicine over time, Year 11 pupils had the task of making group presentations on key factors that have influenced development. They worked well together and communicated their ideas clearly, showing good understanding of the causes and

consequences of major breakthroughs. The pupils make good notes and are able to use historical sources intelligently to reconstruct the past, as when writing an imaginary tour of Leeds in the mid-nineteenth century, to illustrate the poor state of public health. Their teacher's careful monitoring of notes and constructive written comments on how to improve have helped them to make good progress in their writing.

105. History is the main focus of two units of work on the humanities course, which all pupils study. They were not being taught at the time of the inspection, but the pupils' written assignments on Nazi persecution of the Jews show the depth of knowledge, coupled with a level of ability to evaluate evidence, that is in line with what is expected nationally. Some of the long essays are too wide-ranging and do not give sufficient attention to examining the historical sources selected. Generous staffing for a small group of pupils with special educational needs allows them to make good progress on a course leading to a Certificate of Achievement in humanities.
106. Year 13 pupils are achieving standards in line with course expectations, reaching personal target grades that were set at the start of their course. Their note files are well organised and they are developing their technique for writing history essays, combining argument with supporting evidence. In class discussion of the events leading to the General Strike of 1926, pupils were able to assimilate information quickly and represent accurately the views of the key figures in the dispute. Year 12 pupils have made a good start to the A/S course, helped by a useful induction to advanced study and an overview of Britain and Europe at the end of the nineteenth century. Their teachers are encouraging independent study, requiring the pupils to research information and present their findings. In one lesson pupils learned much about early influences on the formation of the Labour Party, by pooling what they had found out individually about socialist thinkers and societies.
107. The quality of teaching is good on both the GCSE and A Level courses. The teachers present their lessons in a lively, interesting manner and use methods that develop their pupils' ability to find out information for themselves and communicate it in an organised way, whether in writing or class discussion. In most lessons there is a stimulating, businesslike atmosphere of teacher and pupils collaborating in a joint investigation of the topic. Occasionally, the intellectual excitement is lost because of the absence of clear learning objectives to focus the enquiry. The pupils' attitudes towards history are very positive. This year, following their experience of history in the humanities programme, more than forty pupils have taken the opportunity to study the subject in the Sixth Form. This indicates successful planning across the humanities team to increase interest in the subject, by promoting a greater variety of teaching and learning styles. As yet, there is no formal monitoring of the teaching, but there is good teamwork to spread the expertise of specialist teachers.
108. Since the last inspection, the introduction of humanities as part of the core curriculum has greatly reduced the number of pupils studying history as a separate subject at GCSE. This loss is compensated by the fact that history does play a major part in the humanities programme. The department has answered previous criticism of failing to give opportunities for pupils to work independently. The net gain has been a big improvement in recruitment to the new A/S course in the Sixth Form. A change of course at A Level has produced much improved results, which had been declining since 1997. The department's fortunes are rising.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

109. Examination results at A level in computing have been variable. In 1999 they were better than the national average, particularly in the higher grades. In the most recent results the pass rate was below the national average.
110. Information and communication technology (ICT) skills and knowledge are developed through the key skills course at Key Stage 4. The time allocated during the year is insufficient and not compensated for elsewhere, because the opportunities to use ICT across the curriculum are limited. There is no overall assessment procedure, which mitigates against effective planning by teachers. Planning is also hindered by the absence of an up-to-date curriculum audit of ICT use.

Attainment in lessons where ICT is the main focus is below national expectations. The progress which has been made by pupils by Year 11 is insufficient to raise standards to the required level. Although ICT teaching was often satisfactory or better, some of the staff required to teach ICT feel uncomfortable in this role and are currently inadequately trained for the task, which results in some unsatisfactory teaching. For the majority of pupils there are few, if any, opportunities to demonstrate achievement in the use of ICT to measure, record, respond to, control and automate events as required by the National Curriculum. All computers have access to e-mail and to the Internet and there is a significant amount of use in all years. Some of the Internet work needs to have a sharper focus and to be more directly related to the curriculum.

111. In the Sixth Form, for those following the A and A/S Level computing course, attainment is at least satisfactory and often good. There is much evidence of satisfactory autonomous use by the majority of pupils in Years 12 and 13, predominantly for wordprocessing and research but also some use of spreadsheets for handling information. Appropriate skills are developed to a satisfactory level by those on GNVQ courses.
112. Although ICT resources are prominent in some areas of the school, particularly in the library, overall resources for pupil use are inadequate. (Some ICT resources are solely for community use.) The ratio of pupils to computers is unfavourable when compared with the national average, and this limits access across the whole curriculum. The overall coherence of the ICT curriculum is constrained by the limited time made available for co-ordination.
113. A number of outstanding issues from the last inspection continue to be a cause for concern. Overall the current provision for ICT remains unsatisfactory. Pupils at Key Stage 4 still do not experience all of the required aspects of the ICT curriculum. There is more scope for many subjects of the curriculum to play a fuller part in contributing to the pupils' ICT experience. Some teachers still lack expertise and confidence in the use of ICT to the detriment of pupils in some classes. The implementation of the New Opportunities Fund training initiative, which would be of benefit to these teachers, has been delayed. Much needs to be done. To ensure compliance with ICT requirements the number of computers should be increased to bring the school nearer to the national norm and provide adequate access for all pupils. A clear picture of the current coverage of the Key Stage 4 programme of study for ICT should be established in order for gaps to be filled, and the plans which have been considered for ICT assessment at Key Stage 4 need to be implemented.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

114. Standards are high in modern foreign languages at Key Stage 4. Since 1998, the percentage of A*-C grades achieved by pupils has been above the national average in all five modern foreign languages taught. In French, 64% of pupils gained A*-C grades in 2000, compared with the national average of 53% in 1999 for this subject. In 2000, 70% of pupils achieved A*-C grades in German, significantly above the national average of 56%. Achievement in French and German in 2000 is similar to that at the last inspection, but there has been a significant trend of general improvement in language results since 1998. Results in Bengali and Gujarati A*-C grades in 2000 were above the national average, and in Spanish, almost double the national average. Against the general national trend, boys perform very well in modern languages. In 1999, boys' GCSE A*-C results in French were well above the national average for boys, and better in A* grades than the girls in the school.
115. In the Sixth Form, achievement varies. In German, although overall results at A Level are below those at the time of the last inspection, there has been since 1998 a trend of improvement in the pass rate, and in the number of A and B grades. In A Level French, results have varied since 1998. The pass rate rose dramatically in 1999, with almost half of the pupils gaining A or B grades but then fell in 2000 with one-third gaining B grades. The results for A Level French in 1999 are similar to those at the time of the last report, whereas those in 2000 are lower.
116. At Key Stage 4 pupils achieve high standards in listening and speaking. The teaching seen at Key Stage 4 was mainly very good or excellent. Many pupils have a sound command of the

language within their experience and can understand, responding quickly, accurately and unselfconsciously in class. This is because the teachers' use of time and the target language is consistently very good. This was seen in a Year 11 French lesson, with rapid and enthusiastic use of the native language and sensitive correction of pupils' spoken language. The pupils generally achieve very good standards of accuracy in writing and presentation in all languages; even so, abler pupils need more challenging opportunities to develop their creativity and accuracy in their writing. The good standards are a result of the teachers' careful marking of work and target-setting, based on the departmental assessment policy. Many pupils can use IT successfully in writing tasks. In Bengali and Gujarati pupils attain high standards because of the teachers' use of resources (worksheets or reading cards) and close supervision of their handwriting. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. This is due to departmental policy on inclusion, and the teachers' understanding of the pupils' needs; for example, in a Year 11 French lesson the use of colourful resources kept these pupils alert and interested, and able to contribute well in class. Pupils are well motivated in their learning, because staff communicate their interest and enthusiasm through their teaching. For example, in a Year 10 Spanish lesson the teacher welcomed pupils at the door in Spanish and used greetings and brief conversations to set a lively tone for the lesson. Generally all pupils make very good progress in listening, speaking and reading and writing, whereas abler pupils make only satisfactory progress in reading and writing.

117. In the Sixth Form, attainment in French and German is generally good in Year 13 and very good in Year 12; however, the extension of the most able and more support for the least able pupils are needed. Standards are good because of contact with native speakers, the lively pace of lesson delivery, and a variety of pupil-based activities. This was seen in a Year 13 French lesson with the use of challenging questions on the topic studied, paired conversation tasks and quality, staff-produced audio tapes. The teacher in a Year 12 German lesson also used her native language to teach a series of well-structured learning activities. Most pupils make very good progress in all language skills in Year 12, especially listening and speaking, and make good progress in Year 13 in both French and German. Progress in listening and speaking is due to motivation by the teachers, and effective use of fluency as a model of spoken language. This was evident in a Year 12 French lesson when most pupils understood and responded well in French, with a good accent. A few pupils make less progress in Year 13 French and need prior preparation opportunities to increase their contribution to class discussion. Native speaking and abler pupils generally in the Sixth Form need more individual opportunities for extension of their language skills. Sixth Form pupils have very good attitudes to learning, sharing their skills in pair work and keen to achieve well.
118. Since the last inspection standards have improved in accommodation, the teaching of speaking skills in Gujarati and Bengali, and a common format in the departmental scheme of work. To raise standards further the faculty should seek to broaden the resources and differentiated provision for abler pupils at Key Stage 4 and in the Sixth Form. More opportunities need to be provided for developing pupils' IT skills, through timetabled periods and improved library resources. Library reading materials for all languages taught and their respective cultural backgrounds should be increased and more prominence given to displays of Bengali and Gujarati.

MUSIC

119. In the GCSE examination in music in 2000, 90% of pupils passed with Grade A*-C. Few pupils took the examination. All six pupils taking the examination at A Level in 2000 were successful, even though none gained the higher grades.
120. Attainment in lessons at Key Stage 4 is above average and is entirely consistent with the GCSE results. Pupils in Year 11 have good aural skills and can transcribe well-known melodies from memory, and most are able to add suitable chords successfully. There is a wide range of performing abilities in this year from elementary to proficient, reflecting the open-access policy for the subject at this level. Attainment in composition in Year 11 is average, although a few pupils can compose with style and sophistication. They have good musical knowledge and use

terminology accurately and confidently.

121. Attainment in Year 13 is average overall, although pupils have differing strengths and weaknesses. One or two are able performers with good aural skills particularly in transcribing melodies. Others, whose performing is not so advanced, have good historical and analytical knowledge and write articulate and detailed essays. Their skill at writing harmony is sound.
122. Pupils at both Key Stage 4 and in the Sixth Form work hard to overcome their weaknesses. Their progress is monitored effectively by the teacher who sets targets for improvement. Pupils know what their strengths, weaknesses and current grades are because of informative and regular feedback in class and thorough marking of written work. Progress in performance and composition is well monitored by the use of diaries, through which pupils can maintain a first-class record of their achievements. Pupils build on their composition skills in Year 11 because of good advice from their very knowledgeable teacher who challenges them with new ideas, but is necessarily patient and encouraging throughout. In Year 10, pupils work at their compositions at an encouragingly high level. Some compositions are stylish and sophisticated such as a composition exploiting techniques of Spanish guitar music. Individual work in such lessons is successful because of very mature and responsible attitudes, and because the pupils' concentration is sustained. Sixth Form pupils find the work challenging. In a Year 12 lesson on chords, they worked hard both theoretically and practically but did not always make the connection between the two. The lesson on Bruckner's Mass in Year 13 enabled the pupils to deepen their understanding of canonic techniques, as used in this piece. Careful and very thorough planning and preparation, a strong feature of the teaching, enable the pupils to build analytical skills progressively. All lessons observed were characterised by very good relationships in a relaxed but workmanlike atmosphere. Pupils who do not speak English as their first language are well supported. Pupils with special educational needs feel valued and included, and are successful in this practical subject. The teacher generated great enthusiasm in most lessons observed and also showed a willingness to experiment with different strategies creating great fun, as well as challenging tasks, which all could share.
123. An innovation this year is the introduction of an A/S level in music technology. The assignments set are excellent. They combine computer technology with composition, performance and recording techniques and help build a good understanding of the relationship between all aspects of the course. Pupils in Year 12, learning how to use the new mini-disc 4-track tape recorder unaided, very enthusiastically achieved a recording of a trumpet quartet movement multi-tracked by one of the pupils.
124. Teaching overall is good with some very good features at both key stages, and as such has improved since the last inspection. Attainment at Key Stage 4 and GCSE results have also improved. More pupils are studying music at GCSE level. The pupils' learning is strong and their attitudes are very good with very good behaviour in all lessons observed. The music school makes a considerable contribution to the pupils' learning, and supports a range of extra-curricular activities, such as the excellent Jazz Band, which played in the town centre during the inspection week. A recently formed choir is very promising and enables pupils and teachers to make music together.

Expressive arts

125. The expressive arts faculty in the school consists of dance, drama, expressive arts and music. The development of a cohesive team of teachers is having a very positive impact. The raising of standards in all of the subject areas through regular assessment and target-setting is the focus of the faculty development plan, and within that the achievement of boys is receiving special attention.
126. Dance is offered at GCSE and at A/S Level, as well as being a core aspect in Year 11. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 in dance is in line with national expectations, as a result of good teaching. Teaching is lively and carefully planned with challenges for pupils and as a result they are well motivated. Lesson objectives are shared with pupils and progressions to the next

lesson are communicated well, giving pupils time to reflect. The pupils' attitudes to dance are good, although at the moment the courses are attracting very few boys. A strategy to overcome this is the establishment of a boys only lunchtime club. The numbers are small as yet but the enthusiasm is present from staff and pupils.

127. Attainment in drama is good. The most recent GCSE drama results are a significant improvement on those in previous years. Since 1998 the proportion of A*-C grades has risen from below national averages to well above the national average in 1999. The recent A Level drama results, those of the first cohort of pupils to take this subject, are encouraging: both the proportion of A and B grades and the average points score were above the national figures for previous years. Numbers taking the subject at GCSE have doubled since 1998, while the numbers in A Level groups also show a considerable increase. Attainment in the lessons observed at Key Stage 4 is at least in line with national expectations. The pupils work productively together, making use of a range of drama skills in their improvisations. The standard of drama in A Level groups is good: pupils are confident performers, and make mature use of improvisation to develop their ideas and explore dramatic potential in considerable depth. They gain a wide theoretical background. Progress in lessons is good at Key Stage 4 and very good at A Level, when pupils are able to develop their work through their teacher's stimulating questions and their own powers of self-evaluation. Teaching at both key stages is at least good, sometimes very good, underpinned by sound curriculum planning and the teachers' wide background knowledge. Good classroom management at Key Stage 4 is a contributory factor in helping to ensure that progress during lessons and over time is sustained. Drama makes a significant contribution to the pupils' personal development and has a valuable place in the college curriculum. Unfortunately the development of the subject to meet the increased numbers at Key Stage 4 and at A/S and A Level is hampered by inadequate accommodation. While one studio is of a good size, the second is an inappropriate space for the larger groups that are now a feature of drama in the Sixth Form.
128. Attainment in expressive arts GCSE is above average at Key Stage 4, as a result of good and often excellent teaching. This attainment is reflected in good GCSE results in previous years, although in 2000 these were disappointing by comparison. The units of work provide much stimulating subject matter for the pupils whose beliefs and values are frequently challenged. Teachers also challenge the pupils to work hard and as a result pupils make considerable mental, creative and emotional effort in lessons. The work seen in Year 11 on *A Picture Tells a Story* was well focused with several mature and strong group performances. As a result of effectively led, regular reflection in the lessons, the pupils are aware of their strengths and weaknesses, and talk perceptively about their own and each other's work. Class reflection at the end of the lesson provides pupils with the opportunity to debate ways in which they may move forward next lesson, as in a Year 10 lesson on the colour blue. All ideas are noted in the pupils' planner. The subject is popular at GCSE and pupils choose to study it in good numbers every year. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported by the teachers, and many find that they are successful and valued in this environment. Enthusiasm is very evident and the pupils sustain a commendable level of concentration and interest throughout the lessons.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

129. GCSE results in physical education in 1999 were slightly below the national average. There was a considerable increase in the proportion of pupils achieving A*-C grades in 2000, to 65%, a figure well above the 1999 national average. At A Level, sports studies was one of the weaker subjects compared with national averages, only 7% achieving A or B grades. Standards have generally improved since the last inspection.
130. Attainment at Key Stage 4 is marginally below national expectations. The pupils' interest together with teacher expertise enabled pupils in a Year 10 basketball lesson to make progress and demonstrate good ball-handling skills in a game situation. Some progress was also seen in a Year 10 swimming lesson but, despite well-prepared tasks tailored to their own ability, many pupils' breaststroke lacked consistency. In a well-structured Year 11 GCSE theory lesson on the

mechanics of breathing, pupils lost focus when an interesting visual presentation took longer than expected. Attainment in this lesson was below average. Very high teacher expectations in a carefully structured Year 11 dance lesson provided pupils with inspiration, motivation and challenge, resulting in enthusiastic responses and very good learning opportunities. Standards in dance are in line with those found countrywide and pupils are encouraged to compose work. In other lessons more emphasis should be placed on pupils' planning and evaluation. Good opportunities for observation and comment were missed in a Year 11 trampoline lesson.

131. Standards in Sixth Form lessons are good. For example, in a well-taught A Level theory lesson on muscle contraction, pupils were keenly involved in discussion and made significant contributions. By contrast, pupils worked very hard physically in an A/S Level lesson on interval training but because of the teaching style were given less opportunity to make oral contributions.
132. Standards continue to rise in extra-curricular sport. There are many teams and up to 40 individual pupils who compete at county level and above. Pupils participating in extra-curricular activities during the inspection, including hockey, girls' rugby and dance had commitment and ability. Standards in basketball were particularly high.
133. The quality of teaching overall is good. It is satisfactory at Key Stage 4, very good in dance and good in the Sixth Form. All teachers set out for pupils what is to be learned, enjoy good or very good relationships and use praise and feedback to good effect. Pupils are generally attentive and positive in their response, but there is a marked lack of opportunity at Key Stage 4 for pupils to take on roles and responsibilities, as required by the National Curriculum. Very few pupils sit out of lessons. Non-participants have legitimate reasons for not taking part and are given tasks related to the lesson. This is a major improvement since the last inspection.
134. The Year 10 core curriculum does not cater fully for all pupils, particularly those who are not games players. A review of the present curriculum and assessment procedures for non-examination courses is needed before the introduction of the new National Curriculum.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

135. The school began entering pupils for the GCSE short course in religious education in 1999 and achieved results above the national average. This high standard was not maintained in 2000 year, when results fell considerably. RE was taught mainly by specialists as a separate subject, but now it is taught by a team of teachers as part of the integrated humanities programme. The new arrangements produced a big improvement in the humanities results this year, but a drop in performance in religious education. Lunchtime lessons give an opportunity to those who want to convert to the full GCSE course. Few pupils enrol, but the results in the last two years have been above the national average. This year all ten candidates achieved grades A*-C. The school is still failing to meet its statutory obligation to provide religious education in the Sixth Form.
136. During the week of the inspection only the Year 10 humanities lessons were linked to religious education. Attainment in the lessons was broadly in line with national expectations but this is not being maintained over the course, judging by the variable coverage of religious education topics in the exercise books of different classes in Year 11. The amount and quality of written work in religious education is below expectations for an examination course and there is little assessment of it to monitor progress. The scheme of work manages to combine the syllabus requirements of humanities and religious education, but the religious education element has been neglected in some of the teaching, which accounts for this year's decline in results. Pupils build up a good knowledge and understanding of the moral issues that are raised in the humanities modules but have a weaker grasp of relevant religious teachings on these issues. Too much of the religious content is being left to the revision course towards the end of Year 11.
137. The small group of pupils in Year 11 taking extra lessons to enter for the full GCSE examination are working in line with national expectations at this level. They are highly motivated and contribute well to discussion, gaining a balanced understanding of the relationship between

religious beliefs and moral action. In a lesson on Christian attitudes towards discrimination, they showed themselves knowledgeable about the teachings of Jesus and the work of Christian leaders to combat racism.

138. In Year 10, pupils show good knowledge of the different cultures represented in Loughborough and an appreciation of how religion can influence a person's sense of identity and way of life. Pupils are making a good start to the course, especially where they are able to use some initiative to find out information, either to produce multicultural posters, or to research the beliefs and practices of the Amish community on the Internet. In another enjoyable lesson, the teacher used paired and class discussion effectively to help the pupils to think about their personal identity and what influences it. Some lessons lack sufficient challenge for higher-attaining pupils, requiring them to spend too much time listening to the teacher, or doing easy tasks. Lower-attaining pupils are working at the right level for them in the ability sets, with suitably graded exercises. Attitudes towards the subject are good. By putting religious education into humanities any previous resistance to the subject has been reduced, although at the cost of lowering its profile. Pupils show interest in the lessons and have a respectful attitude towards other faiths and their cultures. As the religious education teachers now teach all of the humanities units of work they get to know their pupils better and are able to establish working relationships that are conducive to discussing serious matters.
139. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and good or better in nearly half the lessons. Any weakness in the teaching arises from the fact that most humanities staff are teaching outside their specialist area of expertise when delivering the religious education units. The faculty has worked hard on its teaching methods, to promote more active ways of learning, but it is not yet a common feature of religious education lessons. If the school wishes to continue to teach religious education within integrated humanities and if all humanities teachers are to feel confident in this role, it must be prepared to invest in the in-service training required.
140. There is no formal observation of teaching, nor any close monitoring of what is actually taught to the different groups. Pupils are awarded humanities grades each term but there is no separate assessment of the religious education elements in the course. The subject is not assessed in its own right until the trial examinations in Year 11, which is unsatisfactory. This year the faculty emphasis has been on improving results in humanities, which has proved successful. To some extent religious education has been a casualty of this policy. The faculty is now giving priority to redressing the balance in its development plan. Since the last inspection the fortunes of religious education have fluctuated. The faculty has turned round the humanities results at GCSE and there is the capacity and commitment to achieve the same success in religious education.

VOCATIONAL COURSES

141. The average point score for Advanced pupils fell significantly between 1998 and 1999, from above the national average to well below. It improved in 2000, but not back to the level of 1998. In 1999 a very high proportion of pupils, two-thirds, did not complete the business GNVQ, with a third of pupils failing to complete the health and social care GNVQ. In 2000 the proportion of pupils not completing courses halved and the proportion gaining merits or distinctions increased. The proportion of Intermediate pupils completing courses was above the national average in 1999, although the number not completing the business GNVQ increased in 2000, reducing the overall completion rate significantly. Observations from lessons and a review of work to date show that most are working at or above the levels expected for their courses. The issue is to ensure that a greater proportion of pupils is able to translate the knowledge and understanding demonstrated in lessons into completing assignments and passing tests to the required level. The more rigorous approach being taken to ensure that pupils are better matched to their courses when entering the Sixth Form and the higher expectations of sustained commitment being placed upon them once there, are raising the potential for better completion rates.
142. Teaching on vocational courses is never less than satisfactory. It is good in two-thirds of lessons and occasionally, as in an Intermediate art and design pottery lesson, very good. The teachers'

own knowledge and understanding are good and course requirements are well met. There is a good balance of teacher input and pupils working independently. Many lessons, such as a Year 13 Advanced health and social care lesson, have a good pace, with the teacher's own enthusiasm motivating pupils and developing their confidence. Questions are effectively used to involve the pupils, to draw out their ideas and to encourage them to apply what they know to new contexts. Good support is provided for individual pupils, as in a Year 12 Intermediate leisure and tourism lesson, with the teacher monitoring progress and ironing out weaknesses. Teachers place a good emphasis on the development of key skills, a Year 12 health and social care lesson introducing library resources being a good example. Here there was a refreshing emphasis on the appropriate use of the Internet to research recent developments so that pupils remained at the 'cutting edge' of their field. Research and the use of ICT is a regular feature of most courses, although access to computers is sometimes restricted because of demand.