

INSPECTION REPORT

ERMYSTED'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Skipton

LEA area: North Yorkshire

Unique reference number: 121716

Headteacher: Mr. T.L. Ashworth

Reporting inspector: Mark Woodward
(OFSTED No: 11049)

Dates of inspection: 4 – 7 December 2000

Inspection number: 223741

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Grammar
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	11 – 18 years
Gender of pupils:	Boys
School address:	Gargrave Road Skipton North Yorkshire
Postcode:	BD23 1PL
Telephone number:	01756 792186
Fax number:	01756 793714
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R.LI. Whittaker
Date of previous inspection:	28/11/1994

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mark Woodward (OFSTED No: 11049)	Registered inspector	Business studies and economics	What sort of school is it?
			How high are standards? a) The schools results and achievements
			How well are pupils or students taught?
			How well is the school led and managed?
Suzanne Smith (OFSTED No: 9779)	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Geoffrey Binks (OFSTED No: 8216)	Team inspector	English	
Raymond Cardinal (OFSTED No: 26695)	Team inspector	History	
		Special educational needs	
Jeffrey Cooling (OFSTED No: 14704)	Team inspector	Geography	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils or students?
Jeffery Hardman (OFSTED No: 15186)	Team inspector	Design and technology	
		Information technology	
Bob Hartman (OFSTED No: 22723)	Team inspector	Mathematics	
Barry Hodgson (OFSTED No: 22906)	Team inspector	Physical education	
Ken Hounslow (OFSTED No: 27585)	Team inspector	Science	

Peter McKenzie (OFSTED No: 4373)	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages Latin	
		English as an additional language	
John Morrell (OFSTED No: 23308)	Team inspector	Music	
Patrick O'Neill (OFSTED No: 31958)	Team inspector	Art	
		PSE	
Jacqueline Pentlow (OFSTED No: 30563)	Team inspector	Religious education	
		SMSC	

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates Ltd.
Demeter House
Station Road
Cambridge
CB1 2RS

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33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
7PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	12
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR PUPILS TAUGHT?	16
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR PUPILS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	21
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	23
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	24
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	29
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	30
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	34

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Ermysted's Grammar School is a selective school for boys, serving over 600 pupils aged 11-18. A small minority of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, seventeen of whom have English as an additional language, which is a little above the national average, and 1 per cent of the pupils is eligible for free school meals, which is very low compared with the national average. There are seven pupils on the register of special educational needs; four pupils are at stages 3-5 and none has a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of pupils on the register is 1.1 per cent and is well below the national average. The standards achieved by the pupils on entry to the school are very high in relation to national standards. In the National Curriculum tests at age 11, pupils have reached levels that are more in line with those expected of pupils aged 14.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is very successful in helping pupils to achieve very high academic standards. Pupils acquire excellent attitudes to work and behaviour, the school building effectively on the very positive attitudes that they bring with them. The quality of teaching is good, the proportion of very good and excellent teaching being higher than that found in most schools. The headteacher provides very good leadership and is well supported by a skilled senior management team and a committed and knowledgeable governing body. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve particularly well in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, German, history, geography, business studies and economics. ('Achievement' represents the progress that pupils make from one key stage to the next).
- The standard of some work is exceptionally high; for example, astronomy projects in Year 7 and business studies course work.
- Standards in competitive sports are very high, particularly in cross-country, rugby, cricket and athletics,
- The quality of teaching is good; it is very good in mathematics, history, geography, economics and business studies.
- The attitudes, behaviour and attendance of the pupils are excellent.
- Expectations of academic performance and behaviour are very high.
- Already performing well, the school is improving further under the leadership of the headteacher.
- Target-setting is developing well and is having a positive impact on standards and school improvement.
- The preparation of pupils for university is excellent.

What could be improved

- The achievement of pupils in French, information and communication technology, and graphics.
- The preparation of pupils for certain aspects of life beyond school, particularly with regard to sexual relationships, health and drugs education and the consideration of careers options during Key Stage 3.
- The curriculum for information and communication technology, religious education, physical education and music, and curricular links with other schools and colleges.
- The number of administrative and technical staff and the use of information and communication technology for management purposes to enable teachers and managers to concentrate on their key roles.
- The accommodation, particularly in design and technology, science, English, music and modern languages,
- Risk assessment procedures.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in November 1994. Since then it has made good progress, although several of the key issues have not been tackled adequately. The most significant improvement is that the school has improved its processes of self-evaluation. This has had a direct impact on the quality of teaching and learning. Standards remain very high in relation to national standards. The curriculum has been broadened, but some of the criticisms in the last inspection report, such as the provision for information and communication technology, remain. The monitoring, implementation and evaluation of policies have improved, as has the quality of teaching, which now gives pupils a wider range of learning experiences. The library has been improved considerably but further work is needed if it is to operate as a high quality centre for supporting pupils' learning. There remain issues with regard to the religious education curriculum, collective worship and health and safety. Good plans to develop the accommodation have been made.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
GCSE examinations	A*	A*	A*	A
A levels/AS levels	A*	A*	A*	

Key

very high A*

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

The school's examination and test results at the end of both key stages and the sixth form place it among the highest 5 per cent of schools nationally. They have been consistently high over many years. Standards, taking into account the full range of work in the school, are very high. The principal factors which contribute to this situation are: good teaching (and often very good); the expectation of the school for pupils to work hard and achieve well; the eagerness of pupils to learn and their positive response to high-quality teaching and the support that parents provide to encourage pupils' learning.

Over the past five years, pupils have gained results in the English, mathematics and science National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 that are very high in comparison with the national average. In comparison with other grammar schools, the school's results in these core subjects are well above average. GCSE results have also been very high in comparison with the national average over the past five years. In 2000, the results were above average for grammar schools and above average when compared with the same pupils' performance in the National Curriculum tests that they took in 1998. This indicates that the pupils make good progress during Key Stage 4. The average points score of the pupils at A level for the past four years has been very high in comparison with schools nationally. The pupils' results in 2000 were relatively higher compared with their 1998 GCSE results than the performance from GCSE to A level achieved by pupils in other schools. This indicates that the pupils make good progress in the sixth form. The school met its examination performance targets in 2000.

The most effective subjects are English, mathematics, science, history, geography, business studies and economics. Pupils make particularly good progress in these subjects because, whatever their abilities, they are given challenging work which they find stimulating and motivating. The teaching encourages the pupils to think and analyse, as well as to learn and retain facts. The achievement of the pupils is unsatisfactory in information and communication technology owing to curricular planning weaknesses, and in French and graphics it is not as high as in other subjects. The achievement of the pupils was judged to be good on the basis of the inspection evidence in art, but examination results in this subject are currently lower than in most other subjects, particularly at GCSE. Curriculum and timetable restrictions adversely affect standards in music and physical education at Key Stage 3, and in religious education at Key Stage 4.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. This is a major factor in enabling them to achieve very good GCSE and A level results.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The behaviour of the pupils both inside the classroom and around the school is excellent.
Personal development and relationships	The pupils make good progress in their personal development, but the lack of an effective personal, social and health education curriculum restricts the extent to which they have opportunities to confront some of the major issues facing them as they grow up. Relationships in the school are very good.
Attendance	Attendance is excellent and reflects the very positive attitudes the pupils have to their work.

The considerable strengths of the pupils in these areas are heavily reinforced by the practices and ethos of the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

The quality of teaching is good at both key stages and in the sixth form. This judgement combines the judgements about teaching quality in each subject and therefore good teaching, overall, is a very positive statement. The teaching of English and science is good and the teaching of mathematics is very good. There is a higher proportion of very good and excellent teaching compared with most schools nationally. In the 160 lessons observed, the quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in 98 per cent, good or better in 80 per cent and very good or excellent in 35 per cent.

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.

Pupils learn well at both key stages. This is due to the good quality teaching and pupils' high levels of motivation and interest. Learning is very good in the sixth form, the additional factor being pupils' improved study skills, which are considerably enhanced by the excellent quality of sixth form guidance. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. In history, geography, economics and business studies, for example, pupils learn well because teachers take a practical approach; this stimulates pupils' imaginations, making them more motivated to do the extra work needed to achieve the highest possible standards.

In no subject was teaching unsatisfactory, but there are areas where teaching, is or has been, less effective and the impact of this can be seen in examination results - namely French, graphics and art. The provision of information and communication technology teaching is not guided by a curricular strategy but as a result of individual teachers using it effectively to promote learning and through pupils acquiring skills, knowledge and understanding from one another and from home. The achievement of the pupils in developing appropriate information and communication technology skills is therefore unsatisfactory.

The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good and the most able pupils are stretched appropriately; teachers have a good awareness of individual pupils and their needs. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is effective. Pupils' facility in both areas is encouraged well throughout the curriculum.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is good, overall, and it reflects the school's aims. There are, however, some weaknesses which affect the standards achieved by the pupils in some subjects and their personal development.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Pupils' needs are met effectively.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	All the pupils with English as an additional language have standards of English which ensure full access to the curriculum and that they make progress equivalent to that of their peers.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall, this is good and in the promotion of moral development it is very good. The school offers a strong moral framework in which the pupils are expected to behave well and care for others. The curriculum lacks sufficient opportunities for pupils to become aware of other cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Teachers take an active interest in academic and personal development of the pupils. Procedures for promoting good attendance and behaviour are effective.

The curriculum is well-g geared towards academic success and offers pupils a wide selection of courses, particularly in the sixth form. It fails to meet statutory requirements in information and communication technology and sex education. The provision for careers education at Key Stage 3 is also unsatisfactory, although for those seeking university entrance in the sixth form it is excellent. Time imbalances at Key Stage 3, particularly in music and physical education, affect standards adversely in these subjects. Target-setting is developing well in the school, with projections being based on good analyses of pupils' performance in tests and examinations. Some departments, such as geography, are now using this information well to improve the curriculum.

There is a suitable health and safety policy; however, there is no trained member of staff with overall responsibility for its implementation. This has led to the school not being up to date in applying risk assessment procedures and, as a result, some deficiencies have not been identified, including the need for a separate pedestrian walkway to provide access to the school, issues in design and technology and science and a policy to guide arrangements for school trips and visits.

The school works hard to establish good links with parents. The support parents give to the pupils is a significant factor in helping them to achieve good examination and test results.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership of the headteacher is very good. He is successfully taking the school forward with the support of a capable senior management team.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors offer a very good service to the school and are well led. They have not, however, ensured that a number of statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is an area in which the school has improved significantly in recent years. A good range of information about performance is now being used to evaluate past performance and plan improvement strategies.
The strategic use of resources	Financial planning is not formally linked to development planning and therefore is not linked closely enough to the school's long-term strategies.

The most notable improvement in the school is in its ability to evaluate its own performance. This has been achieved through more effective analyses of examination results and target setting. Senior managers are establishing closer links with departments and a rigorous performance review process has begun which has already had a positive impact on standards and morale in design and technology.

There are sufficient teaching staff and learning resources, but more non-teaching staff are needed to take on administrative tasks. The accommodation is unsatisfactory. It affects the quality of pupils' learning in a number of subjects, most particularly design and technology.

Statutory requirements are not met in the following areas: the curriculum provision for information and communication technology, religious education and sex education; risk assessment; collective worship; and aspects of the governors' annual report to parents. The school has policies in place which ensure that the principles of best value are applied appropriately.

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 pupils like school • Pupils make good progress • School expects pupils to work hard • The quality of teaching • The behaviour of the pupils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards in French • The links between the school and parents • The information about pupils' progress • The range of extra-curricular activities

Inspectors agree with parents about the areas that they are most pleased about and their concerns about standards in French. Parents receive regular updates about pupils' general progress but inspectors agree that the information about what they need to do to improve the quality of their work is not detailed enough. Inspectors disagree with parents about the other issues. The school's links with parents are judged to be good, as is the provision for extra-curricular activities.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Standards, taking into account the full range of work in the school, are very high, while examination and test results are exceptionally high compared with schools nationally. The principal factors which contribute to this situation are: good (and often very good) teaching; the expectation of the school for pupils to work hard and achieve well, the eagerness of pupils to learn; and their positive response to high quality teaching and the support that parents provide to encourage pupils' learning.
2. The most effective subjects are English, mathematics, science, history, geography, business studies and economics. Pupils make particularly good progress in these subjects because, whatever their abilities, they are given challenging work that they find stimulating and motivating. A good example of this is the high quality astronomy projects produced by some of the pupils in Year 7. The teaching encourages the pupils to think and analyse as well as to learn and retain facts. In some of these subjects, notably geography, business studies and economics, information and communication technology is used very well to enhance pupils' learning.
3. Weaknesses in pupils' achievements in some subjects are for a variety of reasons. In French, oral skills are underdeveloped and so pupils do not enjoy or see the relevance of their work in terms of developing practical language skills. This affects their interest in pursuing the subject at GCSE and A level and depresses results. In graphics, a teacher left the school, retiring through ill health, and that disrupted the preparation of pupils for their examinations; there remains an issue in raising the performance of pupils in graphics to that of pupils in the other design and technology disciplines. The curriculum does not enable all pupils to develop the full range of information and communication technology skills and does not meet statutory requirements. Pupils do not receive sufficient time in music at Key Stage 3 or religious education at Key Stage 4 to make the progress of which they are capable. The discrepancy between the achievements of the pupils in art and the quality of teaching seen during the inspection were not fully reconciled by the evidence available. The organisation of the physical education curriculum does not enable skills in each sport to be developed most effectively.
4. The standards pupils have achieved when they enter the school are very high in relation to national standards. In the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2, the current Year 7 pupils achieved levels that were more in line with the results expected nationally at the end of Key Stage 3. In other nationally recognised tests taken by the pupils in Year 7, the schools results are substantially higher in verbal, quantitative and non-verbal reasoning than the standard scores expected of pupils of their age.
5. Taking into account National Curriculum test results and the quality of work shown by pupils in lessons and their books, standards, compared with national standards at the end of Key Stage 3, are: exceptionally high in English, mathematics, science, history and geography; very high in German; high in design and technology, French, Latin, art, music and religious education; and average in physical education.
6. Compared with standards that they achieve on entry to the school, pupils' achievement at the end of Key Stage 3 is: very good in English, mathematics, science, history and geography; good in design and technology, German, Latin, art, music and religious education; and satisfactory in French and physical education.
7. Taking into account examination results and the quality of work shown by pupils in lessons and their books, standards, compared with national standards at the end of Key Stage 4, are: exceptionally high in English, mathematics, science, history, geography and GCSE religious education; very high in design and technology, German and business studies; high in French, Latin, art and music; average in information and communication technology and physical education; and low in non-examination religious education.

8. Compared with standards that they achieve on entry to the school, pupils' achievement at the end of Key Stage 4 is: very good in mathematics, science, design and technology, history, geography, GCSE religious education and business studies; good in English, German, Latin, art and music; satisfactory in French, physical education and non-examination religious education; and unsatisfactory in information and communication technology.
9. Taking into account examination results and the quality of work shown by pupils in lessons and their books, standards, compared with national standards at the end of the sixth form, are: exceptionally high in English, science and history; very high in mathematics, geography and economics; high in German, Latin, art and physical education; average in design and technology, information and communication technology, French, music and religious education.
10. Compared with standards that they achieve on entry to the school, pupils' achievement at the end of the sixth form is: very good in English, science, history, geography and economics; good in mathematics, design and technology, Latin, art and physical education; satisfactory in German, music and religious education; and unsatisfactory in French.
11. Over the past five years, pupils have gained results in the English, mathematics and science National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 that are very high in comparison with national averages. The rising trend in performance is broadly in line with the national trend. In comparison with other grammar schools, the school's results in these core subjects are well above average. The pupils who took the tests in 2000 gained an average points increase of 13.7 compared with their own results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2. Nationally, pupils are expected to make gains of around 9 points, which indicates that the pupils have made good progress during the key stage.
12. Teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 in other subjects also indicate a high level of performance. On the whole, the assessments are reliable except in information and communication technology, where all pupils are graded at Level 6 whereas the range of performance is much wider. Standards in music as indicated by the assessments are lower than in other subjects because of the limited time given to the subject in Year 9.
13. Over the past five years GCSE results have been very high in comparison with the national average. The trend in the school's average total points score is below the national trend, but this is understandable as it is harder for a school in which pupils achieve very high standards to improve upon examination results at the same rate as lower-achieving schools. In 2000, the results were above average for grammar schools and above average when compared with the same pupils' performance in the National Curriculum tests they took in 1998. This indicates that the pupils make good progress during Key Stage 4.
14. Given the ability profile of the pupils almost all should gain A*-C grades in all their subjects. This is largely the case except in art, French and graphics. The proportion of pupils gaining A* or A grades has fallen since the last inspection. There was no evidence that the most able pupils made less progress than other pupils, but in some areas, namely art, French, information and communication technology and graphics, the proportion of pupils gaining the highest grades was lower than in other subjects.
15. Over the past two years, pupils have performed relatively better at GCSE in comparison with their results in other subjects in English, mathematics, double award science, German, history, geography, business studies and religious education. They have performed relatively worse in art, French, information and communication technology and graphics. The school reached its GCSE targets in 2000.
16. The average points score of the pupils at A level for the past four years has been very high in comparison with schools nationally. The pupils' results in 2000 were relatively higher compared with their 1998 GCSE results than the performance from GCSE to A level achieved by pupils in other schools. The same pattern emerges when the pupils' A level result in 1999 are compared with their GCSE results in 1997. This indicates that the pupils make good progress in the sixth form. In both 2000 and 1999, pupils who achieved the highest results at GCSE made relatively better progress than pupils who achieved the lowest results at GCSE.

17. In 2000, the subjects that most successfully improved pupils' progress from GCSE to A level were economics, English literature, geography, history, art, biology and general studies. The history and economics A level results were particularly impressive for the pupils who entered the course with relatively (for the school) low GCSE results. The long-term absence of two English teachers in 1998/9 had an adverse affect on test and examination results at the highest levels in 1999.
18. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. In mathematics, they explain and predict number sequences and construct triangles of given dimensions. In history, pupils take a full part in group discussion activities about the impact of the railways. In German, pupils vary and adapt the language during speaking activities. In geography, pupils make good progress in discussing differences between regions and in identifying features of the local area.
19. The school achieves high standards in competitive sports, with excellent standards in cross-country, the junior team recently being placed sixth in the national championships, one pupil becoming Northern Schools cross country champion and another representing England in fell racing. Last year a number of pupils were selected to represent North Yorkshire in cricket and athletics, while four pupils were selected for the under-18 Yorkshire schools rugby squad. Two other pupils were selected for national teams, one in orienteering and the other in swimming.
20. Standards of literacy are high. English teachers are aware of the progress made in primary schools through the development of the literacy hour. Some have observed the upper primary pupils working on literacy skills. There is no whole-school literacy policy, but work has begun this term on implementing the National Literacy Strategy in the school. In a number of subjects other than English pupils' literacy skills are reinforced effectively. Pupils write lengthy coursework studies in science and write in different modes in history and geography lessons. Geography at Key Stage 4 requires an extended written study demanding a wide range of research and writing. The teaching of Latin in Key Stage 3 makes a good contribution to the development of pupils' understanding of the English language through teaching word derivations and introducing more advanced English vocabulary and language structures.
21. The school library provides a useful base for regular supervised reading periods for pupils in Year 7 and 8 for six lessons each week. At the moment, however, it is very much an underused school resource, with only the English and geography teachers making regular use of it. Sixth form pupils use the library more regularly for private study. The library assistant is doing a good job but her skills are not being fully used by the school to train pupils in library skills and to work alongside departments to ensure that appropriate resources are available to support pupils' learning.
22. Standards of numeracy and mental number skills in mathematics are very good. A whole-school numeracy policy is planned, and an initial numeracy audit has already been carried out. This is needed to ensure that teachers of other subjects consider numeracy issues when planning their own curriculum's. Pupils are not always encouraged to do simple straightforward calculations mentally rather than with a calculator.
23. Pupils are able to apply their mathematical skills successfully in other subjects. In no subject is progress inhibited by lack of the appropriate numeracy skills. In modern foreign languages, for example, numerical skills are used successfully in the contexts dates, money and shopping, and, in German, computation. In geography, a range of skills in data-handling are deployed, for example: scatter graphs and simple correlation in Year 7, leading to Spearman rank correlation in Year 11. All the common methods used to display data are encountered during Key Stage 3. Statistical measures of location and spread, together with sampling techniques are met with during Key Stage 4. In Years 12 and 13 a variety of statistical methods is used to test hypotheses. Scope to use and display pupils' abilities in number, graphical, recording and measuring skills is evident in other subjects, including science and physical education.
24. Standards in information and communication technology are average compared with standards achieved by pupils nationally at the end of Key Stage 3, but they are variable because not all pupils have the same opportunity to learn. Some subjects, such as history, raise pupils' standards in information technology well; for example, a Year 7 group had the opportunity to use databases and maps stored on computers to study the location of the leper colony in Skipton. In contrast, computers are rarely used in some subjects such as mathematics, modern languages, art and religious education; in others they are used mainly for presentation purposes. By the end of Key Stage 4, standards in information and communication technology for those following a

course of study are very high compared with standards achieved by pupils nationally. The remaining pupils in Key Stage 4 have no timetabled time to develop their information technology skills and therefore their skill levels again vary depending upon the extent to which they are developed by individual subjects or through home study. Some pupils in Year 13 economics were not familiar with the most common spreadsheet software, indicating a serious gap in their learning and skills.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

25. The attitudes of pupils to their learning are excellent and a major strength of the school. Inspection evidence confirms the views of the large majority of parents that their children enjoy coming to school, are keen to learn and respond to their work with enthusiasm. Pupils across the full age range show exceptionally high levels of concentration and persistence when confronted with a challenge and this makes a substantial contribution to how well they learn. They respond positively to the high expectations for them to contribute to the management of their own learning. This develops progressively as they move through the school and has a significant impact on progress made. Pupils grow rapidly in personal confidence, they ask and answer questions readily, contributing their own views in a mature and responsible manner, although their willingness to debate is not always well enough used in lessons. Most keep their homework logbooks with considerable care and many willingly do more than is required in their desire to succeed. Pupils enjoy practical work. Many show a lively curiosity, steadily-developing skills of observation and the ability to explore independently. They willingly tackle open-ended problems and demonstrate the ability to research to a high standard. These very positive attitudes to learning continue into the sixth form, where very few pupils fail to complete courses of study that have been started.
26. The behaviour of pupils is excellent throughout and makes a significant and very positive contribution to the school as an effective learning environment. No disruption to learning was observed as a result of behaviour during the course of the inspection and evidence shows that there is little need for teachers to caution pupils or refocus their attention during lessons. As a result of this, teachers are able to use the time allocated for teaching very effectively. Pupils have a good understanding of school rules, generally feel they are fair, and respond very well to the high expectations of staff. Out of lessons, pupils interact confidently with one another, with staff and visitors and are invariably well-mannered, polite and courteous. At lunchtimes many take part in informal ball games and, although often showing high spirits and some boisterous behaviour, they behave in a spirit of good will. Both parents and pupils confirm that there are few instances of bullying and these are usually dealt with effectively. During the last school year there were only two fixed-term and no permanent exclusions. This is very low in comparison with similar schools. School premises, equipment and materials are treated with high levels of respect, there is no graffiti and very little litter is dropped. Movement around the school buildings is usually very orderly and contributes well to the personal safety of pupils.
27. Relationships throughout the school and the response of pupils to opportunities provided for their personal development are good. Pupils grow in confidence through responsibility for personal organisation and high expectations for them to be involved in classroom routines. Further opportunities for them to take responsibility and to use initiative outside lessons are limited in Years 7-11; however, older pupils respond with maturity when expressing their views through debate, for example, about the influences that religion has on our lives and some of the associated moral issues. Their awareness of those less fortunate than themselves grows through the work they do for charity. In the sixth form, pupils involved in community service develop an insight into local issues and those starting the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme grow in self-knowledge and personal independence. Sixth form prefects discharge their duties in a responsible manner. Trust, respect and goodwill towards others are strong features of the school community. They enable constructive relationships to develop where pupils willingly help and support each other and where they are confident to approach staff with problems. They feel able to express their own views and opinions without fear of ridicule and they listen without interruption to what others have to say even when not finding it of interest; for example, in a mathematics lesson when listening to a, less than clear, explanation by another pupil about how sequences are built up. Their ability to disagree amicably and be willing to value the views of others results in very effective collaboration when opportunities for this are planned.

28. Attendance for the last school year is 95.6% and makes an excellent contribution to learning. The very large majority of pupils arrive punctually for the start of the day enabling lessons to start promptly. Purposeful movement between classes during the day ensures that the time available for teaching is maximised. There was only a handful of absences that were not suitably authorised during the last year: some of which occurred when the headteacher had quite reasonably felt unable to give permission for holidays to be taken during the school term. Reasons for absence or late arrival are always required and usually justified.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

29. The quality of teaching is good at both key stages and in the sixth form. There is a higher proportion of very good and excellent teaching compared with other schools nationally. In the 160 lessons observed, the quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in 98 per cent, good or better in 80 per cent and very good or excellent in 35 per cent.
30. At Key Stage 3, the quality of teaching is: very good in mathematics and history; good in English, science, design and technology, German, Latin, geography, art, music, religious education; and satisfactory in information and communication technology, French and physical education.
31. At Key Stage 4, the quality of teaching is: very good in mathematics, history, geography and business studies; good in English, science, design and technology, German, Latin, art, music and religious education; and satisfactory in information and communication technology, French and physical education.
32. In the sixth form, the quality of teaching is very good in English, science, German, history, geography and economics; good in mathematics, design and technology, French, art, music, physical education and religious education.
33. Pupils learn well at both key stages. This is due to the good quality teaching and pupils' high levels of motivation and interest. Learning is very good in the sixth form, the additional factor being pupils' improved study skills, which are considerably enhanced by the excellent quality of sixth form guidance.
34. A major reason for the very high standards achieved by the pupils is the quality of work that teachers expect them to produce. Teachers are demanding and not easily satisfied. Much of this is a two-way process in that the pupils are demanding too. They have a strong motivation to learn, are very capable and these two factors impel the teachers to keep them stretched and interested.
35. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection, when a lack of variety in teaching methods was observed. There are still examples of teachers using inefficient methods, such as dictating notes, but far more evidence of teachers developing pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills in ways which effectively and imaginatively engage the interest and commitment of these very able pupils. In history, for example, pupils learn well because teachers give them opportunities to explore issues through investigation and discussion as well as by giving them factual information. Pupils enjoy working in this way because it stretches their thinking skills, as in a lesson organised as a tribunal for those men wishing to be exempted from military conscription at the time of the First World War. The high quality of examination performance in history is largely due to the depth in which the subject is covered by such methods.
36. Imaginative teaching also takes place in business studies, where a significant proportion of the subject is taught through the development and management of a challenging business project. 'Green Fingers' involves the pupils taking responsibility for developing a local market for the sale of £6,000 worth of plants. To do this they have to take account of research and output data from previous years, negotiate contracts, organise a marketing strategy, satisfy customer demand and generate a profit. Assessment of the project itself provides a considerable proportion of the final examination marks, but the understanding and skills learned prepare the pupils very well for the academic side of the subject.
37. The information and communication technology curriculum is not satisfactory, overall, but considerable progress has been made in the past two years in improving it, with some departments making a very valuable contribution to the development of pupils' skills. In A level

geography, for example, pupils' learning is considerably enhanced by computer simulations of slopes derived from their own fieldwork. The department also has stored a range of resources on the school's network, which the pupils use frequently to extend their studies, and has linked a computer to a weather satellite, the results of which are continuously on display. Good use is made of information and communication technology in business studies, economics and history, but other departments, in particular, mathematics, modern languages, art and religious education are not yet using this valuable resource for learning effectively. The provision of information and communication technology teaching is not guided by a curricular strategy but as a result of individual teachers using it effectively to promote learning and through pupils acquiring skills, knowledge and understanding from each other and from home.

38. In no subject was teaching unsatisfactory, but there are areas where teaching is less effective and the impact of this can be seen in examination results. In French, teaching methods at Key Stages 3 and 4 prevent the pupils from developing their speaking skills, and this has an impact on recruitment to GCSE and A level courses and pupils' motivation as well as examination results. A level pupils are reluctant to speak French because they have not been used to doing so regularly except in learning fragments of language. The evidence for this was seen in a Year 8 lesson where parts of verbs were taught but then not practised as part of whole sentences. In this lesson the French language assistant was never used.
39. The teaching of graphics was disrupted last year owing to staff absence and the use of temporary staff. This was the major reason why examination results in that subject were lower than they should have been. The pace and rigour of graphics teaching are still in need of improvement.
40. The quality of teaching in art was good during the inspection, which contrasts with the weaker performance of the subject in examinations in recent years compared with most other subjects in the school. The numbers of pupils taking the subject beyond Key Stage 3 have also declined. The inspection evidence does not identify decisively the reasons for the apparent contradiction between examination performance, the achievements of the pupils seen during the inspection and teaching quality.
41. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good; teachers have a good awareness of individual pupils and their needs. Planning is effective in enabling pupils to make good progress, although targets from Individual Education Plans are not routinely incorporated into planning.
42. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is effective. Pupils' facility with both disciplines is encouraged well throughout the curriculum, even though planning does not necessarily take place formally; for example, there is no whole-school numeracy policy. The study of Latin makes a significant contribution to pupils' understanding of grammar and etymology both in English and in other European languages. This is a great strength of the charismatic teaching in this subject.

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

43. The school has clear statements about the opportunities it provides and the curriculum policy reflects the aims and ethos of the school. While there is a strong emphasis on academic courses that stretch pupils intellectually there is also the aim to promote the wider personal development of all pupils. The curriculum is broad across the school and provision, overall, is good. The current School Development Plan identifies curriculum review as one of its priorities and this process has begun. The total time allocated to the 40-period week is 26 hours 15 minutes, which is slightly less than at the time of the last inspection but still well above the recommended taught week.
44. When pupils join the school in Year 7, curriculum liaison with primary schools is difficult in view of the large number of different schools from which pupils transfer. On entry to the school they are grouped into three parallel classes and all pupils follow the same curriculum. The range of opportunities in Year 7 has been broadened with the recent introduction of drama. In Year 8, and extending into Year 9, about one third of the pupils continue with Latin and the forms are regrouped so that the all these pupils are in the same tutor group. Pupils studying Latin have less

time in Year 8 for science and in Year 9 less time in modern languages and physical education. Not all pupils, therefore, have an equal opportunity to study Latin beyond Year 7. The amount of time allocated to science in Key Stage 3 is above the level found in most schools and while the time is well used, this contributes to imbalance. There is insufficient time for information and communications technology in Key Stage 3. In music and physical education the range of activities is restricted by reduced time in Year 9. While, within individual subjects, curriculum development has led to well-planned schemes of work and many good learning opportunities, there remains, as reported at the last inspection, no overview to ensure progression across the key stage and between the key stages. Provision within Key Stage 3 does not fully meet the requirements of the National Curriculum, as pupils do not receive their entitlement in information and communication technology and there is no food technology component in the design and technology course.

45. At Key Stage 4, the curriculum is broad and balanced and relevant to the needs of the pupils. All pupils have a common core of English, mathematics and either three separate sciences or dual award science together with a modern language, technology and games. About three quarters of the pupils continue to study biology, physics and chemistry as separate sciences, using 30 per cent of the curriculum time. All pupils have a programme of religious, physical, and personal and social education in a rotational arrangement and choose two further options. All pupils study both French and German in Key Stage 3 and the opportunity exists for both languages to be taken at GCSE level. Currently, German is the more popular choice. Pupils who take dual award science are obliged to take geography. In this way the school achieves its stated aim of offering all pupils access to 10 GCSE examinations and the high standards reached as measured in the results indicates that pupils can meet these demands. Although the school provides a GCSE course in information and communication technology as an option for GCSE, this does not ensure that all pupils receive their statutory entitlement in this area.
46. Across both key stages there is no systematic management overview of the whole curriculum. Following the recent review of leadership and management roles and responsibilities, the school has begun to tackle this issue by designating one of its senior staff to be "Curriculum Manager". The school needs to ensure that sufficient time is allowed for this to be done and that the strategies described in the School Development Plan lead to a more co-ordinated approach to curriculum planning and development. This is particularly important where cross-curricular skills and themes need to be mapped and planned so as to ensure that all pupils have equal access and opportunities in literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology and personal, social and health education. The school has begun an audit of the opportunities that are given for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils but as yet this has not led to a more coherent programme.
47. Most pupils continue into the sixth form and in preparation for this they receive clear and appropriate guidance. Curriculum provision is good and the school has worked hard to meet the demands of the new 16-19 requirements. All pupils are expected to follow three or four AS level courses in Year 12 and currently 60 of the 85 have chosen four. In addition, all have a games programme and opportunities to gain success through the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. In line with new requirements all pursue a key skills programme to ensure that they acquire increasing competence and confidence in areas such as the use of information and communication technology. In Year 13 the school provides seventeen full A Level courses, with most pupils concentrating on three subjects and about a quarter tackling four subjects. All continue with games and have the option to take an A level General Studies course. As the majority of the pupils in the sixth form are aiming for places in higher education, the curriculum is well-matched to their needs and there are effective arrangements to promote greater independence and self-reliance so that pupils take increasing responsibility for their studies. While most of the pupils find that the range of courses offered in the sixth form satisfies their needs, there remains the potential for collaboration with other institutions. This would bring even wider choice and support those subjects where numbers are relatively low. The school is interested in and keen to make curricular links with the local girls' school, and a meeting between senior managers has recently taken to explore this opportunity.
48. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Pupils have full access to the curriculum. Individual needs are appropriately addressed with, for example, the use of a mentor to co-ordinate individual provision and arrangements made for dyslexia assessment; and the school is proactive in ensuring that appropriate examination concessions are agreed. The high level of knowledge and awareness of individuals enables the school to address pupils' needs effectively.

49. The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of extra-curricular activities that cover a wide range of pupils' interests. Over the course of the school year pupils have the opportunity to take part in a variety of educational visits in history and geography, there are concert, art gallery and theatre visits and a foreign exchange visit to Germany. Teachers share their hobbies and interests with the pupils and this is reflected in a number of ways, such as the chess club, the debating society, the orienteering club, and the model airfix club. In order to increase motivation and participation, many of the departments supplement the lessons with additional opportunities, such as the electronics club and the 'paper-clip' physics club, while others broaden the experience of pupils through arranging inter-house competitions and fund-raising to support charities. The music department provides the Big Band and there are ensembles for instrumental groups. Auditions are currently taking place for the next major school production and pupils are encouraged to support book fairs, parents' association events and the Christmas concert. Pupils in Year 10 are given the opportunity to take part in a work experience programme and for sixth form pupils there are good opportunities to visit higher education conventions. The school has an excellent record in a range of sporting activities. In addition to maintaining successful teams in rugby, cricket, cross-country and athletics the school provides opportunities for swimming, climbing, five-a-side football, badminton and basketball. Some of the activities inevitably attract greater numbers than others but the opportunities provided represent a good choice and contribute to the wider personal development of the pupils. Ninety per cent of parents think that the school is helping their children become mature and responsible adults.
50. The school provides an environment in which, although there is some variation, the overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Assemblies are organised for pupils on two days during the week and these offer a positive medium for the consideration of some social and moral issues, include a time of reflection, and are a time to celebrate the success of pupils; but most lack a specific spiritual dimension. A thought for the day is being piloted in the tutor time for Year 7 but does not occur on all days and there is no provision for other year groups. Therefore, as at the time of the last inspection, the requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship for pupils is not being met.
51. The provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. The provision within the curriculum is the responsibility of the individual departments and although an audit carried out in September 1999 showed a lack of understanding by a number of staff, the provision within the curriculum, although variable, is often good. The contribution made by the acts of collective worship is limited. In some subjects, such as religious education, music and geography, there is a range of opportunities for considering the spiritual dimension of the subject. In religious education pupils are often asked to consider their own beliefs and those of others; they reflect on the impact beliefs have on everyday life in the way the world around them is viewed. In music, there are opportunities for meditation and personal reflection while listening to music and, in geography, an understanding of the power of natural forces creates a sense of awe and wonder. In English, although the meaning of life is considered within literature, it is approached in a technical and analytical way rather than looking at the meaning beyond the ordinary; this was seen for example, in a Year 9 lesson on love and relationships in *Twelfth Night*.
52. The provision for moral development is very good. The pupils are expected to behave well and care for others. The school offers a strong moral framework to distinguish between right and wrong and pupils show a respect for the property of others and a sense of fair play. The latter is seen in physical education, in games, in respecting the decisions of referees and, in other lessons, being trustworthy when asked to do their own marking. Moral themes are taught in various subjects. In history, the pupils consider issues such as the slave trade, the Holocaust and the Vietnam War. Sensitive teaching is seen in the science department when looking at issues such as genetic engineering, radioactive power stations and other environmental issues. In English, pupils consider moral issues whenever they rise within literature and this is especially seen in looking at war poetry and discussing morality in the twentieth century. In religious education, pupils consider a range of moral issues, especially at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form; these are considered at varying depths. All these opportunities enable the pupils to understand the complex moral decisions that people have to make. The school is a caring community and staff and other adults within the school provide good role models for the pupils.
53. Provision for pupils' social development is good. There are opportunities within lessons for pupils to work collaboratively, in pairs and in small groups. A range of extra-curricular activities, both

formal and informal, provides pupils with opportunities to mix with those of other age groups. The prefect system provides opportunities for various responsibilities for older pupils but opportunities for pupils lower down the school are limited. Within the curriculum, aspects of social life are considered, such as in history considering life in the Middle Ages, during the Civil War and in the industrial revolution. Events are organised within the school that aid social development, such as participation in Founders' Day and the school play and being a member of a school team in activities including sport and other competitions. Opportunities to show social development within the local and global community can be seen in the Christmas party and the music ensemble performances in the community and local primary schools. On a world perspective there are pen pal links with Malawi and the pupils have raised money for Montserrat.

54. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils appreciate their own culture and cultural traditions. In art, the Year 9 pupils are able to base their assignment on a cultural theme and the study of twentieth century icons and graffiti artists is included. The design and technology course includes a study of heraldry and a number of pupils visit museums. In mathematics, displays of historical figures are evident. The study of other cultures is more limited. In history, the pupils consider the views of Arabs and those of an Islamic faith when studying the crusades; geography includes an understanding of life in Egypt and Brazil, and in religious education several world religions are studied. Modern languages offer an annual German exchange but the cultural dimension is not strong in lessons owing to the over-use of English in French lessons. The cultural aspect of the curriculum would benefit from further development, especially in the education of pupils for life in a multi-cultural society.
55. Although the careers education programme has some very strong features, particularly in the sixth form, it is unsatisfactory, at Key Stage 3. In Year 9 it consists of two single-period lessons taken by an external careers officer. This work is supplemented by an external and school-specific publication designed to help pupils in their options choice. This is not a sufficiently robust programme to help pupils start thinking about what they want to use their education for. At Key Stage 4, provision increases to an in-house programme of nine periods over each year that explores self-assessment, linking outcomes to possible job directions, and preparation for work experience in Year 10. A similar time allocation is used in Year 11, which helps individuals identify and secure the next steps in their education.
56. Provision for careers in the sixth form is excellent. Comprehensive and very user-friendly booklets on sixth form support, including preparing UCAS forms and applications to Oxbridge, prepare pupils well for the next stage in their education. In addition, senior teachers prepare candidates for interview through mock interviews in school. All pupils, whatever the courses they are following, also undergo a course in information and communication technology.
57. All pupils follow a course in personal and social education, which is currently confined to Key Stage 4 and the sixth form, although a Year 7 'thought for the day' initiative is currently being piloted. The programme consists of a series of topics, including drugs, sex, racism, censorship, the police and happiness, as well as work on bullying. The course fits alongside, but is separate from, a programme of careers guidance.
58. The personal, social and health education programme is disjointed. It only begins in Year 10, rather late for pupils to begin to consider some of the subject matter. Also the material presented is sometimes superficial; for example, the sex education component does not include any mention of contraception or sexually transmitted diseases. In addition to the declared provision, however, some very good work takes place within specific tutor time, but this is not co-ordinated nor is it commonplace. The quality of provision, therefore, is inconsistent. The school has recognised its shortcomings in this area, and is already planning a revised programme.
59. A community service initiative was introduced last year in the sixth form. It takes place on Wednesday afternoons as an alternative to sport, and it is growing in popularity with a minority of upper sixth pupils.
60. There are seventeen pupils in the school, for whom English is an additional language. The school does not receive any financial support through the Standards Fund in respect of these pupils. Inspectors have observed their work and conclude that all in this group have standards of English which ensure full access to the curriculum and that they make progress equivalent to that of their peers.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

61. Concern for the health, safety and welfare of pupils at the school is a high priority and members of staff are vigilant in their care. Within this context, some procedures have not been fully developed and, as at the time of the last inspection, are unsatisfactory, overall. There is a suitable health and safety policy; however, there is no trained member of staff with overall responsibility for its implementation and this has led to the school not being up to date in applying risk assessment procedures. As a result, not all deficiencies have been identified and dealt with. These include the need for a separate pedestrian walkway to provide access to the school; the siting of some equipment, and working distances between benches and machines in design and technology, storage facilities in science, and a policy to guide arrangements for school trips and visits. Individual teachers are careful to ensure that pupils are suitably briefed on safety procedures during lessons. Arrangements for the annual testing of equipment and appliances meet legal requirements. Emergency evacuation procedures are practised with sufficient regularity to ensure that pupils are familiar with them. There are appropriate arrangements to deal with first aid emergencies, although only the most serious of these is recorded, restricting opportunities to monitor for frequency or patterns involving individual pupils. The governors inspect the premises annually and decide on action to be taken at this time.
62. Arrangements for child protection have been updated and improved since the time of the last inspection. There is a suitable policy, and the guidance provided for staff is clear and in line with local requirements. The designated person with responsibility has been suitably trained and is supported by a named governor. New members of staff are fully informed about procedures and are subsequently updated and briefed as needed. Very positive relationships throughout the school ensure that pupils thrive in a secure environment where they are confident of someone with whom to share concerns.
63. Registration procedures have improved since the time of the last inspection and fully comply with requirements. They provide an accurate record of those present and are kept centrally for ease of access in emergency. Individual form tutors monitor attendance and punctuality with care and take suitable action on the few occasions when there is a need. The heads of lower and upper schools take an overview, ensuring that there is parental contact when problems are not swiftly resolved. Procedures to record the very few arrivals after registration are effective. Parents are discouraged from requesting holidays during the school term and are aware that, if taken, they may not be authorised. Registration procedures for the sixth form are effective, as are arrangements for signing out for private study periods when this is appropriate.
64. There is a suitable behaviour and discipline policy and clearly expressed and understood expectations for behaviour. Staff lead by example and have very high expectations that result in exceptionally good behaviour. On the rare occasions when more than a rebuke is necessary detentions are given. This also results in close monitoring of future behaviour and contact with parents when necessary. Form tutors play an important role in promoting good behaviour and liaise very effectively with other staff where needed. The successful promotion of good behaviour results in very few exclusions being necessary. They are used only as a last resort and the school's procedures meet requirements. There is suitable guidance to deal with the few incidents of bullying, which provides for subsequent monitoring of those involved. The school values hard work and achievement highly and pupils value the praise they receive for this.
65. Arrangements for the personal and academic guidance of pupils are good, overall. The well-planned induction programme for pupils starting in Year 7 is effective helping them to settle happily. The school draws pupils from a very wide area, and although local schools usually transfer sufficient information about prior achievement, this is not always the case for those further afield. Where information is lacking, the Internet is used effectively to obtain end-of-key-stage test results. The very effective tutor system provides high levels of individual support. Form tutors know pupils individually and monitor both their personal development and academic progress well. Successes in both school and personal life are recorded effectively through Records of Achievement for pupils from the age of 14. The informal support that individual pupils receive in lessons has a positive impact on learning. Pupils are confident to approach individual teachers for help where needed. Extra-curricular sessions provide additional academic support and are valued. Annual progress reports to parents do not adequately inform them about pupils' relative

strengths and areas where further development is needed. Pupils do, however, usually gain a good understanding about what they must do to improve their work through marking that is effective and informative. Target-setting is a strong feature and supports progress very well. Regular testing helps pupils to understand how well they are doing. Some pupils, however, approaching end-of-key-stage testing are not fully aware of what more they need to do in individual subjects to complete the necessary work.

66. Opportunities for pupils to take responsibility, contribute their views to the decision-making process of the school and to use initiative outside lessons are limited, except in the sixth form, where new initiatives such as The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme and Community Service support personal development very well. The school provides a wide range of effective opportunities for pupils to grow in personal effectiveness and self-confidence, for example, through work experience, debating, residential visits, field trips, sports matches, and more. There is, however, no planned approach to ensure they receive a coherent programme of personal development through the ages 11 – 16 years. This has resulted in some areas being overlooked, for example, aspects of sex education, personal relationships and drugs awareness. Pupils aged 14 to 16 years receive satisfactory careers' guidance, and those in the sixth form are offered very good support when making decisions about their next steps. For pupils in Year 9 there is insufficient guidance prior to them making choices about what they should study for GCSE examinations. The school has taken suitable steps to prepare for future requirements to teach citizenship skills. An audit of current provision has identified what is already being taught and there are firm plans to supplement this with an effective programme for pupils in Years 7 and 10.
67. Since the last inspection, the headteacher and the senior management team have addressed the issues raised with regard to assessment, recording and reporting. A policy has been compiled which clearly outlines the school's approach to marking, the use of effort grades and the annual examination and reporting sequence. One area of development that receives little mention in the policy document, but has been welcomed by the parents, is that of whole-school target-setting. Examination results from the end of the key stages are thoroughly analysed and the results used to set targets for the forthcoming years. Presentation to all staff is in graphic form, with clear explanation of expected outcomes. This information is then passed to the parents to inform them of the school's expectations. Target-setting for individual pupils is not thoroughly explored in the document, and neither is self-assessment or the use of assessment to inform curriculum planning.
68. Assessment practice within departments is still variable, but it has improved since the last inspection. Procedures for assessing attainment and progress are very good in design and technology and geography and unsatisfactory in information and communication technology. Target-setting is used in some departments, particularly design and technology, where it is a strength; in physical education (where it is good in Year 7 and at A level), and in geography, where its use is very good. Target setting occurs in music at the end of each module, but there is lack of rigour in following up the pupils' response. Use of target-setting in art is in its infancy and there is a need for more use of target setting in science. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is good in English, showing consistent evidence of good practice, and in design and technology where it is comprehensive and informative. Very good marking procedures are to be also found in science, where records are collated to enable teachers easily to track pupils' progress and in geography and in art, where thorough following-up of assessment takes place.
69. The use of assessment to inform curricular planning is developing but still requires more attention. Geography is the only department with a systematic approach to this aspect. It is weak in information communications technology and art. There is also a general lack of use of assessment findings to assist the planning of work for pupils with differing abilities. Exceptions are to be found in geography, where there is an emphasis on devising tasks that extend or challenge high attainers, and in design and technology, where the entire assessment structure supports planning of work for pupils of differing abilities.
70. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils academic progress are good. In English, the regular marking and grades for effort are used for the end-of-unit reports, and guidance in the sixth form for entrance to Oxford and Cambridge is very good. In geography, there is very good marking practice, with very good procedures in place at Key Stage 4 to monitor coursework; and in art,

there is good use of continuous assessment. Use of self-assessment is a strength in history, and is used at the end of each module and to good effect in music.

71. Liaison with primary schools is very good and information is used well to identify pupils with special educational needs. Records show that the school is extremely diligent and sensitive in its approach to monitoring the progress of individuals as they move through the school, with the co-ordinator carrying out regular reviews of progress. There are no established procedures for identifying pupils with special educational needs after entry to the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

72. The school has high levels of support from parents, most of whom are very pleased with what it provides and achieves. They are particularly happy with the standards of teaching and behaviour and believe that their children enjoy school, are expected to work hard and make good progress. Inspection evidence confirms these positive views. Some would like to see more opportunities for extra-curricular activities and residential visits. A review of the school's provision confirms that there is sufficient of these to provide good support for learning overall. Although in most respects the school works closely with parents, inspectors agree with those who feel that information provided in annual progress reports and arrangements for parents to meet and consult with teachers does not fully meet their needs. This reduces opportunities for parents to work closely with the school.
73. Very useful information for parents about their children's grades and the effort they put into their work is provided each half-term. Parents are very well informed about the National Curriculum levels at which their children are working, and the predicted grades and targets that have been set to support the achievement of these. End-of-key-stage test results and comparative figures are suitably reported. Annual progress reports that are sent home towards the end of the summer term provide very good information about pupils' attitudes to their work, their behaviour, grades and effort. They do not, however, tell parents what their children have been taught, what they know, understand and can do, or identify for them the relative weaknesses that should be addressed to secure improvement. For example, where a subject report says that the 78 per cent achieved indicates a high standard of work and effort there is no indication of what gaps in knowledge or performance resulted in less than 100 per cent. There are no arrangements for parents to consult teachers soon after the issue of annual reports. Consultation evenings are held for parents at other times during the school year. They do not, however, always meet the needs of parents to discuss their children's progress with all the teachers they would like to see.
74. The overall effectiveness of the school's partnership with parents is good. The prospectus covers the full range of issues required and, although some of the information given is out of date (for example, arrangements for sex education), an up-to-date copy is in the process of being drafted. The prospectus, information provided for new parents and those entering the sixth form, together with the governors' annual report, provide a generally good range of information about routines, expectations and school performance. The governors have, however, overlooked the need to provide sufficient information about the implementation of their policy for pupils with special educational needs and the progress they have made towards the action plan drawn up following the last inspection. The pupils' logbooks provide an effective means of communication and recording homework. They are usually used well and checked regularly by both staff and parents. The homework timetable raises expectations that are subsequently not always met in practice. The school provides a useful list of diary dates for parents at the beginning of the school year. This is supplemented effectively by letters about individual events as they occur and reporting of current school news in the regular newsletters. At times where choices must be made - for example, what subjects to choose for GCSE and the training and education opportunities available after reaching the age of 16 years - there are suitable information events for parents. These, typically, provide access to a range of people who can advise, for example, the careers' officer and representatives from further and higher education.
75. The involvement of parents with the school has a very good impact on pupils' learning, overall. The home-school agreement has received high levels of support from parents and provides a sound basis for an effective working partnership. The strong tutor system ensures that any cause for concern about individual pupils is identified at an early stage and that parents are encouraged to work with them to resolve difficulties. The school is in close contact with parents of children

with special education needs, ensuring that they are fully involved in decisions affecting the provision made. There is a very high level of support from the parents' association. Throughout the year many social and fund-raising events are organised that raise considerable sums to buy materials and equipment that support the work of the school. Parents show very high levels of interest in their children's work and the progress they make; most attend consultation evenings and other events involving their children. When asked to support specific activities such as field-study trips and orienteering, parents give their time unstintingly.

76. The links with individual parents of pupils on the register for pupils with special educational needs are very good and the school is proactive in keeping parents informed about progress. Parents are notified of placement on the register and they are informed of the results of reviews.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

77. The aims of the school are clearly visible in its work. 'High calibre academic study' is expected by pupils and parents, and achieved. This is strongly reflected in the high proportions of pupils gaining entry each year to high calibre courses at university. The school also values other achievement, as in sport, and this is also strongly reflected in its work and achievement. Pupils are less well prepared for other challenges that they face, such as living in a mixed sex, multi-racial community.
78. The headteacher is leading the school very well; he is building on its strengths and traditions while identifying appropriate areas that are in need of improvement. By presenting balanced analyses of the school's performance and by listening to staff, he has won their respect and support.
79. A good example of the systematic and measured approach of the headteacher was seen in the preparation of the school for the inspection; the key document, in which the headteacher is asked to outline the state of the school and its future direction, was the most comprehensively prepared that the registered inspector had seen. Throughout the inspection process the headteacher showed a firmness of purpose in ensuring that inspection judgements were fair and accurate. He also was able to accept criticisms of the school's work when well-founded and to take advantage of the opportunity of discussing with inspectors ways in which improvements might be made.
80. The headteacher is well supported by an effective senior management team, who have a good balance of skills. They are well regarded within the school and among the wider community and all have served the school well for over 10 years, some for considerably longer. While being receptive to change, senior managers have a strong regard for the traditions and values of the school; this is a very positive feature of the way in which they work. They provide fine role models for pupils and staff.
81. Senior management roles are changing appropriately to encompass performance management and some very good work has been done recently in rigorously evaluating the work of departments. The impact of this can be well seen in design and technology, where a number of issues were raised in partnership with the department that have resulted in improvements in work quality and higher staff morale. The shift towards senior managers working closely with departments is not embedded within job descriptions or in the standard working practices of all senior managers. This is a key area for development. To achieve this, some of the tasks currently performed by senior managers need to be re-assigned.
82. The governors give very strong and valuable support to the school. They bring wide and varied experience to their leadership role and this has a positive impact on the school's development and success. The chair of governors leads the governing body well and has given excellent service to the school for over 20 years. He is a regular visitor and works well in helping to shape the direction of the school alongside the headteacher. The governors have made some very good appointments of senior managers, teaching and non-teaching staff in recent years.
83. The governors are responsible for ensuring that statutory requirements are met. In the following areas, statutory requirements are not met: the curriculum provision for information and communication technology, religious education and sex education; risk assessment; collective worship; and aspects of the governor's annual report to parents.

84. Leadership and management is: very good in history and geography; good in English, mathematics, science, design and technology and music; satisfactory in modern foreign languages, art, physical education, religious education and special educational needs; and unsatisfactory in information and communication technology.
85. The link adviser from the Local Education Authority provides a good service to the school. Monitoring reports are evaluative and helpful in stimulating management and teaching staff to think about the quality of their work.
86. Some very good work has been done recently in the field of target-setting by a senior member of staff. Teachers and managers are now able to compare the performance of subjects in tests and examinations more effectively and this is having a positive impact on improvement planning.
87. Until very recently there was no School Development Plan. This was noted at the time of the last inspection but action was taken only when the current headteacher arrived. The new plan has appropriate targets, which are compatible with the inspection findings. It is organised under appropriate headings, time-scales are realistic and staff responsibilities are identified appropriately. Details about costs in terms of time are limited and the success criteria are more often linked to a process than to a measurable outcome.
88. The school's administrative staff very effectively ensure that the day-to-day organisation of the school is efficient. They have a wide range of skills and take responsibility for tasks which relieves the pressure on managers. There are, however, too few of them. This means that managers and teachers have too many clerical and organisational tasks to complete, which take them away from performing their key roles. A good example is the lack of someone to manage reprographics. Teachers do their own photocopying. This is time-consuming and also inefficient because they are not fully aware of the capabilities of the school's machines to enhance the presentation of, for example, learning resources. Several other tasks are currently performed by senior staff which non-teaching staff are in a better position to perform, such as the arrangements for covering for absent teachers and the collation of assessment data.
89. Information and communication technology is not used sufficiently to aid the management of the school. This is recognised, and there are plans to install new hardware and software that will enable, for example, assessments of pupils' work to be gathered more efficiently. Too much management time is taken up with, often duplicated, tasks that could more efficiently be carried out by machines. The headteacher has been very influential in improving the use of information and communication technology both in the classroom and for management purposes.
90. The school has made good progress since the last inspection, although a number of the key issues have not been tackled adequately. The most significant improvement is that the school has improved its processes of self-evaluation. This has had a direct impact on the quality of teaching and learning. The curriculum has been broadened, for example, by the introduction of design and technology as a compulsory subject at Key Stage 4, but some of the weaknesses (such as the provision for information and communication technology) remain. The monitoring, implementation and evaluation of policies has improved, as has the teaching, which now gives pupils a wider range of learning experiences. The library has been improved considerably following the appointment of a library assistant, but further work is needed if it is to operate as a high-quality centre for supporting pupils' learning in all subjects and developing their independent learning skills. There remain issues with regard to the religious education curriculum, collective worship and health and safety. Good plans to develop the accommodation have been made.
91. The school has adopted a staged approach to special educational needs, taking account of the Code of Practice. A policy is in place, and a designated member of the governing body, though the governors' annual report to parents does not contain sufficient information about the implementation of the school's policy. There is a whole-school approach with the appropriate involvement of senior staff. The co-ordinator is very effective in monitoring individuals and keeping staff fully informed about pupils' needs and progress. All staff receive an up-to-date register each year and the co-ordinator provides other information on a regular basis through staff meetings and training sessions. Good informal contact takes place between the co-ordinator and individual staff, although there are no formal systems for consulting staff as part of progress reviews. The school makes very good use of support services with, for example, very close links with the educational

psychologist. Good progress has been made since the last inspection with a policy now in place, a special educational needs co-ordinator appointed and pupils making good progress.

92. The systems for financial administration are good. The bursar is responsible for providing monitoring reports to the headteacher, governors and spending officers and reconciles the month-end position with information received from the Local Education Authority. Records confirm that specific grants are appropriately applied. The clerk to the governors manages the foundation accounts and regularly reviews investments. The headteacher reviews the delegated budget monthly and provides termly reports, at least, to the governors. The finance committee of the governors takes action on elements of the delegated budget, but concentrates more on the foundation. An audit report in October 2000 raised only two minor issues, which have since been resolved.
93. The headteacher and bursar provide a model-spending plan prior to the beginning of the financial year, which is presented for governors' approval. The school has a contingency fund of about 5 per cent of the budget, which is used to meet the needs for additional expenditure. In the current financial year, a reduction in the number of admissions will lead to an operating shortfall, which will need support from this contingency fund
94. Financial planning is not clearly linked to school development planning and is carried out largely on an annual basis. Consideration should be given to a longer-term financial strategy and to linking this to development planning. The first steps in this work have already been taken by linking learning resource allocations to departmental development planning.
95. The school has policies in place which ensure best value. Purchasing is controlled by the school's own policy and that of the Local Education Authority. The school is aware of the value it provides in comparison with other schools.
96. Standards in the sixth form are very high and represent good value for money but, as Ermysted's is a small school, the range of sixth form courses is subsidised from income targeted at Key Stage 3 pupils. The issue is less significant in this school than in most schools because the great majority of pupils stay at the school between the ages of 11 and 18 and therefore benefit from the sixth form provision; however, the inadequate provision of curricular time for some subjects, such as music and physical education at Key Stage 3, does affect standards.
97. Low expenditure on administrative and clerical staff leads to teaching staff and managers carrying out tasks that take time from their teaching and management responsibilities.
98. In the light of the high academic standards achieved and the average budget allocation, inspectors concluded that the school provides good value for money.
99. Overall, the school has sufficient appropriately qualified and experienced teachers to match the needs of the National Curriculum and the abilities of the pupils, but there is some variation between subjects in the quality of this match. In geography, for example, there is a very good match between staff and the needs of pupils. The match is less good in religious education, information and communication technology, music and physical education. In physical education, two qualified teachers effectively teach the full range of activities, including the A level course. However in games lessons, where a whole year group is involved, additional teachers are required – a number of whom merely supervise rather than teach the pupils.
100. The administrative and office staff ensure the smooth day-to-day running and organisation of the school. Technical support staff also make a valuable contribution to the school, as do the other support staff. The school is well-served by its non-teaching staff.
101. Teaching staff absence is minimal, but when supply teachers are required they are engaged on the understanding that they act as teachers rather than as pupil-minders. Teacher absence did have an adverse impact on test and examination results in English in 1999.
102. Procedures for the induction of new teachers are good. The school has produced an informative booklet for them which includes information on day-to-day procedures so vital to a new teacher. Heads of department play a pivotal and valued support role.

103. Senior staff all teach, are very much aware of what goes on in the classroom and know the strengths of weaknesses of their teachers. The outcomes of the recent programme of lesson observations have made teachers aware of the positive and non-threatening nature of these. Systems for supporting an effective performance management programme are now in place. The teaching staff are now ready to actively participate in performance management.
104. The staff development programme is planned and linked to the School Development Plan. The quality of in-service courses is monitored and participants have to report back to their departments. The school has a commitment to participating in the training of new teachers and annually two or three of them spend time in the school.
105. There is a shared sense of purpose in the school, and staff are well-focused on bringing about improvements that they feel will benefit the pupils. Staff morale is high and all staff work effectively together. There is an impressive shared staff commitment to producing the very highest levels of attainment.
106. Overall, the accommodation is unsatisfactory in enabling the curriculum to be taught effectively.
107. When walking around the nineteenth century buildings it is very easy to feel the sense of traditional values built on high academic achievement. Unfortunately, the school is restricted in what it can do by these old and sometimes unsuitable buildings. The school has worked hard to make better use of the existing buildings; for example, the old boarding house is now used as classrooms. This is far from ideal owing to the size and the nature of the rooms. The school has identified the need for a new building to be used mainly for design technology but also for use by some other departments. The inspection team fully supports the school with this development. Planning permission has been obtained for the new building. Before going to planning the headteacher and governing body adopted a very professional approach in respect of the principles of best value when selecting the architect for this project.
108. In physical education, there is a good sports hall with an adjoining classroom. The school site has limited hard standing and grassed areas for team games. A partial difficulty for physical education is that the games field is off site and is therefore not conveniently available for use during the school day. Accommodation for the teaching of both history and art is good. The adjacent rooms for history reinforce the teamwork approach for this subject. There is a beautiful art room in which there is good storage space. However there is the need for additional studio space for sixth form art.
109. The main problems of accommodation are for the teaching of English, science, design technology, modern languages and music. For English, there are only two adequately-sized classrooms. Other rooms used for English are very small and a long way apart. There is no coherent centre for English, so that teachers have to do a lot of inefficient moving about of resources. The number of science laboratories is insufficient. Consequently, too many science lessons take place in ordinary classrooms, which is unsatisfactory. Some of the existing laboratories are too small and in need of refurbishment. Accommodation for design and technology is poor. The National Curriculum requirements for the teaching of design and technology cannot be met sufficiently under the present arrangements. For the present size of classes the main teaching room used for music is too small and there is not enough music practice space, especially when the instrumental teachers are in school. The modern foreign language rooms are too far apart and also have too few rooms for small group work.
110. It is a credit to the teachers and the pupils that the school has been able to maintain the very high levels of academic achievement in such restrictive accommodation.
111. Overall, there are sufficient resources in departments to meet the needs of the curriculum. However, there are considerable variations between departments. In geography, history and physical education there is a good variety of resources, which are up to date and appropriate for the needs of the pupils. In geography and history, there is a good range of specialist books, pupil textbooks and resource sheets. In addition, the geography department uses a weather satellite and weather recording station linked to computers, and makes good use of the resources on the school network, as well as the CD-ROMs in the library. In physical education, the dedicated room for teaching A level is particularly well stocked with books, periodicals and video materials, and pupils are able to make good use of a video camera to analyse performances. In English, much of

the book stock is old and in need of upgrading. Although there are sufficient keyboards for music, they lack recording and editing facilities.

112. Some departments make use of the resources available on the network and the information and communication technology room, but the provision of computers in some departments, such as science and music, is unsatisfactory.
113. The library has been reorganised since the previous inspection and there have been significant improvements. All books have been catalogued and old stock withdrawn, although the ratio of books to pupils is slightly below national levels. There has been a good increase in the range of CD-ROMs and the installation of two computers linked to the network is a valuable addition to the stand-alone computer. The appointment of a library assistant has not only helped with the organisation of the library, it has also increased the hours that it is open. It is not, however, open before or after school. The library assistant has good skills which are not being fully used; for example, she is not used to train pupils in how to use the library. She has also not been given a strong enough management brief; links with departments are too informal and the library is therefore not supporting their work effectively.
114. Some departments make use of the local environment and further afield. Geography field trips are held in the Wharfedale area and the religious education department make visits to local churches. A number of sixth form pupils will extend their studies with a field trip to Iceland and the senior rugby team have a planned tour of Canada arranged for the coming year.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to raise standards further in the school the governors, headteacher and staff should:

1. Take steps to raise achievement in French, information and communication technology and graphics.
(paragraphs 1-18, 24, 37-40, 158-168, 188-200, 201-212)
2. Improve the curriculum so that:
 - Pupils develop information and communication technology skills that reflect the levels of their achievements in other subjects
 - All subjects fulfil statutory requirements with regard to information and communication technology
 - Pupils are given help in understanding how to develop positive and responsible approaches to personal and sexual relationships
 - Pupils develop an greater awareness of health and social issues, for example, with regard to the consequences of drug-taking (legal and illegal) for individuals and society
 - Pupils are given opportunities to consider career choices before they start making decisions about which subjects to study at Key Stage 4
 - The curriculum for religious education is ratified by the governors and is afforded sufficient time at Key Stage 4 to be taught effectively
 - Sufficient time is given to physical education and music at Key Stage 3 to enable pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills to develop effectively
 - More subject options are made available to the pupils by developing links with the girls' school and the college.*(paragraphs 1-18, 24, 27, 37, 43-60, 65-66, 74)*
3. Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of managers and teachers by:
 - Increasing the number of non-teaching staff so that teachers and managers have fewer administrative, clerical and day-to-day organisational tasks
 - Making the support of departments the key senior management task
 - Increasing the use of information and communication technology to perform management and administrative tasks and to make the resulting information more readily accessible to all staff.*(paragraphs 77-114)*
4. Improve the accommodation so that;
 - The learning opportunities of the pupils are maximised in design and technology, science, English, modern languages and music
 - Appropriate safety arrangements are made in design and technology and science
 - Facilities are made available to ensure that statutory requirements for design and technology are met.*(paragraphs 61, 106-110, 158, 161, 168)*
5. Ensure that risk assessments are carried out to meet statutory requirements.
(paragraphs 61, 83)

The school should also ensure that statutory requirements are fulfilled in the governors' annual report to parents.

(paragraphs 74, 83)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	160
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	67

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	31	45	18	2	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	448	158
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	5	

Special educational needs	Y7– Y11	sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	5	2

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	17

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.4
National comparative data	5.9

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.4

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	86		86

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	85	85	84
	Girls			
	Total	85	85	84
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	99 (100)	99 (99)	98 (100)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	69 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	98 (99)	98 (98)	96 (99)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	86	86	86
	Girls			
	Total	86	86	86
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	91 (96)	99 (92)	95 (97)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (28)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	87		87

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	87	87	87
	Girls			
	Total	87	87	87
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	100 (99)	100 (99)	100 (99)
	National	[48] (46)	[88] (88)	[94] (93)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	65 (64)
	National	(38)

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

Attainment at the end of the sixth form

Number of pupils aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	86		86

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	26.24 [27.3]		26.24 (27.3)	0 (0)		0 (0)
National	17.7 [17.1]	18.6	18.2 (17.9)	2.6 (2.6)	2.9	2.7 (2.8)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	2
Pakistani	11
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	2
White	581
Any other minority ethnic group	5

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	2	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	40.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 - Y13

Total number of education support staff	4.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	131

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	79.0
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Financial information

Financial year	1999
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	£
Total income	1655456
Total expenditure	1595606
Expenditure per pupil	2642
Balance brought forward from previous year	73848
Balance carried forward to next year	133698

Key Stage 3	24.8
Key Stage 4	18.3

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	606
Number of questionnaires returned	241*

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	51	44	3	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	52	43	2	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	49	2	1	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	58	10	2	2
The teaching is good.	49	43	5	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	39	39	12	5	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	46	35	12	4	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	81	17	1	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	20	45	26	4	5
The school is well led and managed.	38	46	6	2	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	41	6	2	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	30	37	18	8	6

*No returns received after November 22nd were recorded in the above table

Other issues raised by parents

All other issues raised by parents are covered in the main body of the report.

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

ENGLISH

115. Standards in English are exceptionally high at the end of Key Stage 3 when compared with national standards. In the most recent National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 9 standards were also very high in comparison with similar selective schools. Almost all pupils reached Level 6 or above and one third of the year group reached level 8. This represents improved attainment at the highest level compared with the 1999 tests' results. Standards in English have been maintained at a similar level to those reached in mathematics and science in recent years.
116. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils read very well from a wide range of literary and factual texts. Pupils in the current Year 9 have a detailed understanding of the plot, the sub plot, and themes of '*Twelfth Night*' and are able to plan confidently with their teacher the structure of an essay discussing intelligently the various relationships within the play. The interpretation of Shakespeare's language is done well. Writing is similarly of a high standard in terms of clarity of expression and the ability to empathise with characters. One Year 9 group, for example, has produced interesting journalistic style writing about '*Animal Farm*' using word processing and desktop publishing techniques to explore the differing viewpoints of different characters to the main events in the novel. There is some difference, however, within Year 9 in the ability of pupils to write in paragraphs without guidance and to spell words accurately in their first drafts. Very impressive oral work was seen in lessons in Year 7 where pupils dramatised stories they had read and told stories they had written themselves to the whole class with considerable narrative skill.
117. Standards at the end of Key Stage 4 are exceptionally high compared with national standards. Attainment in examinations is above the levels reached in schools of similar character. In the GCSE examinations in 1999 and 2000 all pupils gained higher grade A* - C passes in English Language and almost all entrants achieved this in English Literature. Pupils' achievement in GCSE is particularly high in English Language, where well over half the candidates have gained A* or A grade passes in the last two years. The grades have been slightly lower, overall, in English Literature in GCSE, where just over a quarter of pupils reached A* or A grades in 1999 and just under a half of pupils achieved these higher grades in 2000. This difference is accounted for, in part, by a lack of continuity of teaching for some pupils caused by the long-term absence of teachers in recent years.
118. The work of pupils in lessons at Key Stage 4, and their completed writing, is of a similar high standard. Pupils' essays written in response to texts such as '*An Inspector Calls*' and '*Talking Heads*', and short stories written in the style of Raymond Chandler show, strong technical writing skills, detailed knowledge of the texts studied, and often flair and imagination in creating stories. Discussion and oral presentation skills of a very high standard were seen in a Year 10 lesson where pupils were preparing, in groups, an appropriate speech for a candidate seeking election as head boy of the school. The delivery of the speeches and the questioning that followed were done with considerable skill and confidence. The high quality of the work produced reflects both the careful preparation and the high expectations of teachers and the positive attitudes of the pupils.
119. The standards of work in the sixth form are also very high. In the most recent GCE A level examinations all candidates achieved passes in English Literature, with fifteen of the eighteen candidates achieving passes at grade A or B. Of the twenty-eight pupils entered for English Language, half achieved the highest grades, A or B, and all but three candidates were awarded a graded pass. The school has now taken steps to avoid entering pupils for courses for which they are not suited or are unlikely to complete.
120. The work in progress in Year 13 English Language is of a very high standard. In the individual language projects pupils have worked very purposefully to produce detailed analyses of recordings of local dialects and of transcripts of interviews and dialogues from radio and television programmes. In one case, a pupil has consulted national and international experts to gain further guidance and clarification on some of his findings within his study of the local dialect. The pupils' writing in English Literature is also of a very high standard. Thoughtful, detailed essays have been

produced on *Othello* and in response to a selection of Donne's poems. The quality of the discussion work seen in lessons using these texts and in classes studying *'Frankenstein'* and *'Death of a Salesman'* showed that pupils read very perceptively and, in most cases, retain detail well. Above all they show enthusiasm for the challenge of new novels and plays.

121. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good in lessons. In most cases there is a mutual anticipation of challenging detailed work and good behaviour. Teachers in most lessons have a detailed knowledge of pupils' strengths and weaknesses, including the few pupils on the register of special educational needs, and the minority for whom English is not their first language. Teachers do not, however, have any Individual Education Plans for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils' enthusiasm and determination to succeed is a major factor in ensuring their success. They respond particularly well when they are fully and actively engaged in their own learning, as seen in a Year 7 drama lesson and in group activities in Years 10, 11 and 12.
122. Teaching is good throughout the school, despite the continuing absence of two established teachers. In over half the lessons observed it was of a very good standard. Teachers are well qualified and have high expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving. Time is used very effectively to ensure that pupils are fully and productively engaged in a variety of reading, writing and, often, speaking activities, for the full span of the lesson. Well-planned lessons, in which pupils are expected to contribute and to complete work within a given time-scale, are enjoyed by pupils and lead to successful outcomes. A particularly good example was seen in a Year 12 literature group where pupils were set the task of planning to stage key scenes from *'Death of a Salesman'* and ultimately to produce these for fellow pupils. There are some differences in the methods used for marking and assessment of pupils' work in different age groups but the quality of marking is of a good standard, overall. In the examples of teachers' reports to parents seen there is insufficient information given of the pupils' level of attainment in the different aspects of the subject and of how this might be improved.
123. The department is well managed. The new head of English, in post only from September, has worked very hard to put in place clear operating procedures for the department and to identify areas for development. In his short time in the school he has managed effectively with senior colleagues to minimise the disruption to pupils at all levels caused by teachers' absence. The management of English is made more difficult by the unsatisfactory nature of the teaching accommodation. During the inspection, seven full-time and part-time teachers had exclusive access to only two full-size classrooms, one small detached room, unsuitable for thirty-four Year 9 boys who use it regularly, and to some smaller rooms, which can accommodate small sixth form groups. The proper oversight of teaching and learning and the efficient use of resources is difficult to achieve in these circumstances. Teachers from the English department are running regular and well-attended debates for junior and senior pupils.
124. The department has moved forward since the last inspection in 1995 in a number of ways. Oral work in pairs, in groups, and in class discussions seen during this inspection, was of a good standard throughout the school. Good opportunities are offered now in both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, as part of the schemes of work, to practise and develop speaking skills. Teaching is of a better standard, overall, than it was previously. Accommodation remains unsatisfactory, and also unsatisfactory is the lack of development of the use of information and communication technology within the English curriculum. Many pupils produce well-presented, word-processed essays and projects but they have few opportunities to use computers more creatively for research or for writing.

MATHEMATICS

125. Standards are exceptionally high in relation to national standards at the ends of Key Stages 3 and 4, and very high in relation to national standards at the end of the sixth form. The tests and examination results are higher than the standards observed during the inspection. Scrutiny of pupils' work, together with lesson observations, points to standards being very high compared with national standards, rather than 'exceptionally high'. This discrepancy is accounted for by an increase in attainment just prior to the tests and examinations as a result of effective revision coupled with good retention and high levels of motivation.

126. The results of the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 over the past four years have been very high in relation to the national average. The proportion of pupils who reached Level 7 and above was 97 per cent, compared with 19 per cent nationally. The results are very high in comparison with other grammar schools. The trend over the last three years, in terms of average National Curriculum points score, is broadly in line with the national trend.
127. The proportion of pupils achieving A*-C grades in the 2000 GCSE examinations at 100 per cent, was very high compared with the national proportion of 46 per cent. GCSE results over the last five years have consistently been very high and all pupils, without exception, gained a grade in the range A* - C at GCSE. Over the last three years the proportion of pupils reaching the very highest grades (A* and A) was consistently above 60 per cent, compared with a national figure of 10 per cent. GCSE results are very high in comparison with other grammar schools. Standards in mathematics are above average for the school, and generally higher than those for English or the sciences.
128. In the 2000 GCE A level examination, taking the average for the different courses offered, the results are close to the national average in terms of the proportion of A and B grades (40 per cent against 44 per cent), and mean points score (both 5.9 points). In many respects, however, these groups are not representative, since some individuals show relatively low attainment levels throughout the previous key stages. Taking an overall picture over the last five years the standards attained by pupils in pure mathematics and mechanics are consistently very high, but with the applied mathematics (statistics) showing a lower standard. (Pupils taking further mathematics in 2001 have already, in 2000 (in Year 12), gained nine grade As and three Bs at A level.)
129. Pupils' levels of attainment on entry, based on their National Curriculum test results at the end of Key Stage 2, and other nationally standardised tests, are well above average. The levels of achievement of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are very good over Key Stage 3. In Key Stage 4, the achievement of pupils is also very good. Overall achievement in the sixth form is good for all students.
130. Pupils work hard and are well behaved. They co-operate with one another when working together and get on amicably in the classroom. They sustain concentration, persevere with problems and are keen to answer and to ask questions. Attitudes to learning are invariably good or very good. The overwhelmingly positive attitude to the subject makes a significant contribution to the very high standards attained in mathematics.
131. Pupils at all levels of attainment make very good progress in algebra and number. Relatively lower-attaining Year 7 pupils confidently perform calculations and solve problems involving the addition and subtraction of fractions, and, by Year 9, are also able to perform, with a high level of success, multiplications and divisions involving fractions. At the end of Key Stage 3 all pupils are able to solve simple equations, to simplify algebraic expressions, and to use algebra to describe number sequences. They use algebra confidently as a means of summarising the results of investigations - constructing and using formulae. When weaknesses do show themselves they usually originate in carelessness – especially when negative numbers are involved.
132. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils of all attainment levels are able to draw and recognise the graphs of algebraic functions, and to describe and identify regions on a grid on the basis of algebraic relationships involving inequalities. Higher attaining pupils are able to extend an investigation involving moving counters on a board into one concerning the equivalent situation in three-dimensions and to derive and check their own formulae arising from this situation. Relatively lower-attaining pupils perform calculations involving inequalities and those requiring an understanding of standard index form successfully.
133. In Year 12, pupils are able to manipulate trigonometric functions, and use surds to find the values of trigonometric functions for certain angles. Another Year 12 group is able to draw diagrams to solve mechanics problems involving motion on a slope and to appreciate that sign conventions are simply conventions that, once decided upon, must be adhered to. Higher-attaining Year 13 pupils are able to integrate and differentiate various algebraic expressions and to use the results to solve problems. While the majority of pupils have a firm grasp of algebra and advanced number work, the occasional blemish is directly attributable to odd small gaps in their recall of some basic facts.

134. The standard of teaching has improved since the last inspection - pupils now play a far more active role in their own learning. In a Year 8 lesson on factorisation, pupils were invited to prove that the expansion of brackets rule was true for any set of numbers: a thought-provoking discussion ensued and both teacher and pupils were sufficiently confident to 'take chances'. Some Year 9 pupils, working in pairs, were given the opportunity to alter the rules of the well-known game 'Frogs' to investigate the effect on previously established relations in the 'pure' game – they responded well to the challenge.
135. Many Key Stage 3 lessons now use the format used by the *National Numeracy Strategy*: a short number activity, followed by the main learning activity, concluding with a recap of the lesson's work with, perhaps, a brief mention of the content of the next lesson. Pupils are encouraged to explain 'how' they arrived at their answers, rather than merely giving the answer, with teachers insisting on the use of correct mathematical language. A Year 7 lesson on number sequences gave many opportunities for these activities and stimulated pupils to ask some quite searching questions. The high level of challenge sustained during the lesson enabled pupils to make very good progress. A middle-attaining Year 10 group, performing some standard geometrical constructions, was asked to write them down in the form of instructions so that they could be understood by others. In sixth form lessons pupils are often asked to explain their reasoning to the class at large, and sometimes allowed to use their own non-standard methods in order that they may learn by their mistakes. Despite the changes in teaching there has been no decline in rigour or the expectation of high academic success.
136. Overall, the quality of teaching in mathematics is very good. Scrutiny of GCE A level results suggests that some of the teaching is less effective in the sixth form. The very good pace of lessons, the commitment of the teachers and the very positive relationships between pupils and teachers make a substantial contribution to pupils' learning. The underlying depth of teachers' knowledge and understanding is also a factor. In many lessons pupils feel secure enough to state spontaneously, in front of the whole class, that they don't quite understand a particular point. Conversely, pupils will not hesitate to point out a blemish in their teacher's calculations or algebra; although rare, such instances are accepted with good humour by both sides – more evidence of positive relations in the classroom. Homework is set and marked on a regular basis. During Key Stages 3 and 4 a special 10-question revision homework is set once a week, which keeps aspects of the subject in the pupils' minds and is an effective assessment tool.
137. The quality of management in the department is good. The department has a clear commitment to raising standards, relationships are good, and it functions as a mutually supportive team. Using the yard-stick of the difference in the Key Stage 4 points score in mathematics and the mean points score for all GCSE subjects in the school, the department has the highest standards in the Local Education Authority. Monitoring of teaching within the department is beginning to have an impact on the raising of standards.
138. Since the last inspection there have been several areas of significant improvement. The last inspection indicated that pupils were "trained.... within a narrow band of learning skills" ; the evidence from this inspection suggests that pupils are increasingly becoming independent and critical learners. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 3 has substantially improved in terms of the variety of challenge and teaching strategy. There is now a greater emphasis on the application of mathematics across all key stages. The current development plan identifies several areas, which merit attention. Quite rightly, the first and foremost of these is the development of information and communication skills within the department and their subsequent use in the classroom. (One or two opportunities where information technology, for example, in the guise of spreadsheet work, would have advanced mathematical understanding were missed.) Another area in need of development, which is also mentioned in the plan, is the historical and multicultural dimension to mathematics, although steps have already been taken along this path by the production, for staff use, of an in-house publication on the history of mathematics.

SCIENCE

139. Standards for pupils at age 14 are exceptionally high in relation to national standards. Results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 have been consistently very high for the

last four years when compared with the national average. When compared with other grammar schools, the pupils' performance is well above average. Standards for pupils at age 15 or 16 are also exceptionally high in relation to national standards. GCSE results in the three separate sciences and in dual award science are well above the national average when measured in relation to the proportions of pupils gaining A*-C, or A*-A grades. For the last three years all pupils obtained A*-C grades from the dual award course and only a few pupils failed to obtain this grade range from any of the three sciences. On this measure there is no significant difference in pupils' performance in the three sciences. For the last two years the proportion of pupils obtaining A* or A grades has been slightly higher in physics than in chemistry or biology; however, the proportion of pupils who obtain A* or A grades from all three sciences is well above the national average for selective schools. Standards for pupils at the end of Year 13 are, similarly, exceptionally high. Attainment from the three sciences at A level is consistently well above the national average for pupils from selective schools. This is the case whether attainment is measured as either, overall pass rates, average point scores, or the proportion of pupils obtaining either A or B grade passes. Results vary from year to year and from subject to subject. However, for the last two years the average point score obtained by pupils taking A level biology has been higher than for the other two sciences.

140. Very high levels of literacy and numeracy skills make very positive contributions to standards for pupils of all ages. Pupils display very high levels of recall and understanding of previous work, which is achieved by constant reinforcement in lessons and by regular testing. Laboratory and investigative skills are well-developed. Year 9 pupils have very high levels of recall and understanding of their Year 7 work on the reflection of light and of their more recent work on digestion. Their high literacy skills enabled them to answer questions from worksheets containing a high level of technical information. Pupils in Year 11 demonstrate their well-developed laboratory skills when preparing for and carrying out their coursework investigations. They have good knowledge and understanding of the principles of fair testing. Importantly, they are able to obtain the highest marks for their investigations by making quantitative predictions based on scientific thinking. One group of Year 11 pupils was able quickly to apply their recently acquired knowledge about how current-carrying wires move in magnetic fields. It is this ability to apply their knowledge well which accounts for so many pupils obtaining the highest GCSE grades. Year 13 has very high levels of recall and understanding of previous work on thermistors and light dependent resistors. As might be expected by this stage, pupils' laboratory skills are fully developed, which they displayed when investigating the size and frequency of stomata in plants.
141. Overall, pupils achieve very well at all key stages. Analysis of data confirms this much better than expected progression from age 11 to 14, from age 14 to 16, and from age 16 to 18. This very high achievement is due to good, and often very good, teaching of highly motivated, well behaved pupils. Evidence from lessons confirms this very high progress. Year 9 pupils progress well when revising recent work on digestion. Pupils in Year 8 make good progress when learning about how sound travels. They are in a good position to apply this knowledge in their research into methods of noise prevention. Year 7 pupils applied their knowledge and understanding of chromatography well during a crime-detection practical in chemistry. A number of pupils also produced very high quality astronomy projects in Year 7, which shows how the pupils are encouraged to reach for very high standards. When carrying out preliminary work for their coursework investigations in physics and biology, pupils in Year 11 prepare well for the full investigation to follow. Pupils in Year 10 make good progress in chemistry, whether learning about the differences between continuous and batch processes, or about the products obtained by the fractional distillation of crude oil. The few pupils with special educational needs make as good progress as other pupils. In the sixth form, pupils make very good progress whether learning about how enzymes make reactions go faster in biology, or about how to identify particles by their behaviour in magnetic fields in physics.
142. Pupils' attitudes to learning in lessons are excellent. Pupils show high levels of interest for the science subjects, as demonstrated by the high take-up rates to study these subjects at A level. Behaviour is excellent, so that all pupils have every opportunity learn. Pupils work very well together when carrying out experiments. They work safely, making every effort to follow instructions carefully. When moving around the laboratory to collect materials and equipment, pupils act responsibly. During whole-class discussions pupils answer their teachers' questions in a very courteous manner and to the best of their ability. Pupils always put their hands up to answer questions, thus showing respect for others. When pupils have the opportunity to demonstrate their research and independent learning skills they respond extremely well to produce work of an exceptionally high quality. The exceptionally positive attitudes and behaviour

of the pupils make a very significant contribution to the standards of attainment seen in the department.

143. The quality of teaching as seen during the lesson observations is good at Key Stages 3 and 4, and very good in the sixth form. A high proportion of the teaching is very good. This is a very strong department whose committed team of teachers works very hard so that all pupils can achieve their full potential. Teachers set high standards for discipline, which are achieved. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and understanding. Expectations of pupils are very high, with pupils being fully challenged. Lessons are carefully planned. In most lessons teachers use a wide range of resources and methods. The quality of marking is satisfactory, but, in general, scientific supportive comments are not used sufficiently. There is some inconsistency in the quality of marking, which can easily be put right by the heads of departments looking more closely at the marking in their subject area. The way the report form to parents is designed enables parents to see any difference in achievement in the three sciences; however, within each subject report, teachers do not provide sufficient information about what a pupil needs to do to improve. The use of homework to support pupils' learning is very good. Teachers set pupils a wide range of tasks for homework, which can involve anything from revision for tests, evaluation and completion of experimental write-ups, consolidation of class learning through carefully chosen questions, to open-ended research projects. None of the criticisms made about teaching at the last inspection with regard to narrow range of methods, lack of challenge, and little opportunity for pupils to develop their independent learning now exists.
144. The time allocated for teaching the sciences in Years 7 to 9 is generous. However, the departments make very good use of this time to allow pupils to develop their independent learning skills and to teach topics up to GCSE level early. Both these strategies make a positive contribution to the very high standards seen in the department. Each science subject is well managed by strong curriculum leaders. Although it is unusual to work without an overall head of science, the present arrangement works effectively to produce exceptionally high standards in all three subject areas. The staff have recently been invited to bid for funds based on their departmental development plans. The money allocated to them by this system has not altered substantially from previous occasions. The amount of money allocated to each subject is broadly similar but woefully inadequate for such a large curriculum area, which covers about one third of the whole school's curriculum. The provision of textbooks and basic science equipment is broadly satisfactory. However, the amount of money allocated is too small to replace worn out expensive items or to provide a much-needed computer suite.
145. The three science subject areas try to develop the use of information technology but many initiatives are inhibited by a lack of computers for pupils to use. The accommodation is unsatisfactory. Too many science lessons take place out of laboratories because there are not enough laboratories. The existing laboratories are outdated, some are too small, and most are in need of refurbishment. The school has a building plan which might increase the science accommodation but this plan does not yet have financial backing. The department is well supported by an efficient technician team. However the time allocated for technicians is low for the number of lessons and courses that have to be serviced. If the accommodation is increased there will, without doubt, be the need for an additional technician to cover physics.
146. The storage space in the chemistry preparation room is unsatisfactory, so that chemical solutions have to be stored on the floor, which is a health and safety risk. It is important that all solutions, wherever used, carry the appropriate hazard warning label. All teachers must start producing a written risk assessment for all practical work, whether for pupils' experiments or teachers' demonstrations. The department gives proper consideration to health and safety but should act on the points raised. The departments have addressed the issues raised in the last inspection. All science teachers work very effectively to help pupils achieve exceptionally high standards in mostly unsatisfactory laboratories.

ART

147. Standards at the end of Key Stage 3 are high in relation to national standards. Sketch-books testify that pupils are well practised in researching and developing ideas. They build up a good knowledge of the key concepts of art, such as line, tone and colour. They develop a good understanding of the practical skills involved in representing, for example, perspective, and are

able to use their skills to produce good quality work. At this stage, however, technical ability is more evident than creativity. Pupils have a very good command of the language of art, an understanding of abstract art, and an acceptable knowledge of art history.

148. Standards at the end of Key Stage 4 are high in relation to national standards, and, here too, first-hand evidence indicates them to be higher than GCSE results would indicate. Pupils build upon their positive experiences in Key Stage 3 to develop their creativity in particular, using the practical skills they have already acquired. They explore, for example, the distortion of images. Their developmental and analytical abilities increase, as does their confidence and individual styles.
149. GCSE results were slightly above national levels, with 70 per cent of pupils achieving A*-C grades in 1999, against a national figure of 61 per cent. Nevertheless, no pupil achieved above a B grade. These results do not compare favourably across the other subjects in school, particularly in the low proportion of pupils achieving higher grades. The numbers opting for GCSE art in Year 10 dropped this year, although results for 2000 indicate a slight improvement in the proportion gaining A*-C grades, to 72 per cent.
150. Standards at the end of the sixth form are high in relation to national standards and are improving. The small number of pupils receive individual support in developing their personal responses to set assignments. One pupil, for example, had combined the flowing movement of the graffiti artist merged with the movement of a skateboarding acrobat. Although some ideas are rather obvious, pupils are evaluating their thinking and developing well. Furthermore, they are also able to justify decisions about their work and relate some of it to artists and art movements with which they are familiar. The relative status of art at A level mirrors pupils' achievements at Key Stage 4, and the small and variable number of pupils entered each year for A level make valid comparisons from one year to another difficult. However, improvements in 2000 results are also significant.
151. The evidence of previously completed work and observed lessons during the inspection, indicates that pupils are currently achieving appropriate levels of success which are greater than examination results would indicate. This suggests that positive improvements are being made to address previous problems. Recent refinements in departmental planning and delivery are having a significant effect in this area.
152. Teaching is always good and occasionally very good at both key stages and in the sixth form. Teachers have good subject knowledge and lessons are always well prepared and delivered. Even though groups at Key Stage 3 are sometimes very large, teachers have a clear perception of their pupils' abilities and set demanding enough work to engage and stretch them, as illustrated by the level of artistic vocabulary used and the degree of difficulty of set homework. Teachers' explanations are clear and questioning techniques good, although there is a tendency to tell rather than help pupils deduce their own answers. Teaching tends to be over-didactic, and would benefit from giving the pupils more opportunity to express their opinions in classroom debate rather than just through their written work.
153. The art curriculum fulfils National Curriculum and examination requirements through a wide selection of two-dimensional and three-dimensional projects. Each project is linked, in its research stage, to the wider world of art. At present, there is no opportunity for print-making, and little use of information and communication technology. Lessons are enhanced by the opportunity for pupils to continue their work at lunchtimes and an after-school figure-drawing club, which takes place each week. Examination classes also have the opportunity to visit London art galleries each year.
154. Pupils enjoy their art lessons and behave very well. They are highly motivated and keen to become involved in their lessons. Relationships are relaxed but businesslike throughout all classes, even when the art room is overcrowded. Day-to-day assessment is good and well understood by pupils, although written comments are not sufficiently diagnostic to maximise progress. A system of target setting, currently being piloted in Key Stage 3, requires further development. At present assessment information is not used to guide curriculum planning.
155. Despite the current absence of the head of department, leadership and management is adequate in most areas. Some monitoring and evaluation takes place each year, but as yet it is insufficient

to identify adequately the necessary action to raise standards. Similarly, the department's development plan lacks focus, although additional documentation indicates that the matter is receiving attention. Accommodation is good, but could be improved by additional sixth form studio space. The money received by the department is satisfactory to provide for the curriculum. Very good displays enhance the art room and surrounding area.

156. Since the last report, the department has maintained many of the good features identified and made satisfactory progress. The addition of more experimental work and an increased emphasis on artists and art history is now fully embedded within the curriculum. The lack of opportunities for extra-curricular activities for Key Stage 3 pupils has yet to be tackled.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

157. Standards by the end of Key Stage 3 are high compared with standards achieved by pupils nationally. Schemes of work provide challenging opportunities for pupils to develop higher order manufacturing skills; however, owing to restricted space in the resistant material workshop, activities which develop engineering capability cannot be practised with appropriate levels of safety. This limits pupils' learning opportunities. Also, the opportunity for pupils to study food technology and/or textile technology are not provided at Key Stage 3, which means that the curriculum does not meet statutory requirements. The school has planning permission for further building which it hopes will allow it to rectify this issue.
158. Standards of designing and making are high, with an emphasis upon learning how to make things of quality; for example, pupils in a Year 8 lesson were able to achieve well because the skills required to perform the task (the accurate marking out and cutting required for joining the two parts of a bookend, using a dovetail joint) were very carefully taught. The pupils went on to extend these skills by designing and making a support structure to fit within the right angle of the joint. In this work, the pupils put forward a wide variation of interesting ideas that showed they had a good knowledge of the properties of wood and how it can be shaped and formed to produce both a practical and an aesthetically pleasing product.
159. The achievement of the pupils, by the end of Key Stage 3, is good because of the careful planning of schemes of work, which provide good opportunities for the pupils to experience the available aspects of the design and technology curriculum. A weakness of the system is the day-to-day plans, which are basic in their detail and would fail to provide sufficient guidance to a temporary teacher.
160. By the end of Key Stage 4 standards are very high compared with standards achieved by pupils nationally. There are currently variations in standards with graphic products. This is as a result of the loss of a member of staff and an interim period of temporary cover. This situation has been remedied by the appointment of a full-time specialist. However, the situation is weakened by accommodation that is unsuitable for teaching the practical activities associated with the course and, together with poor resources, this has an adverse effect upon standards. A Year 11 group studying resistant material technology demonstrated a high level of making skills in producing their major projects. They were able to describe their work and the manufacturing processes involved. Their knowledge and understanding of these processes and the correct and safe use of hand and machine tools is of a very high standard.
161. The proportion of pupils achieving grades A* to C in the 1999 GCSE examination was well above the national average. The GCSE results for the year 2000 showed a similar high percentage gaining such grades for resistant materials technology and an improvement for electronics. However, while results in graphical products are above the national average they are disappointing in relation to the previous year's results.
162. The achievement of pupils, by the end of Key Stage 4, is very good in resistant material and electronic technology. For example, during the observation of Year 11 electronics lessons, pupils demonstrated their knowledge and understanding of the design and manufacture of a printed circuit board to their own design. They were able to explain the circuit and the components used within the circuitry and expand on the theory of electronics as well as being aware of the human aspects when designing for a specific need. Learning in graphic products was satisfactory, but the lack both of tools and consumable resources of a sufficient quality has an adverse effect upon

teaching and learning. For example, when modelling a product in Year 10, pupils lacked a range of cutting tools which would have enabled complex shapes to be cut accurately and as a result the learning process was affected by having to 'make do'.

163. A level results for 1999 were below the national average; however, the results for the year 2000 improved by 11 percentage points. By the end of the sixth form the achievement of the pupils is good. Pupils within the sixth form are working to a carefully framed design brief and are engaged in developing ideas that demonstrate their understanding of the detail required for the research and analysis associated with designing. Aspects of their work clearly illustrate the progress they have made since Key Stage 4 in developing their thinking, designing and making skills.
164. In all the subject disciplines there has been good improvement since the last inspection, particularly in the monitoring and target-setting for pupils. The department shares detailed progress records with each pupil, which is partly responsible for the very high standards and expectations of both staff and pupils.
165. In all years, pupils demonstrate good attitudes to the subject. When tasks are challenging and the pace and rigour of the lesson require maximum effort, attitudes are very good. When activities lack this rigour and challenge - for example, when accommodation and resources are inadequate, pupils' motivation is reduced. Good workshop practices are evident: a clear example was a Year 8 class that, on entering the room, prepared for the lesson without any urging from the teachers; during the lesson pupils observed essential safety rules, wearing protective aprons without prompting and making full use of eye protection when working on machinery, without having to be reminded.
166. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. Lessons are well organised and carefully planned; all pupils are clear about the tasks they need to complete. For example, in a Year 11 lesson, standards achieved were very high as a result of very good teaching, which not only provided the pupils with knowledge and understanding but also created a learning environment in which the pupils knew that they had to work hard in order to create work of a high enough quality to satisfy the teacher. In a Year 8 lesson, the teacher gave very clear and careful instructions, and during the questioning of pupils to establish their understanding, he skilfully used incorrect answers to illustrate teaching points. Clear targets are set for pupils and achievements are carefully monitored. Targets are shared with the pupils and the provision of diagnostic reports provides pupils with the opportunity to achieve those targets. This is a departmental strength.
167. Unsatisfactory resources and accommodation for the teaching of the subject adversely affect standards in graphical products at Key Stage 4. The support provided by the workshop technician helps to raise standards. National Curriculum changes, which require multi-media and designing and making activities within the same room space have resulted in concerns over safety. The circular saw impedes the only external fire exit and its use is severely restricted through lack of safe working space. The area, which contains the heat treatment and hot metal processes, has too little working and clearance space for safe use. Storage is an issue and work currently in progress has to be stored in an essential cloakroom space.

GEOGRAPHY

168. When pupils join the school in Year 7 their attainment is above the national average. In lessons observed, attainment was well above national expectation and by the end of Key Stage 3 standards are very high and for many pupils exceptionally high.
169. In Key Stage 4 geography is offered as an option. About 70 per cent of the pupils continue to study the subject, a proportion well above the national trend. Over the past three years standards have been exceptionally high compared with national standards and very high compared with similar schools. In GCSE examinations, almost all the pupils gain A*-C grades with the percentage achieving the highest grades of A* and A rising to 65 per cent in 2000.
170. In the sixth form, geography at AS and A level is a popular choice. Results have been consistently well above national averages. In the last three years all the candidates have achieved pass grades and the proportion of grades A and B has risen. In the most recent examinations,

from 25 entries, all gained a pass, with nine pupils gaining grade A passes and ten obtaining a grade B. This amounts to 76 per cent of the pupils achieving one of the two highest grades.

171. Achievement at both key stages and in the sixth form is very good. As pupils progress through the school they rapidly acquire new skills and concepts and benefit from well-planned curricular opportunities. In a Year 8 lesson, pupils learn about natural hazards and demonstrate an understanding of the physical processes that lead to volcanic eruptions. They then apply the knowledge and concepts to a well-chosen case study of Montserrat in the Caribbean and use maps, diagrams and video material to produce very good written accounts that explain the impact of the eruption on the landscape and the people.
172. In the GCSE course, pupils are required to show an increasing capacity to take initiative and to handle a wider range of information. A Year 11 group made excellent use of a double lesson to visit a local industrial estate to record land use. They made effective use of the time, worked well together in small groups to collect the information and on return to the classroom they could relate their research to geographical concepts and present their findings using a variety of techniques.
173. The inspection found that the very good achievement made by pupils results from the skilful way in which the department consistently develops geographical vocabulary and concepts and uses the very positive attitudes of the pupils to inject pace, challenge and enjoyment. A Year 13 A level group made excellent use of information and communication technology facilities to record and analyse the fieldwork on the evolution of slopes, based on a visit to a site in Wharfedale. This challenged them to use the investigation to test models and to reach conclusions that they will present using programs such as Powerpoint.
174. Pupils' behaviour is consistently very good. They arrive promptly to lessons, settle quickly to work and relate very well to one another. The atmosphere in lessons is purposeful and because pupils are well organised the work rate is high. At the same time, because teachers know their pupils well and there is mutual courtesy and respect, lessons are often fun and high standards of oral work are enlivened by the appropriate use of humour. Pupils show pride in their work, and in exercise books, folders and stimulating classroom displays there is an abundance of high quality work diligently presented.
175. The quality of teaching is very good and in some lessons excellent. Teachers use their very good subject knowledge, together with their enthusiasm, to produce well-planned schemes of work. To take account of the large number of different primary schools which send pupils who make up Year 7, schemes of work in Key Stage 3 have been revised to ensure that they not only reflect National Curriculum developments, but also establish a firm foundation of geographical knowledge and skills. The very good progress made by pupils is sustained throughout the school because of the effective use made of assessment information so that lesson plans provide appropriate pace and challenge. Many lessons benefit from the skill with which oral work leads to well-focused and directed questions that require pupils to listen, concentrate and use their prior learning to offer thoughtful responses. On a very few occasions when the teacher spends too much of the lesson time on whole-class oral work, pupils are unable to participate actively enough in the learning process. Teachers' management of pupils is excellent. They use a variety of resources to stimulate interest and motivation. Effective use is made of modern technology and there are good opportunities for fieldwork at all stages. Work is marked regularly and challenging targets are set for pupils to raise standards. The small proportion of pupils who have special educational needs make good progress.
176. The leadership and management of the department is very good. The head of department provides clear direction and he receives good support from other teachers within the team. There is a shared commitment to high standards and continuous improvement. There are appropriate policies and procedures in departmental documents in line with whole-school expectations. Since the last inspection, the department has extended the range of resources for learning and makes good use of the computer facilities in the main geography room as well as those in the information and communication technology centre. The curriculum is further enhanced by links with other countries and through the school's orienteering club. Overall, the department has made good progress since the last inspection and has the capacity to sustain very high standards.

HISTORY

177. At the end of both key stages and the sixth form, standards are exceptionally high and achievement is very good, including that of pupils with special educational needs. Teacher assessments at Key Stage 3 are well above the national average.
178. Pupils at Key Stage 3 use sources critically to reach conclusions; for example, they consider a wide range of conflicting evidence about the possible site of a leper hospital in the local area and critically evaluate it. They are confident in handling a wide range of information to identify the characteristics of castles in different periods and explain poverty in Elizabethan England by referring to a wide range of sources. They compare the opinion of a local magistrate writing about poverty with statistical data and pictorial sources to reach a reasoned conclusion. They select information from sources to describe the impact of the railways on different individuals and they give reasoned arguments to support the different contenders to the throne in 1066. They assess and evaluate evidence about the death of King Harold at the Battle of Hastings. Pupils write in a variety of forms, including keeping a Civil War diary and explaining a belief in witches. They sustain reasoned arguments and use sources to reach substantial conclusions in assessing whether corruption existed in Fountains Abbey. They write at length about Richard Arkwright, including tracing his early career, analysing the reasons for his success, and assessing his importance in the Industrial Revolution.
179. GCSE results are well above the national average. All pupils gained grades A*-C grades in 1999 and 2000, and over 60 per cent of pupils gained A* or A grades in both years. GCSE results are also above the national average for selective schools. In oral work, pupils quickly grasp the historical context of the period in an enactment of a military exemption tribunal by asking and answering questions in role. They compare conflicting views and reach substantial conclusions about the character of Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig. In their study of the Vietnam War they quickly grasp the link between geographical features and military tactics. They consider different policy options for America to adopt regarding the Vietnam War and understand the implications of alternative courses of action. Pupils select and classify information about air raids during World War I from a wide range of evidence and are able to assess bias in sources in a study of the Jarrow March and distinguish between long-, medium- and short-term causes when writing about the General Strike. They use information from sources to compare and contrast the Battle of the Somme and the bombing of Hiroshima, and they identify and describe in detail symbolism in cartoon sources about World War I.
180. GCE A level results are well above the national average for both grades A-E and A-B. They are also above the national average for selective schools for both grades A-E and A-B, with 100 per cent of candidates gaining A or B grades in 2000. Pupils in Years 12 and 13 display the ability to assimilate a wide range of complex material. Year 12 pupils display excellent research skills, which are evident in the breadth and depth of understanding they show in discussing the factors shaping the personality and beliefs of Adolf Hitler. In such oral work a very striking feature is the ability of pupils to respond to one another's point of view as well making very well reasoned individual contributions. In their study of Disraeli, pupils assess the success of different policies in bringing about social and political reform. Pupils evaluate the effectiveness of various aspects of Nazi propaganda and display excellent critical attitudes towards the reliability of evidence. In their study of Mussolini, Year 13 pupils evaluate the success of a variety of foreign policy initiatives and assess their relative merits in achieving the objectives of making Italy "great, respected and feared".
181. The quality of teaching is very good; in some lessons it is excellent. Teaching throughout the school is characterised by the use of a variety of approaches to stimulate interest and consolidate learning. Secure knowledge ensures that oral work throughout the age range enhances learning, with teachers linking pupils' responses to provide continuity and challenge.
182. At Key Stage 3, the use of information and communication technology enables pupils to view a wide range of evidence quickly, leaving sufficient time for critical reflection and discussion so that evaluation skills are enhanced. Pupils' ability to classify and select relevant information is

enhanced by an activity-based approach with groups of pupils competing to identify the principal features of castles in different periods. Skills in selecting information from sources are further enhanced by simulation activities where pupils are assigned particular roles and produce speeches in role. Historical sources are very well used to extend learning with pupils studying a variety of information, including both fact and opinion, so that they can assess the reliability of different forms of evidence. In a small minority of lessons time is not well used to enable lesson objectives to be clearly identified and to allow sufficient time for the completion of group activities.

183. At Key Stage 4, activities are well used to enable pupils to experience as well as learn about the subject. Pupils are assigned roles as tribunal members to question other pupils who appear before them as part of a study of World War I. They gain an insight into the prevailing attitudes of the time towards military service and the arguments of conscientious objectors. In their study of the Vietnam War, pupils participate in a decision-making activity in a guerrilla war simulation and gain insights into both military tactics and the horrors of war. In another activity, pupils choose from different policy options facing America during the build-up to the Vietnam War, which enables them to appreciate the complexity of foreign policy decisions. In work on World War I learning about the effects of air raids is consolidated effectively through a variety of approaches, including the viewing of video footage followed by a selection of information from sources. Data collection sheets are an effective means of enabling pupils to select and classify information under different headings so that they read with a purpose and gain confidence and understanding when confronted with a substantial body of information. Pupils make valuable contributions to class discussions from their general knowledge, and their responses are well used in discussion. In a small minority of lessons the use of time does not enable pupils to complete activities and consolidate their understanding. Pupil management is occasionally not effective in ensuring that all pupils maximise their concentration and effort.
184. Teaching in the sixth form extends further the methods used in Key Stages 3 and 4. In oral work, pupils' contributions are extended and developed in an environment where teachers constantly challenge them to achieve more. Teaching is particularly effective in providing continuity during discussion so that pupils are encouraged to contribute and develop their own ideas. Very good lesson planning is a further means of building confidence and extending understanding, with conclusions from the study of historical sources in one lesson compared and contrasted with those in subsequent lessons, for example, by comparing the aims of political rhetoric in speeches with the policies enacted. Resources are very well used to provide structure and make accessible a complex range of sources of information. Planning ensures that pupils have very good opportunities to develop their ideas and adopt positions in relation to specific essay questions. Activities designed to sort and classify information contribute to the pace and momentum of lessons and encourage productive effort.
185. Pupils' attitudes towards the subject are very good; a notable feature of these positive attitudes is shown by the degree to which pupils pose their own questions during lessons. Collaboration during group activities and pupils' capacity for independent study is very good.
186. Leadership of the department is very good. There is a strong and identifiable ethos in the teaching of the subject, with an emphasis on building skills and enhancing pupils' interest through a wide range of activities and teaching approaches. Curricular planning is very good in giving structure and coherence to areas of study. Assessment is thorough, with an emphasis on progression and the development of skills. Since the last inspection, the standard of teaching has improved; more demands are being made of A level pupils whose results have also improved.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

187. The school does not comply with statutory requirements in ensuring that all pupils at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 have an appropriate information and communication technology curriculum.
188. By the end of Key Stage 3, standards are average compared with standards achieved by pupils nationally. Pupils in Year 7 have a planned lesson of information technology each week. In that time they cover a broad area of the Programmes of Study in limited depth. However, after Year 7, any further experience of information and communication technology is unplanned and, therefore, pupils receive an unequal level of teaching. At the end of Key Stage 3, each pupil is awarded a

Level 6 in information technology regardless of his capability. While there are good examples of high standards and good progress taking place they are not a part of any overall strategy but as a result of individual teachers using information and communication technology to assist pupils' learning and through pupils acquiring skills, knowledge and understanding from one another and from home.

189. Standards in Key Stage 3 are very variable; for example, in Year 7, during a programmed information and communication technology lesson, the standards shown by the pupils were average in relation to national standards: with minimal instruction the group was able to create a two-dimensional shape which they were then able to develop into a three-dimensional representation. On completion they were able to resize their drawings and manipulate the position of the drawings 'on-screen' by linear movement and rotation. High standards were seen in a Year 7 history lesson on the study of the Skipton leper colony, computers being used to enhance pupils' understanding of historical issues. In contrast, when a Year 9 group used information and communication technology in mathematics, both the level of mathematics and information and communication technology was low; the focus was more on developing presentation skills. In an example of Year 9 work on the game of *Frogs*, where the pupils developed a series of mathematical formulae, information and communication technology was again used as a presentation tool rather than one to support mathematical learning.
190. Standards are high when departments use information and communication technology to improve pupils' learning in their subject; for example, in Year 7 geography lessons, when pupils search Ordnance Survey maps and historical records and use the meteostat to study weather patterns over Europe. Another good example is in design and technology, when pupils use design software in order to solve problems related to the layout of electronic printed circuit boards. Further good examples can be found in business studies at Key Stage 4 and economics in the sixth form. The training of staff in the use of information and communication technology to support learning is still in the planning stage.
191. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils have made unsatisfactory gains in learning. Progress is satisfactory in Year 7. There are very good examples of the use of information and communication technology by individual teachers. However, the lack of a programme enabling all pupils to cover the National Curriculum Programmes of Study is a serious weakness.
192. By the end of Key Stage 4, standards for those following a planned course of study are very high compared with standards achieved by pupils nationally. In 1999, sixteen pupils sat the GCSE examination and 93 per cent achieved A*-C grades. A good proportion gained A* or A grades. The results for 2000 are equally high. The remaining pupils in Key Stage 4 have no timetabled time to develop their skills. Pupils in the lower sixth all follow a certificated course but there is no formal provision in the upper sixth.
193. A Year 10 GCSE group being introduced to databases was able to follow routes through a questionnaire. A Year 11 group, who had very high expectations of themselves and the capacity to take responsibility for their own learning, displayed very high standards. An examination of their work folders showed a range of high-quality work through Year 10 and Year 11. The presentation of work is of a very high standard.
194. By the end of Key Stage 4, those pupils following a course of study towards GCSE make very good gains in their learning; the remainder make unsatisfactory progress. There are examples of pupils making good progress; for example, in business studies, where very good use is made of information and communication technology to analyse business information, such as research data, spreadsheets and performance graphs.
195. The course for the lower sixth improves their information and communication technology capability. While the course is not demanding academically, it does provide them with the opportunity to develop a wide range of valuable skills; however, pupils who have already gained the GCSE qualification would be better served by following a more challenging course of study.
196. Pupils clearly enjoy the lessons; response is always good and they concentrate well. They discuss their work in detail, behave well, use equipment appropriately and clearly enjoy the time spent developing their skills.

197. The teaching of information and communication technology is satisfactory at all key stages and in the sixth form. In the specialist lessons, teachers generally give clear instructions and question pupils skilfully; this means that the pupils are able to move through the tasks successfully and learn the intended skills. Some very good teaching is seen in history, business studies, design and technology and economics. In all of these lessons the use of information and communication technology has a direct and positive effect upon the standards of the individual subject. In the other subjects, most teachers lack sufficient skills to use computers effectively to support pupils' learning. The systems by which teachers track the opportunities provided for pupils to develop their skills in all subjects are unsatisfactory. As a result, no pupil is assured of an appropriate level of teaching.
198. The school, appropriately, has a clear vision for the future. The introduction of new equipment and the development of a satellite network demonstrate a positive programme of development. The school has plans for a second suite of computers and the further extension of satellites; however, not all departments and individual teachers are planning for the use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning. The training of teachers is at an early stage of development. While the school has a clear vision, the current day-to-day management of the curriculum is poor. There are no procedures for monitoring and assessing the impact of information and communication technology on pupils' learning. There are no systems for assessing pupils' capability and progress in developing understanding and skills. Some teachers in this area do very good work but their ideas have not been shared with other staff.
199. The organisation and day-to-day management of the network is good. Subject files are easily accessible and contain work developed by teachers. This is an excellent resource, which is managed to a high standard.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

200. French and German are taught as alternate first modern foreign languages, with the other being the second language from Year 8. Both languages are available in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form.
201. Standards at the end of Key Stage 3 are very high in relation to national standards. Results of end-of-Key Stage assessments are very high in both languages, although a greater number achieves higher levels in the years when German is the first language. Pupils have very good listening and reading skills in both languages: the development of good speaking skills, particularly in French, is hindered by the use of too much English in the classroom and some writing tasks lack the appropriate challenge for pupils of their ability.
202. Standards at the end of Key Stage 4 are also very high. The proportion of pupils gaining GCSE A*-C grades in German is exceptionally high compared with national averages and high in comparison with the averages of similar schools. Results in German are also high in comparison with standards achieved by the same pupils in other subjects in the school.
203. The proportion of pupils gaining GCSE A*-C grades in French is well above the national average, but low in comparison with results achieved in other grammar schools and by the same pupils in other subjects in the school.
204. The GCSE results are consistent with standards observed during the inspection. Pupils' listening and reading skills continue to be very good in both languages and, whereas writing skills also demonstrate improvement, speaking skills are only developed effectively in German. Pupils are hesitant in spoken French, as a direct result of a teaching style that makes too little use of the spoken language throughout Key Stages 3 and 4.
205. Standards at the end of the sixth form are high. As at the last inspection, A Level results in German are very high and in French are average. There are observed differences in pupils' approach to language: German is used as a facilitator for discussion on a wide range of current topics and pupils demonstrate comfort in using the spoken language. Exceptionally high standards of spoken German were observed in a Year 12 lesson, when pupils engaged in presentation and discussion about food and health. Aspects of the language are still being developed in French and the long-term effect of the teaching style at Key Stages 3 and 4 results

in poor oral standards. The achievement of the pupils in French in the sixth form is unsatisfactory. The standards of writing were consistent with the A Level results achieved.

206. There are few pupils in the school with special educational needs. Similarly, there are few pupils for whom English is an additional language. Both these groups of pupils, when observed, made progress at least equivalent to that of their peers.
207. As at the last inspection, the quality of teaching is variable. Overall, it is good at Key Stages 3 and 4 and very good in the sixth form. Teachers demonstrate a high level of language skills as a role model for pupils, but this does not always lead to pupils having sufficient opportunity to practise speaking, particularly in pairs, groups or role-play situations. In a significant minority of lessons, the role of language for spoken communication is weak, especially in French, where too many tasks are based around vocabulary lists and grammatical structures, which stifle pupils' instinctive response in the spoken language. Teaching develops very good skills of understanding and of accuracy in writing, particularly in older pupils. In the best lessons, teachers work almost exclusively in the foreign language and expect high standards; this develops interest and commitment from pupils.
208. Learning is good at both key stages and in the sixth form. Pupils learn well when they are challenged by work that is predominantly based in the foreign language. They make particularly good progress when they are given a measure of responsibility for their own learning.
209. Behaviour observed during the inspection was excellent. Attitudes to language learning vary according to the teaching and learning style and pupils' own opportunity to participate. While pupils are always polite and maintain concentration, some pupils do not show the enthusiasm one would expect from the level of success they achieve.
210. Accommodation for the teaching of modern foreign languages is unsatisfactory. There are two pairs of rooms, some significant distance apart, and no small space which could be used for oral tests, the work of the foreign language assistants, or as a departmental base and resource area. This is not promoting the establishment of the most effective team ethos amongst the teachers in the department.
211. Although some good development has taken place, management has not addressed all the issues raised by the last inspection. There has been progress towards developmental planning and departmental policy statements. The department meets regularly and co-ordinates administrative and organisational matters but has not developed and monitored policies on methodology. Monitoring of teaching quality has been undertaken by senior managers and the line management role has recently been more clearly defined.

MUSIC

212. Standards in music, at the end of Key Stage 3, are high in relation to national standards. Teacher assessments in 2000 were just below those of the previous year. The GCSE results for music in 2000 were above the schools averages and above the national averages. No candidates were entered for A level.
213. Pupils in Year 7 can identify different styles of jazz and rock drumming. They can play simple rhythmic patterns accurately, compose a simple rock rhythm, notate it and use information and communication technology to realise the pattern successfully. Pupils can read pitch and rhythmic notation and quickly find the notes on a keyboard. They also participate in listening exercises, achieving good results. Pupils in Year 8 are able to accurately identify tones and semitones and compose a piece of well-structured programme music, which they then record on cassette. They listen to music by French composers and complete the module of work with a listening exercise based on the work covered. Written work shows a working knowledge of musical vocabulary and musical structure. Pupils in Year 9 have just completed a 'Sunshine Isles' module. This comprises learning about major and minor chord structure, how chords influence melodies, and the composition of a melody based on chords. Pupils are also introduced to the steel band and participate in listening exercises based on 'Rivers of Babylon' and 'Yellow Bird'. They complete the module by learning to play 'Yellow Bird' from one of three versions of differing complexity.

214. More demanding tasks were available for the more musically able pupils, but these pupils were not identified during the course of the lesson and no above average results were heard.
215. Standards at the end of Key Stage 4 are high in relation to national standards. There are examples of exceptional composition work in both Years 10 and 11, which must stem from the pupils experiences in the previous key stage. Pupils in Year 10 learn about the different periods of history through a well-presented and well-organised work book devised by the teacher. Recordings have been created to go alongside the music discussed. There are good links between musical styles; for example, a traditional performance of the Hallelujah Chorus is followed by an arrangement by Quincy Jones. Pupils in Year 11 are able to write detailed evaluations of pupils' performances at GCSE level from previous years, with the marks they award matching their comments. Some of the points noted were quite critical, showing observant listening.
216. Taking account the performance of the current A level pupils and recent A level results, standards at A level are average in relation to national standards. Six pupils have opted for music over the past 5 years, 4 of whom gained A grades. In contrast, there are no pupils currently studying music in Year 12, while the standard of work of Year 13 pupils is low in relation to national standards. Their aural skills are below average, even when writing down melodies with which they are familiar. Completed bass lines show weaknesses and the choices of chords show a lack of familiarity with stock bass lines and harmonic progressions.
217. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to the subject at Key Stage 3 are generally good, and at Key Stage 4 they are very good. They are eager to settle down to work quickly and listen attentively to music without disturbing those around them. Following end-of-module assessments, they are eager to see how many marks they have achieved and how they compare with their peers. In response to careful questioning by the teacher, the pupils are very keen to make thoughtful and observant comments about the piece they have listened to. Although A level pupils behaviour in lessons is very good, they show too little commitment to the demands of the subject, exemplified by a reluctance to practise on a regular basis, and complete set tasks on time.
218. Teaching is good at Key Stages 3 and 4, and at A level. The teacher's knowledge and understanding is very good, and this enables him to design educationally and musically worthwhile modules, which are of a practical nature. These help the pupils make good progress through the first two key stages. Lessons are planned and resourced satisfactorily, but the pace of the teaching is too slow. This results in too few activities being required to fill the lesson time, particularly when pupils are attending a double lesson. The content of each lesson is well designed to provide continuity and enable the pupils to make good progress, but no opportunities for pupils to read sections of the worksheets or play examples of previous weeks work were made possible. The teacher has a firm but friendly manner with the pupils and the relationships are good enough to enable the pupils to ask questions confidently. Classroom management is excellent, with the requirements of the first few minutes being explained outside the classroom so that the pupils are able to enter the room properly prepared. Feedback on assessed work is thorough. Following the end-of-module assessments, the teacher discusses targets with pupils but does not write them down in his own records to enable him to check that the pupils have these musical milestones in their sights when working on future modules. No singing was observed in lessons. Homework is regularly set for Years 10 to 13, but irregularly at Key Stage 3, which means that learning opportunities are lost.
219. The curriculum for Key Stage 3 has recently been revised but it does not include the full use of information and communication technology as stated in the requirements of the Curriculum 2000. There is insufficient time for Year 9 lessons, which prevents the National Curriculum requirements from being fully met. This also has an adverse effect on recruitment for GCSE. Other arts subjects are available in two option categories, whereas music is available only in one. Assessment procedures are sound with end-of-year reports making reference to the end-of-key stage statements. Instrumental lessons are provided by twelve teachers from North Yorkshire County Music Service. These teachers give instrumental lessons of a high standard to over one sixth of the school's population, and work in successful partnership with the head of music. Extra-curricular activities are few in number, but no more than can be expected with present staffing levels. More involvement of the instrumental teachers in directing ensembles would remedy this situation, and would generally increase the standard of these activities. The department is well decorated with concert posters, and pupils work, but the teaching accommodation is too small for present teaching requirements. There is a lack of rehearsal space, a shortage of multicultural

instruments, and too few computers to enable the department to teach the required curriculum adequately.

220. Since the last inspection, the department has started to address the issues highlighted, but the level of oracy is still given insufficient priority, lessons sometimes lack sufficient pace and no funding has been made available for the use of information and communication technology.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

221. Owing to the condition of the playing-fields no rugby lessons were observed during the inspection. This restricted the opportunities to see the full range of the department's work.
222. The school achieves high standards in competitive sports, with excellent standards in cross-country running; the junior team was recently placed sixth in the national championships, one pupil becoming Northern Schools cross-country champion and another representing England in fell racing. Last year, a number of pupils was selected to represent North Yorkshire in cricket and athletics, while four pupils were selected for the under-18 Yorkshire schools' rugby squad. Two other pupils were selected for national teams, one in orienteering and the other in swimming.
223. The standards of attainment at the end of Key Stages 3 and 4 are average in relation to national standards. The standards seen in pupils' work in the sixth form are above national levels. In Year 7 'unihock', pupils are able to push and receive the puck with satisfactory levels of control. The majority of pupils in Year 8 basketball have the expected skills in passing and shooting in practice situations but are less effective when using these in games. There are some higher attainers who have a good knowledge of the rules of the game. In swimming, in Year 8, pupils are able to demonstrate both front crawl and breast-stroke, although their breathing technique in front crawl is poor. In Year 9, water polo pupils are able to pass and receive the ball, as well as swim with it using good technique. The majority have sufficient swimming skills to be confident in deep water during the game. In soccer, in this year, there are few higher attainers. Many pupils are working below the expected levels for their age group, lacking control and passing skills. In Year 10 games the majority of pupils are working at expected levels in a range of activities, but there are few higher attainers. In soccer and 'unihock', pupils are able to pass and dribble in games with some control. In basketball, pupils are able to use set shots but are less successful with lay-up shooting. There are similar levels of attainment in Year 11, with satisfactory skills in swimming, soccer and basketball, but an absence of higher attainers in these activities. In A level physical education pupils understand contemporary issues in sport, such as leisure, play and recreation, as well as such psychological factors as aggression, attribution and the impact of personality on performance in sport.
224. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at Key Stages 3 and 4; the quality of teaching of A level physical education is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and give good explanations, particularly in A level courses. Good briefing in changing rooms at the start of a Year 9 swimming lesson helped pupils to get off to a good start in the lesson and made more effective use of the limited time available in single lessons. When given the opportunity to do so, pupils are able to have some independence at the start of the lesson when working on warm up, this being well done in a Year 10 basketball lesson; but too often teachers control this activity. Classes are well managed, as teachers are effective organisers, making good use of space and equipment available. Planning of lessons is more variable, as is the use of assessment. In Year 7 running, there is good planning over the unit of work, where there are increasing challenges to pupils, and clear targets are set as a result of accurate assessment. In Year 7 unihock', well-selected practices provide sufficient challenge for pupils of all attainment levels and lead to pupils being able to use their skills in small games. Planning in Year 9 soccer is less effective, as learning outcomes are vague and pupils made no progress in the lesson observed. In a Year 8 basketball lesson, the plan to develop pupils' skills in zone defence was ineffective because pupils were given insufficient guidance on how and where to establish zones near the basket. A level lessons are well planned, with effective use being made of audio-visual resources, productive question and answer sessions, and appropriate homework. In games lessons, where non-specialist teachers are needed because of the numbers of pupils, there is sometimes only supervision of games with little teaching taking place.

225. In nearly all lessons, pupils make satisfactory progress in learning new skills and refining existing ones. In basketball, in Year 8, pupils have learned basic rules such as travelling and double-dribble as well as basic man-to-man defence. In Year 7 running, they have increased their understanding of pacing as well as improving their performance levels. In Year 9 water polo, pupils have increased their skill levels in the game as well as their knowledge of team play and rules. Progress in activities is often limited because of the short time of single lessons, as well as very short units of work - in some cases lasting only three single lessons. In A level courses, pupils make progress as they increase their knowledge and understanding of theoretical aspects, such as culture and psychology, and are able to relate these to sporting events.
226. Pupils have a very positive attitude towards the subject. They are quick to change and eager to participate. When given the opportunity, they show some independence in their warm-up at the start of lessons. There are records of very good participation, with very few pupils being excused lessons. There are good relationships between pupils and teachers and among pupils themselves. Pupils work well together in small groups. Pupils in the sixth form have high levels of interest and show maturity and responsibility. They show confidence and maturity in their discussions with good interactions with teachers.
227. The curriculum meets statutory requirements at both key stages, with a satisfactory range of activities, but there is imbalance between activities and their time allocation. Pupils in the Year 9 Latin group have less time for physical education than other pupils in this year. There is an unsatisfactory balance of activities in Key Stage 3; swimming and gymnastics have insufficient time and the time spent on inter-house competitions reduces the amount of time for teaching pupils new skills. The amount of time allocated to rugby reduces the time for other games such as soccer, basketball and badminton. In Key Stage 4, pupils have little choice of activity until the second term in Year 11. There are no opportunities for pupils to take GCSE physical education. In the sixth form, pupils are able to select from a good range of activities including the recently introduced Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme as well as A level physical education.
228. Management of the department is satisfactory. Staff are deployed effectively and good use is made of the accommodation. Schemes of work are not sufficiently detailed to comply fully with National Curriculum 2000. Assessment is being well developed to make use of National Curriculum levels, but further work needs to be done to produce criteria to make assessments more accurate.
229. There has been a satisfactory response to the last inspection. Standards are in line with national standards, teaching is satisfactory and pupils remain positive and committed towards the subject. A level physical education has been introduced and is a popular choice for many pupils. The addition of another specialist teacher has strengthened the department and reduced the number of non-specialist teachers; however, in games lessons some non-specialist teachers are needed and although they bring strengths in specific activities, there are occasions where curricular planning is compromised and there is supervision of activities rather than teaching.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

230. Standards at the end of Key Stage 3 are high in comparison with national standards. Standards at the end of Key Stage 4, among the small numbers taking the full GCSE course, are exceptionally high compared with national standards. Over the last three years 75 per cent of pupils have obtained A* or A grades compared with 50 per cent in other grammar schools. Standards achieved by those following the core religious education course are low in relation to national standards because too little work is completed, owing to the low allocation of time for the subject. The core course in the sixth form is not assessed. In 2001, a small number will take the AS level examination and the work seen during the inspection was very high compared with national standards.
231. The achievement of pupils during Key Stage 3 is good. By the end of the key stage they have a good body of knowledge about Christianity and other world religions. Empathy is shown when pupils look at situations from various points of view, as seen when they were considering forgiveness through the different characters in the parable of the prodigal son. When studying

other world religions, such as Islam, the benefits and difficulty of fasting during Ramadan are considered sensitively, as are discussions as to how they would respectfully treat a copy of the Qur'an. The pupils are very confident in expressing their views in a well-considered manner.

232. Achievement by pupils following the GCSE course is very good. Pupils have an exceptional understanding of the gospel of Saint Luke and a deep understanding of a wide range of ethical issues, such as divorce, remarriage, abortion, euthanasia and gender issues. Pupils also form their own views on the issues studied. Achievement by those following the core course is satisfactory, in that work in lessons is of an appropriate quality given the time made available for the course; progress is slower than it should be because of the low time allocation for the subject. The course includes basic discussion of some ethical issues, such as euthanasia. Pupils' long-term recall and understanding of the areas studied is weaker.
233. The pupils following the AS level course have a much deeper understanding of ethical issues, such as those surrounding conception and surrogacy and the views of different branches of the Christian church. In these and many other areas the pupils show not only a knowledge of the facts about religion but also an understanding of religion in applying these to their own situation and beginning to form their own views. The religious education element of the sixth form general studies course includes spiritual dimensions when discussing current affairs. Progress is seen within lessons and from year to year, as seen in the development of writing skills and the ability to develop balanced points of view. There is no significant difference in the progress of different groups of pupils.
234. The teaching of religious education is good at all key stages. Strengths within teaching are the way in which the pupils are asked to look at issues from different viewpoints and apply them to current relevant situations. Relationships are always very good, and by harnessing pupils' lively interest, teachers enable topics to be considered in a pleasant relaxed learning environment. Expectations are high and pupils are asked to develop their answers to include reasons for them and not be satisfied with giving a simple short answer. Teachers sometimes fail to involve the pupils actively in the lessons. This is especially evident when question and answer sessions are too long so that only one or two pupils are actively involved at any one time; this allows pupils to become passive and at times lose interest. Attitudes to religious education are generally very good, the pupils come ready to work and are prepared to participate in the lesson, and they work well as individuals, in pairs and in groups. When given the opportunity to work in groups they stimulate each other in discussing ideas, valuing one another's contribution and respecting those with differing views.
235. Leadership of the department is satisfactory, but the other responsibilities of the head of department limit the time available to manage the subject. The department works closely together and monitoring of the department is on an informal basis. The schemes of work criticised in the last inspection have been improved but need further development to enable them to become useful working documents. There is no scheme of work for the Key Stage 4 course; the governing body has not yet agreed a syllabus and so statutory regulations have not been met. At Key Stage 4, the core course rotates with personal and social education and careers, and the time allocated to the subject is therefore less than a fifth of the recommended time. This means that pupils cannot make satisfactory progress. The current course is not assessed and no reports are issued; this is also an area where the school is not fulfilling statutory regulations.
236. Since the last inspection, satisfactory progress has been made in that the range of teaching styles has been increased and a greater level of questioning and empathy is encouraged. An examination course has also been introduced in the sixth form. However, schemes of work still need further development and certain statutory requirements have still not been met.

Other non-National Curriculum subjects

Brief inspections of the following subjects were also conducted.

LATIN

237. Standards in Latin at the end of both key stages and the sixth form are high in relation to national standards. A level results are high, but are based on a very small entry and have declined slightly over a five year period. GCSE results are also high and have been consistent over the past five years, with all pupils gaining a higher grade pass, the great majority at A* or A. Standards observed in lessons and in pupils' work during the inspection were consistent with these results.
238. Teaching is good. It is based on a lively and engaging style, which ensures pupils' commitment and concentration. Challenging concepts are presented in interesting ways and ensure good learning and progress.
239. In particular, the study of Latin has been developed successfully to support the interests of literacy and language learning throughout the school by relating Latin to other languages whenever possible. In the lessons observed, pupils developed their understanding of English, particularly, because of this aspect of the teaching.
240. Pupils show by their attitudes and behaviour that they enjoy the study of Latin and derive benefit from it.

BUSINESS STUDIES AND ECONOMICS

241. GCSE results in business studies are very high in relation to national averages, with almost all pupils gaining A* or A grades in the examination. Pupils achieve higher results in business studies than they do in most of their other subjects. The course is popular and very well taught;. a key factor in its success is that it is taught in a lively way, which includes pupils having to run their own business venture. This is a demanding task which involves a substantial budget and an appropriate degree of risk. This task is central to the course and provides a practical backdrop around which theoretical business concepts are introduced and reinforced. Pupils really enjoy the course and most make considerable efforts to create coursework portfolios of a particularly high standard.
242. The business project has been run for several years and this means that each year group has a substantial quantity of research data on which to build its own response to the challenge. This again mimics a real business situation and introduces pupils to the challenges of learning from past events while looking for future opportunities.
243. Information and communication technology is used very well in handling research data, analysing business performance and enhancing the presentation of work. The subject makes a major contribution to the development of pupils' information and communication technology skills.
244. A level results in economics are well above the national average, with nearly all the pupils gaining A-C grades. Pupils perform well in economics compared with their performances in other subjects. Pupils are highly motivated because of the very skilled and lively way that the teacher introduces and explains concepts. Pupils have good opportunities to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills in economics through the use of information and communication technology. A new suite of machines has been installed in the department; these are well used, for example, in modelling business situations such as 'break-even' analyses. The standard of pupils' information and communication technology skills is very variable, which reflects the uneven teaching of these skills in the school.
245. The business studies and economics department is very well organised and led. The two teachers meet regularly to plan their work and they collaborate very effectively. The departmental handbook is excellent. Most of it concentrates on analyses of the department's performance and its plans for the future.