

# INSPECTION REPORT

**The Sacred Heart R.C. School**

Redcar

LEA area: Redcar and Cleveland

Unique reference number: 111763

Headteacher: Kevin Mitchell

Reporting inspector: Mark Woodward  
11049

Dates of inspection: 9 – 13 October 2000

Inspection number: 223747

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 11 to 16 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Derwent Road  
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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr J C Proudler

Date of previous inspection: 26 February 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mark Woodward (Ofsted No. 11049)	Registered inspector		What sort of school is it?
			What the school should do to improve further?
			The school's results and achievements
			How well are pupils or students taught?
			How well is the school led and managed?
Marion Howel (Ofsted No.19343)	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			How well does the school care for its pupils or students?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Gordon Allison (Ofsted No.30690)	Team inspector	Geography	
James Bowden (Ofsted No.7926)	Team inspector	Physical Education	Special Educational Needs
Philip Burchell (Ofsted No.18663)	Team inspector	History	
Elizabeth Charlesworth (Ofsted No.19532)	Team inspector	Music	
Jeffery Hardman (Ofsted No.15186)	Team inspector	Design and Technology	
		Information Technology	
Ken Hounslow (Ofsted No.27585)	Team inspector	Science	
Thomas Howard (Ofsted No.27416)	Team inspector	Mathematics	
Peter McKenzie (Ofsted No.4373)	Team inspector	Modern Foreign Languages	Finance
			English as an additional language
Eileen Metcalfe (Ofsted No.17868)	Team inspector	Art	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils or students?
Elizabeth Raitt (Ofsted No.20421)		English	

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The Sacred Heart R.C. School is smaller than average; it serves over 700 pupils, some of whom travel up to 20 miles from surrounding towns and villages. The proportions of girls and boys are broadly equal although there are considerable imbalances in some year groups. The great majority of pupils are white with only one pupil having English as an additional language. Around 18% of the pupils are on the register for pupils with special educational needs which is broadly in line with the national average, and 0.4% of pupils have statements of special educational needs which is well below average.

The standards achieved by the pupils on entry to the school are high in relation to national standards. In the National Curriculum tests at age 11, a higher than average proportion of the pupils reach level 4 (which is the benchmark level for pupils of this age).

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

The Sacred Heart R.C. School is a good school. Standards, in relation to national standards, are high at the end of both key stages and the quality of teaching and learning is good. The school's positive ethos promotes pupils' learning and personal development and this has been the result of effective leadership by the headteacher and the commitment of staff and governors to serve the best interests of the pupils. The school provides good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Pupils achieve particularly well in art, English, geography, music and drama. ('Achievement' represents the progress that pupils make from one key stage to the next).
- The quality of teaching is good. It is excellent in: art; very good in music, business studies and drama; and good in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, information and communication technology, geography and history.
- The aims and values of the school are clearly seen in its day-to-day work.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour are very good.
- Pupils are given very good spiritual, moral and social experiences and guidance.
- The pastoral care of the pupils both formally and informally is very strong. Relationships are very good.
- The careers education programme prepares pupils well for the decisions that they have to make.
- The training of newly qualified teachers and student teachers is of a high standard.

#### **What could be improved**

- The achievement of the pupils in design and technology, and information and communication technology.
- The consistency of pupils' achievements so that they do as well in all their subjects as they do in art.
- The achievement of boys particularly at Key Stage 4.
- The focus of senior and middle management roles so that they can further improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- The curriculum in information and communication technology, where statutory requirements are not met, and in science, design and technology, modern foreign languages, physical education and the drama provision within English. There are also insufficient work-related courses.
- The assessment of the pupils and the monitoring of their progress.
- The development of information and communication technology through all the subjects.

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

More detailed explanations about the strengths and issues identified in this summary can be found in the main report.

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school was last inspected in April 1996. Since then it has made satisfactory progress. GCSE and National Curriculum test results have risen, particularly for the girls; the quality of teaching and learning is still good; and the school is still strongly supported by the parents.

The key issues from the last inspection have mostly been tackled, but there remain some that are outstanding. Elements of the design and technology issues have been addressed, but the status of the subject has not been

raised. The library and information and communication technology resources have improved, tutor time is now more effectively used by most teachers, the provision for a 2<sup>nd</sup> modern foreign language is still unsatisfactory, appraisal has improved, particularly in response to the new Performance Management requirements, and there have been some, but insufficient, improvements to specialist facilities. The school is well placed to build on its strengths and make further improvements.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
GCSE examinations	B	A	B	A

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

Overall, the achievement of the pupils by the end of Key Stage 3 is good. The National Curriculum test results in 2000 are relatively better than the results of the same pupils in the Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests in 1997. The achievement of the pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 is satisfactory. Pupils achieve GCSE results that are broadly in line with what might be expected from them given the standards that they achieve at the end of Key Stage 3. The overall proportion of pupils gaining A\* or A grades indicates that more able pupils make good progress in most subjects. The achievement of the pupils is particularly high in art, English, geography, music and drama.

The results of pupils in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 in 2000 were similar to the 1999 results in mathematics and science, but lower in English. The results of the pupils in 1999 were well above the national average in English and mathematics and above the national average in science. This was also the case in 1997 and 1998. The trend in results between 1996 and 1999 was broadly in line with the national trend. Compared with the results of pupils in similar schools (based on the proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals), the 1999 results were very high in English and mathematics and well above average in science. Teacher assessments in the other National Curriculum subjects in 2000 are broadly in line with test results in the core subjects.

The 2000 GCSE results were the highest ever achieved by the school. The proportion of pupils gaining 5A\*-C grades was 60% which exceeded the governors' target of 55%. Girls did particularly well with 71% gaining 5A\*-C grades, while 49% of boys reached this standard. The issue of raising the performance of boys to meet that of the girls is appropriately one of the school's key priorities. The proportion of pupils gaining A\* or A grades in 1999 and 2000 was very high, in 1999 it was nearly double the national average. Over the past 7 years GCSE results have risen, but at a slower rate than the national trend. The proportions of pupils gaining 5A\*-C and 5A\*-G grades and the average total points score of the pupils in the 1999 GCSE examination were above the national average. The proportion of pupils gaining 1A\*-G grade was well above the national average. Compared with similar schools, based upon the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, the proportions of pupils gaining 5A\*-C, 5A\*-G and 1A\*-G grades, and the average total point score of the pupils, were well above average. The proportions of pupils gaining A\*-C English grades in 1999 and 2000 were around 20 percentage points higher than the proportions of pupils gaining A\*-C grades in mathematics and science, and higher than all the other subjects except English literature, art, music (Year 2000 only) and drama. The high level of the English results indicates that the pupils are capable of higher results in most other subjects. When the 1999 GCSE results are compared with the same pupils' results in the 1997 National Curriculum tests, the proportion of pupils gaining 5A\*-C grades, 5A\*-G grades and their average total points score were average. That is to say, they achieved the grades that might be expected of them.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The attitudes of the pupils to the school and to their learning are very good; the school promotes these very effectively.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good both in lessons and around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils develop well in response to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural opportunities that the school gives them. There are very good relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff.
Attendance	Levels of attendance are satisfactory.

The school is a very harmonious community in which pupils can learn and develop personal skills. They come to the school with positive attitudes to learning which they maintain as a result of the school's high expectations of them, and this is a major reason for the school's success in examinations and tests. The opportunity for teachers to teach effectively is enhanced by the positive attitudes of the pupils.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

The quality of teaching is good overall, and this makes a major contribution to the learning of the pupils which is also good. In the 125 lessons seen, the teaching was satisfactory or better in 94%, good or better in 76% and very good or better in 31%. The proportion of lessons graded good, very good and excellent is significantly higher than the proportions of these grades awarded in other schools inspected nationally. The grades are higher than those recorded during the last inspection.

*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.*

In the core subjects, the quality of teaching is good in English and science at both key stages. In mathematics, it is good at Key Stage 3 and very good at Key Stage 4. In mathematics and science, problems of staffing and organisation explain why GCSE results do not reflect the quality of teaching that was seen during the inspection. In the remaining subjects, teaching is particularly good in art, music, drama, and business studies. It is also good in design and technology, information and communication technology, history and geography. The quality of pupils' learning is directly related to the quality of teaching; for example, it is excellent in art because the pupils are stretched intellectually, physically and emotionally. The school meets the needs of all the pupils; it is particularly effective with the most able and the pupils with special educational needs. Literacy is taught well in English and in some other subjects such as art. The teaching of numeracy is satisfactory despite there being no strategic approach within mathematics or across the school. The teaching of information and communication technology in core lessons is good, but it is unsatisfactory within most other departments.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	In many ways the curriculum reflects the aims and values of the school, but it has weaknesses in a number of areas.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Overall, curricular provision for pupils identified as having special educational needs is good. Pupils identified as having special educational needs have access to the entire curriculum and are making good progress.
Provision for pupils'	This is a major strength of the school. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral

personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	and social development is very good, while the provision for their cultural development is good. . The Catholic faith underpins all aspects of school life by fostering a climate which respects and values every individual.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides very good pastoral care for its pupils. The pupils are able to work within a caring and supportive community.

There are weaknesses in the curriculum with regard to information and communication technology, where statutory requirements are not met, and in science, design and technology, modern foreign languages, physical education and the drama provision within English. Curriculum time is also low compared with recommended levels, as it was at the time of the last inspection. It is inappropriate that teaching time is low given the school's problems in offering a broad and balanced curriculum. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a major strength as is the careers education programme. The support the school receives from the parents makes a valuable contribution to the learning of the pupils. This occurs on a day-to-day basis as well as through contributions to extra-curricular groups, performances, careers guidance events and social functions.

The pastoral support offered to the pupils is a strength of the school. This includes the valuable contributions made by the chaplaincy support team and volunteers from the local parishes. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and the personal development of the pupils are very good. Assessment practices and the monitoring of pupils' progress are unsatisfactory. There are weaknesses in most subjects; pupils are unaware of the standards that they are achieving even in Year 11 and this means that they are not clear about what they need to do to improve. The exception is art where very high quality assessment practices significantly help the pupils to raise their standards.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher leads the school well and he is well supported by the senior management team who work hard to ensure that the school is organised effectively. The current focus of senior and middle management roles does not give them sufficient opportunity to work alongside departments to further improve the quality of teaching and learning.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors bring a range of valuable skills to the school and make an appropriate contribution to decision making. They work hard to support the school's development plans, for example, with regard to the buildings. Statutory requirements for the provision of information and communication technology are not met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The performance of subjects is analysed following each year's examination and test results and teachers are observed in the classroom, but senior and middle managers do not formally monitor and evaluate the performance of all departments and teachers routinely. Therefore action to spread the very effective practices in some areas and to improve weaknesses in others occurs at too slow a pace.
The strategic use of resources	The governors regularly review the school development plan and appropriately consider the financial implications of proposals. Formalised links between the financial and the school development plans are not sufficiently strong.

The school lives up to its mission statement of valuing Catholic traditions and beliefs, showing care for its own and the wider community, encouraging individual growth and working towards academic success. The cohesion between management, pupils, staff and governors in putting its aims and values into practice is a major strength of the school. The focus of senior and middle management roles is not sufficiently centred on how to improve the learning of the pupils so that they achieve as well in all their subjects as they do in the most effective subjects such as art.

The staffing of the school and adequacy of learning resources are satisfactory, but the accommodation is unsatisfactory because it prevents pupils from having a full range of learning experiences, particularly in

physical education. Governors and spending officers are aware of the need to obtain best value from the supply of goods and services, but no formal guidelines and processes are in place.

## **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The school expects the pupils to work hard.</li><li>• The quality of teaching is good.</li><li>• The behaviour of the pupils is good.</li><li>• The support offered to the pupils.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The range of extra-curricular opportunities.</li><li>• The information provided about pupils' progress.</li><li>• The amount of homework set and the variability of the workload.</li><li>• The accommodation.</li></ul>

The inspection team agree with the parents' positive comments. They also agree with parents that the information about progress in the annual reports is unsatisfactory. There is insufficient detail in many of the reports and the presentation of the information is not standardised which makes comparisons between subjects confusing. The accommodation has a negative impact on the quality of education offered; for example, in physical education. The school provides good extra-curricular provision, with most of the activities taking place during the lunch break. From what was seen during the inspection week, the pupils receive satisfactory amounts of homework.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and achievements**

1. The standards achieved by the pupils on entry to the school are high compared with national standards. The proportion of pupils reaching level 4 (the 'expected' level) and level 5 in the 1999 National Curriculum tests for 11 year olds, was well above the national average in English, mathematics and science. This was also the case in 1997, though the results were lower but still above the national average overall in 1998. The 2000 results are similar to those achieved in 1999; national average comparisons are not yet available.
2. Overall, the achievement of the pupils by the end of Key Stage 3 is good. The National Curriculum test results in 2000 are relatively better than the results of the same pupils in the Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests in 1997. The local education authority value-added analysis for 1999 also indicates that the pupils' achievements were better than the local average in English and mathematics and in line with the local average in science.
3. 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 art; very high in mathematics; high in English, science, history, geography, music and physical education; and average in design and technology, information and communication technology and modern languages. Compared with standards that they achieve on entry to the school, pupils' achievement at the end of Key Stage 3 is: excellent in art; very good in music; good in English, mathematics, history, geography and physical education; satisfactory in science, modern languages and design and technology; and unsatisfactory in information and communication technology.
4. The results of pupils in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 in 2000 were similar to the 1999 results in mathematics and science, but lower in English. Of particular note was the rise in the proportion of pupils gaining level 7 or above in mathematics, indicating the department's success in helping the most able mathematicians to achieve well at Key Stage 3. The results of the pupils in 1999 were well above the national average in English and mathematics and above the national average in science. This was also the case in 1997 and 1998. The trend in results between 1996 and 1999 was broadly in line with the national trend. Compared with the results of pupils in similar schools (based on the proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals), the 1999 results were very high in English and mathematics and well above average in science. The local education authority also analyses pupils' achievements on the basis of an 'advantage index'. By this method of analysis the pupils achieved well compared with pupils in other local schools.
5. Teacher assessments in the other National Curriculum subjects in 2000 are broadly in line with test results in the core subjects. The exceptions are in art, music and physical education which are high, and modern foreign languages which are low. The assessments of performance were largely confirmed by observation of pupils' work in class except in information and communication technology, music and physical education where they were too high.
6. 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 art, very high in English, geography, music and drama; high in mathematics, science and history; average in modern foreign languages and physical education; and low in design and technology and information and communication technology. Compared with standards that they achieve on entry to the school, pupils' achievement at the end of Key Stage 4 is: excellent in art, very good in English, geography and music and drama; good in history; satisfactory in mathematics, science, modern languages, and physical education; and unsatisfactory in design and technology and information and communication technology.
7. Overall, the achievement of the pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 is satisfactory. Pupils achieve GCSE results that are broadly in line with what might be expected from them given the standards that they achieve at the end of Key Stage 3. The overall proportion of pupils gaining A\* or A grades indicates that more able pupils make good progress in most subjects.

8. The 2000 GCSE results were the highest ever achieved by the school. The proportion of pupils gaining 5A\*-C grades was 60% which exceeded the governors target of 55%. Girls did particularly well with 71% gaining 5A\*-C grades, while 49% of boys reached this standard. The issue of raising the performance of boys to meet that of the girls is appropriately one of the school's key priorities. The proportion of pupils gaining A\* or A grades in 1999 and 2000 was very high, in 1999 it was nearly double the national average. A number of subjects namely, English, English literature, history, geography, art and drama are successful in helping pupils achieve A\* and A grades. Over the past 7 years GCSE results have risen, but at a slower rate than the national trend.
9. The proportions of pupils gaining 5A\*-C and 5A\*-G grades and the average total points score of the pupils in the 1999 GCSE examination were above the national average. The proportion of pupils gaining 1A\*-G grade was well above the national average. Compared with similar schools, based upon the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, the proportions of pupils gaining 5A\*-C, 5A\*-G and 1A\*-G grades, and the average total point score of the pupils were well above average. The local education authority's analysis of results using their 'advantage index' provides a similarly high result for the school. None of the contextual measures include a factor that reflects the active choice that many parents make in choosing to send their children to the school.
10. There are some considerable variations between subjects in terms of the performance of pupils at GCSE. There are also some wide variations within subjects when the results of different groups of pupils are compared, particularly between girls and boys. A benchmark for the school is the performance of pupils in English, particularly in 2000 when 88% of the girls and 61% of the boys gained an A\*-C grade (the results in 2000 were similar to those gained in 1999 when the overall A\*-C grade proportion was 21 percentage points higher than the national average). The key points to note are: that the proportion of A\*-C grades is measured against all the pupils in the year, not just those entered for English, and therefore gives a good guide about the capability of the whole year group; and that girls significantly out-perform boys in terms of A\*-C grades and A\*/A grades. The proportions of pupils gaining A\*-C English grades in 1999 and 2000 were around 20 percentage points higher than the proportions of pupils gaining A\*-C grades in mathematics and science, and higher than all the other subjects except English literature, art, music (Year 2000 only) and drama. The high level of the English results indicates that the pupils are capable of higher results in most other subjects.
11. Analysis of the 1999 GCSE results by comparing the pupils' performances in all their subjects compared with pupils nationally confirms the variations between subjects. Pupils did relatively better than they did in their other subjects in art, single science, English, English literature and geography. They did relatively worse in double science, French and mathematics. The single science results are high partly because the ability range of the pupils taking single science in this school is higher than in most other schools where single science is most often taken by pupils of lower ability.
12. When the 1999 GCSE results are compared with the same pupils' results in the 1997 National Curriculum tests, the proportion of pupils gaining 5A\*-C grades, 5A\*-G grades and their average total points score were average. That is to say, they achieved the grades that might be expected. By the same measure, the A\*-C results in English, mathematics and science were well above average, average and below average respectively.
13. The local education authority also conducts an analysis of GCSE results against the pupils' prior performance. In 1999 this placed the school 4<sup>th</sup> highest out of the 13 Redcar and Cleveland secondary schools.
14. The issue of boys performing less well than girls at GCSE is as apparent in the most successful subjects, such as English and art, as it is in all of the others (in art it is evident by looking at the spread of grades, not just the proportion gaining A\*-C grades). While the school has identified the issue through its analysis of examination results and has organised some staff training in this area, systematic processes to introduce, monitor and assess the impact of any initiatives to raise boys' performance in all departments are not being carried out and therefore the pace of change is slow. This indicates that middle and senior management working practices are not most effectively geared towards improving learning and teaching.
15. Teachers are attempting to address the issue of the under-achievement of boys in art by carefully selecting examples of artists' work that are appealing to boys. This is working. In Year 9 the studies in point perspective are designed and developed so that boys can use aspects of their own interests within

their compositions. They are motivated by this strategy and the standard of their resulting work is high. This is the kind of good practice that is not being shared across the school.

16. Overall, pupils identified as having special educational needs achieve well and are making good progress in most subjects in relation to knowledge, skills and understanding. Teachers are aware of the needs of those pupils identified as having special educational needs and therefore plan their work accordingly. However, in modern foreign language lessons, there is very little extra support for pupils identified as having special educational needs and this adversely affects their ability to produce writing that reflects their understanding of the subject.
17. Standards of speaking, listening, reading and writing are high. They are very high in art, which consistently give pupils opportunities to develop these skills. The school's initiative for promoting language across the curriculum has made an appropriate start by generating interest through presentations at staff training days, participating in courses led by the local authority and forming a voluntary working party. Pupils speak clearly, mostly using standard English, and they become increasingly fluent. In art pupils are confident and articulate in expressing their thoughts and feelings, often imaginatively. Geography teachers use open questions to encourage pupils to think. In other subjects much of the oral questioning requires only brief answers, which does not give pupils enough opportunity to develop their thoughts. Pupils listen very attentively; in art, music and drama their sensitive responses indicate acute listening. The school measures pupils' progress in reading during Key Stage 3 so as to identify those who need extra help. The library provides boxes of attractive books for Years 7 to 9 to read in form time twice a week though this reading does not always happen when it should. Most pupils read aloud fluently. In geography and art many resources are available for pupils' research, with some sophisticated texts in art at Key Stage 4. In design technology, history and art pupils use the internet for research. Overall, however, opportunities for reading from books and computers are limited in several subjects. Nearly all subjects encourage pupils' use of subject specific vocabulary through the Word Wizard, which is in the pupils' planners along with helpful hints on punctuation and grammar. In religious education pupils write, sometimes at length, for different audiences. In art they write creatively and they annotate art in a very illuminating way. Pupils achieve neat presentation and correct spelling in most subjects though spelling is often weak in history. Overall some subjects miss opportunities for pupils to write for various purposes. Many subjects give insufficient chances for pupils to use computers for organising and presenting written work.
18. The general level of numeracy within the school is satisfactory. There is no whole school numeracy policy. There has been training for mathematics staff for introducing the numeracy initiative and currently this is targeted at Year 7 pupils. Effective strategies for improving numeracy are not yet evident throughout mathematics lessons. Other subjects use, or make significant contributions to, the numeracy skills of pupils. Geography lessons provide opportunities for pupils to collect and tabulate data, using a variety of graphs to demonstrate differing forms of information. In design and technology subjects, pupils successfully use charts to plot test outcomes. They use a variety of units for measuring lengths, weights and volumes. Some physical education lessons provide opportunity for pupils to use mental calculating skills, when determining recovery rates, by counting pulse rate for 15 seconds and determining the rate per minute before applying data from given tables. In science lessons, pupils use a variety of specialist units, including compound units of density, velocity and pressure. They can interpret and produce graphs representing scientific occurrences. Art lessons develop use of scales, proportions in design and accuracy in measuring. Modern language pupils count, use money, time, dates and sizes of cloths in their target language. During history lessons pupils display events on timelines and present census data in a variety of graphical forms. Pupils of all abilities are able to collect their own data and analyse it successfully. Information communication technology teachers make use of data from a variety of subject areas when demonstrating spreadsheets; producing tables and graphs. Opportunities are found in music lessons to relate lengths of strings, pipes and tubes to the sounds produced, as well noting the mathematics in other aspects of music.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

19. The pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning. Their behaviour at all times is very good and there are very good relationships throughout the school. The behaviour and attitudes of the pupils are major strengths of the school.
20. Pupils show a genuine interest in their lessons and are well motivated. They respond well to the teachers and take an active part in their lessons. They are confident to talk about themselves and their work. They settle well to tasks set and show good levels of concentration. The majority of extra-curricular activities

take place during the lunch break, and this is because many of the pupils travel to school by bus from outlying areas. The pupils particularly enjoy the inter-form games competitions and these are well supported. There is also good support for the Italian class and the homework club. All year groups are given the opportunity to take part in a residential visit and the pupils enjoy these trips and the chance to get to know their teachers in a more informal atmosphere.

21. The behaviour of the pupils is very good. They very clearly know how they are expected to behave and their levels of self-discipline are very good. This was particularly evident in the dining hall where pupils eat their meals in a calm and relaxing environment. Teachers' expectations of good behaviour gain a positive response from the pupils and, as a result, all the pupils are able to make progress in class. Pupils know, understand and accept the school rules and code of conduct. These are widely displayed in the school and are also in the pupils' planners. The number of fixed period exclusions is broadly average and has been static over recent years. During the last academic year there were two permanent exclusions. Where there is in-class support and when this is used effectively, this has a positive impact on the attitudes and behaviour of pupils identified as having special educational needs as well as those of other pupils.
22. Pupils move around the school in a very orderly manner. They are polite and courteous, greeting visitors in a friendly manner and offering help if requested. They show respect for their school environment, with no graffiti and very little litter seen. Their classrooms are tidy and their work well presented.
23. There are very good relationships within the school. Pupils work and play well together. They listen to one another's opinions and understand the need to think how their actions may affect fellow pupils. They are willing to express emotions and talk about their own feelings. There are equally good relationships between pupils and teachers. Both during lessons and throughout the school day pupils and teachers were seen to relate well to one another.
24. The school provides very good opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and show initiative. There is a school council, inter-form competitions, tutor group masses and charity collections. Pupils are all encouraged to take an active interest in these activities. In Years 9 and 10 pupils help the new Year 7 pupils to settle into the school and they also organise and operate the Tuck Shop. Year 11 pupils are selected to become prefects. They are responsible for organising a Christmas party for senior citizens and a talent show within the school. All these activities provide effective opportunities for the pupils' personal development
25. The great majority of pupils are happy with the school's policy on bullying and the way any incidents are managed. Pupils were willing to talk about their own experiences and agreed that bullying is not a major problem within the school. They know who they can turn to if they are worried and are confident they will be listened to and offered help and support.
26. Attendance rates are satisfactory. The school's figures for unauthorised absences are below the national average and the figures for authorised absences are broadly in line with national rates. Pupils arrive at school on time, the majority coming by bus. Lessons begin and end on time and registration is completed satisfactorily.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR PUPILS TAUGHT?**

27. The quality of teaching is good overall, and this makes a major contribution to the learning of the pupils which is also good. In the 125 lessons seen, the teaching was satisfactory or better in 94%, good or better in 76% and very good or better in 31%. The proportion of lessons graded good, very good and excellent is significantly higher than the proportions of these grades awarded in other schools inspected nationally. The grades are also higher than the grades awarded during the last inspection.
28. At Key Stage 3, the quality of teaching is: excellent in art; very good in music; good in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, information and communication technology, history and geography; and satisfactory in modern foreign languages and physical education.
29. At Key Stage 4, the quality of teaching is: excellent in art; very good in mathematics, music, business studies and drama; good in English, science, design and technology, information and communication technology, history and geography; and satisfactory in physical education.

30. The excellent teaching in art has a direct impact on the high quality of the pupils' learning in this subject and the excellent levels of achievement particularly at GCSE. Pupils are encouraged to be imaginative and creative, and to develop good technical skills. They study a very wide range of artists' work and are encouraged to experiment. Lessons are structured in short steps so that the pupils gain confidence in their ability to effectively use the techniques that they have been taught. They are also expected to make each successive piece of work better than the last. As a result the quality of pupils' learning is excellent. Pupils improve on their skills of observation in drawing and painting throughout the school. They get a very good understanding of the nature and use of colour, line and tone and an excellent understanding of composition in landscape.
31. The very good teaching in music reflects the enthusiasm of the teacher and the skilful way that pupils are given opportunities to make and learn about a wide range of music. The teaching reaches their hearts as well as their minds. In business studies, lessons are highly organised and well paced. The teacher uses whole class teaching sessions to show pupils how to fulfil tasks and then allows them appropriate time to practice their newly discovered skills. The high standards achieved by the pupils in drama are due to very well structured, stimulating and encouraging teaching.
32. In the best English lessons, teachers convey enthusiasm which stimulates the pupils, they give pupils a good deal of responsibility for making discoveries, and they use an interesting range of resources and a variety of methods, including some very skilful questioning which makes the pupils think. They manage their classes well, often with humour, creating a conducive atmosphere for learning. In nearly all lessons teachers plan well to link with past and future lessons and to include a variety of tasks and well organised group work. Most lessons end with a resume of what has been learnt.
33. In the few lessons judged to be unsatisfactory, half were taught by teachers whose specialism was in another subject.
34. There are some discrepancies between the positive judgements about teaching in some subjects, such as mathematics, science, design and technology and information and communication technology, and the achievement of pupils in these subjects as shown by examination and test results. This is because of: changes in the deployment of teachers and leadership and management issues in mathematics; the long-term absence of teachers, curriculum planning in Key Stage 4 and leadership and management issues in science; curriculum issues and the status of the subject in design and technology; and curriculum issues and changes of staff in information and communication technology.
35. The school has appropriately identified the need to adjust teaching strategies to raise boys' levels of achievement. Training has been undertaken by senior managers and the outcomes passed on to the rest of the teaching staff. This has been a valuable process. There is now a need to monitor the extent to which departments are implementing these or any other strategies, to evaluate which are proving most successful and to spread the good practice around the school. This ongoing monitoring, evaluation and support of teaching and learning in all departments is not currently the core focus of senior and middle managers.
36. Literacy skills are effectively promoted in English and in a range of other subjects; for example, in art pupils are given many opportunities to express their thoughts and feelings, often imaginatively. Geography teachers use open questions to encourage pupils to think. In other subjects much of the oral questioning requires only brief answers, which does not give pupils enough opportunity to develop their thoughts. In geography and art, teachers provide many resources which help pupils to develop their research skills. In design technology, history and art pupils use the internet for research. Overall, however, opportunities for reading from books and computers are limited in several subjects. Nearly all subjects encourage pupils' use of subject specific vocabulary through the Word Wizard, which is in the pupils' planners along with helpful hints on punctuation and grammar. The range of writing seen during the inspection shows that the pupils are not given enough experience in writing for various purposes.
37. Effective strategies for improving the numeracy of the pupils are not yet evident throughout mathematics lessons. Other subjects use, or make significant contributions to, the development of pupils' numeracy skills; for example, geography lessons provide opportunities for pupils to collect and tabulate data, using a variety of graphs to demonstrate differing forms of information, and in design and technology subjects, pupils use charts to plot test outcomes. The numeracy skills of the pupils enable them to take full advantage of the curriculum, but there is not a cohesive programme optimising practice in the school.

38. The quality of spiritual, personal and social education lessons observed was good overall. This programme of work is constantly upgraded and evaluated in an ongoing way; however, there is insufficient time for the co-ordinator to monitor the teaching across the year groups. The Christian commitment to helping and supporting those in need is incorporated into the programme. There is a group that visits the housebound and a CAFOD group which supports Third World development. A support group of 10 adults makes a fine contribution by visiting the school and listening to pupils' concerns in a capacity of helping and healing. This is highly valued by the school.
39. In the majority of subjects teaching meets well the needs of pupils identified as having special educational needs. Teachers receive very good quality information about these pupils and targets are clearly identified. Teachers comment on the reverse side of the individual education plans as to how they will ensure they support the needs of pupils identified as having special educational needs. This enables teachers to plan their lessons for the full range of needs in their groups. In Key Stage 4 history, for example, all pupils identified as having special educational needs make good achievement in both lessons and the unit of work overall. This is as a result of challenging but well-structured tasks and good support from both the teacher and the learning support assistant.
40. Pupils with special educational needs know their targets – which are appropriate – and feel well supported. This creates a positive learning atmosphere in which all can achieve well. In all religious education lessons teachers are adept at ensuring pupils identified as having special educational needs join in discussions and express their views along with all other pupils in lessons. In English lower sets are small and teachers successfully match the work to the full range of ability thus enabling pupils to make good progress. The structure of drama lessons together with teacher encouragement is very effective in developing the self-confidence of pupils identified as having special educational needs. Skilful teaching in a Year 10 life skills lesson resulted in lower-ability pupils learning purposefully as well as enjoying the experience. In a Year 9 geography lesson the effectiveness of a learning support assistant was the result of her enthusiasm and awareness of the learning needs of her targeted pupil, as well as the needs of all others in the room. In some areas though, the needs of pupils identified as having special educational needs are not always fully met. In design and technology, for example, lesson planning does not always take account of the need to match the work to the range of ability in the groups. Similarly, in a Year 7 geography lesson, a pupil with a range of significant needs was not making the progress he should have been making because the work was not fully matched to his needs. In English withdrawal groups, the co-ordinator for pupils with special educational needs sets a positive tone and discusses with pupils why some have difficulties with, for example, spelling. This puts them at ease and provides a purposeful learning atmosphere.

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

41. The aims of the curriculum are in accordance with the Roman Catholic nature of the school and there is a strong and very beneficial focus on the spiritual, moral, social, physical and academic development of the pupils. The curriculum reflects the published aims of the school but it has weaknesses with regards to breadth and balance, structure and the use of time.
42. Not all pupils are able to follow a course of study leading to a GCSE in design and technology. In Year 11, those not choosing the design and technology option follow a technologies studies course which includes a carousel of experiences within the areas of information and communication technology, food, resistant materials and textiles. While this gives some provision, the amount of time allocated is insufficient to meet the requirements outlined in the National Curriculum for both design technology and information and communication technology. The pupils in Year 10 who do not choose either information and communication technology or design technology as an option also follow a technology studies course and select any one of the four options available. This results in three quarters of these pupils not being able to follow a course of study in information and communication technology. This is a breach of entitlement and school is therefore failing to fulfil its statutory duty. This is why standards in information and communication technology are low at the end of Key stage 4. Pupils who choose the design and technology or information and communication technology GCSE option also take the technology studies option because of block timetabling. This results in duplication of activities.
43. In design and technology, curriculum planning is carried out independently in the three subject areas (resistant materials, food and textiles) at both key stages. This results in a fragmented curriculum and the duplication of some key areas of study. Pupils in Year 7 are allocated well below the minimum

recommended time of 5% for design and technology. In Key Stage 4 those pupils who do not opt for a design and technology subject in GCSE get a low proportion of time for the subject, spread across the three disciplines. There are insufficient staff to meet the GCSE needs of all pupils, and therefore take up in this subject has to be limited. Pupils therefore do not have equal access to design and technology. The previous inspection identified as a key issue the raising of “the image of this subject”. Insufficient progress has been made in this area.

44. Double award science is offered as an option only for GCSE and the proportion of pupils opting for it is too low. It is nationally recommended as the core course for the great majority of pupils so that they are best prepared for life after school, particularly with regard to having access to a comprehensive package of career options. The Single Award course fails to prepare pupils well for the adult world where they are expected to make informed judgements on many environmental and technological issues.
45. The breadth and balance of the modern languages is adversely affected by the inconsistent access to German. German is offered as a second language only, and to a small number of pupils. Furthermore, arrangements for the introduction of German have been subject to change and it is not now possible for a pupil to study German in Key Stage 3. The introduction of Italian as a ‘twilight’ course extends opportunity, but less so for those pupils who have a significant distance to travel to the school. A key issue in the last inspection report was to: “improve the arrangements for the provision of a second modern language”. This has not been satisfactorily addressed.
46. The breadth and balance of the physical education curriculum is affected by the overall poor quality of accommodation. In addition, the use of both the hall and the gymnasium for public and school examinations, and the hall’s multiple useages, is very restrictive. In Key Stage 3 not all pupils follow the same curriculum in dance and in ‘outdoor and adventure activities’, which restricts equality of opportunity. There is also less than the national average amount of time devoted to the whole physical education curriculum in Key Stage 3; time also varies across the key stage which adversely affects curriculum planning. The GCSE course is not offered at Key Stage 4 and schemes of work at both key stages need updating to meet the new National Curriculum requirements.
47. In English there is insufficient time given to drama in Key Stage 3, and also in Key Stage 4 where pupils do not take drama as a GCSE option. This fails to meet the new requirements of the National Curriculum. The use of information and communication technology in English is confined to a four-week block for research, word-processing and graphics in Year 9. This is insufficient provision.
48. In Key Stage 3 there is a variation in the time devoted to some subjects from year to year, particularly design and technology, history, geography and physical education. Teachers do not know in advance how much time they will have in each year group, consequently they cannot plan their schemes of work effectively in advance. The timetable is arranged largely in double lessons of 70 minutes and occasionally into single 35 minute lessons. This means that the division of time is less flexible than, for example, 5× 60 minute lessons per day or 6×50 minute lessons per day. Consequently, some subjects get more than the average amount of time and others get less.
49. The Community Work course is a valuable addition to the curriculum at Key Stage 4. It gives pupils challenging experiences of caring for others, both young and old. A more structured curriculum leading to some form of accreditation (without losing the essentially practical dimension of the course) would be beneficial in that it would validate for employers the skills that pupils had developed. The school does not offer a broad enough range of vocational courses.
50. As at the time of the last inspection the length of the taught week falls short of the government’s recommended minimum time in both key stages. This significantly restricts the school from being able to offer a broad and balanced curriculum.
51. In the last inspection report a key issue was to: “reconsider the use of registration and tutorial time in connection with the relatively short curriculum teaching week”. This has been addressed within the very comprehensive spiritual, personal and social education programme. The way in which this is taught varies from teacher to teacher but overall there has been a significant improvement since the last inspection. There is a need for more monitoring and evaluation of the programme of work to ensure a more consistent delivery in both key stages.
52. A good range of extra-curricular activities is offered. Most subjects have lunchtime and after school clubs. This is particularly good in music where there are shows, Christmas concerts and liturgical

music. There is a good range of competitive sports offered. The fact that some pupils travel a considerable distance by bus restricts take up of extra-curricular activities after school. The school tries to support extra-curricular work by having an hour-long lunchtime. This enables all pupils to have access to a range of activities including sports, music, religious celebrations, charity work and lunchtime homework clubs.

53. The provision of careers education is very good. The careers programme is very well organised and integrated to provide appropriate advice and guidance. This includes an extensive programme of careers lessons as part of the personal and social education course followed by all pupils from Year 9 to Year 11. The teaching of careers education is good, as pupils are encouraged to think for themselves and to carefully weigh all their options. The individual pupil interviews provided by the careers service 'Future Steps' is especially valued by the school. The organisation of work experience for pupils in Key Stage 4 is also very good. The school carefully follows up the pupils' experience at their work placements. Links with local businesses are strong as is shown by their support in providing personnel to conduct mock interviews with pupils in Year 11. The school also receives considerable support from Teesside Training and Enterprise Council.
54. The careers library contains much useful information and pupils are actively encouraged to use it. However there is only limited provision of information and communication technology in the library. This prevents pupils from making wider searches that would extend the range of information available to them. The school hopes to improve this provision in the near future.
55. There has been a complete revision of the personal and social education programme since the last inspection. A very comprehensive spiritual, personal and social education programme of work has been developed. This is co-ordinated by a senior teacher. It covers all aspects of spiritual, personal and social education including sex education and drugs and health education. All these aspects are well integrated. It is taught as a discrete subject for one lesson per week, timetabled at the same time for all pupils. Almost all teachers are involved in the delivery of this programme of work and a range of speakers from outside agencies are invited into school to give a greater depth of professional and personal input. These visiting speakers include governors; the police on drugs education and law and order; the ambulance service on first aid; the justice and peace movement; the prison service and professional representatives on health and personal hygiene.
56. The full programme of study is split into units and teachers are given a choice of which unit or units they wish to teach. They do this in rotation with different groups so that they have the opportunity to become expert in one or two areas rather than having to cover the whole programme. This work can often be related to teachers' expertise and interest. Sex education is taught within the context of relationships and is delivered by teachers and a governor, all of whom feel confident and secure in their knowledge and ability to deliver this aspect. The biological aspects are taught within science as appropriate.
57. Overall, the provision for pupils identified as having special educational needs is good. They have access to the entire curriculum and make good progress. They are well supported, both in class as well as in individual or small group withdrawal sessions in the learning support area. A lunchtime homework club offers valuable support to pupils outside normal curriculum time. This support means that individual pupils are able to seek extra help they feel they might need. Not all pupils identified as having special educational needs are entered for the full range of GCSE examinations. There is, however, a range of other accredited courses that pupils can take as well as a study support group in Year 10 organised by the learning support department. Where appropriate, the learning support department organises special arrangements in examinations to support the pupils.
58. Provision for pupils' spiritual growth is very good. The Catholic faith underpins all aspects of school life by fostering a climate which respects and values every individual. Opportunities are created and taken to reflect on feelings aroused through the study of literature, art and music: pupils are open and frank in their expression. There is consideration of the plight of others and of the wonders of the world both

on a personal level and global scale. Worship and music play a central part in the life of the school. A weekly Mass is held in the Postgate Centre, which is also a place set aside for private prayer and reflection.

59. Moral provision is very good. There is a clear code of conduct and the Positive Behaviour policy emphasises the value of pupils through rewards and merits. Pupils are aware of the rewards and consequences of their behaviour. Pupils learn about fair play in physical education and music, and debate moral issues such as the depletion of the rain forests in geography and issues such as old age and class injustice in English. Teachers set a good example and with their support, the pupils help the poor and needy through, for example, providing Christmas hampers, charity giving and the Christmas party for senior citizens. The party makes a major impact on the lives of many people in the community. It is organized by the pupils themselves with guidance from the staff and involves over 100 visitors. Pupils are involved in designing and sending invitations, preparing food and entertainment and hosting their guests. The event is very much enjoyed by all who attend. The chaplaincy support team, volunteers from the local parishes, also provides help and care for pupils.
60. Social education is very good. There are prefects, monitors and a school council which is drawn from elected year representatives. Older pupils officiate at outside sporting fixtures. In most subjects pupils work in groups for part of their learning and in music this is continued into break and lunchtime when pupils can be seen developing their personal relationships through music-making. The Duke of Edinburgh Award has recently been introduced and pupils are also able to join with other young people in Redcar for activities. There are many opportunities for taking part in musical events both in worship where the pupils are responsible for organising the musicians and in public concerts in school and with other musicians such as the Young Sinfonia. All pupils identified as having special educational needs take a full part in the life of the school - some have been appointed as prefects and many take responsibility in other ways such as being library assistants or in helping officiate in inter-form sporting fixtures at lunchtimes.
61. There is good provision for cultural development, particularly in art, geography and music. Assemblies provide a good range of cultural as well as spiritual experiences; for example, during the inspection week an assembly explored the theme of 'having a dream or ideal' through the lives and works of Martin Luther King and Elvis Presley. Pupils are taken on theatre visits to Darlington and Newcastle, geography offers a good fieldwork programme which incorporates local studies and the English department has arranged for theatre groups to perform in school. The teaching of modern foreign languages features too much use of English; it therefore limits pupils' appreciation of the language as a vehicle for communication.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

62. The school provides very good pastoral care and guidance for its pupils and a secure environment which enables them to learn effectively. It is a caring and supportive community where the pupils are known and valued.
63. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good. The school expects high standards of behaviour and it is effective in securing this both in classrooms and around the school.
64. The heads of years and form tutors play important roles in the pastoral care of the pupils; they are kept well informed through regular meetings and discussions. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are very good. Teachers know their pupils well and there are very good relationships in the school. There are secure systems in place to ensure that teachers are aware of the personal needs of their pupils. The well-planned transition policy ensures that pupils joining the school are helped and supported well in their first few weeks. The pupils and their parents are then asked to complete a questionnaire and through this process, the school is able to monitor how effective the transition process is. This is an example of good management practice. The school works closely with the educational welfare officer, the behaviour support unit and other local services. The learning support department has very good and effective links with outside specialist agencies. This further enhances the department's support for those pupils identified as having special educational needs.
65. There are appropriate policies relating to behaviour, attendance, child protection procedures and health and safety matters. There is no policy relating to the use of restraint. Staff are kept up to date with all the

school's policies through the staff handbook. Training has been provided for the child protection procedures and all appropriate records are kept securely. At present some areas of the school's healthy and safety policy are not fully complied with. The school was told of the specific problems during the inspection and has already begun to address the issues. The procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are satisfactory.

66. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory. In response to the previous inspection the school now has an assessment policy but it is not fully in place in all departments and arrangements for monitoring its use are also unsatisfactory. All departments mark and assess work on a regular basis but much of the assessment is made relative to the capabilities of each pupil. This means that the pupils do not have a clear idea about how they are performing against standardized measures such as National Curriculum levels or GCSE grades; for example, Year 11 pupils do not know the GCSE grades that they are expected to achieve and pupils with special educational needs do not know their reading ages. This in turn means that improvement targets are not set against clear benchmarks.
67. The interpretation of the assessment policy varies between departments. Pupils are therefore unsure what a particular grade means in one subject compared with the award of the same grade in another. In line with the requirement to report National Curriculum levels from September 2000, the physical education department has started to assess pupils in this way. By contrast, the music department does not do this, and so the pupils do not know sufficiently well how they are doing. There is good practice in art, where the lessons start with an evaluation and marking of work, which identifies where improvement is needed. This a key element of the department's effectiveness in helping the pupils to achieve high standards. Other subjects do not generally give pupils a sufficiently clear idea of what they need to do to improve.
68. Two senior members of staff are currently being trained in the use of software which helps track pupils' progress. This is a valuable initiative because many schools use such methods to effectively monitor how well the pupils are performing.
69. Statistics are extensively analysed to produce rank order of departments at GCSE, to give a picture of trends and weaknesses and to show individual teacher performance. The analyses do not take account of the relative difficulty of subjects based on pupils' performance nationally, but they are still very useful in identifying more and less effective subjects. The action to follow up the analyses of performance by sharing effective practices and supporting less effective departments and teachers is not routinely and formally part of senior and middle managers' roles. The English department does its own analysis and has used the information to improve teaching by, for instance, planning more multi-cultural poetry. This practice is not widespread and too little use is made of assessment data to inform planning, particularly in mathematics, science, modern foreign languages, geography and music.
70. The merit system has been improved recently by changing the criteria so that boys are more likely to have their positive contributions recognised. This is a very positive initiative as part of the school's desire to raise boys' achievement.
71. Procedures for the identification and assessment of pupils with special educational needs are effective and meet the requirements of the special needs Code of Practice. A range of intake data together with screening tests enables the learning support department to identify strengths and weaknesses in reading and to then organise provision for those pupils identified as needing help. Individual education plans are reviewed on a regular basis and targets are modified, changed or reinstated. Targets are not always specific and achievable, thus they do not always help teachers in their planning to meet the full range of needs in their classes.
72. There is no data on the individual education plans about pupils' reading or spelling ages or their National Curriculum levels. Immediate access to this kind of data would help teachers plan their work to match the full ability range of pupils in their lessons.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

73. The parents are very supportive of the school. There was a very good response to the parental questionnaire. The parents consider that the school encourages their children to work hard. They also think that the teaching and behaviour are good. The inspectors agree with the parents' positive comments. The parents were less happy with the number of extra-curricular activities provided, how well informed they are about their children's progress and the amount of homework set. The inspectors found that the school provides good extra-curricular provision, with most of the activities taking place during the lunch break. The evidence gathered about homework indicates that the amount received by the pupils is appropriate to their ages. The school does not provide sufficient information about pupils' progress as much of the information is not standardised. It is not clearly presented in the annual reports where different formats are used by each subject. Some subjects give full details of grades and targets, using national curriculum levels, whilst others use percentages, with no comparatives provided.
74. The school holds regular parents' evenings throughout the year and these are well attended. The form tutors and heads of years are available to talk to parents during the school day and parents are encouraged to contact the school if they have any concerns. Regular newsletters are produced every half term and these keep parents well informed of staff news and forthcoming events. At the beginning of the autumn term parents are sent a calendar showing all the planned events and important dates for the next academic year. The school's prospectus provides detailed information for parents and is produced in an easy-to-read format. It comprehensively outlines the school's policy for providing for pupils identified as having special educational needs. The latest annual governors' report to parents includes full information on the school's policy for special educational needs. It does not, however, report on successes or changes to this policy.
75. There is an active Parents Teachers Association which holds regular social and fund-raising events. These are well supported and provide valuable additional funds for the school. Parents also help with the school's drama and musical productions, providing refreshments and helping with make-up and costumes. A number of parents take an active part in the programme of mock interviews and others regularly attend the school masses. There is good support from parents and other members of the community for the Postgate Centre. This offers support to pupils throughout the school and is regularly used as a meeting place for teachers and pupils. Parents of pupils in Years 7 and 8 are involved in encouraging their children to read through a month's planned home reading programme. There is also good support from parents through involvement with the music and art departments. A joint parents/pupils choir is currently rehearsing and parents of pupils studying art are very supportive of homework projects.
76. The support the school receives from the parents makes a valuable contribution to the learning of the pupils.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

77. The Sacred Heart R.C. school is a good school. Pupils benefit from being given a wide range of opportunities to learn and develop the skills to help them through life. The headteacher leads the school well. He sets a good example to both pupils and staff in the way that he promotes the school's aims and values and encourages a culture of learning. He is a strong presence in the school, making himself accessible to staff and pupils on a day-to-day basis, while also having a clear eye on long-term development issues.
78. The headteacher is well supported by a senior management team consisting of 2 deputy headteachers and a senior teacher. They also show a high level of commitment to the school and work hard to ensure that the school is organised effectively. A range of responsibilities is effectively managed by them, including the pastoral system and the induction of new staff. They are set performance targets, many of which are precise, and this indicates a good commitment to performance management in advance of its statutory implementation.
79. The roles of the members of the senior management are not sufficiently well focused on promoting high quality teaching and learning. They have too many roles; for example, in recent years the deputy headteachers have shared the responsibility for managing a year group. This means that they are heavily involved in day-to-day events, which prevent them from routinely working alongside departments to support them in raising standards. Senior staff have worked with some departments to build on strengths and improve weaknesses, such as in physical education and modern foreign languages, but this is not a process that is continuous and therefore embedded practice. Some of the roles performed by senior

staff, such as looking after the buildings, would be more appropriately assigned to non-teaching staff so that senior staff could concentrate on key strategic functions.

80. The governors take a close interest in the school. They work hard to support the school's development plans, for example, in liaising with the local education authority and the diocese to gain approval for building projects. They bring a range of valuable skills to the school and make an appropriate contribution to decision making.
81. Middle management roles are fulfilled with varying degrees of success. Leadership and management are: excellent in art; very good in history; good in English, information and communication technology, geography and music; satisfactory in modern languages and physical education; and unsatisfactory in mathematics, science and design and technology.
82. The excellent leadership and management in art is particularly seen in the impact that management strategies have had in helping pupils to reach exceptionally high standards, and the imaginative, challenging and varied schemes of work which draw from the work of major artists and artistic movements from a very wide range of cultures throughout the centuries. The unsatisfactory leadership and management in mathematics is reflected in the weaker GCSE performance of the pupils compared with results in other subjects. In science, staff have worked hard and cohesively to manage in the head of department's absence; however, there are many issues that need addressing particularly with regard to the curriculum at Key Stage 4. In design and technology, the unsatisfactory dimension of its management lies principally with the way that senior management have organised the subject within the curriculum which means that it does not have an appropriately high status. This was a criticism made at the time of the last inspection.
83. The headteacher has appropriately led the school towards the adoption of performance management practices in line with government policy. He has worked hard to gain the trust of staff and has encouraged them to discuss performance related issues with him. This is good practice and shows that the school is moving towards a more systematic process through which staff are supported more effectively in improving their professional practice. Over some years, observations of lessons have been conducted by senior staff and feedback has properly been given in the form of verbal and written reports. Strengths and weaknesses have been identified and targets set. The targets are generally insufficiently specific and therefore it is difficult to assess whether they have been met. The extent to which they have been met is not monitored. This is a weakness and points towards the need for senior and middle managers to support and monitor more closely the work of the staff for whom they have responsibility.
84. Managers do not have a sufficiently clear view of the reasons why some subjects and some teachers are more effective than others in helping pupils to learn and, in turn, what should be done to help them match the performance of the most effective. Art, for example, produces a very high standard of work from pupils of all abilities, while 88% of the girls gained A\*-C GCSE grades in English in 2000 compared with 61% of the boys and 56% of the girls in mathematics. Systematic practices to identify and act upon the factors that create these discrepancies have not yet been developed and effective strategies adopted by some subjects are not being comprehensively shared across the school.
85. Subjects are monitored following each year's examination and test results. This includes an analysis of how well the pupils performed under the direction of each teacher and how well subjects have performed compared with other subjects. This is good practice. Subjects also appropriately report to governors on their progress towards development plan targets but there is not a sufficiently regular reviewing of progress towards these targets within each year. This again relates to the need to refocus senior and middle management roles so that their core task is to support the staff, for whom they have responsibility, in improving their work.
86. The school lives up to its mission statement of valuing Catholic traditions and beliefs, showing care for its own and the wider community, encouraging individual growth and working towards academic success. The cohesion between pupils, staff and governors in putting its aims and values into practice is a major strength of the school.
87. The Improvement Plan has appropriate headings under which actions are planned which are in tune with the school's mission statement. There is a good emphasis in the writing, on actions needing to have an impact on pupils' achievement and the quality of learning. There is also an appropriate consideration of time factors and costs; however, the targets are too vague, for example, 'to raise levels of literacy'. Therefore the precise actions to be taken and how they will be monitored and reviewed are not clear.

88. The governing body does not fulfil its statutory duties with regard to the curriculum for information and communication technology, some aspects of health and safety and the reporting of progress towards the post-Ofsted action plan targets in its annual report to parents.
89. The key issues from the last inspection have mostly been tackled. Some specific issues in design and technology have been addressed, but the status of the subject has not been raised. The library and information and communication technology resources have improved though more development is needed, tutor time is now more effectively used by most teachers, the provision for a 2<sup>nd</sup> modern foreign language is still unsatisfactory, appraisal has improved particularly in response to the new Performance Management requirements, and there have been some, but insufficient, improvements to specialist facilities. Like the Improvement Plan, the school's post-Ofsted Action Plan has targets that are insufficiently precise, identifying processes rather than outcomes.
90. The school cares for and supports well those pupils on the register of special educational needs. In the majority of subjects teachers plan their lessons effectively thus enabling pupils identified as having special educational needs to make good progress. The nominated governor for special educational needs is supportive of special educational needs provision in the school. The co-ordinator for pupils with special educational needs provides satisfactory leadership of the learning support department. She maintains effective procedures in order to efficiently and effectively organise and update the register and to ensure that the Code of Practice is fully in place. Although special educational needs is an integral part of the most recent whole school development plan, there is no specific learning support development plan. The co-ordinator for pupils with special education needs therefore has no formal means of focusing on areas for improvement and further development. There is a lack of clarity over her role and a lack of non-contact time leaves her little time to be engaged in strategic planning. The lack of formalised administrative support for the learning support department means that the co-ordinator has to spend too much time over routine administrative tasks – this is an inefficient use of her time and expertise. She is a well-qualified and experienced practitioner and is ably supported by her team of support staff. There are sufficient numbers of support staff to support those pupils on stages 3 – 5 of the school's register.
91. Since the previous report the learning support department has made good progress. Mathematics withdrawal lessons no longer restrict the use of the library for other users during lesson time. A department link group has been established and meets on a regular basis. This has helped improve the ethos of provision for special educational needs throughout the school. As well as targeted support for pupils with statements, there is now more general support across a range of subjects thus benefiting more pupils on the school's register of special educational needs. The learning support department implemented its intention to involve parents in helping with reading on a regular basis and these parent volunteers are now accredited learning support assistants. Paired reading with older pupils helping younger ones is done on a limited basis and there is room for further development in this area. Other positive aspects of provision mentioned in the previous report have been maintained.
92. The school's income-per-pupil has increased since the last inspection and particularly in the most recent year. The cost of teachers remains low as a result of a budgeting policy to provide a well-maintained learning environment and to address successfully the level of learning resources, criticised at the last inspection.
93. Financial administration and monitoring is very good and provides budget-holders, the leadership team and governors with regular monitoring information monthly or on demand. The last audit report highlighted a small number of areas of concern, which are all confirmed as having been addressed.
94. Since the inception of fair funding, the school has continued to buy services from the local education authority and monitors quality and value for money. The school has decided not to take up the option of operating the budget through a cheque book account at the present time.
95. Governors receive a spending plan proposal from the leadership team through the finance committee, which has delegated powers. This committee discusses the recommendations in detail and confirms the spending plan, with revisions, if necessary. While the governors regularly review the school development plan and are aware of its objectives, formalised links between the financial and the school development plans are not sufficiently strong. Governors and spending officers are also aware of the need to obtain best value from the supply of goods and services, and have the broader understanding of best value, but no formal guidelines are in place.

96. Specific grant is appropriately applied. The Standards Fund and other specific grant are managed by senior managers and monitored by the bursar. External grant to support pupils with special educational needs is appropriately applied and is supplemented from the school budget.
97. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is above average as it is at the end of both Key Stages 3 and 4. The effectiveness of the school is good as shown by: the high quality of the teaching; the strength of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision; the care offered to the pupils; and the aims and values promoted by the management. The match of teaching staff to the requirements of the curriculum and the level of learning resources are satisfactory. The maintenance of the building is satisfactory, but its profile adversely affects the ability of the school to offer appropriate learning experiences particularly in physical education. The cost-per-pupil is above average this year, but below average in the previous year. In recognising all these factors the school provides good value for money.
98. The provision of staffing is satisfactory in terms of numbers to provide for coverage of the school's curriculum. However, there are variations in the amount of provision and the quality of education received in certain subject areas. There is a good balance of experienced staff, with long service in the school, and younger teachers. There is a balanced representation of men and women in middle and senior management. Movement of staff from the school is infrequent with only 6 changes in the last 2 years.
99. The school provides good support for the training and development of staff, for both individual and curriculum needs. This is matched by very good induction procedures for new teachers and for student teachers training in the school. The systems and procedures for induction, mentoring and teacher development are very well documented and have contributed much to the improved quality of teaching since the previous inspection. The school has an effective professional development plan and is currently reviewing its appraisal system to be used for performance management. All but four teachers are working toward targets for progressing through the performance management threshold.
100. Additional technician support has been provided since the last inspection. Spending on special needs support is high compared to most schools, which has enhanced teaching in those areas of provision. Support staff make a positive and appreciated contribution to the work of the school. They are valued as members of staff and their training needs recognised and provided. Learning support assistants are dedicated, enthusiastic and committed to working with pupils identified as having special educational needs. They have a good range of experience and appropriate qualifications and this has a positive impact on the quality of their support in lessons. They are effectively deployed to ensure that all pupils with statements of special educational needs receive the support they are entitled to; however, formal monitoring and evaluation of the quality of this support is not yet well developed and any inconsistencies or strengths in practice are therefore not yet being fully identified by the school.
101. In areas of design and technology, there are an insufficient number and balance of staff to provide an appropriate course for all pupils in Key Stage 4. The limited number of qualified information and communication technology teachers is a factor in limiting curriculum provision in Key Stage 4. In the mathematics and science departments, long-term absences of key staff have resulted in discontinuous teaching which has had an impact on pupils' achievements.
102. Accommodation is well managed by a deputy headteacher and site manager, and progress has been made in improving facilities since the last inspection; however, a number of problems, mostly related to the school's design, remain unsolved. Although there is sufficient accommodation for the present curriculum and number of pupils in all areas but one, a number of rooms are not fully suited to their present use. Maintenance and improvement in the quality of teaching are, therefore, still not fully supported by the school's accommodation. It is nevertheless well maintained and decorated, and is managed in a conscientious and creative way, which lessens the impact of the building's shortcomings. Display throughout the school is of a high standard and has a very positive effect on the learning environment.
103. Issues of poor access for all pupils, of safety and comfort are still unresolved. The lack of adequate corridors results in rooms being used for pupil access, for example the library and modern foreign languages rooms. This limits opportunities for their creative use. Staircases are narrow and fire doors open directly into them, thus restricting safe and efficient movement. However, none of these issues disrupts lessons or causes excessive problems as a result of staff and pupils' good-will, and of good management systems. Many of the windows in the school are ill-fitting and draughty and noisy in windy conditions. A number of rooms also lack adequate blinds to prevent glare in sunny conditions. Some health and safety issues in technology have been reported to the school's management.

104. Progress in improving the accommodation since the last inspection includes the more effective clustering of the rooms of most departments, although the arrangements in mathematics and design and technology are still unsatisfactory. Four sets of toilets and the front entrance have been re-furnished and changing rooms redecorated. The arrangements for pupils' access to the drama room are unsatisfactory. The hard play area has been resurfaced but its drainage is unsatisfactory and therefore unsuitable for physical education when very wet, and two science laboratories are about to be refurbished. Departments can now 'bid' for improvements from the delegated budget as part of a rolling programme of improvement.
105. The quality and quantity of accommodation is still inadequate for the effective teaching of physical education. This has a negative impact on the breadth and balance of the curriculum offered. Unsuitable areas are the lack of a sports hall, the use of the school hall for barefoot dance and the showers do not provide adequate privacy for girls or boys. The newly resurfaced hard play area is uneven and poorly drained. The school is attempting to remedy this with the contractor.
106. The current County Asset Management Plan identifies many maintenance needs. The school and local education authority are currently setting priorities within this, some of which are likely to incur significant costs. There is also a proposal in front of the diocese for rebuilding the whole school so that the limitations of the building can be addressed. This is currently under consideration.
107. There has been some improvement in the percentage of the total school budget, which is spent on resources for learning since the last inspection. Currently about 2½% of the whole school budget is allocated to departments compared with a stated aim for this to be 3%. The process of allocation is based on the number of pupils they teach and the type of work carried out. There are also opportunities for departments to make bids for additional funds. At present the process is not sufficiently linked to improvement planning.
108. Overall there is an adequate supply of resources for the school's curriculum and range of pupils. Within that judgement however there are some shortcomings. There are insufficient computers and software to meet the statutory requirements for information and communication technology and most departments fail to make sufficient use of information and communication technology partly because there are not enough computers around the school. There are also shortages of basic equipment which inhibit learning in science.
109. The number and range of books in the school library has improved since the last inspection. The English department makes a significant contribution to this improvement by giving some of its funding for the purchase of books. The School Resources Service carried out a review of the library this term. Included in their recommendations was for better signs so pupils could find the library, which suggests that it is not used sufficiently at the present time. As with some other areas of the school there are no computers in the library. It is therefore not possible for pupils to use a wide range of information sources when carrying out research. The library is open all day but is mostly used as an ordinary classroom for normal lessons, which again limits its effectiveness as a learning resource.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

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

- Take steps to raise achievement:
  - In design and technology; and information and communication technology at Key Stage 4
  - By improving the consistency of pupils' achievements between subjects so that they do as well in all their subjects as they do in art
  - By improving the achievement of boys, particularly at Key Stage 4  
(*paragraphs 1-18, 110-217*)
- Improve the focus of senior and middle management roles by:
  - Making the key element of senior and middle management roles the improvement of teaching and learning
  - Improving the links and accountability structures between staff, middle managers and senior managers so that good practices can be shared and celebrated, and support can be given to address weaknesses
  - Monitoring more effectively the impact of the implementation of whole school strategies to enable the most successful approaches to be shared across the school
  - Ensuring that management tasks are undertaken at appropriate levels; for example, responsibility for the buildings
  - Using performance information more effectively to inform action plans  
(*paragraphs 77-109, 110-217*)
- Develop a strategic curriculum plan to:
  - Ensure that statutory requirements for information and communication technology are fulfilled
  - Ensure that all subjects make full use of information and communication technology, as indicated in Curriculum 2000, to promote the learning of the pupils
  - Increase the proportion of pupils taking double science to national average levels
  - Develop an approach to design and technology that enables all pupils to have full access to the subject
  - Ensure that the opportunity to study a second modern foreign language is open to all pupils
  - Develop the physical education curriculum so that it: complies with the 2000 curriculum requirements; has balanced and stable time allocations at Key Stage 3; gives equal opportunity to girls and boys; and it offers an examination option at Key Stage 4
  - Increase the provision of work related courses
  - Increase the provision of drama within English  
(*paragraphs 41-61, 110-217*)
- Improve the assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress by:
  - Linking assessments to standardised measures such as National Curriculum levels
  - Ensuring that pupils are fully aware of the standards they are achieving in all subjects
  - Using assessment and monitoring information more effectively to improve teaching and curriculum planning
  - Further developing target-setting for all pupils
  - Developing a progress monitoring system that is open and accessible to all staff so that the progress of all pupils can be tracked and improved.  
(*paragraphs 67-73, 110-217*)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	125
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	61

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	29	45	17	6	-	-

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	719	0
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	102	0

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	4	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	151	0

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

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	9

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	
National comparative data	

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	
National comparative data	

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	69	155

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	61	68	61
	Girls	57	50	46
	Total	118	118	107
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	76 (86)	76 (78)	69 (71)
	National	(63)	(62)	(55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	29 (38)	52 (50)	29 (27)
	National	(28)	(38)	(23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	61	71	40
	Girls	54	56	43
	Total	115	127	83
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	74 (78)	82 (79)	54 (60)
	National	(64)	(64)	(60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	32 (40)	44 (46)	14 (24)
	National	(31)	(37)	(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	79	75	154

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	40	75	79
	Girls	53	71	72
	Total	93	146	151
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	60 (56)	95 (96)	98 (99)
	National	(48)	(88)	(94)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	43 (42)
	National	(38)

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

<b>Vocational qualifications</b>		<b>Number</b>	<b>% success rate</b>
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and	School	18	94

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	2
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	715
Any other minority ethnic group	0

### ***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	49	2
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	40
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.2

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Education support staff: Y7 – Y11**

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	219

#### **Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	[ ]
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#### **Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11**

Key Stage 2	0
Key Stage 3	23.45
Key Stage 4	23.45

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	1,665,240
Total expenditure	1,688,201
Expenditure per pupil	2,335
Balance brought forward from previous year	20,329
Balance carried forward to next year	-2,632

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	719
Number of questionnaires returned	573

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	34	54	9	3	1
My child is making good progress in school.	37	51	4	1	7
Behaviour in the school is good.	36	54	5	1	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	54	15	2	4
The teaching is good.	36	55	3	1	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	44	14	3	7
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	52	37	6	3	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	34	1	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	34	46	12	3	5
The school is well led and managed.	45	43	5	2	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	44	4	2	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	16	38	22	7	18

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

### **ENGLISH**

110. Pupils entering the school in the past two years have attained results in English at Key Stage 2 that were well above the national average. Before 1999 their results at Key Stage 2 were above the national average. At the end of Key Stage 3 standards of attainment are high in relation to national standards. Over the years 1996–1999 results in the Key Stage 3 tests were well above the national average, the trend similar to the national trend. Compared with similar schools they were very high at levels 5 and above and high at the top grades. Boys and girls attained average scores that were well above the national scores for boys and girls. The gap between boys' and girls' results is in line with the national gap, which means that the girls are equivalent of a year ahead of the boys. In 2000 results at the expected level 5 were the same as in 1998, but lower than in 1999, and close to the 1999 national average. Results at the higher levels 6 and above in 2000 were also close to the 1999 national average; these have declined over four years and results in mathematics are now well ahead of English at the higher levels.
111. By the end of Key Stage 4 standards of attainment are very high. Results in English and English literature at grades A\*-C have been well above the national average in the last two years and very high compared with similar schools. There is still a significant difference between boys' and girls' results at A\*-C but not always at A\* and A. In 1999 both boys and girls attained A\* and A grades double the national average in both subjects, with boys gaining more of these highest grades than girls in literature. In 2000 the girls' results were exceptionally high, 88% gaining A\*-C grades and 32% gaining A\* or A grades (11% of the boys gained A\* or A grades). In English literature, 32% of the pupils gained A\* or A grades. Boys did not gain such a high proportion of top grades as in the previous year. All pupils pass and there are few grades below E. Overall these results are higher than those in mathematics and science. A few pupils in the past two years have taken a certificate of achievement in English instead of GCSE; they have gained creditable results in this so that almost every pupil has been able to leave school with a qualification in English. Results in drama at GCSE are also very high. All pupils pass. The results at grades A\*-C were high in 1998, very high in 1999 and high in 2000 compared with the national averages; in 1999 and 2000 a quarter of the group attained A\* and A grades.
112. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 3 and very good progress in Key Stage 4. In Key Stage 4 pupils make much better progress in English than in mathematics and science. At both key stages pupils listen well and they speak clearly, using standard English appropriately, and with increasing fluency as they move through the school. Neat handwriting, pleasing presentation of written work and competent spelling are usual and have improved since the previous inspection. Throughout both key stages there was little difference observable in class between boys' and girls' attainment even though this is so marked in the test and examination results. There were many perceptive and mature comments from boys, who were forthcoming and sometimes witty without being overbearing. Boys and girls are thoughtful when writing in class and they take care in presenting their work. Year 7 enjoy the texts they read in class, understanding well for their age and remembering details. Their thinking skills, however, are only average for their age. They choose appropriate books for their personal reading. They write competently for their age and greatly improve the effectiveness of words and sentences as they redraft their writing. Nevertheless, as a year group that attained results at Key Stage 2 that are well above the 1999 national average, they should achieve more than they have done in the first five weeks of Year 7. Year 8 make particularly good progress in working imaginatively and productively in groups, listening well to each other and reaching solutions about the story they are constructing from a set of photographs that are capable of various interpretations. Throughout the key stage pupils show interest in plot and character in their class tests, recalling well what they have previously studied and learning to justify their responses with evidence. Some forget the technical terms they need for explaining the effects of language. In Years 8 and 9 pupils write in different styles for different purposes. Above average and average attainers write lively stories with effective verbs and complex sentences and they compose imaginative, often inventive, poetry. Amongst the written work of average and below average attainers in last year's Year 9 there were more lightweight tasks than necessary. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. They can sequence ideas and form sentences, though spelling, punctuation and omitting words is a problem with a few lowest attainers. Lower attaining pupils in Year 9 during the inspection were greatly enjoying "Macbeth", remembering a good number of details of Macbeth's character and revelling in quoting short phrases from memory and acting out excerpts.

113. Year 10 have made a very good start to their GCSE course, for instance in understanding characters and social issues in "An Inspector Calls", which they have seen performed, and in grasping the contrasts between patriotic fervour and horror in first world war poetry. Throughout the key stage almost all pupils remember a useful amount of detail from their set texts. Above average attainers analyse characters and issues in a text like "To Kill a Mockingbird" and can explain the effects of literary devices. Lower attainers can see some aspects of character, atmosphere and contrasts for themselves but are not always confident about their findings. Highest attainers achieve some very sophisticated original writing. The majority of pupils write well for different audiences though many average and below average attainers cannot explain why their writing is effective. Some lack confidence in spelling unfamiliar words and some low attainers in Year 10 have done only a little consecutive writing this term. With well structured lessons, interesting tasks and encouragement, pupils with special educational needs feel motivated, take care with their work and make good progress.
114. Pupils taking drama for GCSE start the course with fewer drama skills than are usual at the end of Key Stage 3. However, from the start of Year 10 they rapidly acquire techniques for expressing themselves through drama. With very well structured, stimulating and encouraging teaching pupils achieve high standards. They work very well in groups exploring such issues as teenage pregnancy and infant death, and the effects of schizophrenia and child abuse on families. They keep thorough notebooks on their work and sensitively evaluate their own and other people's work in order to improve it. As a result their performance is very strong on ideas and the use of dramatic techniques to express these. They also create effective dialogue, but their diction, use of tone, and voice projection do not always do justice to their imagination and empathy. Along with the other pupils, those with special educational needs take a full part and make very good progress. There is very limited opportunity for pupils to gain experience in sound and lighting in the school but half of the current Year 11 avail themselves of an evening class run by their teacher at a neighbouring school in order to gain some further expertise.
115. The teaching is good at both key stages and this has a direct impact on the learning of the pupils and their very high achievements at the end of both key stages. Teachers' knowledge of the subject is particularly good at Key Stage 4. In the best lessons, teachers convey enthusiasm which stimulates the pupils, they give pupils a good deal of responsibility for making discoveries, and they use an interesting range of resources and a variety of methods within the lesson, including some very skilful questioning which makes the pupils think. In addition, the teachers in these very good lessons are alert to opportunities for developing the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. In all lessons teachers manage their classes well, often with humour, creating a conducive atmosphere for learning. In nearly all lessons teachers plan well to link with past and future lessons and to include a variety of tasks and well organised group work. Teachers encourage and support lower attaining pupils, thus building up their confidence; they help pupils to acquire new vocabulary and they set homework regularly. Most lessons end with a resume of what has been learnt.
116. Weaknesses in the teaching are when the teacher talks for too much of the lesson, echoing pupils' answers too often, elaborating on their answers rather than eliciting more ideas from the pupils by skilful questioning, and sometimes interrupting when the pupils are concentrating on a task. Sometimes the pace of lessons is too rushed. Across the department the standard of marking is variable in its usefulness, as was the case at the previous inspection. Teachers abide by the school policy, and they give pupils a good deal of oral feedback while they are drafting their writing. However, not all teachers give equally helpful written comments on assessed pieces of work and in reports so that pupils can know exactly what they have achieved in relation to national criteria, and what they need to do to improve. Given the high attainment of pupils when they enter the school and the generous time allocated to English, pupils should achieve more reading, more oral assignments and more pieces of writing, and additional challenging homework tasks in Years 7 and 8. At both key stages the department needs to increase the amount of drama for exploring ideas and issues and for conveying action, character, atmosphere and tension. There is insufficient use of information and communication technology for selecting and comparing texts and for organizing and presenting writing.
117. The school has recently made a number of good appointments in this department. Good management has created a committed, cohesive and mutually supportive team of these relatively inexperienced teachers, and of the three teachers who are not specialist English teachers who are shared with other departments. Informally teachers share their ideas a good deal. However, monitoring of curriculum coverage, assessment procedures and teaching is not sufficiently developed to ensure that all classes are adequately challenged. Accommodation for English is now satisfactory and much better than at the previous inspection. Now all but one of the English classrooms are close to each other. There is more

use of the library than before. Better access to the library and to the room most suitable for teaching drama could be achieved with skilful timetabling.

118. Standards of speaking, listening, reading and writing are high. They are very high in art, which consistently give pupils opportunities to develop these skills. The school's initiative for promoting language across the curriculum has made an appropriate start by generating interest through presentations at staff training days, participating in courses led by the local authority and forming a voluntary working party. Pupils speak clearly, mostly using standard English, and they become increasingly fluent. In art pupils are confident and articulate in expressing their thoughts and feelings, often imaginatively. Geography teachers use open questions to encourage pupils to think. In other subjects much of the oral questioning requires only brief answers, which does not give pupils enough opportunity to develop their thoughts. Pupils listen very attentively; in art, music and drama their sensitive responses indicate acute listening. The school measures pupils' progress in reading during Key Stage 3 so as to identify those who need extra help. The library provides boxes of attractive books for Years 7 to 9 to read in form time twice a week though this reading does not always happen when it should. Most pupils read aloud fluently. In geography and art many resources are available for pupils' research, with some sophisticated texts in art at Key Stage 4. In design technology, history and art pupils use the internet for research. Overall, however, opportunities for reading from books and computers are limited in several subjects. Nearly all subjects encourage pupils' use of subject specific vocabulary through the Word Wizard, which is in the pupils' planners along with helpful hints on punctuation and grammar. In religious education pupils write, sometimes at length, for different audiences. In art they write creatively and they annotate art in a very illuminating way. Pupils achieve neat presentation and correct spelling in most subjects though spelling is often weak in history. Overall some subjects miss opportunities for pupils to write for various purposes. Many subjects give insufficient chances for pupils to use computers for organising and presenting written work.

## **MATHEMATICS**

119. On entry to the school, standards in mathematics are high in relation to national standards.
120. At the end of Key Stage 3, standards are very high in relation to national standards. The results of the 1999 National Curriculum tests in Year 9 were well above the national average; over three-quarters of pupils reached level 5 or above and almost half of pupils reached level 6 or above. The results were very high when compared with the results of similar schools, they are similar to those achieved by the pupils at the time of the last inspection. The results of Key Stage 3 tests in 2000 are similar to those in 1999 except that the proportion of pupils gaining level 7 is considerably higher. This indicates that at Key Stage 3 the mathematics department is effective in helping the most able mathematicians to make good progress.
121. At the end of Key Stage 4, standards are high in relation to the national standards. In the 1999 GCSE examinations, results were above national averages for grades A\*-C and for A\*-G. However, mathematics remains one of the weakest subjects when comparing pupils' performance in other subjects. For the past two years, girls have out-performed boys in the A\*-C category by around 10 percentage points. The trend from 1998 to 2000 indicates a decline in the proportion of pupils attaining the higher grades, while the overall proportion gaining an A\*-G grade has reached almost 100 per cent.
122. At the end of Key Stage 3, the achievement of the pupils is good; with the overall standards of pupils being raised from above average on entry to the school to well above average at the end of Year 9. A significant factor in the raising of test results in 2000 is the improvement of the Key Stage 3 curriculum. Year 7 pupils successfully collect and tabulate data, producing frequency charts and bar charts of the information. In Year 9, high attaining pupils work to very high levels. They are able to identify the rules of indices and apply them accurately. Pupils attaining at average levels are able to create accurate graphs when studying the differences between discrete and continuous variables. Lower attaining pupils are able to name the various types of angles and the range of degrees associated with them; performing mental calculations and estimations of size. Number skills are of a satisfactory standard throughout the key stage and pupils are comfortable using investigation processes to determine results.
123. At the end of Key Stage 4, achievement of the pupils is satisfactory. The GCSE results are above average and broadly in line with the levels of performance they showed when taking the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3. The results are lower than the results of pupils in their other subjects; however, observed lessons indicate an improvement in this situation. In addition, the inspection

of books shows higher attaining pupils working at levels of exceptional performance in some topics. They are strong in the use of number and algebra, using indices, multiplying algebraic expressions and manipulating formulae. They are able to determine the probability of outcomes of compound events and calculate areas and volumes. Higher attaining pupils also show proficiency in deducing the 'sine rule' for triangles and applying their findings to determine missing sides and angles.

124. In both key stages, lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs, make progress similar to other groups of pupils. Almost all lower attaining pupils achieve GCSE grades at foundation level. They successfully follow individual programmes of study, consolidating previous learning as they work on percentages, money scales, averages and circle measures.
125. The general level of numeracy within the school is satisfactory. There is no whole school numeracy policy. There has been training for mathematics staff for introducing the numeracy initiative and currently this is targeted at Year 7 pupils. Effective strategies for improving numeracy are not yet evident throughout mathematics lessons. Other subjects use, or make significant contributions to, the numeracy skills of pupils. Geography lessons provide opportunities for pupils to collect and tabulate data, using a variety of graphs to demonstrate differing forms of information. In design technology subjects, pupils successfully use charts to plot test outcomes. They use a variety of units for measuring lengths, weights and volumes. Some physical education lessons provide opportunity for pupils to use mental calculating skills, when determining recovery rates, by counting pulse rate for 15 seconds and determining the rate per minute before applying data from given tables. In science lessons, pupils use a variety of specialist units, including compound units of density, velocity and pressure. They can interpret and produce graphs representing scientific occurrences. Art lessons develop use of scales, proportions in design and accuracy in measuring. Modern language pupils count, use money, time, dates and sizes of cloths in their target language. During history lessons pupils display events on timelines and present census data in a variety of graphical forms. Pupils of all abilities are able to collect their own data and analyse it successfully. Information communication technology teachers make use of data from a variety of subject areas when demonstrating spreadsheets; producing tables and graphs. Opportunities are found in music lessons to relate lengths of strings, pipes and tubes to the sounds produced, as well noting the mathematics in other aspects of music.
126. Teaching, overall, is good; it is slightly stronger in Key Stage 4 due to the recent re-allocation of experienced staff to this area. This accounts for the discrepancy between the very good teaching and only satisfactory levels of achievement as indicated by recent GCSE results. Teachers are suitably qualified and have very good subject knowledge. Good organisation, high expectations of pupil behaviour with care and respect for the individual helps maintain good discipline and a secure learning atmosphere in lessons. Prolonged interest and application from pupils is maintained by careful planning of lessons which often contain a variety of activities. On the very few occasions where there was insufficient variety of activity, lower attaining pupils found it difficult to maintain their concentration for the whole 70 minutes of the lesson. Teachers' interest and enthusiasm for their subject is transmitted to the pupils who work co-operatively and with motivation. In a Year 8 lesson, pupils were eager to offer their suggestions to improve a questionnaire and, in a Year 11 lesson with low attaining pupils, there was a mature atmosphere of respect and effort as they discussed situations arising from a probability question. In all lessons, teachers took care to use appropriate vocabulary to ensure all pupils could make progress. This was clearly seen in a Year 9 middle set where the teacher reinforced understanding of words to be used during the lesson and encouraged pupils to explain their answers as fully as possible. Pupils respond well to the close support from teachers during lessons.
127. Long-term absences and a variety of supply teachers have resulted in classes having changes of teachers on a frequent basis. This coincides with the fall in GCSE results over the past years. The discontinuity caused and the delay in understanding pupils' needs have contributed significantly to the fall in standards.
128. The leadership and management of the department is unsatisfactory. The major management tools of analysis, development of strategies and targets for improvement, have not been utilised. There is no departmental handbook and no policy documents for internal use or linking to whole school policy. There is no departmental strategy [available for viewing] for activity, relating to the new Numeracy Initiative. There is no evidence of activity to rectify the differing performances between boys and girls. There has been no response to the issue from the last inspection regarding the lack of information and communication technology use within the department. There has been no activity to rectify falling performance of pupils in mathematics at GCSE level. This lack of structure has a limiting effect on teachers' ability to provide the highest quality learning environment for pupils. The department has made

unsatisfactory progress since the last inspection. The new course has been introduced in Key Stage 3 and the Numeracy Initiative has been adopted in Year 7 this year. There have been no developments in ICT provision. The acting head of department has proved effective in introducing a new course into Key Stage 3 and co-ordinating the mathematics teaching of the supply cover. The ethos within the department is one of caring, with a focus on improving the mathematical skills of all pupils.

129. Staffing problems need to be reconciled to reduce the adverse effect on pupils' performance. The department needs to develop management strategies which will allow for clarity of analysis and development within the department, thus providing clear targets which will enable teachers to provide the highest quality learning experiences for pupils. There is a need to develop strategies to improve under-performance of boys in GCSE examinations and to develop the use of information and communication as a learning tool within the department.

## SCIENCE

130. Standards achieved at the end of Key Stage 3 are high in relation to national standards. Attainment in the national testing at the end of Key Stage 3 over the last four years has been above the national average. In 1999 the percentage of pupils obtaining level 5 and above was 71% (55% nationally), and at level 6 and above 27% (23% nationally). This year, results are similar – level 5 and above 68%, and level 6 and above 28%. Average point scores have remained fairly constant over the four years up to 1999. There has been no significant difference in the performance of boys or girls over time with both groups achieving results above the national average. Results in science are below those obtained in English and mathematics particularly in respect of the improvement in levels from Key Stage 2.
131. Standards at GCSE are high in relation to national standards but the relatively low proportion of pupils who take double science confuses the picture. Overall the proportion of pupils gaining A\*-C grades in science (including single and double science) was 56% in both 1999 and 2000. This is 8 percentage points higher than the national average in 1999 (the national average for 2000 is not yet published). The 1999 A\*-C results in English were 21 percentage points higher than the national average. The results in science are similar to those achieved in mathematics. A concern during this inspection has been that pupils, based on their prior attainment in both Year 9 and 11, show below expected knowledge and understanding of previous work. It is likely that frequent changes of staff last year due to staff absence have had a negative impact. This was the view of the pupils and is of concern if examination and test results are to be improved. The higher attaining pupils in Year 9 have only a superficial knowledge and understanding of previous work on series and parallel electrical circuits and the arrangement of particles in solids, liquids, and gases. Pupils' laboratory skills at the end of Key Stage 3 are in line with expectations. Their understanding of the principles of fair testing is satisfactory but they cannot explain properly what the implications are if variables are not controlled. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 11 have a superficial knowledge and understanding of recent work on kinetic and potential energy. Some middle-attaining pupils in Year 11 have only limited understanding of forces, and the difference between elements, compounds, and mixtures. The numerical skills of the pupils help their learning at both key stages.
132. Taking all evidence of pupils' standards into account, the achievement of the pupils is satisfactory in both key stages. At Key Stage 3 pupils enter the school with above average attainment. Attainment remains above the national average at the end of Key Stage 3 but their performance compared with those from similar schools is well above average. Progress at Key Stage 4 is also satisfactory because pupils start from above the national average and achieve results above the national average when they leave the school; however, the 1999 A\*-C GCSE results were below the level that might be expected from the same pupils' results in the 1997 National Curriculum tests. In lessons higher attaining pupils in Year 9 progress well when learning about renewable energy. Year 8 pupils make good progress when observing the structure of flowers to understand how plants reproduce. Mixed ability pupils in Year 7 learn well when preparing and observing onion cells under the microscope. When learning about exothermic and endothermic chemical reactions middle attaining pupils in Year 11 make good progress. Highest attaining pupils in Year 10 make good progress whether investigating the different physical properties of metals, or learning about internal reflection. The department writes subject targets for pupils with special educational needs. These targets are not specific enough for the department to fully monitor their progress. Pupils with special educational needs and more able pupils make satisfactory progress but material adapted for their needs is not used sufficiently.

133. Pupils' attitudes to learning in lessons are generally very good. Pupils show high levels of interest for the subject. Behaviour is also generally very good so that all pupils have every opportunity to learn. Pupils work very well together when carrying out experiments. 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. The very positive attitudes and behaviour of the pupils is a significant reason for the high standards of attainment they achieve.
134. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was good with no significant difference between the key stages. This is an effective department whose teachers work very hard. The concerns about pupils' levels of achievement stem from the discontinuity of teaching particularly last year, the matching of work more closely to the needs of the pupils, curriculum issues relating to the take-up of double award at Key Stage 4 and uneven time at Key Stage 3 and management issues. Teachers set high standards for discipline, which are mostly achieved. The teachers have very good subject knowledge and understanding. Presently the very good balance of their qualifications allows teachers to teach their specialist science subject almost exclusively. This is an important feature, which allows teachers to share their enthusiasm for the subject with the pupils. Lessons are carefully planned, often using a range of resources and methods. The unsatisfactory behaviour of a minority of pupils adversely affects learning in some Year 9 lessons. The quality of marking is satisfactory but there are some inconsistencies with respect to the use of the marking policy. Generally scientific supportive comments are not used sufficiently. The quality of reports to parents is satisfactory. The use of homework to support pupils' learning is good. While the teachers know the level/grade their pupils are aiming for they do not inform the pupils. Consequently the teachers fail to make use of a very important tool for raising standards.
135. The proportion of pupils who opt to take double science falls significantly below those taking this course nationally. This year only about a third of pupils in Year 10 take double science compared with about eight tenths nationally. It is unsatisfactory that this situation has been left to arise in a school with such high attaining pupils. The single science course, which so many pupils take, fails to prepare pupils well for the adult world where they are expected to make informed judgements on many environmental and technological issues. The department runs a modular course for single science pupils and a co-ordinated course for double science pupils. This is an unnecessarily complicated arrangement for such a small school, which should be rationalised. Curriculum time at Key Stage 3 is slightly low on average but more important is the uneven provision through the stage. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 receive 10% of curriculum time while pupils in Year 9 receive 15%.
136. Assessment procedures help to form similar attaining teaching groups. These procedures are suitable for ranking pupils but are not entirely accurate when predicting levels for the National Tests at the end of Key Stage 3. The department does not make enough use of target setting approaches, which will bring about a further improvement in results in both key stages.
137. There is a good team spirit in the department but the present arrangements for the management of the department are unsatisfactory. The head of department has been away for a long time. The task of running the department has been shared between the three most experienced members of the department. They have proven their ability to work together to fulfil this role; however, the department lacks proper direction. It is important for the school to review the responsibilities given to these teachers so that the department can move forward. There are some important issues, which need to be addressed urgently. These issues include: - a review of the Key Stage 4 curriculum, adopt a policy to increase the proportion of pupils taking Double Award, increase target setting, and increase the monitoring both within the department and by the senior management team.
138. There is a newly qualified teacher in the department who feels well supported by the formal mentoring she receives about whole school issues. The science staff support her well informally but no arrangements have been made for her to receive regular advice with regard to the teaching of the subject. Her present timetable still contains groups given to her as the replacement for the head of department. As yet, she does not have the experience to teach some of these groups effectively. The department is well supported by an efficient technician but the time given for technician support is unsatisfactory. Accommodation is satisfactory but in need of refurbishment. There are insufficient power supplies and microscopes. The department makes some good uses of information and communication technology but there are insufficient computers and sensors to give pupils the direct experience of collecting data from their experiments. The money made available annually is insufficient to address these shortages. Bottles of chemicals used by pupils must be labelled with the appropriate hazard warning signs. The storage of concentrated acids and inflammables is unsatisfactory because cupboards are too small. Storage space is low. However the department stores too many chemicals, and too much equipment,

which are not now used. The department has addressed most of the issues raised at the last inspection but the following still require improvement: - the use of information and communication technology, the development of materials to match work more closely to the needs of the pupils, the refurbishment of the laboratories.

## **ART**

139. Standards in art are exceptionally high in comparison with national standards at the end of both key stages. A significant feature of this success is that all pupils, including pupils on the special educational needs register, reach high standards in their work. In both key stages these high standards are directly related to the high quality, imaginative, specialist teaching.
140. In Year 7 pupils are taught colour theory to a good depth, and their learning and knowledge are checked at the beginning of lessons to ensure that they keep the important aspects in mind as they work. Pupils are taught the skills of drawing and painting formally. In Year 8 pupils working on a project on Celtic Art have a good understanding of the nature and purpose of Celtic art and have a good knowledge of the use of symbols. Their work is exemplary in most cases, with some excellent examples of interlacing and pattern, including an exquisite background pattern by a pupil on the special educational needs register. In Year 9, pupils learn by experimenting with the use of colour in landscape painting. They are given excellent guidance on the effects of strong and light colours and examine these in a wide range of reproductions and photographs. They are encouraged and helped to be imaginative and creative.
141. There has been a 100% pass rate in GCSE art over the past three years. GCSE results in the higher grades A\*-C have also been exceptionally high with 95% of pupils getting these higher grades in two of the past three years. A significant feature of GCSE results in 2000 is that over one third of the pupils achieved the A\*/A grade which is significantly higher than average. In relation to their other subjects pupils achieve well in art.
142. Pupils respond imaginatively to their GCSE projects using a wide range of media, drawing and painting, clay, textiles, printing and light sculpture. They also gain inspiration from studying a wide range of artists' work from neolithic through classical to impressionist art and modern art. Very good use is made of information and communication technology for research. Pupils make good use of the digital camera and computer to explore and experiment with ideas and to produce finished pieces of work.
143. The quality of learning is excellent. Lessons are very well planned and structured. The projects presented to pupils are very well chosen to enable all pupils to make imaginative and creative responses. In both key stages pupils use their sketch books very effectively for research and experiments. Pupils improve on their skills of observation in drawing and painting from Year 7 onwards. They get a very good understanding of the nature and use of colour. There is a very good emphasis on the use of line and tone and pupils gain an excellent understanding of composition in landscape.
144. Pupils on the special educational needs register get specific help, including specially written guidance sheets to support their learning. They make excellent progress. There has been a significant improvement in pupils' standards and achievement since the last inspection.
145. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary in the vast majority of cases. They value and enjoy the subject and behave responsibly in all lessons. They are trusted to get resources as they are required and can do this without interrupting others. There was no inattention or poor behaviour observed in any lesson.
146. The quality of teaching is excellent in both key stages. The subject is taught by two specialist teachers who have very good knowledge and expertise. Pupils are encouraged to experiment and to be imaginative and creative. They are helped in these aspects by studies of a very wide range of artists' work. Lessons are structured in short steps so that pupils focus clearly on each part of their work. They are expected to make each successive piece of work better than the last. There is a very good emphasis on pupils acquiring good technical skills. Teachers have the highest expectations of their pupils.
147. The quality of teaching and learning is supported by the excellent leadership of the head of department. Planning is concise and clear and contains all the required information. Teachers have addressed the issue of the under-achievement of boys by carefully selecting examples of artists' work that are appealing to boys. In Year 9 the studies in point perspective are designed and developed so that boys

can use aspects of their own interests within their compositions. As at the time of the last inspection the teaching of printmaking is a particular strength.

148. For the past two years the department has been very successful in generating extra money for art by doing a "float" for the British Steel festival. They have been able to buy computers, a digital camera and a laminator with these funds. They use the laminator to create high quality resources from the works of major artists. They have given part of this funding to other subjects that have co-operated in this project.
149. Teachers give generously of their time, keeping the art rooms open for pupils each lunchtime and running art clubs on two evenings each week. They accompany Year 10 on trips to the London art galleries each year. They do not fully use the rich local environment in their studies. Art has a high profile within the school. The high quality of displays throughout the school enhance the learning environment.
150. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

151. Standards by the end of Key Stage 3 are average compared with standards achieved by pupils nationally. In the tests carried out at the end of Year 9, boys' standards are low compared with those of girls. Schemes of work fail to incorporate opportunities for pupils to develop higher skills, and higher levels of knowledge and understanding, which in part restricts the most able from achieving higher levels of attainment.
152. Standards of designing and making are equitable across the three disciplines of food, textiles and resistant material technology. For example, a Year 7 lesson was able to construct a timber penholder, which required good measuring skills and accurate use of tools. Pupils in a Year 8 food technology lesson achieved satisfactory standards because the teacher extended their learning through an exploration of sensory testing of food. Pupils in food technology demonstrate good team work; for example, a Year 9 group on the theme of harvest. The skills pupils bring with them from science and mathematics enhance their progress in design and technology.
153. The proportion of pupils achieving grades A\* to C in the 1999 GCSE examination was in line with the national average. Achievements for girls and boys are average against their own gender. The achievements gained for the 2000 GCSE are similar to those achieved by the pupils in 1999, however, a smaller proportion of the cohort entered a GCSE examination. The proportion of pupils gaining A\*-C grades in textiles was very high, most of them gaining C grades. Their results were broadly in line with the results that they achieved in their other subjects. The A\*-C results in food were high and above the results of the pupils in their other subjects, while the A\*-C results in resistant materials were low but above the result that the pupils achieved in their other subjects.
154. Those not following a course of study towards GCSE achieved externally validated certificates of achievement. 54 pupils gained the unit 'Cereals from Source to Table' and 52 achieved the unit 'Characteristics in Food'.
155. By the end of Key Stage 4 standards are low in relation to national standards. This is as a result of the option system, which fails to allow equality of access to GCSE for all pupils. There are examples of very high standards in textiles; for example, work on display, which took designs prepared by primary school pupils into a complete product. A Year 10 group of boys studying basic skills in metal understood the correct procedures and processes for the correct and safe use of hand and machine tools. Those not choosing design and technology within the option group follow a course of study for two periods per week in the current Year 11 with the opportunity to gain units towards certificates of achievement. In the current Year 10 they have the opportunity to take a short course in design and technology equal to a half GCSE or units towards certificates of achievement. The curriculum arrangements diminish the status of the subject.
156. In general, pupils with special educational needs are well supported which enables them to make good progress particularly at Key Stage 4.
157. In all the subject disciplines there has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection, particularly in the quality of teaching. However, specialist resources for textiles and aspects of resistant materials technology have not been sufficiently addressed. The key issue from the last inspection which

required the enhancement of the subject has not been adequately addressed; there have been a number of changes in curriculum time; and the curriculum arrangements mean that some very able pupils take a course designed for those unlikely to achieve a grade G at GCSE. In an attempt to raise the profile of the subject the school applied for Technology College status but was unsuccessful.

158. The quality of learning at Key Stage 3 is good because of good teaching and the introduction of new and innovative projects; for example, in a Year 8 lesson, pupils gained knowledge and understanding of simple electronic circuits through a toy which both inspired and motivated both boys and girls. A Year 8 group in food technology made good learning gains in the subjects and through the positive links to science, mass production systems and quality assurance. A weakness is the lack of planned opportunities for the most able pupils to achieve higher standards.
159. The quality of learning at Key Stage 4 is unsatisfactory when the experiences of all the pupils are taken into account. Those following a course of study leading to a full GCSE certificate, which represented 44% of the cohort, make good learning, gains. Lower ability boys in resistant materials make good gains in learning in relation to achievements in other subjects. Whilst 62% of the remaining pupils achieved certificates of achievement, all the rest achieved no formal qualification.
160. In those lessons observed at both key stages pupils demonstrated good attitudes to the subject. They enjoy the practical activities and respond to the challenges of designing and making. There is evidence of good workshop practices that are integral to workshop and kitchen practices. They share equipment and are mindful of the dangers within a working environment. Pupils wear aprons without prompting and make full use of eye protection when working on machinery.
161. The quality of teaching is good at both key stages. Lesson plans are detailed, and teachers record their observations in order to plan the next stage of learning. Good examples of effective teaching were seen in: a Year 10 lesson where the teacher carefully taught the skills of manufacturing; and in a Year 8 lesson where the teacher effectively explained the processes of sensory testing. Target setting is very much in its infancy and these areas along with planning for opportunities to enable pupils to work at higher standards are key issues for improvement.
162. The current organisation at both key stages has an adverse effect upon overall standards, this makes the overall management of the subject unsatisfactory. Changes in time allocation each year over the past three years has resulted in a lack of continuity in planning. The impact upon Key Stage 4 has resulted in a statutory subject being placed with an option system, which was organised to minimise GCSE take-up. This is due to an insufficient number of staff to meet the demands of the curriculum. The two technical support staff in the department do an excellent job in providing support for lesson preparation and general housekeeping. Aspects of health and safety practice have been reported to the school.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

163. Standards in relation to national standards at the end of Key Stage 3 are good and at the end of Key Stage 4 they are very good. There has been a significant improvement in the proportion of pupils reaching A\* to C grades at GCSE in recent years. At GCSE in 2000 73% of pupils gained A\* to C grades compared to a national average of 63 %. In the same year all pupils taking geography attained at least a G grade. Pupils perform better in geography than they do in the majority of their other subjects.
164. Teacher assessment, lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work show that most pupils reach, or exceed, national expectations in Key Stage 3. Standards of spoken English are above average being clear and fluent at both key stages. Standards of writing are satisfactory in Key Stage 3 and good in Key Stage 4. Pupils in Key Stage 4 use geographical terms accurately and with understanding which is a consequence of the emphasis put upon this by their teachers. The quality and depth of longer pieces of writing improves as they move through the key stages. Standards of numeracy are satisfactory. This is especially so in their ability to construct appropriate graphs and to analyse the patterns these show. For example, pupils use climatic graphs with real assurance.
165. Pupils' level of achievement is good in Key Stage 3 and very good in Key Stage 4. Their ability to link factors and offer credible explanation improves as they move through Key Stage 3. For example, by the end of Key Stage 3 pupils can describe and explain features such as convectional rainfall in the Amazon basin and understand the links between the factors that influence a rainforest ecosystem. Their level of skill in using geographical techniques also improves, for example, they are confident users of maps of all

scales and their understanding of where places are in the world also increases significantly. The very good progress made in Key Stage 4 builds upon this foundation. GCSE coursework shows considerable sophistication. Higher attaining pupils can, for example, accurately relate advanced geographical models of city development to their local area. The departmental emphasis on regular testing to GCSE standards contributes significantly to the high level of progress made in Key Stage 4.

166. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls. Most pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. The last report indicated that teaching strategies should be reviewed to adapt some of the work to meet the needs of the full range of ability. The department has met this requirement by providing targeted in-class support for individuals, and by using materials that most pupils can use and understand. Pupils who are especially talented achieve well as is evidenced by the high proportion of A\* grades at GCSE.
167. Pupils' attitudes towards geography are good in Key Stage 3 and very good in Key Stage 4. This positive attitude is a contributor to the high standards that are achieved. Pupils are keen to do well; they show interest, initiative, are self-motivated and take considerable pride in their work. The standard of presentation of their written work is high. Pupils come to lessons well equipped. They co-operate willingly and relationships between themselves, and with their teachers, are good. This is shown by their willingness to question the teachers and to add their own points that contribute significantly to the lesson. Their behaviour is invariably good.
168. The quality of teaching is good overall at both key stages with some very good teaching in Key Stage 4. This good quality of teaching makes a considerable impact on the high standards achieved by the pupils. Significant strengths in the teaching include thorough and appropriate planning that matches the needs of the pupils. A wide variety of teaching methods are used. Lessons proceed at a good pace and are focused on improving the standards of pupils' learning. For example, one lesson involved the use of whole class revision led by a pupil, discussion in pairs, the use of a video segment, appropriate questioning by the teacher and finally pupils working on their own summaries in preparation for an assessment the following lesson. There is great emphasis on ensuring correct responses from pupils that will obtain marks in external examinations. The main points are reinforced to ensure that they are clearly understood. Pupils' work is marked after every unit of work and in Key Stage 4 in particular the assessments are used to assist pupils in improving their work. Teachers are enthusiastic and knowledgeable about the subject and have high expectations of the pupils. Homework is used appropriately to extend and reinforce work done in class. Pupils in Key Stage 4 produce most of their GCSE coursework outside lesson time. There is a good programme of fieldwork that begins in Key Stage 3 and enables pupils to become familiar with the techniques as they move through the school.
169. The department does, however, need to further develop the use of information and communication technology. This was an issue in the last report that has been only partially addressed. Pupils are actively encouraged to use information and communication technology either within the school or at home; for example, many coursework folders at the end of Key Stage 4 show evidence of word-processing, the scanning of photographs and the use of graphing tools to give high quality presentation and content. The department now has two computers to which pupils have access both in lessons and at other times. The department is keen to develop this aspect of their work but is handicapped by limited access to computers. There is, for example, no access to internet or intranet facilities that would enhance pupils' range of research options.
170. Also, although the current assessment procedures are very thorough, they do not inform pupils of their current level of attainment against national standards especially in Key Stage 3. This inhibits the opportunity for pupils to be fully involved in developing their own learning.
171. Other issues highlighted in the last report have been met. The textbook provision is now satisfactory and provision for the library has been enhanced. However, only very limited information and communication technology resources are provided in the library and there is no internet access. These deficiencies inhibit the library's role as a resource centre for geography.
172. The leadership and management of the department are good. This positive leadership provides the framework for the good teaching that contributes to the high standards achieved by the pupils. The department works together as a team concentrating on improving the standards of all pupils. Resources are used and monitored most efficiently. There is clear, energetic direction from the head of department whose planning and organisation is a major asset to the rest of the team.

## HISTORY

173. Standards in history are high in relation to national standards at the end of both key stages. For the past 2 years, the teacher-assessed attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 has been high in relation to the national average, with a significant number of pupils attaining above average grades. This was broadly matched by work seen during the inspection.
174. There is a similar picture at Key Stage 4, where in 1998 and 1999 pupils performed significantly above the national average for all schools at GCSE, although the trend in A\*-C passes is slightly downward from 71% in 1998 and 1999, to 65% this year (2000). A notable feature of the results over this period has been a good number of A\* and A passes in relation to national norms; for example, 10 percentage points higher in 1999. Observed attainment in assessment samples is generally high, with some very high in relation to the national average. This broadly reflects the prior attainment of pupils seen.
175. In both key stages boys' attainment is lower than that of girls. This has been, and still is, a school target on which the department is working to improve. Pupils with special educational needs do well in both key stages when specialist help is available from a learning support assistant, and make satisfactory progress at other times.
176. In both key stages most pupils have a high level of recall and good understanding of relevant knowledge, particularly about their own local history. This reflects a strength in the department's teaching. Most pupils can use verbal reasoning to progress towards new understanding and knowledge when 'led' by careful questions and the addition of new information from teachers. Written attainment is good and most pupils produce careful and well-presented work as a result of teachers' high expectations in this area. Some produce very good extended writing in both key stages, particularly for assessed tasks, when work is often enhanced by pupils' use of information and communication technology. Pupils' attainment in the development of skills is average-to-good, but not as good as it could be with even more emphasis from teachers on this aspect of their learning.
177. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good in both key stages. In Key Stage 3 pupils respond well to the mostly very good and good teaching and, therefore, quickly gain very good attitudes to learning (only one lesson was unsatisfactory). They display a keen enthusiasm and enjoyment in all lessons and a high motivation to succeed. This is similar in Key Stage 4 where all pupils, including those with difficulties in written communication, speak well of the subject because they feel they have done as well as they could with good help from teachers. They clearly like and respect their teachers and also listen to, respect and work well with each other. This is a direct result of their teachers' thoughtful preparation, commitment and generally high expectations. The department sets high priority on creating a love and enjoyment of the subject in their pupils, and they are successful with most pupils.
178. Pupils' achievement in relation to their attainment on entry to the school is good overall in both key stages. By the end of Key Stage 3, many pupils display good ability to think through a problem, with help, and to explain consequences of given causes. When pupils were seen using source material it was done confidently. Some pupils in both key stages can relate and use their ideas well, both within and across topics and time periods, thereby reaching a high level of attainment. This relates directly to the level of challenge set for them by their teachers; for example, in two Year 7 lessons, pupils were required to work in groups to combine research from texts with the practical problem of making a Roman toga from a supplied piece of cloth. They then presented their solutions to the class and used their research, and present-day experience, to judge the practicality of their garment. All pupils actively participated, gaining new knowledge and skills, but were also able to display this understanding across two widely separated time periods. Similarly the best achievement seen in Key Stage 4 was from lower attaining pupils who were actively involved in a very well-structured and well supported activity on the analysis and interpretation of census material. All achieved good understanding which they were able to record and communicate by using suitable software programs and by making teacher-assisted choices about their own methods of presentation.
179. Pupils are given good guidance and taught good strategies for approaching assessments, and so most pupils achieve well for their ability. In both key stages, however, there is some evidence that pupils sometimes expect the reassurance of being 'guided' through the processes and uses of skills described above, being quite reliant on their teacher or the inspector to supply the next appropriate question or strategy for a given situation.

180. Standards of literacy and numeracy displayed are generally good and well supported by teachers, although some poor spelling and poor use of language was seen from lower attaining pupils in both key stages. Most can use a variety of ways to communicate in written form, including extended writing, although this was seen more in assessments than in class or homework. Most pupils listen exceptionally well to teachers who sometimes, as a result, supply them with more 'teacher-led' activity than is necessary for their independent development of skills and learning strategies. The majority of observed examples of pupils speaking were in response to teachers' questions, but they spoke coherently and with confidence. When pupils speak undirected by teachers they communicate well, but would benefit from still more explicit teaching of problem solving strategies. In both key stages all pupils use numeracy skills appropriately to support historical work, for example, in Year 7 to develop understanding of chronology by using timelines, and in Year 11 to manipulate and analyse data.
181. Some good progress has been made by the department since the last inspection due to its conscientious and reflective leadership; however, a number of issues remain. Some good 'sources' now exist to support learning in both key stages, but teaching is still not sufficiently challenging in their use to fully promote pupils' independent skills of enquiry and analysis. Planning in work schemes is detailed, but not adequately expressed in terms of fully challenging learning outcomes for all pupils. It also lacks coherence in the medium term. This leads to an over emphasis on pupils' knowledge and understanding at the expense of other skills and makes monitoring of both progress and teaching not fully effective. Some lessons are still too teacher directed and insufficiently adapted to the needs of all pupils in both mixed ability and setted classes. In Key Stage 3 pupils' individual targets are still too broad for them to know fully how to improve, but better in Key Stage 4 where a more detailed diagnostic approach is used. All 7 staff are enthusiastic and committed; most have significant responsibilities outside the department.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

182. The school does not comply with statutory requirements in ensuring that all pupils at Key Stage 4 have an appropriate information and communication technology curriculum.
183. At the end of Key Stage 3, standards are average compared with standards achieved by pupils nationally. In Year 7, pupils' develop their information and communication technology skills within a carefully planned programme of study. Pupils have the opportunity to work across two different computer platforms developing spreadsheets, which support and extend their mathematical understanding, and through desktop publishing, which extends and supports their English language. Their understanding of information and communication technology is demonstrated through their ability to talk about their work; for example, they are able to describe a 'cell address' and explain the effect of a formula. The most able, who form a minority, are able to explain more complex outcomes; the majority is at a basic level of understanding. Those learning desktop publishing are able to word-process and import/ export graphics chosen from a picture database. By the end of the key stage, pupils are developing PowerPoint displays, which illustrate the knowledge and understanding that they have gained from a previous project on computer control. They are able to develop a sequence of slides, boys being more adventurous than girls in experimenting with menu facilities. They can set up slide sequences, alter slide colours and add timed slide shows.
184. At the end of Key Stage 4, projected standards in information and communication technology for the small number following a course of study towards a full GCSE is in line with national averages. No previous examination results for the past two years are available. The remainder of Year 11 is following a course of study in technology studies, which is linked with resistant materials, food and textile technology. Whilst this gives some provision the amount of time allocated is insufficient to meet the requirement outlined in the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. Those pupils in Year 10 who are not following GCSE are able to choose one of the four disciplines. Whilst this increases the allocated curriculum time to 5%, those choosing resistant materials, food or textiles technology have no access to information and communication technology in order to cover the required programmes of study. This is a breach of statutory regulations and therefore the school is failing to comply. This also results in those pupils achieving low standards in information and communication technology by the end of the key stage.
185. The pupils following technology studies make good progress in their lessons; for example, all the pupils in a Year 11 lesson quickly gained an understanding of how to put a slide show together and by the end had reached a similar standard to that seen in a Year 9 class. Although the scheme of work provides for minimal access to information and communication technology, the program has been well designed.

With the use of technology, which enables the teacher to intervene with individual pupils or the whole class to demonstrate how a particular part of the program works, good learning takes place.

186. During the inspection, evidence of the effective use of information and communication technology was found in business studies, art, and music. Very good teaching in business studies enabled pupils to use desktop publishing techniques in order to make progress. In art, a wide range of information and communication technologies are in use which support the pupils' development of a whole range of artistic concepts. In music pupils are using programmable keyboards and consult Encarta for investigation into composers. Musicworks and the newly installed Sibelius is available for those pupils composing and arranging their own music. Other areas of the curriculum provide only minimal evidence of the use of information and communication technology.
187. Pupils clearly enjoyed their information and communication technology lessons. Response is always good and pupils remain focused on their work. Pupils can be seen using information and communication technology resources during lunchtimes. All pupils seen using information and communication technology equipment did so with respect. They recognise the value of equipment and treat it well.
188. The teaching of information and communication technology is good at both key stages. Some very good teaching was also seen when information and communication technology was in use for a Business Studies lesson in Year 10. Lessons are carefully planned, and the strength of the department is in the use of new technology to improve teaching effectiveness, this was particularly evident in Business Studies where the teacher efficiently and effectively taught the whole class how to use a range of devices before giving them the opportunity to practise and consolidate their learning. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils. Assessment and target setting is being developed. A weakness which leads to unsatisfactory elements is when non specialists do not have sufficient experience to assess the progress that pupils are making when faced with a difficult concept.
189. The school has a vision for the future. The relatively new head of department has developed structures for learning which are having a positive impact on standards at Key Stage 3. The timetable and allocation of time, together with too few qualified staff to meet the needs of the curriculum, are issues which are holding back the improvement of standards at Key Stage 4. Plans are at an advanced stage for computers to be allocated to the science department, and the school sees this as the beginning of units throughout the school. New and existing systems together with up-to-date teaching technology provide good prospects for the future. The school has had discussions for the training of all staff in information and communication technology through the New Opportunities Fund.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

190. French is the principal modern foreign language in the curriculum and is taught to all pupils at both key stages. German is studied by a small number of pupils in Key Stage 4, who began the second language in Year 8. There is currently no German taught at Key Stage 3. Italian has been introduced as an extra-curricular activity, in twilight sessions.
191. As at the last inspection, standards at the end of Key Stage 3 are average. Results of end of key stage assessments were high in 1999 but stabilised at average levels in 1998 and 2000. Listening is the strongest skill; speaking, apart from Year 7, is the weakest. Opportunities for original reading are limited, though good when observed, and much writing lacks sufficient depth, rarely rising above copying.
192. In relation to national standards, standards at the end of Key Stage 4 are average, which is similar to the situation at the time of the last inspection. The proportion of pupils gaining A\*-C grades in French in 1999 were similar to the national average, as they had been in 1998. The proportion of pupils reaching this level in 2000 increased by 10 percentage points. Similarly, the proportion of pupils gaining A\*-G grades was similar to the national average in 1999 and improved, so that all pupils entered, reached this level in 2000. The proportion of pupils gaining A\*-C grades in German in 1999, the last year pupils were entered, was also average and the proportion gaining A\*-G grades was high. The results in French in the Certificate of Achievement were high.
193. The GCSE results are consistent with the standards observed during the inspection. There are, however, significant differences. There continues to be a marked difference between girls' standards and boys'; there is significant under-achievement amongst lower-attainers and standards in speaking are well below

those in other skills. There are good skills achieved in writing by some pupils in the Certificate of Achievement.

194. Although pupils' achievement is satisfactory at both key stages, there is inadequate provision for both gifted pupils and those with special educational needs at Key Stage 3. Extension work is not often available and additional classroom support for lower-attaining pupils, particularly in Years 8 and 9, is not provided. There are good opportunities for more able pupils at Key Stage 4, but lower attainers need more support and a modified teaching style.
195. Teaching is satisfactory at both key stages. Teaching methodology is often traditional in style and predominantly based in English. While this results in good standards in all skills except speaking for the higher-attaining pupils, it is at the root of much of the under-achievement of average- and lower-attainers and is the cause of poor attitudes observed by lower-attaining boys as early as Year 8. Two similar lower sets of pupils were observed during the inspection: one taught largely in French and with an emphasis in speaking and listening produced good learning; the other taught more in English and with a larger proportion of writing made less progress.
196. The quality of learning is greatly affected by teaching methodology and is satisfactory at both key stages, but within key stages and ability groupings, differs widely. In Year 7, it is good, declining through the rest of the Key Stage. In Key Stage 4, it is only good amongst higher-attaining pupils. In those cases where learning is less satisfactory, pupils have a disrespect for the language and go to some lengths to avoid speaking French.
197. Attitudes are satisfactory but widely variable. In contrast to the poor attitudes observed by lower-attaining boys, particularly, Year 7 pupils approach their language learning with enthusiasm and commitment. Higher-attaining pupils at Key Stage 4 have very good attitudes to learning, making significant intellectual efforts in their own work and showing respect for the efforts of others. Behaviour is satisfactory in almost all lessons and often good.
198. The department is well resourced. There is a good level of commercially produced resources, and there are high-quality resources produced by teachers in school to support their teaching. No use of information and communication technology was observed during the inspection; however, some examples of pupils' work which had been effectively supported by the use of information and communication technology were seen. Accommodation is provided in a suite of four rooms which are between two landings, and, because of the profile of the school's accommodation, these are often used as corridors which creates interruptions to lessons.
199. The culture of the languages taught is insufficiently embedded into the teaching, despite good display in classrooms, and the presence of native speakers in the classroom. The time allocation for the foreign language assistant is inadequate. Most influential in the lack of cultural appreciation is the absence of target language for genuine communication.
200. The breadth and balance of the modern foreign languages curriculum is unsatisfactory. The key issue from the last inspection, to improve the arrangements for the introduction of German as the second modern foreign language remains un-addressed and the introduction of Italian is a positive step, but relies on a twilight session.
201. Leadership and management of the department is satisfactory. This is based on high quality administration and organisation and a number of relevant policies. Procedures for assessment and information to parents are a significant strength, although the information from assessment data does not inform curriculum planning. There is no departmental policy on teaching methodology and the head of department is aware of the urgent need to address this deficiency with planning to establish use of the target language at the heart of learning.

## **MUSIC**

202. At the end of Key Stage 3 standards are high in relation to national standards. Pupils learn basic musical skills through playing guitar, brass and drum kit and immediately take part in a wide range of music-making due to the skill of the teaching. Music-making emanates from a sense of joy and this is a strong factor in ensuring very good achievement. With a strong rhythmic sense and keen sense of pitch, pupils are able to appraise their performance and improve it. They have a rich experience of improvising

and of composition techniques through the example set by teachers and by the professional musician who visits on a regular basis to work with them. This is applied to their own compositions which are produced independently, often with effective application of specialist software and the four-track recorder. Compositions are of good quality showing a maturity which reflects the standard of other music-making. Pupils of all abilities achieve very well. Pupils with special educational needs have good co-ordination and perform as well as their peers, as was seen particularly in a drum assessment. Many pupils have instrumental lessons and they bring instruments to lessons where they often find the improvising and performing tasks challenging. All pupils benefit from the contribution of the musically gifted to class ensemble. Singing at both key stages is very good. Part-singing is clear and well balanced, intonation accurate and the quality of tone expressive. Pupils are self-critical and they encourage each other all the time.

203. At the end of Key Stage 4 standards are very high in relation to national standards. For a number of years pupils have gained grades in music which are better than in other subjects. This was not the case in the last two years, the reason being that during this time, pupils did not have the benefit of the head of department's teaching due to illness. Currently, there are 5 pupils in Year 11 but no Year 10 group. All pupils are at least competent on one instrument, with evidence of exceptional musical talent in the group. They have the opportunity to stretch and develop this talent both in lessons and in extra-curricular ensembles, most particularly through taking charge of music for worship. Using the available technology and computers at home, pupils are completing compositions which are well structured, have interesting texture and use a range of compositional devices such as canon, round and solo with accompaniment.
204. A committed nucleus of pupils rehearse regularly to provide music for worship and to take part in instrumental ensembles. Opportunity exists for larger numbers to perform in musical production such as 'Grease', 'Easter Jazz' and a Christmas performance. Pupils also use the music suite at lunchtime to continue class-work or to work on their own projects. They have open access to the department and respond very well to the trust that this places on them. Whether working as a whole class or in small groups, pupils relate well to one another and respect each other's point of view.
205. Teaching is very good at both key stages. The high standard of musicianship and value placed on the work of each pupil are the most significant factors. Pupils' abilities are recognized, and the right level of work given to them so that they are both challenged and enabled to contribute to the class or group performance. The teaching is rounded; connections are made to other disciplines, which shows pupils that learning is most effective and enjoyable when appreciated in the broad context. A good example of this was seen in a Year 7 lesson when 'sound' and the physical aspects of hearing were linked to listening to Beethoven and appreciating the resonance of piano strings. This was all presented in a very entertaining and memorable manner which the pupils, and the inspector, enjoyed. Pupils are encouraged to listen thoughtfully to music and to experience its spiritual and emotional power. The teacher's youthful and energetic approach inspires the pupils with the result that the pupils are engaged in their work and make very good progress.
206. The department is well led by a talented and experienced musician who uses this ability to plan a lively curriculum both in class and in extra-curricular activities. He gives very good opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their learning and for the care of the department by having an open access policy. Through the involvement of an associate musician in the life of the department, during the inspection week pupils made a trip to the Dome in Greenwich to take part in a performance with other pupils from Redcar. Improvements in curriculum planning and in the time allocation in Year 9 since the previous inspection have ensured the raising of standards particularly at Key Stage 3. The department has not addressed the issue of assessment. Although composition and practical skills are marked regularly these are not linked to National Curriculum levels. The result is that pupils do not know how well they are doing. With this information available to them systematically pupils will be able to judge what progress they are making and take this into account when making choices for GCSE.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

207. At the end of Key Stage 3, teachers' assessments in 1999 indicated that the proportion of 14 year olds working at or beyond age-related national expectations was high in relation to the national average. A significant number of pupils were working beyond the national age-related expectation. Teacher assessments in 2000 indicate that standards have remained high in relation to the proportion of pupils working at or beyond the national age-related expectation. This is an improvement on the standards achieved by pupils at the time of the last inspection. There are no significant differences between boys

and girls. In lessons, the majority of 14 year olds achieves national age-related expectations and is on course to achieve appropriate levels at the end of the key stage. In football, boys have a good range of all round skills and are successfully developing their understanding of set play in their analysis of the principles of attack and defensive play in small-sided games. A significant minority displays high levels of individual skills and team play. In basketball, girls are developing their knowledge and understanding of defence principles in team play. Some though need further practice to develop their accuracy in shooting. Girls' achievement in dance in Year 8 is not as expected because the basic concepts and terminology of dance are not being fully addressed in lessons.

208. There are no teachers' assessments for 16 year olds in terms of the proportion of pupils attaining at or beyond age-related national expectations at the end of Key Stage 4. In lessons, the majority of pupils achieves appropriate age-related expectations and is on course to achieve appropriate levels at the end of the key stage. In both basketball and volleyball, boys and girls are developing well their individual and teamwork skills, as well as developing their analytical and evaluative skills. In basketball, pupils are also developing their experience of taking different roles and responsibilities in games, such as coach and referee. Some boys in Year 11 are not achieving sufficiently well, because lessons are not sufficiently challenging. Standards are therefore only as high as the pupils achieved, relative to their age, at the end of Key Stage 3.
209. Across both these key stages, all pupils have a secure understanding of the principles and procedures of warm-up. In some lessons, though, they are given insufficient responsibility for leading their own warm-up. Although no pupils identified as having special educational needs were observed with additional help, they are well supported, integrated and make secure progress.
210. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory across both key stages. There are, though, inconsistencies. The range of the quality of teaching varies from very good, in one lesson, to unsatisfactory in two lessons. The quality of teaching in the department is having an inconsistent impact on standards of achievement of pupils in relation to their knowledge, understanding and skills development in the games and activities taught. Teachers have high expectations in terms of discipline and behaviour and in the ability of pupils to work to their best. Pupils, whose attitudes are positive, comply well with this, which helps to promote a positive learning atmosphere in lessons. In a Year 11 basketball lesson, for example, all pupils were challenged to improve and deepen their knowledge and understanding both through effective questioning by the teacher as well as being involved successfully in pair and teamwork and in peer evaluation.
211. Although all lessons include a variety of structured activities, thus helping to ensure pupils remain on task, not all non-participants are as fully involved as they should be. In a Year 11 football lesson, for example, the four non-participants spent most of their time standing away from the teaching grids, thus they were not part of whole group demonstrations or involved in any peer evaluation. In the best practice the use of effective questioning allows the teacher not only to establish what pupils know and understand, but also enhances their speaking and listening skills. In a Year 7 gymnastics lesson effective questioning also enabled the pupils to evaluate both their own balance sequences as well as the sequences of their peers.
212. Clear objectives and lesson targets are discussed with pupils at the start of lessons which makes them fully aware of what is expected of them. Overall lesson planning is indicative of teachers' secure knowledge and understanding of the subject; however, pupils are not always offered sufficient responsibility in lessons, for example, more planned opportunities for peer evaluation in lessons would help deepen further pupils' understanding of what they are doing. In a Year 8 dance lesson for example, much of the work was simply directed by the teacher and pupils were given insufficient opportunities to be involved in aspects of planning, performing and evaluating their work. Similarly, in a Year 11 boys' football lesson learning objectives lacked challenge and pupils were simply directed to be involved in skills drills and small-sided games. This meant that challenge was lacking as well as not being matched to the demands of the new physical education National Curriculum.
213. The curriculum is broad and balanced, and meets the requirements of the new physical education National Curriculum; however, at Key Stage 3, curriculum time has varied recently and this year the provision for Years 8 and 9 is half that of Year 7. This inconsistency makes it difficult to ensure depth, breadth and balance, are maintained across the key stage. Boys and girls are not receiving the same curriculum provision at Key Stage 3 – boys do outdoor and adventurous activities whilst girls do dance. At Key Stage 4, the lack of a GCSE physical education course limits choice and the level of challenge for the more able. Short units of work are not yet fully addressing the requirements for two activities to

be studied in depth at Key Stage 4 in the course that all pupils follow. Present schemes of work for both key stages are now in need of fine-tuning so that learning objectives fully meet the requirements of the new physical education National Curriculum. A range of extra-curricular activities further extends the learning experiences of pupils. These include recreational activities but mainly inter-form lunchtime fixtures and inter-school competitive fixtures. There is no record as to the numbers of pupils who participate in these activities. However, as a result of the dedication and enthusiasm of physical education teachers, two individuals have recently achieved representative honours at county level in cricket and athletics. Other individuals have achieved representative honours at district level in association football, athletics, cross-country and netball. As a result of the department's links with the Cleveland orienteering club the school has been 'mapped'; thus pupils are offered a structured course.

214. The head of department is highly committed to the school and provides satisfactory leadership and management of the subject; he has recently joined the governing body. He has ensured the department is fully on stream for using the new assessment levels in physical education introduced in September. Pupils' awareness of these has been enhanced by effective and informative displays in the changing rooms. Developing clearly defined roles and responsibilities in the department is made difficult because two of the teachers have other subject and whole school responsibilities and one, though experienced, is a non-specialist. Formal evaluation and monitoring of good practice in the department is not yet fully developed, thus inconsistencies in the quality of teaching are not being addressed. The quality of teaching has remained much the same as at the time of the last inspection. The quality of accommodation remains unsatisfactory. This is having a negative impact on the breadth and balance of the overall curriculum that the department is able to offer. The newly resurfaced hard court area is unsuitable for use because of unevenness and poor drainage, the main hall is unsuitable for barefoot dance work and along with the gymnasium is often out of use because of school and public examinations. The school has, however, arranged to use a local sports hall and leisure centre for some Key Stage 4 activities. There are insufficient hooks and benches in the changing rooms thus, when groups are large, pupils have to use the floor areas at the entrance on which to change. The fitness suite, converted from a design and technology room, is in need of refurbishment in order to provide a more pleasant working environment for pupils. Shower arrangements do not provide the privacy expected by both boys and girls and this has a negative impact on standards of hygiene of pupils.

### **Life Skills**

215. The life skills course is offered at Key Stage 4 to pupils who are considered likely to benefit from having some core skills reinforced and extended. It is an externally accredited course and so offers the pupils useful evidence to show employers the skills that they have developed. The other objective of the course is to help pupils improve their achievement in other areas of the curriculum. On the evidence of the one lesson seen and a review of the course structure, this objective is met.
216. The pupils enjoy the lessons which they find challenging and stimulating. The teaching is by senior staff who have developed materials that motivate the pupils; for example, street maps of Redcar were used in the lesson seen which the pupils enjoyed exploring. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good. Teachers' explanations were clear and learning was reinforced and reviewed through effective whole class sessions and individual support.