

# INSPECTION REPORT

**CHILWELL COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL**

BEESTON

LEA area: Nottinghamshire

Unique reference number: 122854

Headteacher: Mrs H M P Robson

Reporting inspector: Mr P Orr  
16007

Dates of inspection: 6-10 November 2000

Inspection number: 223776

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 to 18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Queens Road West Chilwell Beeston Nottinghamshire
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs L A Golbey
Date of previous inspection:	16 October 1995

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Patrick Orr 16007	Registered inspector		What sort of school is it?
			The school's results and achievements
			How well are pupils taught?
			How well is the school led and managed?
			What should the school do to improve further?
Brigid Quest-Ritson 9724	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
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		Equal opportunities	
Reginald Fletcher 15304	Team inspector	Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Sylvia Greenland 23324	Team inspector	History	
Grace Marriott 3674	Team inspector	Religious education	
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Chilwell School is a mixed comprehensive school for 1013 pupils aged 11 to 19, which has a rising roll and is over-subscribed. The whole ability range is present, but year groups vary, and attainment on entry is rising. It was average on entry to the present Years 7 to 9, but below average for the present Years 10 and 11. Pupils are from very mixed socio-economic backgrounds. About 11 per cent of pupils are on the school's register for special educational needs, a below average proportion. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is not far from the national figure. A small number of pupils speak English as an additional language, but very few are in the early stages of learning English. The sixth form is part of a consortium involving three schools in the locality. Typically, between 65 and 70 per cent of pupils have stayed on in full-time education after age 16. In 2000, the proportion rose to 88 per cent.

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

Chilwell Comprehensive School is an improving school, which is increasingly effective in almost all aspects of its life and work. The school is well led and in most respects well managed. Teaching is good at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, and GCSE results have improved considerably to reach above-average standards. The curriculum for older pupils meets their needs well. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- Purposeful leadership and management are successful in raising standards.
- The teaching is good at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form.
- GCSE results improved markedly in 1999 and 2000.
- There are effective arrangements for tracking pupils' progress and setting targets for improvement.
- Pastoral care is good.
- Pupils with special educational needs receive well-informed teaching in the individual needs department.
- Careers education and vocational provision prepare pupils well for the next stage of their life.
- There is a wide range of interesting and well-supported activities outside lessons.

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

- Teaching and learning should be better at Key Stage 3, as should standards, particularly in English.
- The large size of most classes at Key Stage 3, and the lack of space in many classrooms and practical areas, have an adverse effect on pupils' learning.
- The school does not monitor the cost-effectiveness of its deployment of staff in sufficient detail.
- The behaviour of a small minority of pupils, mainly boys, is unsatisfactory
- Support assistants for pupils with special educational needs are often not used efficiently by subject teachers in lessons.
- Overall, marking and homework are not used well enough to raise standards at Key Stage 3.

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

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

The school has made significant progress since it was last inspected in 1995. Almost all the weaknesses identified then have been followed up thoroughly. Standards have risen at Key Stage 4 and the quality of teaching has improved, though further improvement is needed at Key Stage 3. The curriculum matches national requirements more closely. Leadership and management are better, and teachers now work well together to raise standards. The exclusion rate has been reduced and attendance improved. Provision for information and communications technology is considerably better, but more needs to be done, particularly at Key Stage 4. The school has a budget deficit, which is not of its own making, and which is being reduced along lines agreed with the LEA. There are some

weaknesses in staff deployment. Much has been done to improve the accommodation, but there are continuing difficulties in this area. The school is now part of a national project designed to raise standards at Key Stage 3, and this is beginning to have a positive impact. Provided weaknesses are tackled, the school is well placed to improve further.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	All schools			Similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
GCSE examinations	C	D	B	B
A-levels/AS-levels	B	A	C	

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

The GCSE results for 2000 maintained the above-average standard of 1999. Since the last inspection, GCSE results have improved, markedly so in 1999 and 2000. In these years, the school exceeded its overall targets and its targets for most subjects. By contrast, the 2000 results in the national tests at Key Stage 3 were below the national average overall and continued a decline from the previous two years, particularly in English. The low results were mainly because girls did less well than they do nationally. Nevertheless, the test results were satisfactory overall when compared with the same pupils' results at Key Stage 2 before they came to the school. A level results, for relatively small groups of students, have varied; in most years, the results have represented good progress from GCSE.

In lessons and other work seen during the inspection, pupils' overall progress at Key Stage 3 was satisfactory, and was good at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. Progress in English is good at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, but less so at Key Stage 3, where standards of writing and spoken English across the curriculum are lower than they should be, and some of the weaknesses persist in later years. Progress in mathematics varies considerably but, overall, is broadly satisfactory. Progress in science is satisfactory at Key Stage 3 and good in other age groups.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Attitudes to the school	Attitudes are good at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, and satisfactory at Key Stage 3.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is satisfactory overall. The unsatisfactory behaviour of a small minority of pupils, mainly boys, sometimes makes learning difficult for the whole class.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development and relationships are satisfactory overall. Relationships between teachers and pupils are generally good.
Attendance	Attendance is good, and improving



## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The teaching was very good or excellent in 19 per cent of the lessons seen, at least good in 51 per cent, and at least satisfactory in 91 per cent. It was unsatisfactory or poor in nine per cent of lessons. Teaching and learning were much better at Key Stage 4 than Key Stage 3, and best in the sixth form. The teaching of English is good overall, though better at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form than at Key Stage 3. Science teaching is good. Mathematics teaching is satisfactory overall, but there are weaknesses in the mathematics teaching in some classes in all age groups.

The strengths found most frequently in the teaching and learning are: teachers' good knowledge of their subject; their good planning of the structure of the lesson, to provide variety and opportunities for pupils' learning to be reviewed; their good feedback to pupils; their clear explanations and demonstrations; and their careful preparation of learning materials. The weaknesses found most frequently are: a reluctance by many pupils in all year groups to take the initiative; a tendency, particularly at Key Stage 3, for pupils to be too easily distracted; a lack of attention across the curriculum to teaching literacy and numeracy; inconsistencies in the use of marking and homework to raise standards; and weaknesses in meeting the learning needs of the highest-attaining pupils at Key Stage 3.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is satisfactory overall at Key Stages 3 and 4 and is good overall in the sixth form. At Key Stage 4 the curriculum is improving with the development of a well-planned range of pre-vocational opportunities. The provision of extra-curricular opportunities in sport, drama, music and through the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme is very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There is well-managed and effective provision in withdrawal groups in the individual needs department, but weaknesses in the use of support assistants by subject teachers in lessons.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Specialist provision is satisfactory for the small number of pupils starting to learn English. However, subject teachers lack awareness of the language learning needs of these pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision is good for pupils' social development and satisfactory for their moral and cultural development. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is unsatisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils are well cared for. There are good arrangements for improving behaviour and attendance, and for tracking pupils' progress.

There are fewer teachers than in most schools of a similar size and type nationally, and the average amount of time teachers spend teaching is lower, overall, than in the majority of schools. Eighty-five per cent of Key Stage 3 classes contain 30 or more pupils. The school seeks to work in partnership with parents and is increasingly gaining the confidence of the local community. The school does not meet statutory requirements for information and communications technology at Key Stage 4, or for religious

education in the sixth form. It does not provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils, as is required.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is in most respects well led and managed by the head teacher and key staff. The headteacher provides strong leadership and a clear sense of educational direction. Teachers with management responsibilities have been successful in ensuring that appropriate action is taken to improve pupils' performance at Key Stage 4. The setting of targets is well organised at school level. Leadership and management in history, mathematics, physical education, religious education and drama have also been adversely affected by the absence of the head of department or co-ordinator, but teachers in all areas affected by absence have worked very hard to maintain effective provision. Other subjects are managed satisfactorily or well. The management of pastoral care by heads of year is effective.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil most of their responsibilities well and provide strong and well-informed support for the school in its work to raise standards. However, their monitoring role is under-developed. In particular, they do not have sufficient information to be able to scrutinise spending priorities closely and objectively.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school does this well. Thorough evaluation of examination results, pupils' progress and the quality of teaching by senior staff provides a very good basis for planning further improvement. Monitoring of teaching and pupils' performance by heads of department varies in quality, but is often good.
The strategic use of resources	Financial control is good, and much careful thought is given to ways in which 'best value' can be achieved in many areas of expenditure. However, strategic planning for a better balance of overall budget priorities is less good than it should be.

Weaknesses in the accommodation have detrimental effects on the quality of learning in science, information and communications technology, music and design and technology. Many of the general classrooms are too small for the large numbers of pupils in many classes. However, the school does much, often by 'self-help', to improve the quality of the accommodation. A new base for the individual needs department has recently been created. The library is of very good quality.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What some parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children like school</li> <li>• Pupils make good progress</li> <li>• The school is easy to approach with problems</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed</li> <li>• The good range of activities outside lessons</li> <li>• Pupils become mature and responsible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information about pupils' progress</li> <li>• The school does not work closely with parents</li> <li>• Behaviour</li> <li>• Homework</li> </ul>

Generally, inspectors agreed with parents' positive opinions about the school. They also agreed that there are inconsistencies in the setting and marking of homework, mainly at Key Stage 3, and that behaviour is not always as good as it should be, mainly among boys. However, they felt that the school does much to try to establish close relationships with parents and that, in most respects, it provides accurate and helpful information for parents and carers about pupils' progress. There are, nevertheless, weaknesses in the quality of reports in a few subjects, in that they are too vague and do little to explain precisely what pupils should do to improve. At the meeting between the registered inspector and parents, those present stressed that the school was improving.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The results of the national tests at Key Stage 2 and of standardised tests taken on entry to the school indicate that the present Years 10 and 11 were of below average attainment on entry to the school, whereas Years 7 to 9 were of broadly average attainment.

#### **Key Stage 3**

2. At the end of Key Stage 3 in English, mathematics and science, pupils' results in the national tests have varied in recent years but, in the three subjects taken together, were close to the national average up to and including 1999. They dipped below the national average in 2000, and were below average when compared with results in similar schools in both 1999 and 2000. Over the last three years the results have not advanced in line with the national improvement, mainly because of weak results in English and a fall off in mathematics in 2000. The decline has reflected the relatively weak performance of girls. In 2000, the results were in line with the national average in science, below average in mathematics and well below average in English. These results, although they represent broadly satisfactory progress overall when compared with pupils' attainment on entry to the school, are not as good as they should be, particularly in English, and for girls more generally.

3. To judge by the work seen in lessons and pupils' books during the inspection, the weak performance in English is mainly the result of unsatisfactory achievement in written work, where there are too many errors in spelling, punctuation and sentence construction. Standards of spoken English, also, are not as high as they should be. A significant proportion of Key Stage 3 pupils, girls as well as boys, lack confidence in speaking. Furthermore, a small but significant minority find it difficult to listen with attention for more than short periods of time. Relatively few willingly take part in class discussion. Teachers, across the curriculum, do not encourage this aspect of language development sufficiently, nor do they encourage pupils often enough to extend answers to questions or re-phrase answers in different and more appropriate ways. Work in the national project designed to raise standards at Key Stage 3 is leading to improvement in pupils' use and understanding of language, but is not yet having a noticeable impact on accuracy and presentation in written work.

4. The majority of pupils enter the school with average or below average number skills. By the end of Year 9 progress is satisfactory for higher-attaining pupils who are able to use mental strategies appropriately for common calculations. Their understanding of number, however, often lags behind their manipulative skills. Some still show confusion over types of numbers and over upper and lower limits of measurement. Those pupils in average-attaining groups are confident in multiplication skills when they can use alternative methods such as Chinese multiplication. Other groups of pupils make slower progress in improving their number skills. Many still have difficulty in working with time, dividing angle sums by single figures and multiplying and dividing by powers of 10.

5. In relative terms, standards in science at the end of Key Stage 3 are higher than in English and mathematics. Pupils achieve quite well in relation to their attainment on entry to the school, and progress during the key stage is at least satisfactory in science despite the difficulties the teachers face with large classes in teaching spaces that are, in many instances, cramped and inconvenient.

6. Pupils' progress in, and understanding of, the use of information and communications technology has improved since the last inspection, and in Year 9 standards now match those expected nationally. The teaching of information and communications technology is good at Key Stage 3, but pupils' progress is impeded to some extent by a shortage of machines, large class sizes and some unsatisfactory accommodation.

7. In other subjects, progress during Key Stage 3 is mostly satisfactory and occasionally good. Progress is improving in art, in a department that appears in many respects to be revitalised. Progress is also improving in modern languages, though there is ground to make up. Pupils do not yet speak confidently, and basic errors in pronunciation still intrude in the best work. Progress in the humanities subjects varies considerably reflecting, in part, recent and frequent changes of teacher in the constituent subjects. Extensive non-specialist teaching, much of it by teachers working temporarily at the school, also affects pupils' rate of learning. Achievement varies considerably in design and technology, but standards in Year 9 are broadly in line with national expectations. Attainment in music is very low on entry to the school, and most pupils do not make sufficient progress to match the standards expected nationally, although there is much variation across the department, and in some lessons pupils make good progress. Most of the pupils receiving instrumental tuition make good progress. Pupils make broadly satisfactory progress in drama, but the work in Year 9 lacks the necessary self-discipline and assurance that should characterise good achievement in this subject. In physical education, pupils make satisfactory progress during Key Stage 3, and the oldest pupils in Year 9 achieve in line with the standards expected nationally. In basketball, they achieve more highly than this.

8. Pupils with special educational needs achieve satisfactory standards overall. In the intensive small group or one-to-one sessions in the individual needs department they make good progress and achieve well. Their achievement in most mainstream lessons is only satisfactory, and varies considerably because the work provided is not always matched with their individual needs. The small number of pupils learning English as an additional language make satisfactory progress and receive some specialist language support. Their progress across the curriculum would be more rapid if teachers in all subjects had a greater awareness of their language-learning needs. There are no specific arrangements for the identification of the most gifted and talented pupils, or for monitoring their achievement. Their progress has, nevertheless, improved since the last inspection, when there was much under-achievement among these pupils. However, they are not yet making as much progress as they should during Key Stage 3. They occasionally languish – as in some aspects of English and mathematics, history, music and physical education for example – when their potential is not fully recognised or developed.

#### **Key Stage 4**

9. Pupils' achievement is better at Key Stage 4 than Key Stage 3. In the main, pupils are taught in smaller and more cohesive classes, and the tasks set are better matched with their needs. The foundations laid at Key Stage 3 are built on and extended and the work becomes progressively more demanding. In some subjects – for example English, music, modern languages, geography – progress accelerates, work improves and standards rise quickly. In science, considerable strengths are maintained and consolidated. In information and communications technology, by contrast, the good beginnings at Key Stage 3 are not sustained, although there is good practice in the use of information and communications technology in some subjects.

10. Pupils' work in English improves in Years 10 and 11. They learn to take more care with writing, though weaknesses in technical accuracy do persist in many cases. Pupils' reading is extended and becomes more challenging, but the fall off in voluntary reading that

occurs in Year 9 is not recovered. In English lessons, pupils become more fluent and confident in spoken English and their listening skills improve, particularly in higher-attaining classes, where pupils often show themselves able to maintain concentration over considerable periods of time.

11. Standards of literacy in other subjects also improve during Key Stage 4, although there are still too many examples of the weaknesses in spelling, sentence construction and punctuation found at Key Stage 3. Pupils continue to have limited opportunities for developing competence in spoken English. For example, there is little oral work in mathematics, and oral work in design and technology is usually limited to brief responses to question and answer sessions, led by the teacher.

12. Towards the end of Key Stage 4 the standards achieved in numeracy are satisfactory, though some pupils in Years 10 and 11 still lack confidence in number work without a calculator. In science, good progress continues despite persisting accommodation and equipment difficulties, though these are less difficult to cope with than at Key Stage 3 because group sizes are smaller. Curricular provision in information and communications technology is fragmented: there is no separate GCSE course, and the commitment of other subjects to the development of pupils' skills varies. There are no cross-curricular assessment procedures to establish how much progress pupils make with computers. A growing variety of alternative courses is offered at Key Stage 4 to the pupils who are judged to be less suited than most to a complete GCSE course. GCSE commitments are maintained, combined with vocational options, mainly provided at a local college of further education. It is too early to evaluate the standards achieved because the main group following the new arrangements is still in Year 10. Further adaptations to the curriculum are made for pupils with special educational needs. For example, small groups of pupils in Years 10 and 11 take the 'youth award' option and achieve good standards in relation to their previous attainment. The Year 10 pupils have made a good start to the course, and all the Year 11 pupils following the course have gained the bronze award. They have now started work at the next level.

13. In 1999 and 2000 the GCSE results exemplified the improvement in standards at Key Stage 4. In 1999, the proportion of pupils gaining five or more grades A\*-C was above the national average, as was the proportion gaining five or more grades A\*-G. In both these categories, the school's performance matched that in similar schools. The average point score in 1999 was above the national average, and the proportion of pupils gaining the highest grades at least matched national figures. The provisional results for 2000 suggest that these standards have been maintained. On the other hand, the proportion of pupils gaining one or more grades A\*-G was below national figures in 1999, but improved in 2000. About seven per cent of the pupils in Year 11 in 1999 left the school without any pass at GCSE. In 1999, the overall results at GCSE, in terms of the average point score gained, were above those in similar schools. On the other hand, the proportion gaining one or more grades A\*-G was well below the average for similar schools. Since the last inspection, the trend of improvement in GCSE results has matched the national trend of improvement and is probably exceeding it in the most recent results.

14. GCSE results across the curriculum vary considerably. Results in English, English literature and media studies are consistently good and, given that pupils are able to gain three GCSEs in this subject area in little more time than is usually allocated to two, the English and media studies results are of considerable benefit to the school's profile of examination success. Although there was some improvement in 2000, the mathematics results are weaker than those for English and science, and girls perform less well than boys, a trend that persists in the 2000 results. Science results in 1999 were just above the national average, but with a high proportion of top grades, a pattern that has continued into 2000. In all these

subjects, the work seen in lessons was of a broadly similar standard to the recent examination results, except that there was less evidence of high attainment. Pupils in the present Years 10 and 11 were of lower attainment on entry to the school, and the targets set for GCSE in 2001 and 2002 recognise this.

15. GCSE art results have in recent years been among the weakest in the school, well below the standards expected nationally, but the work seen in lessons was of a better standard. French results in 2000 showed a definite improvement on performance since the last inspection, which has been weaker than in most other subjects. Other subjects where GCSE results have been good recently, or are improving, include geography, religious education, music and physical education. Results in design and technology vary across the different aspects of the subject, but are close to national averages overall. The 2000 history results fell from what had been a good standard in 1999 and before, probably because of the long-term absence of the co-ordinator for Key Stage 4 history.

16. Overall, the most recent GCSE results represent good achievement. In relative terms, the GCSE results in 1999 and 2000 were better than the results at the time of the last inspection.

### **Sixth form**

17. It was not possible to gain a detailed picture of standards in the consortium sixth form, because the teaching was dispersed across sites. In the lessons seen at the main centre, close to the school, attainment was always at least in line with the requirements of the course being followed, and sometimes above. Students were adapting well to the demands of the new post-16 curriculum, and were making good progress in lessons where the atmosphere was always conducive to good learning.

18. In the sixth form, students' written work shows evidence of good progress in organisation and maturity, although there are occasional examples of the unnecessary misspellings and clumsiness in sentence construction evident in the main school. In discussion, students are willing to answer questions and venture opinions, but most need more practice in using formal language and in adapting their use of spoken English to meet the demands of different situations. Many are still too wedded to colloquial modes of response in all circumstances. Those heard reading did so well, with appropriate intonation and expression, but would nevertheless benefit from more encouragement to read round and beyond their set texts.

19. In mathematics, students make satisfactory progress, although a few show poor recall of some basic knowledge and understanding. Weaknesses in simple operations with fractions continue into Year 12, where some students are hindered in their work on 'normals' and tangents through failing to recognise the equivalence of improper and mixed fractions.

20. A level results have varied since the last inspection, with relatively small numbers of Chilwell students taking the examinations in most years. Numbers are increasing, however, and in the most recent years the progress made by Chilwell students from the grades they obtained at GCSE has been mainly satisfactory, and often good. In a few instances, progress and attainment have been adversely affected by staff absence. The 1999 results represented good progress from GCSE, and the 1998 results very good progress. Progress was weaker in 2000. Overall, the results have been in line with national averages. Results at GNVQ intermediate and advanced have ranged from broadly satisfactory to good.

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

21. Pupils' attitudes to their schooling are satisfactory overall. Many pupils, particularly boys at Key Stage 3, often need firm handling before they settle down, but can then work well. This tendency was evident in a Year 8 French lesson, where after some initial showing off, the pupils responded to praise, and worked calmly and constructively for the rest of the lesson, although not always with enthusiasm. On the other hand, pupils' attitudes can occasionally be persistently unsatisfactory, as in some Key Stage 3 music lessons. There is a marked improvement in pupils' attitudes to work as they progress through the school, though concentration remains difficult for some throughout Key Stages 3 and 4. In a Year 10 mathematics lesson on drawing triangles pupils did concentrate and applied themselves well to their studies, working with consideration for others in cramped conditions. By the time they reach the sixth form, students are keen, interested and concentrate well. This was the case in an English lesson where students contributed to the lesson very readily and willingly, but not always confidently. Pupils enjoy the wide range of extra-curricular activities, especially the sporting ones and the activities week, which are available to them and they show their appreciation by taking part in large numbers.

22. Pupils with special educational needs work hard in the Individual Learning Centre. They enjoy the work, concentrate well and respond very positively to the individual attention they receive. When working in small groups they learn to listen to one another and work co-operatively. In mainstream classes their attitudes and concentration are generally satisfactory.

23. Behaviour is satisfactory, though better, overall, among girls than boys. Standards of behaviour improve as pupils mature. At Key Stage 3 and in some lower-attaining sets at Key Stage 4 there are pupils who do not always behave well. Pupils can be noisy before they settle down to work. They usually respond to teachers' careful and effective management, which ensures that lessons are not disrupted for the class. Behaviour as pupils move around the school is also satisfactory. There is considerable congestion on stairs and in corridors when lessons change, despite the one-way system. Individually, pupils are courteous and friendly to members of staff and to visitors, but are not universally considerate among themselves. Pupils acknowledge that some cases of bullying occur. The number of exclusions, both permanent and fixed-term, has fallen since the last inspection and is now lower than average for a school of this size. The main reason for both types of exclusion is anti-social behaviour. An aspect of behaviour that requires more consistent attention than it receives at present is the tendency for many pupils, from Year 7 onwards, to indulge in low-level talk and whispering during some lessons. Although this rarely disrupts lessons seriously, it is distracting, reduces concentration and often affects the quality of pupils' learning.

24. The quality of relations in the school is satisfactory. Most pupils, especially the older ones, work well together in pairs or groups. Good collaboration was seen in a Year 11 English lesson when pupils were reading the play *An Inspector Calls*. Relations between pupils and members of staff are generally good. Pupils interviewed all felt they would be able to ask for help with problems. The way in which pupils respond to the provision the school makes for their personal development is, again, satisfactory overall and improves as they progress through the school. Pupils are usually willing to accept responsibility as members of the Year and School Councils and to represent the school on the local Youth Council. They regularly raise money for charity. The prefects show maturity and responsibility in the way they run activities for younger pupils, such as helping in tutor groups, running sporting activities and clubs. However, apart from the higher attainers, many pupils are reluctant to take responsibility for their own learning. A number prefer to be given information by their teachers rather than find it out themselves. There are exceptions: some Year 11 pupils in a French lesson on how to order a meal in a restaurant showed considerable initiative in finding out about regional dishes from reference sources. The ability to listen and reflect develops



slowly in pupils. Not all give due regard to others' opinions in the earlier years. Sixth form students often show greater sensitivity to differing views.

25. Attendance at the school is good. In 1998/99 the rate of attendance was 92.4 per cent, which is above the national average of 91 per cent. Authorised absence was 6.7 per cent, compared with a national figure of 7.9 per cent. The rate of unauthorised absence in the same year was 0.9 per cent, close to the national average of 1.1 per cent. In 1999/00 the rate of attendance improved to 93 per cent, while authorised absence fell to 6.2 per cent with unauthorised absence slightly lower, at 0.8 per cent. During the inspection some pupils were late at the start of the school day, but this was due to the extreme weather conditions and the traffic problems caused by flooding.

26. Standards of pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are broadly similar to those reported at the time of the last inspection, except that levels of exclusion have fallen, and the rate of attendance has risen steadily over the past four years.

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

27. The quality of teaching varies across the age range, and within and across subjects. It is better by a considerable margin at Key Stage 4 than Key Stage 3 and, to judge by the relatively limited sample of sixth form lessons seen, is best in the sixth form. The most effective teaching is in science at both key stages. In several other subjects, including English at both key stages, and modern languages, music, physical education and geography at Key Stage 4, teaching is predominantly good. Teaching is also mainly good in information and communications technology and art at Key Stage 3. Overall, the teaching is weakest in mathematics and humanities, although in both these areas there are considerable variations between classes, with some examples of very good teaching. Humanities teaching is at present affected by a relatively high proportion of non-specialist supply teaching. In the school as a whole, the teaching was very good or excellent in 19 per cent of the lessons seen, at least good in 51 per cent and at least satisfactory in 91 per cent. All the teaching seen in the sixth form was at least satisfactory, and most was good or very good. At Key Stage 4, two-thirds of the teaching was good or very good, but at Key Stage 3 less than half.

28. The quality of pupils' learning also varies across subjects and key stages. At Key Stage 3, the quality of the learning does not quite match the quality of the teaching. There are several reasons for this. First, for all the school's best efforts, there is a minority of pupils, mainly boys in Years 8 and 9, who lack self-discipline and find concentration difficult except for very short periods of time. In lessons where the learning is no more than satisfactory, they sometimes have an unwarranted influence on other pupils, and undercurrents of inattention become established. Second, some pupils – girls as well as boys – lack confidence in their ability to learn and need constant encouragement and reinforcement by success. Generally, however, pupils are anxious to learn, and respond well when they have a clear understanding of the purpose of their learning and the progress they are making. Learning improves considerably at Key Stage 4 and is good overall. Most pupils work hard to achieve success in GCSE examinations; they concentrate in lessons (though better in higher than lower-attaining groups) and build well on existing knowledge to achieve new skills and understanding. Classes are generally smaller at Key Stage 4 than Key Stage 3, and this makes it easier for teachers to manage pupils' learning. In addition, imaginative and increasingly effective adaptations to the curriculum are being introduced at Key Stage 4 to meet the needs of potentially disaffected pupils. Learning in the sixth form is good overall, and often very good.

29. Most teachers manage pupils skilfully in lessons. Most have high expectations of good behaviour, though less so at Key Stage 3 than in later years. At Key Stage 3, classes often take some time to settle down. Relationships between teachers and pupils are firm but friendly and praise and encouragement are used appropriately as, for example, in science and English lessons. At the beginning of most lessons, pupils are given a clear idea of what is expected of them, and they work hard once they see the pertinence of the task they have been set. In most subjects, and particularly at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, pupils learn good research and note-making skills. They make increasingly effective use of information and communications technology when given the chance to use it. Pupils grow in confidence in using spoken English (though this remains an area of weakness in the school as a whole) and become more willing to venture opinions and ask questions. Discussion and group work are generally well managed, though more effectively at Key Stage 4 than Key Stage 3. Such work is well managed in the sixth form. The use of questioning to establish and extend pupils' understanding is often well managed throughout the school.

30. As far as can be established on the basis of evidence generated by different criteria, and in different circumstances, the quality of teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection, although the most obvious weakness noticed then – a tendency for teaching to be least effective in Years 8 and 9 – persists. Nevertheless, there is more consistency than at the time of the last inspection, and a much better appreciation across the staff of what constitutes good practice. Much work has been done to ensure that teachers share an understanding of what constitutes good teaching. Monitoring by line managers and within departments (though here the monitoring has been less extensive and effective) has been useful in reinforcing this understanding. There is much evidence that this in-service training is bearing fruit, though the effects are more obvious at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form than at Key Stage 3. Teachers are anxious to ensure that pupils' interest is caught and maintained by approaches that are varied and build on earlier learning; by instructions and explanations that are clear and precise; by work that is adapted to meet pupils' needs, or presented in such a way that all are able to respond at their own level; and by regular checks during the lesson of pupils' progress and understanding. There is clear evidence of growing consistency within subjects and across the curriculum in relation to these features of good practice.

31. Most of the unsatisfactory, and all of the poor, teaching was at Key Stage 3, where 12 per cent of the lessons failed to promote learning effectively. The main reasons for this were two. First, in most of these lessons poor class management by the teacher led to unsatisfactory behaviour by a significant number of pupils, mainly boys, that impeded learning for the whole class. Second, in several instances the teacher's planning and knowledge of the subject planning were inadequate, and the work was not adapted well to meet the needs of the pupils – it was either too easy, and the pupils wasted time, or it was too difficult and did not enable pupils to build on what they already knew. There was a much smaller proportion of unsatisfactory teaching at Key Stage 4 but the reasons for it were broadly similar. Although there is more unsatisfactory teaching than there should be, in a third of the cases seen, it was in lessons taught by supply teachers or teachers on temporary contracts, who were either inexperienced, or unqualified in the subject they were teaching, or had not adapted to the school's established expectations for good practice.

32. There are particular problems at Key Stage 3 as a result of the large size of most classes. Although skilled teachers can manage classes well whatever their size, overall the quality of teaching and learning is adversely affected. In science, for example, teachers often have to struggle to ensure that the syllabus can be covered effectively in cramped accommodation. In most subjects where teaching is in classrooms too small for the large groups, movement is restricted and furniture is more difficult to re-arrange for purposes such as group work. The large classes also make it much more difficult for teachers to consider

and cater for pupils' individual needs. For example, regular and helpful marking demands much more time in large classes. The pupils who were interviewed confirmed that the management of behaviour becomes more difficult in large classes, because "the pupils can get away with it more easily, and the teacher can't watch everyone."

33. Teachers' use of day-to-day assessment – in order to help pupils understand what they need to do to make progress – has improved since the last inspection, except in one respect. Marking of pupils' work, although regular, is still too often inconsistent. Straightforward errors are often ignored, particularly at Key Stage 3, and very few references are made to style and organisation, though this aspect of marking is better at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form than at Key Stage 3. Pupils are not given enough indication of what they need to do to improve their written work. These features reflect weaknesses in the teaching of basic literacy and spoken English across the curriculum. Parallel weaknesses affect the teaching of numeracy in subjects other than mathematics.

34. There are some examples of good teaching of basic skills in literacy at both key stages, but the lack of a literacy policy means that there is little consistency in the contribution that subject departments make, especially in attempting to improve pupils' writing. Overall, the teaching of literacy across the curriculum is unsatisfactory.

35. Most teachers know their pupils well and are given very detailed information about pupils' prior attainment. Not all use their knowledge of pupils or the information they are given to set work at an appropriate level, though there is increasingly good practice in this regard, for example in history, geography at Key Stage 4, and English. Most teachers give relevant feedback to pupils during lessons, to let them know how well they are doing, and to suggest ways of improving. This is an improvement on practice at the time of the last inspection. Teachers are making increasingly good use of targets to help pupils improve, and sometimes relate their marking of pupils' work to these targets. A significant number of parents are dissatisfied with the quality of homework, citing inconsistencies in the amount and difficulty of the work set, and delays in marking it. Such weaknesses exist, but there is good practice as well, where teachers ensure that pupils have a clear understanding of what they are expected to do, and there is careful monitoring of what they actually do. Overall, homework helps to raise standards, but it is weaker than it should be at Key Stage 3. Marking is also weaker at Key Stage 3, partly because the large class sizes can generate very large amounts of marking.

36. The teaching in the individual needs department is good. The special educational needs co-ordinator and the special needs support assistants plan the work very carefully and target the specific needs of individuals. The sessions are lively, move at a brisk pace and are designed to boost confidence as well as improve basic skills. The meticulous record keeping demonstrates that most pupils make significant improvement. The special educational needs co-ordinator has provided good guidance on teaching pupils with special needs in mainstream classes, and special needs assistants also provide support in mainstream lessons. However, their effectiveness is more limited because most subject teachers do not give the support assistants specific direction about what they should be doing. In addition, the assistants do not necessarily know in advance what the main focus of the lesson will be. In some lessons, the assistants spend much time wandering around under-occupied. This means that the pupils do not benefit as much as they could. The support is more effective where experienced assistants take the initiative.

37. Since the last inspection, teachers have raised their expectations of what pupils can achieve, and they plan more effectively to ensure that all pupils will be able to make progress. Nevertheless, there is still some lack of challenge for the pupils with most potential. As far as can be judged under different circumstances, the proportion of good and very good teaching

and learning has risen since the last inspection, but further improvement in the teaching is needed, particularly at Key Stage 3, where expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour are not yet high enough.

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

38. At Key Stages 3 and 4 the curriculum makes a satisfactory contribution to the standards and quality of pupils' work; in the sixth form the contribution is good. The range of learning opportunities provided is satisfactory overall at Key Stages 3 and 4 and good in the sixth form. Currently, the school is seeking with some success to increase the range of opportunities for high and low attainers at Key Stages 3 and 4 and is involved in a pilot project designed to raise standards at Key Stage 3. Throughout the school, a very good range of extra-curricular activities enhances the curriculum. Overall, the school is largely successful in its aim to ensure that pupils benefit from effective teaching and learning through the provision of a broad and balanced curricular experience. However, the many good features of the curriculum are offset by a number of shortcomings.

39. Significant improvements have been made to the curriculum since the last inspection, and the curriculum, overall, now meets pupils' needs satisfactorily. The length of the teaching week has been increased and is in line with practice in the majority of similar schools. Curricular balance is better at Key Stage 3 and, at Key Stage 4, a developing and appropriate range of alternative opportunities is being introduced for potentially disaffected pupils. The match with sixth form opportunities has been improved, and the post-16 curriculum is developing well in relation to national requirements. Two weaknesses identified at the time of the last inspection have not been dealt with completely. Provision for information and communications technology still does not meet statutory requirements fully at Key Stage 4, and there is no religious education in the sixth form.

40. At Key Stage 3 the curriculum includes the full range of core and foundation subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education, extended by separate drama and a personal, social and health education programme taught in tutor groups. These last allow a particular focus on social and moral issues while the cultural dimensions of the curriculum are enriched by visits to theatre, musicals, exhibitions as well as a recent millennium arts festival.

41. Several subjects at both key stages, including English, are taught in mixed-ability classes, but the very wide range of learning needs in each class is not always met. The school is concerned about this and is investigating the possibility of an extension of setting by attainment at Key Stage 3. The English department seeks to build on good links with the contributory primary schools and a literacy project is being introduced in Year 7 to carry forward the approaches developed in the national literacy strategy. There is already evidence of its positive effects on pupils' learning. Provision is complemented by a good scheme for library use in Years 7 and 8. However, this scheme is not carried forward into Year 9 where pupils' interest in voluntary reading tends to diminish. Media studies and drama, as options in Year 9, provide opportunities for the study of media texts and elementary theatre techniques, and give pupils an early start in studies that can lead to GCSE.

42. The mathematics curriculum is satisfactory. Progression is maintained through a published scheme enhanced by the introduction of the national numeracy strategy, for which adequate time is provided. The placing of pupils in broad attainment bands at Key Stage 3 and in ability sets at Key Stage 4 provides opportunities for matching the work in mathematics more accurately with pupils' needs, but in practice the opportunities are

reduced slightly by the large class sizes at Key Stage 3 (as many as 39 in one class) and, at Key Stage 4, by a lack of extension work for the highest-attaining pupils.

43. Broad banding and setting of pupils assist the teaching of science. There has been a considerable improvement in provision for information and communications technology since the last inspection. Nevertheless, the curriculum does not meet statutory requirements fully since there is no reporting on information and communications technology at Key Stage 4.

44. At Key Stage 3, humanities is taught on a rotational basis through modules devoted to history, geography and religious education as separate subjects. The same teacher takes all three subjects with each class. Although every attempt is made to ensure that non-specialist teachers receive support through guidance in schemes of work and teaching materials, the overall quality of the provision is less good than is often the case when the subjects are taught entirely by specialists.

45. The design and technology curriculum is appropriate and balanced at both key stages, although some problems are caused by large group sizes for practical work.

46. Modern foreign languages benefit from additional periods in Years 7 and 11, but there is less time in Years 8, 9 and 10. Setting offers some compensation in that it enables better provision to be made for the higher attainers, but large class sizes, which appear unavoidable with present levels of staffing, cause difficulties for meeting the needs of all pupils in the lower-attaining groups.

47. In art and music, the time allocated has been increased, but remains slightly short as at the time of the last inspection. Aspects of the new curriculum orders have not yet been translated into schemes of work in these subjects, notably in relation to the use of information and communications technology. Both subjects take insufficient account of cultural diversity in their programmes of work, and opportunities in music are often constrained by large class sizes. Provision for physical education is satisfactory overall, although Year 9 pupils who do not opt for additional time in the subject find it difficult to reach their targets.

48. Curricular links with primary schools are developing well, while increasing links with industry, commerce and the community bring enrichment to the curriculum as a whole. There is a well-planned work-related option for Years 10 and 11 (53 pupils are taking part), which is equivalent to two subjects. The intention is to provide positive alternatives for potentially disaffected pupils. The main provision is a range of accredited vocational courses at nearby Broxtowe College. Pupils can study business, leisure and tourism, garment making, electronics and community studies, alongside work placements in related businesses and a range of GCSE subjects (including English and mathematics) in school. GNVQ foundation leisure and tourism is also provided at Chilwell. Other opportunities include a junior sports leader option in physical education. The programme as a whole will replace non-accredited work-related schemes, which are being brought to an end this year. There are two disadvantages to the new programme, but these are outweighed by the advantages. First, pupils involved have to be disapplying from modern languages; second, targets for the course have not yet been set, but they will include pupil achievement, increased life skills, and improved attendance. The strong advantage is to provide new perspectives for pupils in their study, which are seen by them to be more relevant to their needs. In addition, there is a carefully prepared work experience programme, which is followed by all Year 10 pupils in the school.

49. Provision for pupils with special educational needs at both key stages is broadly satisfactory overall and good in the individual needs department. In addition to the withdrawal work, the school had introduced its own literacy booster classes and the initial evaluation of

these suggests that most pupils who have taken part in the six-week course significantly improve their literacy skills and sustain the improvement once the course has finished.

50. The Youth Award scheme in Years 10 and 11 is another good alternative for pupils for whom a full GCSE course is not appropriate or who are at risk of becoming disaffected. About twelve pupils are involved in each year and the course supports the work of these pupils in their GCSE subjects or college placements.

51. The school makes satisfactory arrangements for pupils' personal, social and health education. The programme is carefully planned so that over time pupils return to a topic and explore it again in greater depth. The provision already contributes to education in citizenship. Tutors teach the programme at both key stages. Some find this type of teaching easier than others, but standards are satisfactory overall.

52. The local community makes a good contribution to pupils' learning. In order to raise money for the Arts College the school has registered with a main shopping centre in the city. There are good contacts with local sports clubs and other organisations.

53. Links with partner organisations are also good. Contact with primary schools through the local 'family of schools' brings many benefits. The Year 7 co-ordinator goes to the primary schools to talk to all prospective pupils. This visit is followed by similar ones from tutors, who go to meet their new groups before the induction day, which is held in the summer term before the pupils transfer. Curricular links in several subjects strengthen the contacts between the schools. The school also makes a point of promoting contact between it and local universities. Pupils in Year 11 are taken to see Nottingham Trent University, while students from the university give advice annually on revision and examination techniques.

54. Curricular provision in the consortium sixth form is good overall, with a wide range of A, AS level and GNVQ courses. Students join the sixth form from three schools and in recent years former Chilwell students have made up about a quarter of the total. Recruitment from Chilwell is, however, rising rapidly at present. Twenty-three A and AS levels are offered. In addition, there are three GNVQs at intermediate and advanced levels. In line with national requirements for the post-16 curriculum, key skills courses are taught. These are organised thoroughly and taught effectively, but there is some doubt amongst students and staff about their validity because they are entirely separate from the subject studies they are intended to support. Ways of achieving greater integration are being considered.

55. The post-16 curriculum includes work experience, tutorial periods, community service and some extra-curricular activities. General studies can be taken as an A level, and the few who sit the examination do well. Careers guidance is well organised and extensive help is given with university applications for those who intend to continue in higher education. The proportion of leavers doing so is high. Private study is organised and usually supervised on-site, but students have the right to remain at home if they are not being taught during a half-day session. Students' time is generally well organised and most Year 12 students have relatively full timetables. The drop-out rate from A level subjects is relatively low.

56. There are some weaknesses. The sixth form centre, although it is on the Chilwell site, operates in isolation from the school and sixth formers contribute very little to the life of the school. The provision of activities outside lessons is limited because sixth formers are expected to organise their own activities, and most are reluctant to do so, particularly when they have many demands on their time and may just have transferred from another school. The small amount of tutorial time is devoted entirely to careers education and guidance and the preparation of applications for higher education; there is no personal and social education. Few take general studies and there is no religious education. In combination,

these features limit the opportunities for study and discussion beyond the academic and vocational courses, and lead to some narrowing in students' experience. Another weakness is that the sixth form centre, in contrast to the main school, has not been adapted to provide access for disabled students. These students are, therefore, bound to transfer to other institutions for their post-16 studies.

### **Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

57. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. There is, however, no systematic approach throughout the school to pupils' development in these areas. The school has made no review of where and how such development might be supported. In consequence, pupils have inconsistent experiences. In many cases, opportunities are lost.

58. Provision for spiritual development is unsatisfactory. Pupils have opportunities for reflection in few areas. In religious education they explore a number of major faiths and in the light of these consider their own beliefs. In their studies of English literature, they sometimes reflect on beliefs and emotions, but rarely upon the beauty of language. Pupils' emotional reactions to works of art or music are infrequently considered. In other subjects the spiritual dimension is at best incidental and in most cases is ignored altogether. Assemblies offer some possibilities for reflection and consideration of beliefs. Year 11 pupils, for example, reflected on the significance of Armistice Day. Year 7 pupils were encouraged by a visiting speaker from the Gideons not to dismiss the claims of the Bible without taking time to look at them. Such opportunities are, however, irregular. The school does not comply with its statutory obligation to provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.

59. Provision for pupils' moral development is satisfactory. The school rules and behaviour policy foster pupils' understanding of right and wrong. Staff lead by example. In physical education pupils learn the need for rules and fair play in sports and games. In English and media studies, they review the ethics of the international and national, especially tabloid, press. The global implications of GM foods are tackled in science. Poverty, aid, and environmental exploitation issues figure strongly in geography. The profound debate about euthanasia is considered in religious education. In other subjects, however, moral aspects feature only in passing, if at all.

60. Provision for social development is good. Except in the sixth form, there is an appropriate programme of personal, social and health education. Pair and group work are common in many subjects and pupils learn to work in collaboration with one another. A wide range of extra-curricular activities including the Youth Award and Duke of Edinburgh's Award schemes promotes both independence and collaborative skills. Within the school, pupils have opportunities to exercise responsibilities as librarians, prefects and especially as part of the School Council where they have some opportunities to contribute to the running of the school. Pupils from all years have, since its inception, taken part in the Broxtowe Shadow Council, run under the auspices of the Local Authority. Along with other young people from the locality they support the local council, bringing to its attention matters that particularly affect young people. Visits abroad and links with schools in other countries foster international understanding. Pupils are heavily involved with charitable works and on their own initiative have supported a wide range of causes including the local youth club, Help the Aged and the Mozambique flood appeal. They are encouraged to develop a sense of responsibility, to be aware of the need to receive from society and to give something back.

61. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils have visited theatres and exhibitions, and the school recently celebrated pupils' work in art and music, in particular in its Millennium Festival. Extra-curricular activities include a drama club and the pupil-run

Radio Swan, initiated as part of media studies and created with the help of Radio Trent. Pupils have visited France and have links with other parts of Europe. However, most of the provision for cultural development is rooted in the Western European tradition. Some provision for multi-cultural education is found in religious education when rites of passage are considered, in geography in appreciation of cultural diversity and to a lesser extent in English, modern languages, art and design and technology. Provision for multi-cultural education is, however, despite good library resources, not widespread.

62. Since the last inspection provision for spiritual development remains underdeveloped. The school still fails to meet its statutory obligations to provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.

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

63. The school looks after the pupils in its care effectively. There are good procedures to ensure that members of staff know pupils well. Year teams stay with their year groups throughout their time at the school to give greater continuity as pupils move through the key stages. Year teams work well together, meeting frequently to monitor pupils' personal development and behaviour. The daily tutor periods are not always effective, however. There are some productive sessions, but others have little impact on pupils. This weakness persists from the time of the last inspection. There are good procedures to ensure pupils' safety, both within the school, on visits outside and for pupils on work-related activities. The procedures for child protection are effective. The school has been successful in improving attendance. Since the appointment of the education welfare assistant four years ago, at the school's own expense, levels of attendance have improved year on year. This has been achieved by efficient day-to-day recording of attendance, prompt action in cases of absence, and careful monitoring. The procedures to promote and monitor good behaviour are thorough and mostly effective, despite the continuing unsatisfactory behaviour of a small minority of pupils, mainly, but not exclusively, boys at Key Stage 3. A booklet summarises the behaviour policy for pupils and parents, listing what the school expects of pupils, with the rewards and sanctions explained. As a result of effective school training in behaviour management, teachers use the same methods to encourage good behaviour and enforce discipline. This approach was seen to work well in many lessons.

64. The school provides good support and advice for all pupils. It has started to combine the various types of support available. Monitoring of pupils' academic progress is benefiting from the increasing use of information collected about pupils' potential, and matching this with the progress they make. This is being combined with the information on their behaviour, personal development and attendance, already well monitored by year teams and the education welfare assistant. Members of staff are being trained how to use the wide range of information available to support all aspects of pupils' progress and thus raise achievement. There is an increasing emphasis on recognising and celebrating success of all kinds that culminates in the award evenings. Members of staff also use this information to teach pupils how to set targets for themselves to improve their academic work, behaviour and general organisation.

65. Standards of care were good at the time of the last inspection and remain so. Progress has been made in the way the school uses the information about pupils that it collects, to track their progress and provide good support and guidance, both educational and personal.

66. The school has mostly good procedures to assess pupils' attainment. There are very effective arrangements to ensure that there is secure information about pupils' attainment when they enter the school, in order to provide a sound basis for future assessments,



including 'minimum target grades'. Pastoral co-ordinators supplement the data systems with individual pre-entry interviews with most pupils. Increasingly, subject departments build on this analysis by their analysis of test results, two progress checks, and examinations. Subject assessments are guided by a very comprehensive school assessment policy. However, some departmental assessment practice still lags behind the standards set by whole school procedures. Teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment at the end of Year 9 are not always accurate, and in many subjects are inflated. The very good, concise assessment in science is marred by under-assessment by teachers in Year 9. In modern languages, there are good systems to inform teachers and pupils of progress. Some subjects such as geography, do not underpin or moderate their assessments. Assessment in art is not yet fully secure in relation to the current National Curriculum Orders. Pupils are involved in their own assessment through a school pilot initiative in Year 8. This is particularly successful in religious education. Day-to-day marking to underpin the assessment of pupils' classwork and homework is not carried out consistently across all subjects, although this is required by the school marking policy. Teachers' written advice to pupils, indicating clearly how their work could be improved, is insufficiently detailed in many subjects and does not contribute enough to pupils' progress. At a more mundane level, at Key Stage 3 in particular, errors in spelling and technical accuracy in pupils' written work are rarely picked up by teachers in marking, and even more rarely corrected by pupils. This unsatisfactory practice, which reflects the difficulty teachers have in keeping up with marking in large classes, may largely explain the persistent and unnecessary weaknesses in spelling, technical accuracy and sentence construction that are evident in the written work of a significant number of students in Year 12.

67. Assessment data are used satisfactorily to support the raising of attainment. There is very detailed school analysis of examination data, which is shared with departments and used to set and review targets for pupils for both the national tests at the end of Year 9 and for GCSE examinations, and the data illustrate well the school's improving trend of performance in GCSE examinations. The school development plan and the current staff training sessions recognise the need to raise staff awareness and expertise in the use of these and other data to inform their teaching. Good assessment information assists pupils' progression from primary to secondary school. In addition, it supports planning for pupils with special educational needs, although it is not yet well used to target in-class support.

68. Procedures for monitoring pupils' progress across the range of subjects in the curriculum are satisfactory. The two existing progress reviews assist year co-ordinators and associated members of the senior management team to monitor the progress of pupils in their year groups. Mentoring in Year 11 and the targeting of underachieving pupils help pupils preparing for examinations.

69. The school has made good progress in assessment since the last inspection. The school has continued to develop well its assessment practices and monitoring and support procedures. There is now much greater use of secure 'baseline' data to inform assessment and target setting, a focus group on assessment has been established, and staff awareness and expectations have been raised. Assessment is more purposeful and better targeted to support planning and monitoring of pupils' progress, both in relation to national trends and performance in similar schools. Departmental practices, however, are not yet fully consistent with the school procedures.

70. The individual needs department provides a high standard of care for pupils with special educational needs. The staff carefully assess individual needs and target their support effectively in terms of identifying the type of help pupils need. Regular and thorough monitoring of progress, both academic and personal, helps pupils, teachers and parents to see what is being achieved. Pupils' individual education plans are then modified accordingly.

This good practice does not, however, lead to consistently effective support in mainstream classes through subject teaching or the deployment of learning support assistants.

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

71. Parents support the work of the school. Most of those who returned the questionnaire think that the school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best. Parents also think that children like the school and make good progress there. Inspection findings agree with these parental views. The responses of a significant number of parents who returned the questionnaire were critical of the school. Some do not think they are well informed about the progress their children make. Inspectors found that the amount and quality of information on progress vary. Some parents have concerns about homework. Inspectors consider that there are inconsistencies in both the amount and the usefulness of the homework set for pupils, particularly at Key Stage 3, and in the quality of marking. Some parents do not think that standards of behaviour in the school are good. The inspection team agrees that the behaviour of a small minority of pupils is not good, but consider that standards of behaviour overall are satisfactory. Some parents do not think the school works closely with them. Inspectors consider that the school tries hard to involve parents and does work closely with them.

72. The school has made considerable efforts to develop the links it has with parents. It provides an extensive range of useful information about the school and the work their children do there. There are, for example, curriculum booklets for each year group at Key Stage 3 and one for Key Stage 4, which tell parents about topics to be studied. Parents also receive booklets that summarise the policies on behaviour and drugs in the school. The Chilwell Partnership (a parents' group) sends out a weekly newsletter to keep parents up-to-date with events at the school. The school seeks parents' views through questionnaires before making changes, as happened with a proposed alteration to the arrangements for consultation evenings. They have also run courses for parents on particular topics such as drugs. The education welfare assistant is an effective link between the school and parents. Although the general information provided by the school is extensive and helpful, the information they receive about progress does vary. All parents receive a brief progress check and one full report each year. The reports indicate standards and effort clearly: the variation lies in the comments made on these. Some, particularly at Key Stage 4, tell parents exactly what their children know and can do in a subject and say precisely what is needed in order to improve. Others, however, consist of much more general, and often unhelpful, comment. The level of parents' involvement in the work of the school is satisfactory, as is the contribution that they make to their children's learning. Most parents sign the planners (homework diaries) and will contact the school if they have concerns. Parents come to dramatic and musical productions and awards evenings in good numbers, but attendance at subject evenings is lower, though nonetheless satisfactory. The Chilwell Partnership organises fund-raising events, such as the Craft Fair, in addition to the weekly newsletter.

73. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed and are consulted at all stages. They are invited to attend review meetings and to contribute to and comment on individual education plans and the targets set in these.

74. The quality of the school's partnership with parents is at least as good as at the time of the last inspection. The school has, in fact, expanded its links with parents.

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

75. The leadership and management of the school have improved considerably since the last inspection, when several weaknesses were identified, the main one being that the

approach to management was insufficiently corporate. There is now good teamwork among managers and policy decisions are shared. The headteacher, who had only just joined the school at the time of the last inspection, provides strong leadership clearly focussed on raising standards and on giving the school a definite sense of direction and purpose. Senior managers have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and work well together. Almost all the key issues for action in the last inspection report have been followed up thoroughly, particularly those concerned with the monitoring and improvement of teaching.

76. At the time of the last inspection, leadership and management at head of department level were judged not to be focussed clearly on teaching and learning, and some weaknesses were identified in departmental development planning. Departments are now involved regularly in initiatives designed to improve teaching and learning and departmental development planning is linked to school priorities. Departmental leadership and management are generally effective across the curriculum. Much has been done since the last inspection to develop cohesion in practice in assessment, target setting and the improvement of teaching and learning, as part of the school's policy to raise standards. Where there are weaknesses in management, they are partly the result of staff absence. Some weaknesses are the result of anomalies in school organisation. For example, the management of information and communications technology is made difficult because the co-ordinator is timetabled for much of the week to teach mathematics.

77. It is still the case that some aspects of school policy are not implemented thoroughly by all departments. For example, the extensive and accurate assessment data produced by the assessment co-ordinator are not used well enough by every department to monitor pupils' progress, and departmental progress, towards targets. Although the line management arrangements generally ensure that productive contacts are maintained between senior managers and subjects, middle managers are not yet sufficiently accountable for implementing policy in some areas central to the raising of standards. Most of these areas of school policy requiring further improvement have been identified accurately through recent work on 'self-evaluation' by the heads of English, mathematics and science. They highlighted the following priorities: the further development of information and communications technology; better use of targets; the teaching of literacy and numeracy; better differentiation in planning work to meet pupils' learning needs; higher expectations of the most able pupils at Key Stage 3; and the effective use of individual education plans (IEPs) in teaching pupils with special educational needs. The inspection team identified similar areas requiring improvement.

78. Heads of year provide good support for the pupils in their year group, and pastoral care in the school is good. The special educational needs co-ordinator leads the team of support assistants very effectively. There is a strong sense of teamwork and commitment to providing the best support possible for the pupils. The funding for special educational needs is used well in providing support within the individual needs department. The in-class support, however, is not as effective and therefore does not provide as good value for money because subject teachers are not giving enough direction. The quality of the support is too dependent on the initiative and experience of the special needs assistants.

79. There are other features of good practice that represent improvements since the last inspection. New technology is used well to manage school organisation, assessment data and financial administration. The reputation of the school in the local community has improved and ambitious plans are being made for the future development of the school. The school makes good progress towards meeting its aims and objectives, which provide a broadly appropriate framework for its development, though they were drawn up some years ago and would benefit from updating, as the school has itself realised in discussing its objective of becoming a specialist Arts College.

80. School finances are controlled carefully, but financial planning since the last inspection has been made difficult by a number of factors. The school has had to reduce progressively a deficit that, it reports, was not of its own making. It has also had to meet, with retrospective funding, the financial commitments of a rising roll. The consortium sixth form has grown in size and there are uncertainties about the precise cost to the school of this sixth form provision. The senior staff and governors point out that there are extensive 'hidden' costs, including the need to duplicate expenditure in certain areas of staffing and resources. The school does not receive a split-site allowance for sixth form purposes.

81. The school reports that, since the last inspection, the governors and the headteacher have had to manage some difficult reductions in staffing. The provision of teachers is now just adequate to meet the demands of the curriculum, but there are some continuing difficulties. At present there are more teachers with relatively senior responsibility allowances than would normally be the case in a school of this size. Several of these allowances are held for historical reasons, and do not reflect closely current priorities in the management of staffing or the development of the school, though the school reports that the situation is better than at the time of the last inspection. The staff includes a high proportion of experienced teachers, many of whom have served for many years - some even for all their teaching career - at Chilwell. While this provides valuable stability and expertise, it can restrict flexibility in curriculum development and staff deployment and the introduction of new thinking to the school.

82. There are some features of expenditure on staffing in the current financial year that are difficult to understand. Records show that the school's expenditure on teachers during the 1999-2000 financial year was broadly in line with, though at the lower end of, national levels of spending in similar schools. The most recent data suggest that this situation has changed. In the current financial year, the school is working to a pupil to teacher ratio of 21:1, well above the expected figure for comparable schools nationally. On the other hand, this year the proportion of the school's overall expenditure devoted to employing teachers is below national figures for similar schools, although expenditure on staffing as a whole is close to the national median. Overall, again in this year, teachers teach pupils for a lower proportion of the week than in most comparable schools. Some of these circumstances can partially be explained by hidden costs that are not included in the school's overall analysis of expenditure on teaching - for example, the pupil to teacher ratio does not take account of some additional staffing provided through the consortium arrangements; nor does the calculation of teaching time allow for the fact that teachers volunteer to staff the referral room throughout the week, an additional use of time that benefits all pupils at Chilwell. Nevertheless, it remains true that present patterns of staff deployment have consequences that are detrimental to pupils' learning. This is particularly true of Key Stage 3. Except in design and technology in Years 8 and 9, very few classes at Key Stage 3 contain fewer than 30 pupils, and several have close to 40. The size makes it difficult for many teachers to manage pupils' learning and behaviour to a consistently high standard, particularly in mixed-ability classes and classes containing a broad range of average and lower-attaining pupils. It also makes marking more demanding, and flexibility in teaching approaches more difficult to achieve, particularly in the many cramped classrooms. Pupils' individual needs are not as well met. Pupils spoken to in Year 9 readily identified the disadvantages of the large classes, and the evidence of the inspection supported their perceptions. Pupils make better progress at Key Stage 4 than Key Stage 3. It is not immediately evident why Key Stage 3 classes should have to be so large, since the overall expenditure on each pupil in the school is close to the national median and not at a level that would normally cause such constraints.

83. Governors give good support to the headteacher and staff, most importantly in the school's work to raise standards. They have a clear understanding of the school's long-term

objectives. They have an appropriate committee structure, hold meetings to pertinent agendas, and record their decisions carefully. Governors receive regular and informative reports from subject and pastoral areas of responsibility, and these provide a good basis for their monitoring. Governors do not, however, ensure that statutory requirements are met in every area. There is no provision of religious education in the sixth form (a responsibility that would have to be shared with other schools), nor is there a daily act of collective worship. The school does not report to parents on pupils' competence in information and communications technology at Key Stage 4, as is required. There is also an omission in the annual report to parents, in that it does not report on the effectiveness of provision for special educational needs, or the ways in which the school allocates its funding in this area. Governors ensure that the school has good standards of financial control, and they give careful thought to ways in which 'best value' can be achieved in many areas of expenditure. However, governors do not have a sufficiently clear, strategic overview of expenditure and its effects. They receive insufficient information about patterns of school spending, in central areas such as the deployment of staff, in comparison with national patterns of spending in similar schools. In consequence, governors are limited in the extent to which they can scrutinise school decisions objectively and fulfil their statutory responsibilities as a 'critical friend' holding the school to account for its strategic decisions.

84. Governors through their finance committee liaise carefully with the senior management team and the finance officer in planning and monitoring the budget. Specific grants - for example for special educational needs - are distributed carefully, and their effects evaluated. Subject staff contribute to financial planning through their development planning, and funds are allocated to departments according to an appropriate formula. However, heads of department are not required to account with enough rigour for the cost-effectiveness of their spending decisions. In relation to the main area of their expenditure - staffing - senior management and governors do not have sufficient detailed information about some aspects of the school's income and expenditure to carry out such rigorous analyses. The school reports that trying to identify the precise costs of the sixth form provision causes particular difficulties in this context.

85. At the time of the inspection several teachers, including some heads of department, were absent. Where the school is able to recruit cover teachers of whom it has knowledge, the substitutions are generally satisfactory. There are difficulties in finding appropriate supply cover, however. The quality of non-specialist supply teaching is a matter of concern in humanities, where short-term cover is having an adverse effect on pupils' progress. In physical education, non-specialist supply teaching has had an adverse effect on standards and the A level group has lost ground because of this. Teaching at Key Stage 3 in religious education is by non-specialist supply staff, but the quality is generally satisfactory, and support is being provided by established members of the humanities faculty who, in the absence of the head of department, are covering most of the work at Key Stage 4.

86. The selection of priorities for in-service training and staff development since the last inspection has been thoughtful, and related closely to school priorities for raising standards through the improvement of teaching and the development of management skills. Specific grants have been used well in this context and strong support has been provided through the LEA advisory service and local universities. The school is involved in initial teacher training, though at the time of the inspection only the science department had a student actually teaching. Others were working with a variety of departments as part of their initial experience. The support provided through science was good and the training arrangements are well co-ordinated at school level. The induction to the school of newly qualified teachers is effective.

87. Except for the absence of a network manager for information and communications technology, there is a sufficient number of non-teaching staff including support, administrative, clerical and premises staff. The professional development needs of non-teaching staff are met well. Non-teaching staff provide very valuable help for the school in all these categories. Most of the support assistants for special educational needs have a good level of specialist expertise, but this is often not used to best advantage in lessons.

88. The school's accommodation has many good features including comprehensive community sports facilities, an attractive landscaped site, a fine library and safe access for bicycles, which are much used by pupils for coming to school. Much has been done in recent years to improve working conditions for pupils and staff, for example by partitioning teaching areas to separate them from other teaching areas, by painting and redecoration, by upgrading lighting, inserting viewing windows, and refurbishing the dining areas and library. There are, however, significant weaknesses that affect standards of work, and the overall quality is, therefore, unsatisfactory.

89. Large classes often have to be taught in classrooms that are cramped and restrict flexibility in teaching styles. Many teaching spaces, for example in design and technology and music, are subject to noise and visual interference from adjacent teaching areas. Practical work in science is affected by the inadequate size of laboratories and their poor condition. Music accommodation is in need of refurbishment and the pottery room in art is poor acoustically. The sixth form accommodation is of good quality, but the school reports that the shared management arrangements cause problems for the identification of respective responsibilities and costs across the three schools in the consortium. Under difficult circumstances, the school's accommodation is well managed and the quality of caretaking is good.

90. Learning resources are satisfactory in most departments, but barely adequate to meet needs in a few areas. In particular, computer capacity in the school as a whole is weak. The ratio of pupils to computer terminals is about 16:1 (based on the number of terminals available to pupils), which is low in national terms. The main computer rooms contain 17 terminals each and are used by classes that often contain 30 to 35 pupils. Working in pairs or with one-half of the pupils undertaking associated deskwork is common practice. The lack of teaching capacity in the two main computer rooms prevents the English, media studies, design and technology, geography, history, mathematics, modern languages and science departments from applying information and communications technology fully to their courses. In addition, the lack of computing capacity is one of the reasons why specialist courses in information and communications technology have not been developed at Key Stage 4.

91. The school has a very good library, which is well run by an experienced librarian. The ratio of books to pupils is in line with national expectations and covers the needs of all departments adequately. In addition, the library has a wide range of other resources including videos, cassettes and CD ROM discs. It contains six computer terminals connected to the school's network, and two stand-alone personal computers. With this equipment it provides Internet and e-mail facilities. The CD ROM discs are used for general research, private study and in courses in art, English, geography, history, mathematics, music, religious education and science. The library is used for teaching library skills and by pupils for private study outside normal school hours.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

92. In order to build on good practice, raise standards further and improve the quality of educational provision, governors and staff should take action in the following areas, most of which are already receiving attention:

(1) Raise standards at Key Stage 3 by:

- paying particular attention to the achievement of girls;
- raising overall standards in English, numeracy and literacy and spoken English across the curriculum;
- taking account of the developing priorities and contribution of the Key Stage 3 Project in this context;
- ensuring that the most able pupils are identified and their needs met through clear planning for, and monitoring of, their progress.

(See paragraphs 2-4,34,95,99,108-112,121)

(2) Improve the quality of teaching and learning at Key Stage 3 by:

- monitoring closely the effects of class size and cramped accommodation on the quality of learning and standards of work and behaviour;
- continuing to improve the teaching of literacy and numeracy;
- making consistent use of marking and homework to raise standards;
- ensuring that homework takes proper account of pupils' different levels of attainment; and that it is followed up and marked appropriately;
- ensuring that marking is accurate, that it indicates clearly what pupils need to do to improve, and that it takes proper account of pupils' learning needs;
- building on existing good practice to improve further pupils' (and in particular boys') behaviour

(See paragraphs 23,27-37,66)

(3) Use school development planning to monitor and evaluate more closely the main areas of school expenditure:

- with support from the LEA if necessary and on the basis of accurate information about the school's financial obligations in all areas, including the sixth form, review the efficiency of the patterns of expenditure, and their effects on standards;
- take account of decisions in areas such as curricular development, timetable arrangements, the balance of expenditure between teaching and non-teaching staff, the balance of teaching and non-teaching time;
- in these contexts, use the findings of school monitoring, and local and national benchmarks where necessary, to establish where improvements are possible.

(See paragraphs 82-84)

- (4) Continue to raise standards of management and leadership in subjects by:
- ensuring that school policies are implemented fully by departments;
  - monitoring and supporting more closely those departments where staff absence is affecting the quality of leadership and management
  - paying particular attention to the co-ordination of information and communications technology; ensuring that there are appropriate opportunities to carry out the role;
  - ensuring that statutory requirements for information and communications technology are met fully at Key Stage 4.
- (See paragraphs 76,77,83,85,159)
- (5) Ensure that pupils with special educational needs are supported more effectively through:
- planned and effective use of support assistants in lessons;
  - where appropriate, better use within subjects of the targets and suggestions for development in pupils' individual education plans (IEPs)
- (See paragraphs 36,70,77)
- (6) Continue to seek improvements to the accommodation, in particular for science, design and technology and music.
- (See paragraphs 88-89,130,142)

93. In addition, these less central issues should receive attention:

- i. The shortage of computers (paragraph 90)
- ii. Provision for pupils' spiritual development (paragraph 58)
- iii. Accuracy in teacher assessment at Key Stage 3 (paragraph 66)
- iv. Provision for collective worship (paragraphs 58,83)
- v. Provision for religious education in the sixth form (paragraph 56)
- vi. Requirements for reporting to parents on special educational needs (paragraph 83)
- vii. Quality of annual reports for parents (paragraph 72)
- viii. Use of tutorial time in the main school and sixth form (paragraphs 56,63)
- ix. Development of library skills and voluntary reading after Year 8 (paragraph 95)



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	163
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	44

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	18	32	40	7	2	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	894	119
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	68	2

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	5	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	112	0

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	24
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	33

### Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	6.7	School data	0.9
National comparative data	7.9	National comparative data	1.1

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000 [1999]	100 [100]	73 [70]	173 [170]

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	45 [50]	68 [66]	71 [67]
	Girls	33 [43]	38 [43]	36 [36]
	Total	78 [93]	106 [109]	107 [103]
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	45 [55]	61 [65]	62 [61]
	National	63 [63]	66 [62]	60 [60]
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	13 [20]	31 [40]	34 [22]
	National	28 [28]	42 [38]	30 [28]

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	66 [67]	47 [72]	61 [61]
	Girls	60 [51]	29 [43]	34 [31]
	Total	126 [118]	76 [115]	95 [103]
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	73 [70]	44 [68]	55 [54]
	National	65 [64]	66 [64]	60 [60]
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	32 [32]	26 [30]	36 [22]
	National	31 [31]	39 [38]	29 [28]

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	76	71	147
	[1999]	[91]	[77]	[168]

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	35 [41]	63 [82]	70 [83]
	Girls	40 [42]	65 [75]	69 [75]
	Total	75 [83]	128 [157]	139 [158]
Percentage of pupils achieving The standard specified	School	51 [49]	87 [93]	95 [94]
	National	n/a [47]	n/a [91]	n/a [96]

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	43.4 [41]
	National	n/a [38]

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and The percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	0 [0]	0 [0]
	National		n/a [n/a]

### Attainment at the end of the sixth form

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	46	36	82
	[1999]	[25]	[14]	[39]

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	18.0 [15.1]	13.1 [20.2]	16.2 [16.6]	n/a [4.0]	n/a [5.5]	n/a [5.0]
National	n/a [17.7]	N/a [18.1]	n/a [17.9]	n/a [2.7]	n/a [2.8]	n/a [2.8]

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number in their final year of studying for approved vocational qualifications or	School	2 [5]	100 [100]

units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	National		n/a
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### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	6
Indian	10
Pakistani	7
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	3
White	940
Any other minority ethnic group	12
Not known	34

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	48.36
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21:1

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked per week	313

*\* This total does not take account of staffing allocated to the sixth form centre*

#### **Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	75.6
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#### **Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11**

Key Stage 3	28.7
Key Stage 4	24.6

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	1	
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	27	2
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	2200443
Total expenditure	2245359
Expenditure per pupil	2423
Balance brought forward from previous year	-27884
Balance carried forward to next year	-72800

**Results of the survey of parents and carers**

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	1013
Number of questionnaires returned	163

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Tend to agree</b>	<b>Tend to disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
My child likes school.	32	58	9	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	27	62	7	1	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	21	55	16	1	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	18	54	19	8	1
The teaching is good.	14	68	10	1	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	22	42	24	6	6
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	37	48	11	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	43	49	4	2	2
The school works closely with parents.	21	48	22	4	5
The school is well led and managed.	26	51	6	4	13
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	25	60	7	2	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	24	47	8	4	17

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

### ENGLISH

94. The attainment of Year 9 pupils in National Curriculum tests in 2000 was well below the national average and very low compared with similar schools. Results have fallen sharply since 1997 when they were in line with the national average. Pupils' attainment was lower than in mathematics and science. Girls in particular have not done well in the tests since 1997. Attainment in GCSE was much better. In 1999 the proportion of pupils gaining grades A\*-C in English was well above the national average and well above attainment in similar schools. Results in English literature were close to the national average. Pupils gained better results than in most of the other subjects they took, including mathematics and science. Good standards in GCSE English were maintained in 2000 and improved slightly in literature. In the sixth form, results at A level were above the national average in 1999, but have varied considerably from year to year.

95. The standard of pupils' work seen during the inspection was broadly in line with these results. Pupils do not achieve as well as they should at Key Stage 3. They enter the school with average levels of attainment, but this falls to well below average in Year 9. Their inaccurate written work is the main reason for this. Many pupils make elementary mistakes in punctuation, sentence construction and spelling, and several still print rather than write. Even higher-attaining pupils are unsure about the use of paragraphs and many use commas indiscriminately. When pupils re-draft work, these errors often persist because neither pupils nor their teachers identify the mistakes in the first draft. Apart from these basic errors, pupils' writing is often very imaginative and descriptive. Many are able to write accounts that analyse how language is used for effect. One boy explained clearly how "the tempo speeds up through the use of short words as the story reaches its climax." Most pupils enjoy reading in Years 7 and 8, but tend to lose interest in Year 9 when there are no lessons based in the library. Many can identify figures of speech such as 'oxymoron' and 'personification' in Moniza Alvi's poem, *Presents from my Aunt in Pakistan*, and some are able to explain why the poet uses these figures of speech. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are sufficient for them to participate in class discussion, but they seldom volunteer ideas and many lack confidence, preferring to give short answers to teachers' questions.

96. At Key Stage 4 pupils take much more care with their writing. They still make some basic spelling errors, but a growing number write well-structured essays. Many can write well in a range of styles. For example, they use word processors to produce realistic newspaper articles as part of their media studies coursework, and show a good understanding of the plot and characters of Shakespeare's plays. Most pupils plan their work well, for example when devising characters and narrative for their own "television soap". Their note-taking skills are very good and they annotate texts during discussions without any reminders from teachers. Few pupils read widely for pleasure, but most read quite fluently in class – for example during a group reading of Priestley's *An Inspector Calls*. High-attaining pupils can analyse poems in depth, comparing Browning's *My Last Duchess* and *Porphyria's Lover*, with excellent reference to the text to back up their views. Pupils' oral skills are less well developed. They often listen attentively in class but rarely instigate discussion by themselves, preferring to give short answers to teachers' questions.

97. There were few opportunities to observe lessons in the sixth form. Year 12 students show an assured understanding of plot and character in their study of *Frankenstein*, although weak spelling persists in some writing. Their discussion skills are well developed and they can argue cogently in support of their views.

98. Pupils behave well in lessons. They respond well to teachers' instructions and firm class management but, apart from sixth form students, rarely show any real enthusiasm or willingness to take responsibility for their own learning.

99. The quality of teaching is good. It is always at least satisfactory and two very good lessons were observed at Key Stage 3. Teachers plan their lessons well. They seek to take account of the needs of all pupils in the mixed ability classes by identifying what high, middle and low-attaining pupils should be able to learn during the lesson. The department achieves a reasonable measure of success in meeting the needs of all pupils, although the highest attainers are not always challenged sufficiently, particularly in oral work and reading in the large classes at Key Stage 3. Teachers prepare some very good resources, especially worksheets that ask incisive, challenging questions and help pupils to annotate texts and plan essays. At times, however, these worksheets are too prescriptive and make it difficult for pupils to develop a personal response to texts. Teachers use video extracts from Shakespeare plays effectively. In one lesson Year 8 pupils increased their understanding of the development of Bottom's character in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by watching an extract from the film version and comparing Bottom's speeches with notes they had made about an earlier scene. In many lessons teachers plan a good variety of activities to develop pupils' interest. For example, a Year 7 lesson in the library involved pupils writing and sharing their book reviews, writing letters to the author of their chosen book and searching for further information on the Internet. In other lessons, especially when large classes are taught in small rooms, teaching methods are limited because it is difficult for the teacher and pupils to change from one activity to another. Teachers have a very sound knowledge of the texts they are working with. In the sixth form, this knowledge is well used to generate lively discussion, but with younger pupils teachers tend to dominate the discussion and do not encourage pupils to give longer answers or explore their own ideas. The marking of written work is insufficiently rigorous. Spelling and punctuation errors are often not corrected, and in consequence pupils are unable to learn from their mistakes. In most respects, teachers' good planning helps pupils on the special needs register to make good progress in most lessons. In lessons where learning support assistants are available, however, further planning is needed to ensure that the assistants are fully involved in the learning of the pupils they are supposed to support.

100. Teachers in the English department are developing their assessment procedures in line with the school policy. Key Stage 4 pupils are aware of what they need to do to achieve higher grades at GCSE and use the information to improve their work. In Years 7 to 9 pupils are less aware of what they need to do to improve. Teachers grade the pupils' work according to National Curriculum levels, but they are often too lenient and award unrealistically high grades for work with grammatical and other errors. Furthermore, the teacher assessments at Key Stage 3 in the last two years have been much higher than the actual test results.

101. The head of department ensures that teachers are kept up-to-date with current developments and teachers work well together at Key Stage 4 to raise standards. The head of department has a good knowledge of strengths and weaknesses in the department, but monitoring of teaching and marking is mainly informal, and lacks rigour. There have been several improvements since the last inspection. The department has maintained and developed the good quality of the teaching, with the result that standards have improved at GCSE. Although there is some continuing weakness in this area, higher-attaining pupils no longer underachieve to the same extent, because teachers plan most lessons to provide sufficient challenge for them. Behaviour in Years 8 and 9 has improved. However, some areas that were identified as requiring improvement still need attention. In Years 7 and 8, schemes of work still do not meet requirements for the teaching of information and



communications technology. Marking remains inconsistent, leading to underachievement in written work at Key Stage 3, and there is still insufficient emphasis on helping pupils to speak at length.

#### Drama and media studies

102. All pupils are taught drama in Years 7 and 8 and many (though girls are in a distinct majority) choose to continue studying the subject in Year 9 as part of a “mini-option”, linking with lessons in music and art. At Key Stage 4 drama is a popular GCSE option, but results are below the national average in most years, and generally weaker than results in other subjects taken by the same pupils. For the last two years media studies has been a core subject at GCSE, alongside English. One extra period a week is allocated to English to cover this addition to the curriculum. GCSE results in media studies were good in 1999, but slightly weaker in 2000. Drama can lead to A level study in performing arts, where small numbers of students obtain mixed results. The numbers are too small for valid comparisons with national figures. By contrast, large numbers opt for media studies at A level and results are good.

103. In lessons at the end of Key Stage 3 pupils do not achieve as well as they might in drama because they lack concentration. Year 9 pupils were asked to mime their interpretation of the Beatles’ song *She’s leaving Home*, but were unable to pay sufficient attention to rhythm or words, and the mime lacked conviction as a result. At Key Stage 4, pupils are able to work together well to produce effective improvisations. One class planned and performed realistic scenes around an “Abandoned Baby” theme. They were able to maintain their role well and speak clearly and confidently. One group used ‘freeze frame’ techniques effectively, but most had limited awareness of dramatic conventions and techniques.

104. In the media studies lessons seen, pupils and students tackled the work conscientiously and made good gains in learning, but in a relatively narrow range of subject matter. Partly because there are relatively few resources for media studies, and virtually no specialist accommodation, the work is concentrated on printed texts and television. In this context, pupils and students develop appropriate critical awareness and, at sixth form level, start to organise abstract material effectively and distinguish the many ways in which ideas and images can be manipulated.

105. During the inspection supply staff had replaced two drama teachers. This resulted in some poor teaching at Key Stage 3 because of one teacher’s lack of knowledge of the subject and poor class management. In most lessons teachers plan well and have clear objectives, providing sufficient challenge to ensure that pupils work productively and develop their performing skills. However, teachers place insufficient emphasis on the evaluation of performance and pupils therefore lack the ability to evaluate their own work.

106. The teaching in media studies is well organised and efficient. Pupils and students receive very thorough preparation in examination techniques. Activities in lessons are varied appropriately to maintain pupils’ and students’ interest, and questioning is often used well to probe and extend their understanding. The subject is enjoyed and pupils and students respond very well. To judge from the limited number of lessons seen, however, there is a danger of over-concentration on trivial subject matter and, in consequence, some lack of challenge and extension in the language encountered. Nevertheless, the subject makes an important contribution to the school curriculum and to the standards achieved in examinations.

107. Media studies is well managed, but the situation is unsatisfactory in drama because of the absence of the head of department.

### Literacy

108. The school does not have a policy for developing literacy in all subjects. However, in Year 7 the English department has revised its schemes of work as part of a pilot scheme to improve standards in literacy at Key Stage 3. Pupils are developing a good understanding of figures of speech in these lessons and are learning how to use language for effect. One very good lesson about the use of personification led to pupils writing imaginative descriptions such as “on the smiling sand the sun beds laze”, but there is still insufficient emphasis on ensuring that sentence construction, punctuation and spelling are correct.

109. Standards of literacy are not good enough at Key Stage 3, but improve by the end of Key Stage 4. Nevertheless, pupils have limited opportunities for developing competence in spoken English. For example, there is little oral work in mathematics and oral work in design and technology is usually limited to brief responses to question and answer sessions, led by the teacher. In music, younger pupils have difficulty talking about their experience of music, even though it is often quite broad.

110. Most pupils' reading skills are sufficient for them to understand the required reading in all subjects. For instance, in design and technology they carry out research for their projects by reading commercial publications, specialist journals and encyclopaedias. In history, most pupils at Key Stage 4 can understand some difficult vocabulary when reading about the history of medicine.

111. Writing skills are less well developed, especially at Key Stage 3. Some writing in science is almost impossible to read because of weak spelling, grammar and syntax. Average and lower-attaining pupils regularly fail to write in adequately-formed sentences in religious education, history and geography. By Year 11, on the other hand, many pupils write detailed descriptions and explanations of historical events. They express opinions clearly in religious education, and in design and technology their written explanations of design ideas and methods of manufacture are often complex and professional. Nevertheless, unnecessary spelling and punctuation errors continue in much of the work.

112. The lack of a literacy policy means that there is little consistency in the contribution that subject departments make, especially towards the improvement of pupils' writing. Some teachers, for example in art, history and design and technology, emphasise and teach 'key words' in their subjects. 'Writing frames' are well used in geography and sometimes in mathematics. Science teachers often correct spelling and grammar mistakes, but this is the exception. In most subjects, including some of the English at Key Stage 3, pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar mistakes are generally ignored.

## **MATHEMATICS**

113. On entry to the school, pupils' standard of attainment is, overall, now broadly average, although the present Years 10 and 11 had a below average profile on entry. Recent standards in the national tests at the end of Year 9 have been broadly in line with national averages, but have dipped below this level in 2000. However, the 2000 results represent broadly satisfactory progress relative to the pupils' attainment on entry. In 1999, teachers' assessments were close to those of the tests for pupils gaining level 6 and above, but were more generous than the test results for pupils at level 5. The reverse was true in 2000. When compared with similar schools, standards in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 were in line with national averages in 1999, but probably below in 2000. In 2000, the

test results were better than those in English, but lower than those of science. In 1997 and 1998, girls out-performed boys in relation to the national results for each sex. The reverse was true in 1999 and 2000. The gap in favour of boys in the 2000 results is unrelated to differences in the attainment of boys and girls on entry to the school.

114. Attainment in GCSE mathematics in both 1999 and 2000 was close to, but just below, national averages in the achievement of grades A\* to C. The 2000 results show an improvement from the 1999 results. GCSE mathematics results, in 1999, were below those in schools where the earlier attainment at Key Stage 3 was similar. The 2000 GCSE results were close to those in similar schools. Recent results in GCSE mathematics have been below those achieved by the same pupils in English and science. The gap between boys' and girls' results continues at the end of Year 11, with girls attaining less well than boys.

115. A level results are at least in line with national averages for the small number of students involved. In recent results, over half of the students have gained the higher grades of A and B and most have achieved a pass mark.

116. From the evidence of the inspection as well as of the test results, overall standards of attainment have until recently been close to nationally expected levels by the end of Year 9. Standards observed in lessons and other work varied according to groups, and were only rarely above national expectations. Pupils with special educational needs attain appropriately in the catch-up numeracy sessions, part of the pilot National Numeracy Strategy. They are increasingly able to spot simple repeating patterns in numbers, although they still struggle with mental methods to divide and multiply by single digit numbers. Some above-average attaining pupils have good manipulative algebra skills, but adopt a mechanical approach to solving simple problems, as in questions applying Pythagoras' theorem, for example. They still show some confusion over higher numerical skills such as finding upper and lower limits of measurements and over the use of standard form notation. They are less able to communicate their mathematics orally than in written form, partly as a result of limited opportunities in the very large classes. Many pupils in middle bands apply themselves well to practical opportunities, but still lack confidence to transfer methods and processes from a particular example to similar questions. They fail to note the underlying patterns, becoming confused by varying numbers.

117. The standards of attainment in mathematics of the oldest pupils at Key Stage 4 are marginally below those expected nationally in examinations and in much of the work seen. In lessons, standards again vary with sets but also with teachers. The highest-attaining pupils in Year 11 make less good progress than they should in their work on using and applying mathematics. They miss opportunities to develop fully their coursework skills, particularly in explaining their findings through relating them to the practical problem. Similar pupils in Year 10, however, already work successfully on higher-grade topics such as trigonometry. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in work in number, particularly through the Youth Award scheme. Pupils in middle sets, however, are still 'calculator-dependent' for many number skills, and in some groups their achievement in lessons is lower than it should be because of troublesome behaviour. These pupils suffer from poor recall of earlier work in mathematics.

118. In the lessons seen, attainment in A level mathematics lessons was appropriate when compared with the same pupils' attainment at GCSE. Numbers in A level groups are small. Students in Year 12 groups are competent in finding normals and gradients of curves, using their algebraic skills well. However, some able students lack efficient numerical skills of a comparable quality, as was shown in their confusion over fractions. In Year 13, students attain very well in modules on 'Living with Uncertainty'. In the work seen they were

competently applying their calculus skills to problems. They, too, showed some poor recall of basic mathematics, such as areas of plane figures in the approximation work.

119. Teaching is satisfactory and many pupils learn mathematics as they should. The teaching at Key Stage 3 is slightly better than at Key Stage 4. However, there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching experienced by the pupils across both key stages. There is a sprinkling of good teaching and only two unsatisfactory lessons were seen. In all lessons the teaching is knowledgeable and technically correct. In the best lessons, teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and good relationships between teachers and pupils encourage positive attitudes to work in class. In some lessons, there is good, open questioning that allows pupils to express their understanding of their mathematics orally. In other lessons, teaching is very directed and allows little scope for pupils' contributions, even to the extent of missing their requests for clarification. The departmental practice in Years 7, 8 and 9 on teaching number is positively influenced by the National Numeracy strategy. Equivalent methods to enhance pupils' recall of their mathematics in Years 10 and 11 are not yet secure in all lessons. The match of work to pupils' previous learning again varies with groups. There is insufficient attention to the importance of language skills to help pupils' learning in mathematics and to enable them to get to grips with tasks, as in a Year 8 investigative session. Large class sizes and inadequate classroom space inhibit both practical and oral work in some lessons. Similarly, some very large banded groups lack sufficient differentiation to allow all pupils to make good progress, particularly those who are gifted and talented. Assessment in lessons has improved but is not yet sufficiently comprehensive and rigorous in focusing on what each pupil actually understands in relation to the planned learning outcomes. In a few lessons, pace sometimes slows so that pupils lose concentration, as in a Year 11 revision lesson. Marking is still inconsistent across the department. The best practice provides helpful comments to assist progress but not all pupils benefit in this way.

120. The mathematics department has achieved satisfactory improvement since the last inspection in that pupils' attainment at both key stages has improved and the monitoring of teaching is more thorough. However, previously identified weaknesses still remain and include inconsistent marking and little variety in the methods used in lessons to help pupils learn. Recent lack of stability in staffing and, in particular, the absence of the head of the mathematics department have led to particular difficulties. However, the present acting head of department has managed the day-to-day affairs of the department well and has efficiently overseen the successful implementation of the pilot National Numeracy Strategy for secondary schools.

The development of numeracy across the curriculum

121. There is good provision within mathematics to develop pupils' numeracy skills. The mathematics department is making effective use of the National Numeracy Strategy secondary pilot to improve the number skills of pupils in Year 7. This practice influences positively strategies to improve pupils' attainment in other year groups, particularly in Years 8 and 9. Other than within mathematics there is insufficient use and support for numeracy and, as yet, no policy or co-ordinated programme across the whole curriculum to enhance pupils' skills.

122. In design and technology, pupils use graphical representation and tables appropriately in project work. There are some opportunities to enhance pupils' understanding of scale and proportion in art. However, in music, pupils do not readily transfer their number skills to use in writing sound patterns nor to work in geography in Year 8. Library sessions support the ordering of numbers through the classification activities. In Years 10 and 11, pupils make good progress in a range of number skills in the Youth Award scheme. Basic number work

supports pupils well in science. Many can use bar charts and other graphs competently to illustrate their results. GCSE coursework in history is enhanced through the interpretation of population and census figures, while in physical education pupils consider the financial implications of the leisure industry. A level students of geography use their numerical skills well in their individual investigative tasks. They are competent in testing relationships against possible models, for example, and in using a variety of data handling skills.

## SCIENCE

123. Attainment in science at Key Stages 3 and 4 is in line with the standards expected nationally, and in the sixth form is well above national standards. The Key Stage 3 National Curriculum test results were above average in 1999 but close to the average in 2000. While the results have varied slightly each year, the overall performance between 1996 and 2000 of boys and girls has been above the national average by a similar amount, except that girls' results dipped in 2000. The GCSE results in 1999 were marginally above the national average in terms of the proportion gaining grades A\*-C and A\*-G. However, the proportion of pupils gaining high grades A\* or A was nearly twice the national average and the proportion of high grades improved further in 2000. The highest and lowest-attaining pupils have achieved above their counterparts nationally. In class, some lower-attaining pupils carried out a load/extension experiment on springs. A very clear brief and experiment sheet combined with rigorous supervision and guidance ensured that all obtained valid measurements and drew accurate graphs. Their practical achievement was good in terms of prior attainment. In several upper sets, pupils were given tasks that encouraged them to extend their knowledge and understanding beyond syllabus expectations, and pupils responded with detailed study of the topic. Standards of work seen in lessons are mirrored in recent examination and test results. Recent teacher assessments have been below average when test results have been above. In some measure this has been the result of the high challenge and expectations that teachers have of pupils. In 1999, Key Stage 3 National Curriculum test results in science were better than those for English and mathematics. The science GCSE results were approximately average for the school as a whole in 1999. Test and examination results at Key Stage 3 and GCSE were above average for similar schools in 1999. The A level results were well above average, particularly in terms of high grades.

124. The quality of teaching at Key Stages 3 and 4 is good and very good in the sixth form. Teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of their subject, helped by teaching their own specialism of biology, physics or chemistry. All lessons were planned well and teachers use imaginative approaches to encourage pupils to think about topics. For example, in one class, groups of pupils had to decide how to get drinking water from the sea around a desert island. The aim was to challenge them to think about distillation. Whilst not all suggestions were practical all could explain change of state and the principles involved in distillation. Teachers' expectations are high but many are unacceptably constricted in their teaching styles by the accommodation. For example, in one lesson that had 30 pupils in a laboratory where there was barely room for them to sit, the teacher could not do a practical demonstration in the space and pupil practicals were quite impossible. Pupils are well managed and behaviour is generally good. There is some variation between groups and time of day. Relatively few pupils are able to sustain full intellectual effort for the whole of one hour lessons despite teachers' careful planning. At A level, students clearly enjoy their chosen science subjects and do sustain full concentration. The clear, imaginative teaching at Key Stages 3 and 4 with high expectations and firm discipline are the main reasons that pupils obtain scientific knowledge and understanding and gain skill in practical work. Apart from those in the sixth form, relatively few pupils exhibit initiative or perseverance. Pupils' interest is a result of teachers' challenges.

125. Teachers use available time well with a good variety of activities where possible including oral, written and practical work. The technical support staff are efficient in providing materials and apparatus ready for practical work. However, there is inadequate equipment for some experimental work and pupils are having to work in over-large groups, which slow the development of practical skills and reduce understanding of the theory involved. Homework is set regularly to help reinforce work done in lessons. While much of the marking is good and in line with the policy there are instances of very poorly presented work being accepted. Formal assessment is good and the results are carefully monitored by the subject co-ordinator.

126. Sixth form students are highly motivated, their concentration is excellent and they can work independently at a brisk pace. The laboratory facilities for A level work are generally adequate and do provide enough space for student practicals.

127. There is a good level of support for pupils with special educational needs. However, in lessons the available support is not targeted quite closely enough. Nevertheless, the classes as a whole gain some benefit from the presence of the support assistants.

128. Teachers try to encourage pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 to work more independently with less reliance on what the teacher tells them. Most lessons include development of ideas for new topics by questions addressed to the whole class. In several classes, group discussion was used to encourage pupils to think about problems. For example, the issue of GM foods was considered in one lesson. The teacher started by using quotations with facts and opinions, often mixed. In another lesson considering the ethical aspects of GM, pupils prepared their cases in groups representing different interests for or against. There was considerable enthusiasm, somewhat greater than their scientific knowledge about GM.

129. Pupils make good progress in learning at both key stages and very good progress in the sixth form. In only one class was learning unsatisfactory, very much a reflection of pupils' attitudes in an overcrowded laboratory. Achievement is slightly above the average for similar schools. Science has improved generally over the last decade with twice the percentage of pupils gaining grades GCSE A\*-C in 2000. Since the last inspection there has been a significant increase in higher grades. The arrangements for setting pupils by ability make some contribution to ensuring that work is well matched with pupils' learning needs.

130. However, the arrangements do not in themselves ensure that every pupil can be challenged to their maximum. Most of the laboratories are far too small for the excessively large classes of well over 30 pupils. This is quite unsatisfactory for much science practical work. Group sizes for practicals are also often too large because of the lack of space and access to equipment. Teachers are well qualified and the subject is very well led and managed. However, if all classes were of appropriate size for the subject there would not be enough teachers. Teachers and technicians work well together as a team, which has helped minimise but cannot eliminate resource and accommodation deficiencies. The curriculum includes some consideration of the moral, social and cultural aspects of science, but is largely devoid of any consideration of the spiritual.

## **ART**

131. GCSE results at grades A\*-C in 1999 were well below national standards. In 2000 there was a significant improvement, but the results remained well below the national average. At grades A\*- G the results in 1999 were above the national average. From a very low point in 1997 there has been a perceptible upward trend, but girls and boys have consistently performed less well in GCSE art than in most of the other subjects they take. Subject performance indicators for all pupils up to 1999 show art to be pupils' least

successful subject. A level results since 1995 show all pupils gaining grades within the range A - E, but the numbers involved have been too small for helpful comparisons with national figures.

132. In work seen during the inspection the attainment of the oldest pupils at Key Stage 3 matched national expectations. Key Stage 3 pupils acquire satisfactory knowledge and understanding of a broad range of art and craft processes in two and three dimensions and develop satisfactory skills in the application of a variety of media. Their knowledge of art and artists, together with the vocabulary to describe them, is sound. Three-dimensional work is mostly pottery, and this too is satisfactory, and sometimes good. Some good work in the use of information and communications technology to develop magazine cover designs was observed.

133. In the work of the oldest pupils at Key Stage 4 during the inspection, attainment was broadly in line with the standards expected nationally. Key Stage 4 pupils have sound observational drawing skills and use media such as inks, watercolours, pencils and pastels satisfactorily. They research aspects of art history such as Art Nouveau and related artists, for example, Beardsley and Gaudi, and many make good use of the Internet for this purpose. However, many pupils are vague about course requirements and the criteria on which marks are awarded. Most of the work seen in three dimensions was ceramic and of an at least satisfactory, and sometimes good, standard.

134. In work seen during the inspection the attainment of Year 13 students was above expectations for the course. Students' work showed some well-practised drawing skills and evidence of good research for critical studies. Because of the consortium arrangements for teaching the sixth form, only a limited sample of lessons was available for observation.

135. In the lessons seen, the quality of teaching at Key Stages 3 and 4 was good and in the sixth form it was very good. Teachers' knowledge and understanding and the teaching of basic skills including art vocabulary are good. Expectations are high and the planning of lessons and teaching methods are good. Pupils are well managed. In the sixth form the quality of teaching, particularly for critical studies, was distinguished. Planning for the new National Curriculum Order for Key Stage 3, together with the assessment arrangements for the attainment target, is incomplete. Assessment overall is a weakness in need of further refinement, so that pupils know how they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

136. In the lessons seen, pupils' learning was much better than recent examination results indicate. The learning in lessons was good at Key Stages 3 and 4 and very good in the sixth form. High, average and low-attaining pupils made good progress in acquiring their art knowledge, skills and understanding. Pupils with special educational needs made good progress. Year 7 pupils made good progress, learning about tints and applying this knowledge to creating and painting leaf collages. Year 10 pupils made good progress in creating well-observed drawings of cross-sections of fruit realised in three media. However, pupils' understanding of what they needed to do to improve further was weak.

137. Attitudes to art are positive. Pupils like the subject and generally behave well, often within the context of large classes. The behaviour of a Year 8 class alternating between the computer suite and the art room was exemplary. There is a danger, given large class sizes, of methods becoming over prescriptive.

138. The last report was highly critical of almost every aspect of art and since then there have been a considerable number of staff changes at frequent intervals because of ill health and other factors. At the time of the inspection, the art department had an altogether different look. GCSE results had started to improve, and teaching was much improved. Further work

remains to be done on planning the Key Stage 3 curriculum and on assessment. Resources for art are tight and the department has no computers, although access to the school computer suites is possible.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

139. Standards of work at Key Stages 3 and 4 are in line with national standards and have improved steadily in recent years. The teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 show that two-thirds of pupils reach the National Curriculum level 5 or above, with girls performing significantly better than boys, in line with national patterns. Overall, these standards are satisfactory, but the school should seek ways to assist the boys to make better progress during the key stage. At Key Stage 4, standards in the GCSE examinations are slightly above the national average, with girls again achieving better than boys in most aspects of the subject. The percentage of pupils gaining A\*-C grades is in line with the national average in food technology, resistant materials and graphics products and above the national average in textile technology. Pupils' achievement in food technology and resistant materials is comparable to that in other GCSE subjects offered in the school. The percentage of pupils obtaining A\*-G grades is above the national average in all aspects of the subject. Standards at both key stages have improved since the last inspection and remain high in textile technology. A small proportion of pupils go on to take an A-level in design and technology. The A level results vary and in 2000 only about a quarter of students gained A-C grades. However, numbers were too small for reliable comparisons with national figures. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated in lessons and perform satisfactorily at both key stages.

140. Attainment in lessons and other work seen broadly matches the standards expected nationally, but can vary considerably. Attainment is good when the topic interests the pupils and is well taught. At Key Stage 3, pupils undertake appropriate practical tasks and 'design and make' assignments using board, wood, metal, plastic, food and textile materials. The use of combinations of practical tasks and 'design and make' assignments in Years 8 and 9 is an innovative and good feature of the design and technology curriculum. The practical tasks are projects on topics such as a 'steady-hand tester', wall hangings and the making of food dishes, which teach pupils about the materials they use and develop essential practical skills. The 'design and make' assignments undertaken in Years 8 and 9 are based on a full cycle - design brief, research, select, design, cost, plan, make, evaluate - and are based on themes such as imitation food for a museum, a food product for a journey, promotional package for a watch and a person warmer. These assignments are similar in form to those undertaken at Key Stage 4, but are based on simpler themes and are less extensive. At Key Stage 4, the work undertaken is that prescribed by the examination board. The quality of the 'design, make and presentation' features in the assignments improves steadily year by year. Some of the 'design and make' assignments in Year 11 are of a very good standard, and in a small number of instances reach near-professional standards. Most assignments at Key Stage 4 involve numerical work with dimensions, quantities and costs and information and communications technology to present texts, designs, graphs and bar- and pie-charts. Information and communications technology is also used in the manufacture of products, particularly in textiles.

141. The standard of teaching is generally satisfactory but varies from very good to unsatisfactory. It is more consistent at Key Stage 4 than Key Stage 3. All teachers have secure knowledge of the subject and plan lessons well. They set out to interest pupils in the work to be done, engage pupils in discussion, give good demonstrations, give clear guidance, have high expectations and in most cases manage classes well. These characteristics are present in seven out of ten lessons. Teachers regularly teach the spelling of key words in class and mark all coursework for spelling and grammar. When teaching is unsatisfactory,



pupils are given undemanding work, class control is not consistent, pupils are allowed to move off task and the pace is slow. The weaknesses in teaching observed at the time of the last inspection largely remain. Not enough is done to challenge able pupils fully by giving them extensions to projects and assignments, and in other ways. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons are nearly always satisfactory; they were good or very good in half the lessons seen. All work is marked and assessed at the end of each group of lessons on a particular aspect and recorded. Homework is set regularly according to a departmental timetable and is always marked. There is a tendency for teachers' comments on homework to be too complimentary and for the numerical marks to be within a small range, thus conveying a false and unhelpful impression of achievement to weaker pupils. Pupils' achievements and progress are reported to parents according to the school's reporting policy.

142. The department is well led by an experienced teacher. The leadership given to the department and the harmony amongst the teachers are the main factors that have led to the steady improvements in standards since the last inspection. Class sizes are typically between 20 to 25 pupils and are smaller than in other subjects in the school. Accommodation is adequate, but the open-plan layout makes teaching in some areas difficult because of the noise inevitably generated in adjacent wood and metal workshops. As at the time of the last inspection, learning resources are generally adequate, but there are shortages in some small items of electronic components.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

143. Standards at the end of Key Stage 3 are below the standards expected nationally although the higher-attaining pupils attain in line with national expectations. Since the last inspection, GCSE examination results have risen steadily from below to slightly above average. In 1999, over a fifth of pupils achieved A\* - A grades. Girls did better than boys at all levels, although boys' results matched the national average for boys. Both boys and girls do better in geography than in most of their other subjects. Similar standards are found in the current Year 11. Similarly, A level results have risen. In 1999 they were broadly in line with national figures. They improved in 2000 when all students achieved a grade, the proportion gaining higher grades comparing favourably with the 1999 figures. Attainment in lessons and other work in Year 13 is above expectations for the course, reflecting the rising trend in examination results.

144. Most of the oldest pupils at Key Stage 3 have good mapwork skills and know where places are. Most can undertake some research. However, few demonstrate more than a limited capacity for analysis and asking geographical questions. Fieldwork to widen their range of techniques and develop critical skills is limited. Most have some understanding of physical processes and environmental concerns. Higher-attaining pupils can clearly explain different causes of rainfall, but middle and lower-attaining pupils show below average understanding.

145. Most of the oldest pupils at Key Stage 4 know more about places and have a satisfactory understanding of patterns and processes, as seen in work about hurricanes, and on land use patterns in Beeston. In the latter case, higher-attaining pupils show good understanding, expressing their ideas clearly and making good use of terminology. Lower-attaining pupils have more difficulty in relating practical work to theory. Some pupils are not good at remembering previous work so the department is giving regular tests to help them. The oldest students in Year 13 show good understanding of geographical ideas and have developed a good range of skills. They sort and synthesise ideas well and apply what they have learnt to other contexts. In fieldwork investigations, their numerical skills support them

well. Throughout the age range pupils use information and communications technology with increasing competence for research and handling information.

146. Most pupils at Key Stage 3 make satisfactory progress over time given their below average attainment on entry to the school and the weaknesses in writing and numeracy that affect the progress of many. They benefit from teachers using improved work plans with more demanding work and from the good attention to improving vocabulary and organising ideas. They are helped to develop ideas orally through paired and group work. As a result, their writing has improved although low attainers show better understanding orally than in writing. In work on a Migrant's Diary, higher-attaining pupils wrote sensitively and at length about the problems facing migrants. In some lessons, the large class size and the lack of support for lower-attaining pupils affect the progress of others because teachers have to spend undue time helping them. Some Year 9 pupils, presently at the start of their geography module, are affected by staff absence and are making slower progress in lessons than others. At Key Stage 4, pupils make good progress because teachers build effectively on previous work on topics such as the weather. They challenge pupils by increasing their opportunities for working and thinking independently. A level students make very good progress because teachers support them well in improving their understanding of increasingly difficult ideas. Their ability to justify arguments is evident in presentations that are well researched and show much creative and intellectual effort. Pupils with special educational needs make broadly satisfactory progress, as a result of departmental efforts to match work to different abilities. Even so, teachers do not make enough use of the individual education plans of these pupils to target their individual needs.

147. Since the last inspection, the use of data to identify and target underachievers, combined with effective revision techniques, has helped Key Stage 4 pupils do better. Work on learning styles to develop thinking skills is having a positive impact on the progress of the older pupils in particular. Teachers are still not using National Curriculum level descriptions enough to provide a secure foundation for their judgements. The teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 are too generous: the work seen in lessons and in pupils' books did not reach the standard in the assessments.

148. Pupils' attitudes are satisfactory. The majority work hard and enjoy lessons. A minority of boys in Years 8 and 9 have poor attitudes. They are poor listeners, often shouting out and talking above the teacher. Most behave well, but poor behaviour by these boys disrupts lessons for others. Relationships are generally good and older pupils in particular work responsibly. This is evident in high quality coursework that demonstrates the considerable amounts of time and care spent on it. Some Year 10 pupils use e-mail effectively to continue working electronically with their data at home.

149. Teaching by the regular humanities staff is never less than satisfactory. It is most effective at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form where all the lessons were good or better. Here teachers use their expertise particularly well to develop pupils' answers, stimulate their imagination and extend their understanding. Their good management of behaviour leads to a productive working environment. Two less than satisfactory lessons seen were taught by a supply teacher, lacking the subject knowledge to keep pupils interested and the experience to control some poorly behaved boys. The cramped accommodation did not help the situation. Teachers plan lessons well so that pupils are clear about what they are doing. Expectations are high, especially in the upper school, and teachers generally set demanding but achievable tasks. In Year 7 too long was spent on an easy sorting exercise that did not challenge high achievers. Occasionally, opportunities to test pupils' understanding, before beginning the next activity, are missed, or too much time is spent helping individuals at the expense of keeping the rest of the class working. Most teachers use a variety of methods and well-prepared resources to interest every pupil and develop their skills. These

characteristics were demonstrated in a Year 13 lesson about managing earthquakes. In an informative introduction, the teacher checked students' understanding before engaging them in role-play. Group discussion supported less confident students and effective intervention by the teacher helped to develop the arguments. During the presentations, every student shared and evaluated ideas. Thus, the teacher equipped them with useful planning skills and effectively developed their understanding in a new context. Good feedback in most lessons helps pupils to improve. Homework is planned to support classwork. Marking - especially for older pupils - is helpful, although incomplete work is not always followed up.

150. The department is well managed and teachers work closely as a team. At Key Stage 3, large mixed ability classes and cramped conditions for some groups affect the quality of learning, as does some of the supply teaching.

## **HISTORY**

151. Standards of attainment by the oldest pupils at Key Stage 3 are broadly in line with national expectations. Girls' results have been consistently better than boys'. The standards attained by the oldest pupils at Key Stage 4 are also in line with expectations. Results for GCSE grades A\* to C have been above the national average over the past three years, with an improving trend. Results for grades A\* to G have been in line with the national average, and in 2000 all pupils gained at least a grade G. Pupils taking GCSE history in 1999 gained better results than in most of the other subjects they took. In 2000, however, the percentage of the very highest grades fell, but the results remained good. Girls' results were considerably better than boys' in 1999 and 2000. A levels are taught as part of the sixth form consortium. Standards are also in line with expectations for the course in both examination results and the work seen. The numbers of Chilwell students entering A level have been too small for reliable statistical comparisons with national results. There were no A and B grades in 2000, and only half the Chilwell candidates gained a pass grade in the C to E bracket.

152. Standards of work in lessons and other work seen are in line with expectations at both key stages and in the sixth form. At Key Stage 3, pupils develop research skills and the higher attainers have produced some good examples of travel brochures on Ancient Rome, many of them using information and communications technology for presentation. However, the work of many of the lower attainers is not well presented and the highest-attaining pupils are not challenged sufficiently by what they are asked to do. Pupils of all abilities have not had enough opportunities to develop an understanding of the feelings of people in other ages through their experience of history. Those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress because they receive a lot of extra help from the teachers in many classes, but the support staff provided for them are not well directed by the teachers. Two students with English as an additional language were having difficulty understanding the work. At Key Stage 4 the highest attainers produce a range of descriptive and explanatory writing. In Year 11 pupils of all abilities produce a good standard of coursework about 18<sup>th</sup> century social development in the knitting centre of Ruddington, because of appropriate teaching styles that allow them to work at their own pace. Year 10 pupils have learned about the history of medicine and have a good understanding of the conditions in other ages. Most pupils can explain their work fluently. Some of the low attainers produce a lower standard of work than they are capable of. Some pupils make less than satisfactory progress because of the long-term absence of a member of staff. A small amount of sixth form work was seen, which showed understanding of cause and effect and knowledge of historical facts, but the students have had limited experience of essay writing and historical analysis. Literacy is encouraged through displays of key words and emphasis on specialist vocabulary, but opportunities are missed for pupils to read aloud in class, individually and in groups. Numeracy is used when necessary for the analysis of evidence, but is not systematically taught through the schemes of work.

153. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. New teaching styles are now being used in some Key Stage 3 topics to encourage independent enquiry. Teachers more accurately match National Curriculum levels to work because of their increased experience in assessment, but there has been no external moderation of level gradings, which would standardise assessments further. The use of information and communications technology as a teaching and learning tool is now well developed through the curriculum. Better resources have been produced for pupils of differing abilities in the same class. Tests and assessment assignments are now better integrated into the work at Key Stage 3 and the results lead to adaptation of teaching styles and curriculum emphasis. However, marking is still a weakness, as the grades given are unrealistic, giving pupils a false idea of their own progress and no guidance about how to improve.

154. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at both key stages. Because of the experience, knowledge and understanding of most of the teachers involved, there is little evidence that the non-specialist history teaching at Key Stage 3 is having a marked adverse effect on standards of learning. The weakness in this context is the result of supply cover for absent staff. Because of consortium arrangements it was not possible to observe teaching in the sixth form. Almost four-fifths of the lessons observed were satisfactory or better. Two unsatisfactory lessons were seen, and three lessons were good or better. The teaching of some classes has suffered because of the long-term absence of the Key Stage 4 co-ordinator. In the best lessons, the organisation of pupils into groups, for self-directed work, and the resources used mean that all pupils can work independently and learn at their own pace, as in the Year 7 library lesson researching life in Ancient Rome, and a Year 9 lesson where pupils were researching information and teaching one another about aspects of social change in 18<sup>th</sup> century Britain. In the weaker lessons pupils of all abilities are expected to work at the same pace which frustrates the lower attainers and leaves the higher attainers wasting time. Some lessons suffer from inadequate planning, and homework is not always set regularly. Management of pupils is good, though in some lessons too much inattention is tolerated.

155. Leadership and management of the department are in an unsatisfactory situation because the long-term absence of the Key Stage 4 co-ordinator has put considerable pressure on the Key Stage 3 co-ordinator. She has worked extremely hard, without any additional support, to fill the gap left by this absence and at the same time to introduce new developments and put the new National Curriculum requirements in place. Monitoring of teaching through classroom observation and checking of pupils' work takes place regularly, and is well managed. Although there is provision for pupils' social development through group work and through many of the themes taught, there is no explicit provision in the schemes of work for spiritual, moral or cultural development, or citizenship. Nevertheless, the subject makes significant contributions to pupils' moral and cultural development. The departmental development plan is in need of revision with firm targets. There are good relationships between faculty staff, who work well together and share best practice.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY**

156. Standards of work match national expectations at Key Stage 3, but are below them at Key Stage 4. Teachers' assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 show that six out of ten pupils attain the National Curriculum Level 5 or above, with girls performing significantly better than boys. Overall, this is a satisfactory result, but the lower attainment of boys does not receive sufficient attention. At Key Stage 4, no specialist course in information and communications technology is offered and no assessment of standards of achievement is undertaken. Information and communications technology is taught as a part of GCSE courses in English, design and technology, geography, history, mathematics and modern

languages, and as part of the foundation GNVQ course in leisure and tourism. Information and communications technology also features in the programmes for careers and special educational needs. The progress of individual pupils, therefore, depends upon their choice of GCSE and GNVQ courses. As there is no systematic or progressive development of computing skills in these courses, the standard of achievement of many pupils remains much the same as it was at the end of Key Stage 3, and below expectations for Key Stage 4. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated in lessons and some perform better in this subject than in many of the others they take. A small number of pupils go on to study an A level in computing or GNVQ advanced in information and communications technology. The percentage of students obtaining A-C grades in the A level course is in line with the national average, but the percentage obtaining a merit in the GNVQ course was disappointing in the 2000 results. The sixth form curriculum now offers a core skills course with a mandatory unit in information and communications technology. This new course is compulsory for all students in Year 12 and early indications are that it is very successful.

157. Attainment in lessons and other work seen at Key Stage 3 is always satisfactory and often good. At Key Stage 3, pupils have one lesson per week in information and communications technology in all three years. They learn to apply the computer to word processing, spreadsheets, databases, publishing and online computer control. A strong feature of the course in Year 7 is the early study of the Internet and e-mail. Skills in the use of the Internet are used in other subjects to research topics and obtain data, especially in geography and history. In Year 9, pupils study computer control using the Logicator equipment. Pupils learn sequencing and apply it to the control of burglar alarms and traffic lights. They also learn to control electric motors online. The lessons in control are also a part of the course in design and technology. Word processing, spreadsheets, databases and publishing are applied in English, design and technology, geography, history, mathematics, modern languages and science to develop texts, designs, graphs and various charts at both key stages. A publishing project is undertaken in Year 9 in which a newspaper is produced with articles aimed at the general reader on 'Alcool', a new hydrocarbon fuel, thus linking information and communications technology to chemistry.

158. The standard of teaching is generally good and some is very good. All teachers have secure knowledge of the subject and clear plans for lessons. Good teaching occurs when introductions to lesson are interesting and clear, learning materials are well prepared and appropriate demonstrations are given. The best lessons feature a combination of these and enable pupils to make progress according to their individual abilities. These characteristics are present in three-quarters of lessons. Teaching and learning are made difficult by the large class sizes, typically between 30 to 35 pupils, and the fact that the two main computer rooms are small and contain enough terminals for only one-half of the pupils to use them at any particular time. Teaching methods are used in which pupils either work in pairs or one-half of pupils undertake associated deskwork while the other half use the terminals. Both methods have disadvantages and lead to slow pace and difficulty in assessing individual attainment when pupils work in pairs. The ratio of pupils to terminals is about 16:1, a ratio which is well above the national average. The lack of teaching capacity in the two main computer rooms prevents other departments from making full use of information and communications technology in their courses. Pupils and teachers cope remarkably well with these difficulties and the attitudes of pupils are positive and always at least satisfactory. In one-half of lesson attitudes are good or better. Pupils' work at Key Stage 3 is assessed at the end of each year and reported to parents according to the school's reporting policy. Little homework is set.

159. Information and communications technology is co-ordinated by an able and experienced teacher. The majority of his teaching time is, however, spent in the department of mathematics, and the number of non-teaching periods he has per week is insufficient to

enable him to co-ordinate the subject properly. The school does not as yet have a network manager, which exacerbates the leadership problem, and all other teachers teach information and communication technology as only a small part of their teaching duties. It is as a result of these staffing difficulties that not more has been done to develop the subject and assessment at Key Stage 4.

160. Despite these remaining difficulties, information and communications technology has come a long way since the last inspection. The standards reached at the end of Key Stage 3 have much improved and pupils now get a good grounding in basic skills. The problems at Key Stage 4 remain largely unresolved, although information and communications technology is now applied in a range of other subjects. The computing equipment has much improved and is up-to-date. However, computing capacity is still limited and continues to inhibit the development of the subject. In order to make further progress the department must develop a plan to cover the National Curriculum requirements and develop courses and assessment at Key Stage 4.

## MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

161. Standards reached by the oldest pupils at Key Stage 3 are in line with the standards expected nationally. The results of the National Curriculum teacher assessments in 2000 were above average, but teachers admit that they were too generous in their assessments.

162. Most Key Stage 3 pupils listen carefully and identify the main points and some details of the French they hear. The highest attainers need few prompts in English in order to grasp most details. They are well used to hearing French as the normal language of the classroom. Although their accents and intonation are usually good, and most make their meaning clear, they do not often speak confidently. Basic errors of pronunciation intrude into the best work. Average and lower-attaining pupils tackle listening and speaking exercises with a greater need for support. The lowest attainers are unable to maintain exchanges in conversation, making short responses only. Most pupils cope with appropriate reading tasks, but there is little evidence to show that they can use dictionaries. The lowest attainers can generally produce written sentences. The highest attainers write well, some pupils producing up to eight competent sentences in a row, much from memory. They do not, however, write in paragraphs. As in spoken language, there are elementary errors which, although they do not prevent communication, spoil the overall effect. Relatively few pupils consistently use tenses beyond the present; in consequence, the proportion of pupils reaching higher levels of attainment is lower than average. On the other hand, standards are improving.

163. Girls tend to do better than boys, following national trends, but there are examples of particularly good work by boys. Pupils with special educational needs work well alongside their peers towards appropriate targets when demands and support meet their requirements. Those pupils who have just begun their second language are making suitable progress. For most pupils in the key stage progress is satisfactory, but for one class in Year 9 it is unsatisfactory because pupils have failed to learn basic work in earlier years and the foundations have now to be built again.

164. The standards reached by the oldest pupils at Key Stage 4 are satisfactory, broadly matching the range of attainment found nationally. GCSE results in French had been well below average for several years, but were broadly average in 1998 and only slightly below national figures in 1999. Despite these improvements, in 1999 most pupils taking GCSE French did less well in French than in the other GCSE examinations they took, even after allowing for differences in national success rates between subjects. The situation was similar in earlier years in both French and German. French results for 2000 were well above those for 1999, but it is not yet possible to compare pupils' performance across subjects since national figures are only provisional.

165. Higher attainers show particular competence in French in handling authentic material from the Internet well. They communicate effectively orally and in writing, getting their message through the first time, without ambiguity. Levels of grammatical accuracy are, however, often low. In spoken language good accents and intonation are frequently spoiled by gender errors, wrong verb forms and the pronunciation of silent endings.

166. Average attainers work with less confidence and even less accuracy in both speech and writing, but can, for example, both follow and produce role-play dialogues satisfactorily. Lower attainers, boys especially, contrary to national trends, manage to put together sentences, at times with support, to reach levels in line with GCSE Foundation Tier. They show initiative in tackling unfamiliar language and using dictionaries.

167. Examples of coursework show a good range of attainment, with a greater proportion of potentially high grades and fewer potential low grades than is typical. There are examples of both formal and informal registers, varied styles and, for higher attainers especially, effective handling of tenses and subordinate clauses. Elementary errors, however, particularly in spellings and number and gender agreements, seriously compromise otherwise good work, putting potentially good results at risk. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress during the key stage, but a minority of pupils in Year 10 is held back by the need to revise basic language, and by their unco-operative behaviour.

168. The work of the small number of pupils taking German as a second foreign language in Year 11 is good. Several have connections with Germany through parents, which contribute to a greater confidence and competence in all skills than has generally been the case.

169. Sixth form work is satisfactory. In past years only small numbers have taken A level, making comparisons with national statistics unreliable. Results have shown an upward trend in recent years. The present AS level class in Year 12 includes five girls from Chilwell. While oral work shows above-average confidence, accuracy in both spoken and written French is below expectations for the course.

170. Teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form. It is good at Key Stage 4. Teachers use the foreign languages well, promoting their use by pupils. They organise work well, linking lessons to previous work and explaining relevant grammar so pupils see how things fit together. The different language skills are taught in realistic contexts, authentic recordings and reading materials are often used so that pupils' experiences may be more vivid. Expectations are high, but do not daunt pupils. Pace is usually good. Homework supports classwork. Regular assessments are now more accurate after recent training and help to identify underachievement. Marking is, however, inconsistent and sometimes sparse. Targets are often insufficiently clear so that pupils do not always know how to improve. In consequence, basic errors remain. In large classes, particularly at Key Stage 3, teachers do not always find it easy to give all pupils the individual attention they deserve. Setting permits well-focused work for higher attainers, but mixed ability groups do not serve other pupils as well.

171. Since the last inspection, a new head of department has taken control and two new teachers have joined the department. New schemes of work have been adopted, a new GCSE syllabus introduced, and a revised and detailed assessment system has been put in place. Teaching is regularly monitored to ensure good quality, and pupils' achievement is plotted on computer and analysed. Underachievement has been reduced, relationships have improved and standards, especially at GCSE, have gone up.

## **MUSIC**

172. Standards in music are wide-ranging and variable. At Key Stage 3, on entry to the school, a few pupils are evidently talented but, for the majority, standards are unsatisfactorily low: commonly far lower than expected at Key Stage 2 and, in many cases, even Key Stage 1. In Year 7, no baseline assessments in music are made. Observations confirm that while attainment generally improves during the key stage it remains, for many pupils, significantly below national expectations, especially in respect of the depth, breadth and range of skills, knowledge and understanding expected of the oldest pupils at Key Stage 3. Pupils in Year 9 confuse the most basic concepts, for example movement upwards or downwards, while many are insecure in their knowledge of simple musical notations. Such shortcomings require even more rigorous and better-targeted work, aimed particularly at



those under-performing pupils and their specific needs. Information and communications technology is not used as an aid to learning in music lessons. Singing was not heard in classes at Key Stage 3. Pupils find it difficult to maintain an independent part when playing instruments. Teacher assessments in Year 9 in 1999 were acknowledged to be unreliable and inconsistent with currently expected levels of attainment.

173. At Key Stage 4, small numbers of committed pupils take GCSE and generally do well. At the time of the last inspection 100 per cent of the 13 pupils entered gained A\*-C grades but in the three succeeding years results fell significantly below national norms, to rise again to very good levels of attainment in 1999 and 2000.

174. Provision for music in the sixth form is made in the context of a performing arts A-level course in which drama and dance also feature in a rotational arrangement that did not allow music to be observed during the inspection. However, the results of small numbers of candidates - an average of approximately four in each cohort - show that while only one has gained an A/B grade in that time, all have gained A-E grades.

175. These achievements complement those of approximately six per cent of the school population who take instrumental lessons, some taking graded examinations with distinction. Their results are not analysed or published in the governors' report in the same way that other examination results appear.

176. Attitudes to music vary widely. At Key Stage 4 and in instrumental lessons where pupils are keen to succeed, pupils settle well to work with increasing independence and with little behavioural disturbance. This has had an impact on standards at Key Stage 4 and general satisfaction in the results achieved, especially for a number of pupils who have had special educational needs and who make good progress. In contrast, at Key Stage 3, there is in the many large classes a small but significant number of pupils who seek or attract attention by discourteous and occasionally poor behaviour. Teachers seek to manage such situations sensitively and positively. However, confrontations occasionally occur that distract the whole class, impeding teaching and learning with an evident and damaging impact upon standards. No support for pupils with special educational needs was seen in any music class.

177. The quality of teaching was good or better in three-quarters of the lessons seen. Then it was generally characterised by energy, commitment and dynamism. Teachers make clear to pupils the learning objectives and check that they are met by constantly monitoring work in progress. Such good teaching inspires comparable responses from pupils, although they are sometimes hard won, for example in a Year 9 class when some disaffected pupils were seen but good behaviour management on the teacher's part ensured that progress was made. Teachers show a care for their pupils that is particularly evident in the context of more individualised work at Key Stage 4 and in instrumental lessons. Some administrative technicalities regarding teaching were drawn to the school's attention and were quickly dealt with. Unsatisfactory teaching is rare. When it occurs, it relates to pupils' poor behaviour and challenges to class management. There is a need for more rigorous self-evaluative assessment that allows pupils to understand how well they are doing, particularly because there is no reference point established by 'baseline' assessment of pupils on entry to the school. However, while the caring attitudes of teachers are very evident at Key Stage 3, they are frequently challenged by the poor attitudes and insensitivity of a significant minority of pupils who have a disruptive influence that depresses standards. Class teachers are often having to work harder than their pupils.

178. The well-qualified and experienced school music staff is supported by five visiting instrumental teachers, all expert in their several fields. However, no support was seen in any

music class for pupils with special educational needs. This necessarily places extra pressures on both the pupils and class teachers in a school where there are significant numbers of such pupils, and where class sizes at Key Stage 3 are large. The most talented and able pupils at Key Stage 3 are commonly involved in the work of the whole class, only rarely given separate tasks or extending challenges. Lesson planning generally reflects the National Curriculum requirements, which have been significantly modified by the introduction of levels of attainment. These, together with requirements for information and communications technology, are not yet fully in place. There remains, therefore, much to be done, especially in relation to the more rigorous application of modified tasks to cater for the full range of attainment.

179. Pupils' learning is mostly at least satisfactory and is often good. The commitment of pupils that good quality teaching inspires is evident in many pupils' focus upon work and their growing facility in music. However, it is too often compromised by the lack of appropriate and shared understanding of assessment. Analysis of pupils' work and discussion with them show that there is a proper emphasis on performing and composing, but listening skills need substantial development. At both key stages and especially at Key Stage 3, pupils appear uncertain of their own achievements, lacking confidence in their present attainments and therefore being tentative in their efforts to enhance them. Assessment schemes, which do include self-assessment, are being revised to make possible better analysis of data to inform planning and provide more reliable measures of progress.

180. Accommodation is adequate for class teaching. However, there are disadvantages. Noise travels between rooms, and visiting music teachers often have to work in difficult conditions. There are some good quality keyboard organs, but resources in general are unsatisfactory. The lack of information and communications technology for music is a considerable shortcoming. Extra-curricular activities include recorder, string and wind groups that rehearse regularly at lunch-times. Regular excursions are made to local and London shows to extend the cultural dimension of pupils' experience, and the school stages concerts, entertainment and musicals of its own. Most recently, an arts festival involved several other local schools and promises to be the basis of future collaborative ventures including opportunities for curriculum planning and development with local primary schools.

181. Since the last inspection the time allocated to music at Key Stage 3 has been increased through the addition of a rotational arrangement for expressive art lessons in Year 9. While this brings the total amount of time for music close to the recommended minimum, it involves some reorganisation and, in consequence, difficulty in ensuring continuity in the teaching. The schemes of work and lesson plans have been modified and improved, but there remain shortcomings so that progress in improvement is unsatisfactory overall.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

182. The teacher assessments at Key Stage 3 in 1999 recorded pupils' standards as above national expectations in physical education. The 2000 assessments continue this pattern. The 1999 GCSE results were well above national averages for grades A\* to C and grades A\* to G. The 2000 results were higher than those for 1999 and continue an upward trend after a dip in 1998. More boys than girls choose the subject and their GCSE results are better. In the current year, however, more girls have opted for the course. A certificated course in sports leadership caters for pupils interested in the practicalities of sport, and they achieve the standard required. The 1999 A level results, for the small numbers involved, were just below the national average. A new course in AS level sports studies has attracted 13 students, but their progress is being affected by staff absence.

183. In the lessons seen during the inspection, the attainment of the oldest pupils at Key Stage 3 was in line with national expectations in dance, gymnastics and soccer, but higher in basketball. Pupils' ability to perform sequence work shows continuity and vigour, but a lack of control affects quality in many instances. Pupils at all levels of attainment make satisfactory progress in dance and gymnastics because of the open-ended tasks, which encourage pupils to work at their own level. In games of basketball, pupils use their basic skills well. A health and fitness group in Year 9 did not perform exercises properly and this led to minor disruptions, culminating in unsatisfactory attainment, and lack of attention to safety. Standards in other year groups at Key Stage 3 vary across the differing sets and according to the quality of teaching by replacement teachers taking the place of the absent head of department. Teachers are sometimes excusing pupils from physical education as a result of inconsistent attitudes to non-participation, and standards are adversely affected in consequence. Some Year 8 pupils performed with vitality in dance and gymnastics and a Year 7 class showed good control in passing and dribbling in hockey. Pupils' striking and fielding skills, involving catching and throwing, are not as well developed. Attainment at Key Stage 4 is above national expectations in the Year 11 GCSE group. These pupils demonstrated developing literacy skills in their written work and good oral skills during a question and answer session. There is good planning in the junior sports leadership group, which helps pupils present their work effectively to other members of the group. Work in the Year 10 GCSE group is in line with national expectations in most activities, but the pupils' badminton skills are at a very basic level. Although many pupils had been allowed to sit out a Year 11 hockey session, those who took part showed a satisfactory understanding of tactics and strategies. Other activities such as badminton, basketball and soccer are performed with skill and enthusiasm.

184. The teaching is satisfactory overall at Key Stage 3 and good at Key Stage 4. Planning and preparation at both key stages are good and all lessons include a clear introduction. However, in Key Stage 3 lessons explanations are, on occasions, too long and this leads to restlessness and occasional disruption. When pupils are actively involved, the lessons allow them to practise and improve skills more readily. Praise and encouragement are often used well. Not enough use is made of good quality demonstrations, although there are examples of good practice in this regard. Progress is slow when the practices and exercises are performed incorrectly. Some warm-up exercises are well managed; a few lack rigour and form. For example, in one case they promoted poor control and unsatisfactory progress in a health and fitness lesson in Year 9. In two instances, where there were large numbers, well-timed intervention and support by the teacher was the major factor in enabling pupils to make good progress. The large size of many groups at Key Stage 3 makes teaching more difficult. The teaching at Key Stage 4 is at least satisfactory and is sometimes very good. Variety in approaches keeps pupils interested and promotes their learning. Pupils are given opportunities to work in pairs and small groups in order to plan and evaluate their actions. Tasks are well matched to pupils' differing attainment levels. Teachers' knowledge of the subject and their use of resources are good. Class management is good and pupils respond quickly to the teachers' instructions, although the collecting of valuables before lessons sometimes causes delays. The absence of the head of department is restricting progress in groups where the cover is of inconsistent quality. Students who have opted for AS level sports studies are adversely affected, as are the larger-than-usual numbers of pupils in the absent head of department's classes in Years 7, 8 and 11 who are allowed to miss physical education lessons for a variety of reasons. Progress over time is unsatisfactory in these classes.

185. The physical education curriculum meets statutory requirements but, because of the option choice that is permitted in Year 9, full coverage of the programmes of study is difficult to achieve in the classes that have only one session a week. The GCSE option is well supported. The extra-curricular provision in sports and team games is very good, and

encourages the development of links with the sports clubs at the adjacent leisure centre, and other local clubs. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme is run very successfully. Approximately 40 per cent of pupils at the school take part in the after-school activities. Three specialist staff in the department conduct most of these activities. Assessment procedures have been documented, but targets have not been updated in line with the requirements of the revised National Curriculum. Schemes of work are in place, but development planning does not prepare for the new curriculum. Departmental leadership does not provide clear direction for the work and development of the department. Effective use of new technology has not been planned, although the acting head of department has begun to introduce the necessary changes. Under difficult circumstances, the acting head of department is doing good work to maintain the strengths of the department. The senior management in the school is aware that decisions will have to be made to enable the department to make further progress. Initially, updating of development planning and modification of assessment policy are important considerations. Resources are good for the practical activities, but less so for examination requirements - text books are needed and equipment for information and communications technology. The accommodation (both indoor and outdoor) is very good and ideal for promoting pupils' learning.

186. Since the last inspection GCSE and A level physical education results have improved. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 4 has improved. Extra-curricular activities have been extended. Pupils have more opportunities to become independent learners. However, the quality of overall leadership has declined.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

187. There has been an improvement in the provision for religious education since the last inspection, and standards at Key Stage 4 have risen, to judge by recent GCSE results. At the time of this inspection religious education was being taught entirely by non-specialists, and the main teacher of the subject was a teacher qualified in geography with a temporary contract at the school, who has only recently joined the teaching profession. Nevertheless, the lessons seen revealed that pupils are developing some understanding of the significance of religion and belief for people's lives. However, there was relatively little evidence of pupils' knowledge and understanding of the different religions covered by the Agreed Syllabus. Furthermore, because religious education at Key Stage 3 is part of a rotational arrangement within humanities, no lessons were seen in Year 9. Nevertheless, the work seen in class and through looking at pupils' books shows that attainment at Key Stage 3 is broadly in line with the expectations of the local Agreed Syllabus. In Years 10 and 11 pupils now take a GCSE short course examination. Standards are broadly in line with expectations for the course and the first year's examination results were encouraging because they were well in line with the results the pupils obtained in the other subjects they took.

188. The work in Year 8 books showed that many pupils understand at an appropriate level the significance of the different festivals in world religions. Some could, for example, explain how the ceremonies and rituals associated with the birth of a child reflect the beliefs of different religions. In general at Key Stage 3 written work is satisfactory, though much of it is in the form of short answers and most pupils have relatively few opportunities to write at length. In Year 7 pupils had looked at how different religions use signs and symbols to help communicate their beliefs. A recent focus on religious symbols was followed by a very good lesson in which pupils worked well together to develop some ideas relating to peace and meditation.

189. At Key Stage 4 the requirements of GCSE enable pupils to develop their ideas in greater depth. The scheme of work indicates that religious education lessons should also deal with important moral and social issues that are set within the context of religious belief.

The best writing in Year 11 showed a sensitive understanding of the attitudes of various religions towards issues such as euthanasia. The social and moral issues involved had been considered in the context of religious belief.

190. The teaching seen was satisfactory overall, with one example of very good teaching. Carefully planned lessons took account of the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus for religious education, and of GCSE requirements in Years 10 and 11. The activities observed encouraged pupils to discuss issues from different points of view and justify their own ideas. They were expected to listen carefully to other people, and the majority did so, though in several lessons inattentive behaviour by a few boys sometimes made it difficult for other pupils to learn. The teachers make their expectations for work and behaviour clear and they seek to keep pupils' interested and 'on task' in lessons, particularly in the large classes at Key Stage 3, and are in most instances successful.

191. Pupils at both key stages are given the opportunity to acquire a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the beliefs that are the basis of Christianity and how Christians practise their faith. Religious education lessons also give pupils the opportunity to learn about world faiths and cultural traditions. In addition to studying Christianity, pupils learn about Hinduism, Judaism, Islam and Sikhism and Buddhism, which helps to develop their understanding of and respect for others' beliefs and values. Visits to places of worship and visitors who come to talk about religious belief help to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. The scheme of work suggests that the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development.

192. The pupils' written work is marked regularly in line with the school policy, and more structured assessment is being gradually introduced. The staff are aware that work still remains to be done on this. The marking is often encouraging, but gives relatively little guidance on how pupils should improve their work. Pupils' self-assessment indicates that many have a satisfactory understanding of their own progress and they set themselves straightforward targets for improvement. The assessments also show that many pupils have valued and enjoyed lessons.

193. The amount of teaching time allocated to religious education has been increased since the last inspection and this is an important factor in the improvement in standards. The modular structure of the course appears to be used to develop the topics in more depth than previously. There is still, however, no provision for religious education in the sixth form, which is a statutory requirement. This is also a missed opportunity to extend the experience and understanding of the older students and to build on the improvement at Key Stage 4. The schemes of work have been improved and this gives the inexperienced non-specialist staff who teach much of the religious education at present a better basis on which to plan and ensures some consistency across the year groups. Resources are adequate; the school has a reasonable range of books and videos and some artefacts. Displays in the humanities rooms are up to date, reflect the topics being taught and are helpful. Religious education is temporarily without a head of department, but the current staff have taken on additional responsibilities until the new head of department joins the school in January.