

INSPECTION REPORT

WITHERNSEA HIGH SCHOOL

WITHERNSEA

LEA area: East Riding of Yorkshire

Unique reference number: 118075

Headteacher: Mr M W Green

Reporting inspector: Mr R Drew
7281

Dates of inspection: 11-15 September 2000

Inspection number: 223782

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:	Hull Road Withernsea East Riding of Yorkshire
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Speck
Date of previous inspection:	13 March 1995

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			The school's results and achievements
			How well is the school led and managed?
			What should the school do to improve further?
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			How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is an 11-18 comprehensive school, which has just achieved technology college status. There are 1081 pupils on roll, including 95 sixth form students. The school serves the resort town of Withernsea and many nearby villages. Together they lie within a region which suffers from isolation and sufficient deprivation to be declared a Rural Achievement Zone by the government. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is just above the national average, but other indicators, including unemployment rates and the percentage of parents with higher education qualifications, show pupils to be significantly disadvantaged in social and economic terms. Virtually all pupils are white, and only one uses English as an additional language.

While the proportion of pupils with special educational needs, at 16 per cent, is similar to the national one, nationally recognised assessment data on pupils show that overall attainment on entry to the school is below average previous attainment.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school and one which continues to improve. Pupils make good progress across the school because teaching is good and leadership and management are very effective. Since spending per pupil is broadly average, this represents good value for money.

What the school does well

- It provides very good leadership and management, so that marked improvement has been made since the last inspection and excellent vision and delegation typify its current progress.
- Governors fulfil their statutory duties and strategic role very well and show an unusually clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Teaching is good across all year groups and pupils learn effectively. As a result, they are making good progress at both key stages and in the sixth form.
- The school provides a good formal curriculum, which is broad and varied enough to meet the needs of all pupils, especially through very good special needs provision, literacy teaching, links with partner schools and the newly established programme for gifted and talented pupils.
- It provides very good care for its pupils, with particularly good monitoring of their personal development, and there is good provision for moral and social development. It fosters good relationships, and as a result the behaviour of pupils is good.
- Staff assess the academic progress of pupils well and make very effective use of their data to influence the way they teach and to encourage and challenge pupils.

What could be improved

- The quality of modern languages provision, including teaching, standards of attainment and quality of management.
- Attainment by boys. While this is improving noticeably, it still falls further short of girls' performance than is the case nationally.
- Attendance. This is below average and adversely affects the performance of some year groups, notably Year 11.
- The library. While recently very well equipped for information and communications technology, it remains a poor facility for book loan and independent reading.
- Pupils' cultural development. This has some strengths, but does not include sufficient experience of the non-European cultures now prominent in the United Kingdom.

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

The school's many strengths greatly outweigh any areas of weakness.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1995. Since then, it has made very good improvement. In addition to tackling the key issues of the previous report, the current headteacher has had to deal with the substantial budget deficit discovered at the time of his appointment.

While the school has yet to conform with legal requirements to provide a daily act of worship and sixth form religious education, it has successfully established: very good strategic planning; very effective use of base-line data and target-setting for pupils; and exemplary monitoring of the budget and the allocation of funds to suitable priorities. It has also made reviewing by tutors a strength of the school. In addition, the budget has now been turned round by successful bids for additional funds worth over £1,000,000.

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	C	A
A-levels/AS-levels	D	D	C	

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

Pupils' standards on entry to the school are below average, but good progress is made so that, by the end of Key Stage 3, attainment in tests broadly matches national averages in the core subjects, taken together. In English, they are above average while in mathematics and science, they are just below.

Pupils maintain good rates of progress at Key Stage 4 and their attainment broadly matches national averages when they are 16. Some subjects regularly achieve above-average GCSE results, notably English literature, geography, history, mathematics, sociology and media studies. Others have had below average results in the last two years, including French, German, art, business studies and physical education.

In the sixth form, students enter with lower average prior attainment than in many schools. Their overall results therefore represent good achievement, as standards in 1999 were close to the national average. Attainment and progress are above average in some subjects, notably the GNVQ courses and A level history; standards match national ones in most other subjects and are just below average in art and geography. They are significantly below average in modern languages.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes are satisfactory overall. A minority are absent too often, indicating negative attitudes. However, the majority of pupils are positive in their approach and many show very good attitudes in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour and personal development are good. While exclusions are significant, the overwhelming majority of pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. They are particularly well behaved in assemblies.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships and personal development are good. Staff take the initiative in treating pupils, including the few who do not behave well, with respect. Pupils work well with one another in lessons and they build up confidence and self respect effectively.
Attendance	Despite on-going improvements, this is still unsatisfactory, falling well short of the national average.

A significant proportion of parents were concerned about behaviour, but inspectors find that earlier problems with one or two specific groups are now being contained and that over 70 per cent of lessons had good, very good or excellent behaviour. Attendance is unsatisfactory and this significantly depresses the standards reached in GCSE by many pupils.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching across the school as a whole is good. In 94 per cent of lessons, teaching is satisfactory or better and in over 60 per cent of these it is at least good in quality. In the sixth form, the overall quality is very good.

English teaching is good overall and very good at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, while mathematics teaching is consistently good. Science has very good teaching at Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form and good teaching at Key Stage 4.

This places English and science alongside history as the group of subjects with very strong teaching, but many others have good teaching across the school, notably geography, art, mathematics, music, and religious education. Teaching quality is satisfactory elsewhere, apart from in modern languages, where unsatisfactory teaching is too common across the school.

Teachers as a whole are particularly good in their use of assessment to guide their planning. In the sixth form, they show very good subject knowledge and relate very well to students. The use of homework is good at Key Stage 4 and post-16. It lacks some consistency at Key Stage 3, but is satisfactory overall.

Pupils learn well across the school. Some of the younger pupils are variable in their concentration levels, but in every year group, pupils are particularly well informed about the standards they are reaching and how to improve.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is good at both key stages and in the sixth form. Apart from post-16 religious education provision, it meets requirements very well. It has many additional, beneficial features to help meet the varied needs of pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is very good. It is well organised, support is extensive, whether through withdrawal groups or through help in mainstream classes. Subject teachers and special educational needs staff liaise well. Pupils make good progress as a result.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	This is satisfactory overall. Provision for moral and social development is good. Spiritual development is satisfactory. Some aspects of cultural development are strong in certain subjects, but overall the school does not provide a satisfactory awareness of cultures outside the white and western European tradition.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The quality of care is very good and a strength of the school. Very helpful personal support and guidance are provided and pupils' academic performance is very well monitored

The curriculum is particularly good in respect of links between Year 6 and Year 7, in the provision for literacy and in the way that vocational courses and specialist GCSE or A level courses have been introduced to meet particular needs. The quality of monitoring by pastoral and academic managers is very strong and contributes to the good progress made by so many pupils.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. There is great clarity and agreement about the aims of the school. Managers bring both energy and vision to the example they set.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil their statutory duties very well. They are far more involved and familiar with their school than is common and offer very good strategic advice.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Current monitoring and evaluation practice is very good and the school's marked improvement since the last inspection demonstrates that leaders have been identifying the correct objectives and strategies to make progress.
The strategic use of resources	The school is exemplary in the way it generates and directs resources to support its educational objectives.

Management in the school is particularly effective at setting out a vision for change and implementing strategies for improvement. Staffing, accommodation and resources, especially the library, have suffered from serious under-spending in the past, owing to successive budget cuts and a large deficit inherited by the present headteacher in 1996. However, the school's recent successful bids for special funds have enabled it to begin to reverse these trends. Best value principles are very effectively applied in all areas of school business.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their children like school • they find the school approachable • the school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best • their children make good progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • standards of behaviour • the amount of work their children do at home • the closeness of links between school and home • the information parents receive

The inspection team fully agrees with the positive views expressed above, and finds evidence of many other strengths in the school's work. While a significant minority of parents clearly have anxieties over several issues, inspectors find that the school compares well with national standards on nearly all these points. It has taken effective steps to minimise the poor behaviour of a minority and an overwhelming majority of pupils behave well. Compared with schools nationally, the information to parents and the scope for their involvement in school life are good, but are not always acted upon by enough of the parents. Homework arrangements at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form are good; at Key Stage 3 they are satisfactory overall, though some room for greater consistency does exist.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The attainment of pupils at the ages of 14, 16, & 18 broadly matches national averages. This represents good progress, since pupils entering the school in Year 7 have below-average prior attainment, and the sixth form also accepts students with lower entry standards than sixth forms nationally.

2. At the age of 14, the average points scores for test results in English, mathematics and science place the school's pupils fully in line with national standards, and this has been so for the last three years. However, this collective score masks the fact that English standards have been above average while those in mathematics and science have been below. More pupils have also reached the higher levels in English than in mathematics and science. In work seen during the inspection, standards in all three subjects matched national averages, but there are growing signs of more pupils being able to reach the higher levels in mathematics and science than have done so in past tests. For example, in a Year 9 science lesson pupils showed a clear grasp of 'biomass' and other quite complex concepts. Compared with schools with similar degrees of economic and social disadvantage, the test results taken together have consistently been above average.

3. In the other subjects, pupils aged 14 show a range of standards. In history and geography, they are above average, which reflects particularly good teaching and management. In a Year 9 history lesson, for instance, pupils showed impressive skills and knowledge in analysing photographic evidence of Edwardian society and relating their findings to background information about the period. Standards are average in art and religious education, and below average in design and technology, information and communication technology, music, physical education and modern languages. While there is sound teaching, and some which is good, amongst these subjects, pupils enter the school with too great a deficit in skills and knowledge for them to reach average standards by the age of 14. In the case of modern languages, attainment also remains depressed because of unsatisfactory teaching and management. For instance, in several French lessons pupils showed poor speaking ability, being too hesitant and lacking sufficient practice in chorus work.

4. At the age of 16, pupils are reaching national average standards in GCSE points scores. While the proportion of pupils gaining five or more A* to C passes was below average in 1999, it has been rising over the last few years, and continued to do so in the summer 2000 results, in which 43 per cent gained these higher grades, compared with 47 per cent nationally. Given the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, these results are well above average for schools in the same category.

5. Boys' results have regularly fallen far short of those achieved by girls at both Key Stages 3 and 4, and more so than nationally. However, the school has worked effectively to try to counter this trend, and the gap is closing noticeably, especially in the summer 2000 GCSE results. In several subjects, teaching strategies have already established strong or rapidly improving performance by boys, notably in history, but also in English and science. The poor attendance record of a minority of Year 10 and, more especially, Year 11 pupils continues to put limits on their success at GCSE and adversely affects school results as a whole, though action taken over the last few years has begun to reduce this influence.

6. In recent public examinations, pupils aged 16 have achieved standards noticeably

above the national average in several subjects, such as media studies, history, geography and English literature. Similar good quality work was typical of lessons seen in these subjects during the inspection. For example, Year 11 pupils in geography showed a very strong grasp of population distribution patterns and the complex factors responsible for them. In other subjects, standards are broadly average, while some are falling below average each year, particularly in French and German, but also in science, art, physical education and business studies. For most subjects with below average GCSE results, pupils are nevertheless meeting or nearly meeting the targets set for them, based on their prior attainment. In addition, in art and science standards are improving, especially if 2000 results are included. However, in French and German, these positive features are absent, and low attainment essentially reflects shortcomings in teaching, management and curricular planning. The poor listening skills and levels of participation found at Key Stage 3 persist in many lessons in Years 10 and 11.

7. The overall picture of attainment for pupils aged 14 and 16 indicates that good progress is being made. Pupils enter the school with lower than average scores on nationally recognised tests at age 11, but they achieve much over the following years and, collectively, catch up with national standards. They are increasingly showing that they can exceed them in several subjects. These achievements reflect the good teaching in most subjects and the school's very good procedures for assessing and encouraging pupils through target-setting. In addition, basic skills, especially in literacy, are strongly promoted by the school, and the needs of able and talented pupils are now beginning to be met. Standards of literacy are at least in line with national expectations, having been below average when pupils enter the school; numeracy skills start with a similar deficit which is again substantially reduced through improving provision. Pupils also show positive attitudes and are acquiring good learning skills.

8. The work of staff involved in providing for pupils with special educational needs has a very positive impact, enabling those pupils to make good progress at both key stages. Their targets are regularly reviewed by staff and, where appropriate, new targets are set. Parents and pupils are kept informed.

9. Attainment by students in Year 13 broadly matches national averages. In A and AS level examinations, the points scores for the school had been below average for several years, but in 1999 they reached 15.3, compared with 17.9 nationally, and this improvement was continued in the summer 2000 results. However, the sixth form GNVQ subjects are now consistently providing above-average results, with the great majority of candidates gaining merits or distinctions. These positive trends are confirmed by the findings of the inspection week. Standards are above the national average in A level history; they match national averages in English, the sciences, design and technology, sports studies and information and communications technology; they are just below average in art and geography and well below in modern languages. In history, for example, Year 13 students are producing very well-argued individual projects; their English coursework shows highly perceptive and accurate writing on Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, and in a biology lesson, students conducted a very successful investigation into the relative influences of genetic and environmental factors in human development. In French, however, while students listen well, they still lack the confidence and regular practice required to speak and write extensively in the language.

10. Since most sixth forms limit entry to those with a relatively strong performance at age 16, and this school does not, the standards reached by the end of Year 13 represent good progress. Students achieve well because teaching overall in the sixth form is very good; because students are well matched to courses and because they show particularly positive attitudes to learning.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Overall, pupils' attitudes to school are satisfactory. The majority, who attend regularly, generally have a positive attitude to school. Attitudes are particularly good at Key Stage 4 and amongst sixth form students. In the great majority of lessons, pupils at all key stages are well motivated, interested and keen to learn. A lack of interest by a minority is particularly apparent at Key Stage 3, especially amongst Year 9 boys. Several lessons seen during the inspection were partially disrupted by pupils calling out and chatting continuously during the lesson. In many lessons, pupils showed their capability to listen attentively, contribute well to class discussions and work in silence as required. Students who stay into the sixth form are well motivated and have a strong self-belief in what they can achieve. Pupils interviewed during the inspection gave a positive picture of their life in school and indicated that they thought that the extra-curricular opportunities provided are good. The inspection was unable to assess the participation levels, since clubs do not operate at the very start of the school year.

12. Overall, standards of behaviour are good. In most lessons at Key Stages 3 and 4, behaviour is good or very good. In the sixth form, it is consistently very good. A few instances of poor behaviour in lessons were seen during the inspection, particularly amongst boys who lack self-discipline, mainly in Year 9 and some in Year 10. There is an absence of oppressive behaviour, and when bullying occurs it is usually effectively dealt with. Pupils are excluded for short, fixed periods for aggressive or violent behaviour that disrupts the learning of other pupils. Two pupils with long histories of difficult behaviour were permanently excluded from school last year, before the pupil support centre was established to assist with the inclusion of pupils with emotional and behavioural problems. Behaviour in the dining room and at break times is good. Pupils are polite and friendly around the school site, although staff supervision is sometimes needed to help maintain an orderly movement of pupils between lessons.

13. Relationships in the school are very good. There is mutual respect between pupils and teachers, which fosters a good learning environment. Pupils show appreciation for the help offered to them by teachers. In lessons, pupils work well in groups and pairs. They listen responsively to one another and show respect for others' feelings.

14. Pupils who are withdrawn for support lessons in the special needs rooms are well motivated and work hard. They are usually keen to learn and they behave well. Teachers and assistants work hard to establish good relationships, and this results in positive attitudes to learning. The atmosphere is welcoming and helps pupils to feel at home, and to get down to work.

15. Pupils' ability to exercise personal responsibility is good. The school buildings and equipment are well cared for. Pupils contribute to the school community through their participation in the school council, as well as the extra-curricular activities. Pupils in all year groups respond well to opportunities given to represent their school. Some act as school ambassadors, while others represent their school on community projects, such as the Operation Lifestyle projects organised by the police, the Crime Prevention Panel and community regeneration with Withernsea Community Ltd and Holderness Youth Initiatives. A

large number of pupils was involved in the community play during the summer.

16. Attendance is unsatisfactory and below the national average. In the last school year, only the attendance of Year 7 was above 90 per cent. Unauthorised absence is nearly twice the national average, although the level improved from this in the last year. Over one-third of all pupils are recorded as absent without authorisation. About 30 pupils achieved certificates for excellent attendance, with six or fewer half-day absences during the year. Authorised absences include a considerable number of holidays taken during school terms.

17. Since the last inspection, good attitudes and behaviour by the majority of pupils have been maintained. There are still incidents of poor behaviour, most notably amongst Year 9 boys, and exclusions for a fixed term remain high. Absences, both authorised and unauthorised, appear to have increased, but registers are now maintained on computer.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

18. Teaching across the school as a whole is good. It is effective and ensures that good learning is at the heart of the vast majority of lessons. In the lessons seen, teaching in 94 per cent was satisfactory or better, and in 62 per cent it was good or better. In some lessons (four per cent) it was excellent, and more than a quarter of all lessons (26 per cent) had very good teaching. The standard of teaching is consistently good between Years 7 and 11 and is very good in the sixth form.

19. In Years 7, 8 and 9, teaching is generally and consistently good across most subjects. Here, teachers' thorough planning ensures that the structure of lessons enables them to engage and stretch pupils consistently. This good preparation is the reason why teachers can brief their classes so meticulously, and thus the tasks and the aims of the lesson are clearly understood by the pupils. This is frequently true in science lessons, as seen in a Year 8 lesson on the solar system, where planning by the teacher led to an excellent lesson in which every moment was filled with purpose.

20. Most lessons in Years 7, 8 and 9 show an eagerness by teachers to challenge and stimulate pupils by presenting and discussing subject material in a way that helps pupils thoroughly understand. This is one of the major reasons why pupils learn so well. However, this is not universally the case, and in a small proportion of lessons, teachers fail to engage pupils in challenging and stimulating work. For example, in a Year 9 lesson in French, the pupils were not sufficiently involved and the work was not challenging with the result that both their behaviour and their attainment were unsatisfactory.

21. In Years 10 and 11, teaching is again good, and the thorough planning of lessons is again a strong feature. Teachers identify a range of different activities within lessons, which build up well to keep the momentum of learning and the interest of pupils going. Often, such planning runs alongside effective checking and assessment, outside and within lessons, which enables teachers to build up a very good knowledge of their pupils. They use this knowledge to help pupils understand, either through asking specially chosen questions or by offering additional explanations. In many lessons, teachers effectively link such knowledge to aspects of examination preparation and techniques. Where this is done skilfully, such as in a Year 11 English lesson on the Vernon Scannell poem *That Old Rope*, the pupils gain higher levels of attainment, and both progression and achievement in the lesson are good. In the best lessons at this stage of the pupils' schooling, teachers are not only competent at teaching basic skills, including the ability to link their subject to improving basic literacy, but they are also very adept at developing pupils' analytical skills. For example, in a Year 11 history lesson about the 'boom' in the United States in the early 1920s, pupils were able to make complex analytical links between a range of factors which led to the boom. They could,

for example, analyse links between the sudden growth of cheap labour, because of the demobilisation of millions of men at the end of the First World War, and the subsequent weakening of the Trade Unions; they were then able to evaluate the role of this factor in encouraging the 'boom' soon after. In the few unsatisfactory lessons at this key stage, teachers did not promote such higher-order skills and failed to challenge pupils sufficiently. For example, in a GCSE physical education class dealing with decision making in passing in basketball, the teacher's lower expectations and lesser intellectual challenge meant that pupils only consolidated their previously learnt skills, but did not apply them in a GCSE context.

22. Teaching in the sixth form is generally very good and occasionally excellent. In the vast majority of lessons, teachers are knowledgeable and often passionate about their subjects. In these lessons, they infuse a confidence in the students about their own ability to succeed, and they establish mature relationships with students which underpin good sixth form teaching. There are good examples of such relationships in several subject areas, notably English, history and particularly science, where a Year 12 lesson in physics, concerning spectra, echoed in many respects a Year 13 lesson in biology on genetics. In both lessons, the interesting and exciting expositions by the teachers were augmented by a mature and adult relationship, which encouraged dialogue between the teacher and the students and considerably strengthened students' learning and understanding. In the small number of lessons which were less than satisfactory, the teachers' knowledge of the subject and expectations of pupils' potential for achievement fell short of the required levels. For example, in a Year 13 French class, the teacher's level of spoken French was pitched at GCSE level and failed to challenge students.

23. Largely as a result of good teaching, pupils' learning is good through the school as a whole and is very good in the sixth form, where, in over 50 per cent of lessons, students' learning was very good or excellent. The high-quality discussions between teachers and pupils within lessons are not only a significant feature of good teaching, but they also ensure full participation by pupils in developing their strong interest in their learning. They show a keen interest and enthusiasm for their work and they acquire new knowledge and skills. They also develop ideas and understanding. Where there is good learning, pupils are particularly successful at high-order skills of evaluation and interpretation of evidence. For example, in a Year 11 history lesson, pupils studied a range of sources concerning Henry Ford, and were very adroit at evaluating and interpreting both primary and secondary sources concerning Ford's ideas and achievements, presenting a mature and balanced assessment of his contribution to the welfare of people in the country. Similarly, in a Year 13 biology lesson, the application of intellectual effort and the sustaining of concentration underpinned a very intense but academically rigorous discussion of the nature/nurture debate. Where learning is less successful, pupils are less well motivated and rely too heavily on the teacher and are passive recipients rather than active participants in their own learning. For example, in a Year 13 French lesson, several students remained silent throughout the lesson and made no contribution to their own learning.

24. Overall, teaching has a very beneficial effect on the standards of attainment, because it impacts so effectively on pupils' learning. Pupils are not all naturally inclined to independent learning, but they are encouraged by the quality and depth of knowledge of their subjects which the vast majority of teachers display. This, together with planning and presentational skills, helps pupils to become engaged and motivated, which in turn helps to ensure satisfactory attainment in lessons. The short-term satisfactory attainment in lessons where there is good teaching is not always reflected in the results in public examinations, where other longer-term factors, such as attendance, severely affect pupils' achievements.

25. The quality of teaching by special educational needs staff is very good. Teachers

plan very well and carefully address the special targets that are set for their pupils. They display a high level of expertise, patience and understanding. A very good feature of this teaching is the collaborative relationships that teachers have established with pupils. Pupils who have special needs benefit greatly from the care and attention given by teachers and assistants. While many pupils have difficulty in remembering what they have learned, teachers and assistants are ever patient in helping and guiding them to try their best.

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

26. The curriculum is good and provides a broad range of opportunities for all pupils. The school aims for the full statutory curriculum to be enhanced and enriched to develop the full potential of all students. At Key Stage 3, pupils follow courses in all the National Curriculum subjects and also have lessons in religious education, drama and personal, social and health education (PSHE). The time allocation for most subjects is appropriate, but is lower than the national average for modern languages at both Key Stages 3 and 4. Pupils at Key Stage 4 follow a core curriculum that includes English, mathematics, science, a modern language, information and communications technology, religious education and personal, social and health education. There is a wide range of optional courses that lead to GCSE qualifications and to certificates of achievement. The school has also introduced GNVQ courses. Together these help to provide a broad and relevant range of work that is suitable for all pupils. The organisation of the options is good and matched to the needs and demands of pupils. In the sixth form, there is the very full range of GCE A level and GNVQ courses necessary for a school that serves a wide area that is geographically isolated. This inevitably results in some small groups, but Withernsea High co-operates well with neighbouring schools to ensure that courses are economic. A good example is the sharing of a psychology teacher with another nearby secondary school, and the use of video conferencing. Careful and professional planning has ensured that the statutory curriculum is in place. The teaching of key skills in the sixth form is good.

27. Considerable care is taken to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs have access to the full curriculum offered to all. When they are withdrawn for extra help, they often use the same material as their peers in the main classes. There is much emphasis on raising their literacy skills, such as reading, spelling and comprehension of what they read. The special needs department is also successful in providing suitable opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, respect for other people and property is emphasised fully, and teachers reinforce this message both by their own example and by encouragement.

28. The inspection was carried out in the first full week of the school year, and extra-curricular activities had not begun. However, there is good planning to enrich the curriculum and a good range of activities is planned. As evidence of the school's commitment to extending pupils' opportunities, it provides a free bus from the school at 5 pm on three nights each week and has negotiated with bus companies that children can also use other routes, outside the normal school times, after their clubs and sports activities. The school has been persistent and creative in ensuring that funds are available to continue this important aspect of its curriculum. There is an impressive range of physical education activities at lunchtime and after school. The school has a full programme of competitive sports with other schools. The music department also provides good opportunities for pupils to participate in choir, string ensembles and steel bands. Year 7 pupils can develop their juggling skills. The school is making good use of its lead role in the Withernsea and South Holderness Rural Achievement Zone to consolidate and develop this work and make it inclusive for all pupils. The successful organisation of the summer school for gifted and talented pupils involved pupils from primary schools, working with Withernsea High School pupils in an imaginative

and beneficial programme. A community play entitled *The Holderness Saga* was a major success, involving pupils and students from the school with members of the local community. The drama department makes an important sustained contribution to extending opportunities and has held workshops with a Zimbabwean group, produced a school musical, 'The truly amazing new millennium magic box trick', and organised an Irish evening and a wide range of concerts and cultural events. There is also a range of visits and Year 8 pupils participate in a residential activity at Sutherland Lodge. The sixth form geography students and the media studies group extend their studies on a residential course at the West Cumbrian Field Centre. There have also been visits to Hull University for Year 7 geography pupils, Year 10 pupils involved in a public speaking competition and sixth form students examining 'What it means to be a young European'.

29. The school has a very good understanding of the nature of its catchment area and provides opportunities for all pupils to develop their knowledge, skills and interests. The form tutors and pastoral staff are diligent and show care for all their pupils and have good links with their parents and the wider community. There is a good atmosphere in the school that encourages all pupils to feel at ease and included and to take advantage of the expertise of the staff. There is a very good policy to ensure equality of opportunity, and this is monitored by the deputy head and reviewed by the governors.

30. The provision for personal, social and health education is satisfactory. A new post has recently been created to ensure more effective co-ordination of this work. It is essential that planning and co-ordinating time is available, especially in view of other commitments. There is a programme of activities in every year, taught by a dedicated team of teachers. The topics are appropriate and relevant and there are good materials. A variety of teaching methods is used, including discussion, role-play and group work, and visiting speakers are involved where appropriate. In Years 7 and 8, pupils receive one hour each week and in Year 9, they have two lessons in the summer term. The latter is not satisfactory in ensuring good continuity and progression. Sex education is taught as part of the science curriculum, and in Year 9, in PSHE lessons. Parents are informed of their statutory rights in relation to sex education. There is a sex education policy, but this is not included in the prospectus alongside the drugs education policy. Year 10 pupils prepare for work experience and while useful, this provision is limited to a block of lessons and other aspects of the programme are missing in this year. Pupils also have three sessions each week with their tutors in an extended form period, but this time is not used consistently well and has variable links to the PSHE programme. Year 7 and Year 9 pupils have special career days and Year 10 pupils have a prison day. These are useful ways of enriching the curriculum and widening the horizons of pupils. The demands of the new curriculum to include citizenship are not fully in place. The sixth form have a good introduction to their studies and are introduced to safe driving skills.

31. The provision for careers education is good, with a well co-ordinated work experience programme that succeeds even in a remote rural area.

32. The contribution of the community to the pupils' learning is satisfactory. The school is at the heart of the community and involved in the regeneration of the area through the Withernsea and South Holderness Rural Achievement Zone. Students were part of the group that accompanied the final bid to London to express local views to the Department of Trade and Industry. The gaining of technology college status also creates links with the community through the provision of up-to-date technology that benefits both pupils and community. The school also benefits from its links with the East Riding Business Education Partnership and its participation in the Young Enterprise Scheme. Individual governors bring their personal skills and professional expertise to their role as link governors with each faculty in the school.

33. There are very good relationships with partner institutions, especially with primary schools. This has resulted in close co-operation on the teaching of literacy and the development of a good programme in Withernsea High. The transition from Year 6 to Year 7 is smooth, and pupils appreciate the efforts of teachers in helping them at this stage. There are good links with neighbouring high schools, both for curricular and sporting purposes and also with institutions of higher education.

34. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. The school has a good policy on these areas and provides good guidance to teachers. This has yet to have sufficient effect on teaching and learning. There are well-planned assemblies that link with a theme for the week that can be followed up in tutor time. Some of these assemblies are effective collective acts of worship, but others miss opportunities for personal reflection and consideration of personal faith. A Key Stage 3 assembly provided good opportunity for spiritual reflection on life in the universe and a time of silence. The assemblies always provide good opportunities for the moral development of pupils and staff are good role models. The thought for the day is a new development this year and requires careful monitoring and evaluation. Too few departments have given sufficient consideration to their contribution to the spiritual development of pupils. While some of their work must deal with the wonder of the natural world and human achievement, there are too few planned opportunities for pupils to reflect, consider beliefs and values and ponder on their own place in the universe. The school is aware of the need to develop pupils' awareness of self-identity and self-worth and the pastoral system makes a good contribution to this. The school makes good provision for the moral development of pupils and there is a good sense of right and wrong and the need for strong community cohesion throughout the whole school. The school has a clear set of values and these are evident to all members of the community through displays in all classrooms. Teachers also insist on high standards and set good examples. This is reflected in the good standards of behaviour of the vast majority of pupils. The buildings are well cared for and free of graffiti and the grounds remarkably litter free. Pupils show respect for each other and for adults. The provision for social development is good. Pupils generally work well together and there is an atmosphere of trust and collaboration. Many pupils enjoy coming to school and form good friendships, and families develop long-lasting links with the school. There are good opportunities to work together on school productions, in musical activities and on residential visits. The provision for cultural development is unsatisfactory, although there are some good features. The school has not ensured that the good quality spasmodic events are part of a sparkling, exciting and sustained whole-school provision that broadens pupils' horizons and lifts their eyes past the low-lying Withernsea coastline. There is a lack of cultural exchanges with European schools, the modern languages area is weak, with very limited take-up in the sixth form, and the exposure to other cultures through Asian, African or Latin American music and art is restricted. However, the link with Japanese pupils in geography, the consideration of Chinese music, 12-bar blues and Indian ragas in music, the workshop for Year 10 drama and music pupils by Black Umfolosi, and the use of artefacts from world religions in religious education lessons show that the school is beginning to address this area of the curriculum.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. The school makes very good provision for the care of its pupils. Very good procedures are well established to identify and handle issues related to child protection and health and safety matters. Staff and pupils work in a safe and secure environment. A written assessment of risks has been undertaken in all departments, and some are under review following the completion of new building work for information and communications technology and music. A matron is employed during school hours and very good procedures are in place to deal with first-aid issues and to cater for pupils who require long-term health care.

36. Overall, the school's monitoring of academic performance and personal development, and the educational and personal support and guidance available to pupils are very good. Teachers know pupils very well. The care and guidance provided by form tutors and heads of year are greatly assisted by the maintenance of good records of personal attributes and achievements. Gifted and talented pupils are properly identified and extra provision is made to challenge them, most notably with the introduction of a very successful summer school. The school has made good provision for the social inclusion of all its pupils.

37. Procedures for monitoring attendance are good and the existing attendance statistics are used well. A full-time educational welfare officer took up post in the summer and is beginning to produce positive improvements to attendance and punctuality statistics. Pupils identified with attendance problems are closely monitored. Further improvements are expected with the installation of a new computerised registration system during the current term.

38. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good. The school deals well with reported incidents of bullying and addresses the issues to eliminate oppressive behaviour through the programme of personal and social education. The introduction of the Pupil Support Centre is a positive initiative to enable the social inclusion of pupils with emotional and behavioural problems, although its effect cannot yet be measured. Outside agencies are brought in as necessary. Co-operation with the police and other external support agencies is good. The 'Ready to Work' campaign and the system of praise and rewards policies have had a beneficial impact on pupils' behaviour.

39. The school has very good procedures for assessment. A coherent policy document indicates how it uses a wide range of data about pupils' achievements to indicate present needs and future expectations. The school effectively uses a considerable and growing body of assessment data for the benefit of the pupils. Information from primary schools, cognitive ability test results, national key stage tests and departmental assessments are used to set higher targets for all pupils. A working party considered the priorities in this area as part of on-going school development which has resulted in a strong whole-school commitment to making assessment systems work. There has been a significant amount of success in managing and monitoring these arrangements and in communicating results and the significance of assessment data to all staff.

40. The day-to-day assessments of pupils' performance and the recording of individual attainment and progress are very good in most departments. Information and communications technology has still to develop fully monitoring and review systems. In other areas, very good use is made of relevant data to analyse the value that is added to pupils' progress as they move through the school. The school uses past results to establish reasons for boys' under-achievement, with notable success in history and science. The English department expertly uses its assessment data to place pupils in relevant sets and to ascertain the appropriate level of work. In science, module tests have excellent links with National Curriculum levels to chart progress, and many subjects have extensive portfolios of pupils' work to moderate standards and to set future targets. The school has successfully cultivated an ethos whereby it assesses the relative performance of departments. Successful practice is shared as a means of improving subject performance at all crucial stages, and especially after GCSE and A level results. Certain departments are dealing with data that are relatively new and in these circumstances on-going assessment is not used sufficiently to make curricular changes: for example, evaluating units of study after completion does not consistently lead to remedying problems identified.

41. The school makes very good use of its assessment information to share results with

parents and pupils. Academic review days are set aside for form tutors to review progress with their pupils and to negotiate individual targets. Pupils are well aware of their subject performances and respond positively to the predicted next-stage levels of achievement.

42. The school has made excellent progress in developing assessment procedures since the last inspection. Starting from a position of identified weakness, it has now established departmental consistency of practice to set appropriate targets for pupils of all abilities. The care taken over pupils who have special educational needs is very good. Assessment of their needs, and the help given, are very carefully thought about and carried out. Targets and individual plans are very good and shared with all concerned.

43. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are very good. Tutors and heads of year keep themselves well informed about the pupils in their care. Systematic records of pupils' personal strengths and weaknesses are kept throughout their school career and link with the assessment data of academic performance and termly reviews of effort in each subject. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own progress and set targets for improvement. Form tutor times are variable in their usefulness. The best provide a purposeful and thoughtful start to the day, but others are merely social gatherings. Heads of year work hard to assist pupils and their parents with academic and social problems. Personal mentoring helps identified pupils in Year 11 with their study skills and to make good progress in raising their attainment.

44. Since the last inspection, procedures for formal monitoring of progress have been established and are securely in place. A unit to support pupils with behaviour problems has been established and represents a very positive initiative to secure their social inclusion. Implementation of revised policies which affect pupils' attitudes and behaviour is having a positive effect in many classes. The programme of personal and social education has been revised, but the effective use of tutor time on three mornings a week remains variable.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45. Parents view the school as satisfactory. Less than one tenth of parents returned the inspection questionnaire and the results gave a mixed picture, but, on balance, showed that parents support the work of the school. Concern was expressed about the amount of homework set, and some parents do not feel well informed about the progress made by their children, nor that the school works closely enough with parents. A number of parents were concerned about the standards of behaviour. Most say their children like school. They consider that the school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best, and find the school approachable if they have questions or problems. The parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting were positive about most areas of the school's work. They acknowledged some behaviour problems in Year 9 and some inconsistencies in the amounts of homework set, but praised the school for the attitudes and values which it promotes and the pastoral care given. They said the school was always responsive to their concerns and felt the school had improved a lot since the last inspection.

46. The inspectors found that concerns about behaviour were largely unfounded, except for a small group of boys, mainly in Year 9, whose problems are being addressed. Appropriate homework is usually set and parents receive regular reports of effort and progress in all subjects. The school works hard to involve parents in all aspects of school life. While parents respond well to requests to visit the school if problems arise, very few are willing to be involved in its work on a broader scale. The school has developed effective links with parents which positively affect standards of work and personal development.

47. The quality of information provided to parents is very good. The prospectus, with an

annual update, and the governors' report are well produced and very informative. In addition, parents receive regular information of events in school. Annual progress reports give good information on each pupil's strengths and weaknesses in all subjects and indicate areas for improvement. Appropriate consultation evenings are offered and parents who do not attend are contacted. Parents are routinely contacted for a variety of reasons and whenever there are problems, and informed when their child has shown positive improvement or consistent good work. The school makes its expectations for parental support very clear. Home-school agreements have been signed by nearly all parents. Parents of children with behaviour problems who attend the Support Centre sign a detailed agreement and are encouraged to be fully involved in helping their child to be included in the school community.

48. Parents' involvement is unsatisfactory and has a limited effect on the work of the school. Parents do not routinely contribute to lessons or extra-curricular activities. They attend performances in which their children are involved and respond to the school's requests to discuss their children. Attendance at parents' evenings is reported to be satisfactory, although for Key Stage 4, the school's figures show that only between one and two-thirds of parents attend. A small number support the Parents', Teachers' and Friends' Association which organises social and fund-raising events and has contributed many extras to support extra-curricular activities. The committee works hard to involve more parents in its work, but many parents do not support events and functions.

49. The quality of information and contact between parents and the special needs department is good. Parents have the opportunity to discuss pupils' progress at parents' evenings, and they also receive extra reports, and sometimes they are invited for personal discussion. Parents often express their appreciation of the work of the special educational needs department by writing to the school.

50. Since the last inspection an effective partnership with parents has been maintained.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

51. The school benefits from very good leadership and management at every level. This has a major positive impact on virtually every aspect of provision and goes a long way towards explaining the culture of improvement which now pervades school life.

52. The school receives excellent educational direction from the headteacher and other key staff through well-formulated aims and a very well-constructed school development plan. These make it clear to all what the school's priorities are and how they should be pursued. Equally important, however, is the way the headteacher and senior and middle managers demonstrate by example those values and qualities the school is seeking. While much of the energy and vision behind the school's planning comes from the headteacher, it is a strength of the school that so much responsibility is effectively delegated to others. Compiling the school's development plan, for example, involved all senior managers and all heads of department in an unusually thorough way. Current whole-school aims, objectives and strategies are realistic, well understood and subscribed to by staff largely because teachers at every level had a large part in their design.

53. Management in the school has been and remains excellent at analysing the school's strengths and weaknesses and taking appropriate action. The key issues from the last inspection were noted, and very good overall improvement has been made. Indeed, some previous weaknesses, such as assessment arrangements and target-setting by subject teachers, have now been transformed into strengths. In addition, broader challenges,

including the school's large budget deficit of 1996 and subsequent cuts in LEA funding, have been met by ambitious plans involving the whole community, as well as the school.

54. Appreciating the economic deprivation in the region and its lack of social and cultural facilities, the school managers have played a key role in meeting these needs, while providing much-needed additional funds and facilities for the school. They have helped to secure special government grants totalling over £1,000,000, along with the creation of South Holderness as a Rural Achievement Zone. Collectively, these successful bids for special status and funds have allowed the school to stem the loss of teachers - 12 since 1996 - and begin to make new appointments to renovate and re-equip large areas of the school, which staff and parents had begun to believe could never be dealt with.

55. The school's governing body has also played an important role in these developments and this is indicative of its overall effectiveness. Governors are far better informed than is usual about the school's strengths and weaknesses and they take the initiative in making proposals and in aspects of management. For example, the governors' curriculum sub-committee meetings are very much a reflection of governors' concerns and interests; they follow the governors' agenda and the senior management representatives invited to the meetings must expect not only to provide information, but to answer quite searching questions. As a result of secure knowledge about the school, governors offer very good strategic guidance when plans are formulated and implemented. The governing body is fulfilling its statutory duties very effectively.

56. At senior management and faculty level, there is good monitoring and support of teaching. This represents another area of very good improvement since the last inspection. Managers of subjects make regular observations of colleagues' lessons and help design any necessary support. Along with the adoption of a range of agreed principles of good teaching, this is promoting a better awareness of colleagues' many strengths and greater consistency in basic lesson structure and conduct, as well as offering scope for improving teaching where there are weaknesses. In addition, monitoring involves quite extensive and rigorous inspection of subjects by senior managers and invited local authority specialists. This has enabled the school to give better recognition to success and to take decisive action where necessary to help bring about improvements. There remains scope for the school to gain even further from the very good and excellent teaching seen during the inspection by increasing the opportunity for staff to observe outside their own departments. There is also scope for employing new strategies, given that some unsatisfactory teaching persists, particularly within modern languages.

57. Departments and faculties are well managed overall, and pastoral managers contribute significantly to the very good care and guidance provided by the school. Some subjects are particularly well managed, notably science, history, English, mathematics, physical education and music, and there is good management in geography, art, information and communications technology and design and technology. The special educational needs provision is very well managed, and there are very high levels of commitment and expertise used in helping these pupils. The special needs co-ordinator monitors very well, and offers good support for all the adults concerned with special needs. This, in turn, enables them to offer very good levels of help and support to the pupils.

58. However, management is unsatisfactory in modern languages. This has been so for some time, and the school has taken appropriate interim action; it now needs to provide clear strong leadership within the department to ensure that standards of provision rise.

59. In the main, staff are well qualified for the subjects they teach. Exceptions are drama at Key Stage 3, information and communication technology and music, where there is a

shortage of specialist teaching. There is a very thorough induction programme for newly qualified teachers and teachers new to the school. Newly qualified teachers have slightly reduced timetables to allow useful time for professional development. They attend regular meetings on a wide range of relevant topics and there is a well-organised mentoring system. Attendance at courses and other in-service training events is well organised for all staff and closely related to the school's current priorities for development. Support staff are adequate in number, except in science. Support staff, office staff and maintenance staff are all very well managed. They are kept aware of the school's priorities, undertake regular in-service training and are an integral part of the school community.

60. Accommodation overall in the school is satisfactory. The site is large, and the external grass and hard surfaces are well used and well maintained. The accommodation is good in some areas, is well lit and newly appointed, and this creates a bright and positive atmosphere. These areas include history, modern languages and special educational needs. Some areas, however, are unsatisfactory, namely design and technology, religious education, and some of the accommodation used for the teaching of science. These areas have a negative effect on the quality of the school as a learning environment. In addition, there are a number of flat roofs which are leaking, including the sports hall, and the humanities and design and technology areas. The school has recognised these problems, and has made excellent progress in securing funding from a number of sources to raise the standard of the accommodation. A wide-ranging programme of repair and refurbishment is under way, which addresses all the major deficiencies, and a recently completed multi-media centre now provides very good accommodation. An additional room, used for the teaching of information and communication technology, has also been refurbished and re-equipped, and the music department has been re-located. The programme for upgrading has been very well planned to balance the need to complete the work quickly, so that improvements can take effect as rapidly as possible, with the need to minimise the disruption that major works can cause.

61. The previous inspection reported that a lack of resources was restricting the effectiveness of collaborative and independent learning. Although financial restraints have prevented resources from reaching an ideal level, they are generally adequate for teaching present courses. Exceptions are modern languages and geography, where there are too few textbooks for pupils to be allowed to take them home. There is insufficient equipment for fieldwork in geography. As funding permits, the school is developing the use of computers, and upgrading and increasing equipment as a matter of urgent priority. The stock has been significantly increased recently, but the ratio of computers to pupils remains below average. More equipment is needed so that planned developments can be carried out in information and communication technology, science, geography and music. The school promotes literacy well by housing well-chosen collections of up-to-date fiction in classrooms. However, the ratio of library books to pupils is well below the recommended level and library provision is poor at present. Out-of-date books have been removed. The remaining stock is of good quality, but there are not enough fiction and reference books, particularly for GCSE and A level students. The library has recently been moved into larger premises, the intention being to create a versatile learning area with books and computers. The latter are in place and are being used, but there are far too few books, both fiction and non-fiction, and inadequate accommodation for quiet reading. Thus, the library is not yet established as an adequate resource for book loans or for conducting research.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

62. The school should:

- (1) Take urgent steps to improve modern language provision across the school, so that in teaching, attainment and in management, standards come to match

those found in the school as whole and that pupils receive a satisfactory experience in French and German. (See paragraphs 3, 6, 9, 22, 58, 148, 155, 156)

- (2) Further narrow the gap between boys' and girls' attainment at Key Stages 3 and 4 by spreading to all departments the successful methods which have already raised boys' standards in some subjects, such as history, science and English. (See paragraphs 5, 40, 65, 83, 102, 133)
- (3) Raise attendance levels, at Key Stage 4 especially, by implementing the school's existing plans for use of the new educational welfare officer and the electronic registration system, so that better and more rapid action is taken over absences and the progress and attainment of a minority of poor attendees are enhanced. (See paragraphs 5, 16, 37)
- (4) Broaden the cultural experience of pupils so that in lessons and school life in general they are made sufficiently aware of the cultural diversity within the UK and beyond. (See paragraph 34)
- (5) Expand the library facilities so that they offer pupils an adequate resource for book loan and independent research writing. (See paragraph 61)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

169

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

63

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4.1	26.3	31.6	32.2	5.3	0.6	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	986	95
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	219	n/a

Special educational needs

Y7 – Y11

Sixth form

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	30	n/a
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	173	n/a

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	53
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	52

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	9.4
National comparative data	7.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	2.2
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
	1999	92	126	218

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	54	40	35
	Girls	99	60	50
	Total	153	100	85
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	71 (78)	48 (54)	39 (51)
	National	63 (65)	62 (59)	55 (56)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	35 (53)	23 (25)	9 (18)
	National	28 (35)	38 (36)	23 (27)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	34	52	37
	Girls	81	78	53
	Total	115	130	90
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	54 (54)	61 (62)	42 (52)
	National	64 (62)	64 (64)	60 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	21 (19)	33 (28)	20 (23)
	National	31 (31)	37 (37)	28 (31)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	103	90	193

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	29	91	96
	Girls	46	83	86
	Total	75	174	182
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	39 (29)	90 (87.9)	94
	National	46.6 (44.6)	90.9 (89.8)	95.8 (94.9)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	36 (32.9)
	National	38 (36.8)

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

Attainment at the end of the sixth form

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1991	17	32	49

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	12.6	16.8	15.3 (13.8)	n/a	n/a	n/a
National	17.7	18.1	17.9 (17.6)	2.7	2.8	2.8 (2.6)

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 units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	20	100
	National		[81]

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	1080
Any other minority ethnic group	1

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	149	2
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	62.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	29
Total aggregate hours worked per week	671

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13]

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	73.5
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	26.9
Key Stage 4	25.6

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	2,682,315
Total expenditure	2,727,842
Expenditure per pupil	2,487
Balance brought forward from previous year	183,038
Balance carried forward to next year	137,511

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1081
Number of questionnaires returned	105

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	20	68	7	5	1
My child is making good progress in school.	24	64	7	2	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	21	34	22	14	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	17	54	17	9	1
The teaching is good.	26	53	14	3	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	32	43	16	7	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	41	46	8	4	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	38	5	1	2
The school works closely with parents.	24	43	15	8	9
The school is well led and managed.	21	50	5	8	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	26	50	10	5	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	27	45	9	4	14

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

ENGLISH

63. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is average. In the National Curriculum tests in 1999, results were above average compared with schools nationally, both at level 5 and level 6. They were well above those of similar schools, and much better than those gained in mathematics and science. Seventy-one per cent of pupils received levels 5 and above, compared with the national average of 64 per cent. Teachers assessed their pupils at below the national average. Results are rising. Girls outperform boys by substantially more than is found nationally.

64. The inspection finding is that attainment in the present Year 9 is average. This is lower than in the previous year, because a minority of boys do not work as hard as they should and produce untidy and careless written work, poorly punctuated. They do not think carefully before answering questions and do not extend their ideas beyond short responses. They find it difficult to listen carefully. However, many pupils, the majority of whom are girls, achieve high standards. These pupils are keen and interested in their work. They read with understanding and write accurately, varying sentence formation for effect. They recognise specialist language, such as first person, and have a wide vocabulary. They use effective similes and have assured control of direct speech. They use language carefully to develop a mood - for example, in descriptions of their favourite places. They listen carefully to one another and speak clearly and confidently. They are attentive and work hard.

65. At the end of Key Stage 4, attainment is average. In the GCSE examinations in 1999, results in English and English literature were below the national averages, but average compared with similar schools. Girls outperformed boys by a very significant amount, with 69 per cent of girls gaining A* to C in English, but only 32 per cent of boys. The many strategies used to encourage boys, such as precise targeting of lesson objectives, are beginning to have an effect and the gap has narrowed a little in the 2000 results and considerably in this year's Year 11. Almost all the cohort gained a pass in each subject. The trend for both subjects is rising and both did very well compared with other subjects in the school.

66. Attainment as judged by the inspection of the present Year 11 is average. This improvement is largely because of the very good teaching and support given to all pupils, and their very good behaviour and attitudes to their studies. Pupils know exactly where they stand and how they can improve their performance, which they are determined to do. Standards of reading are especially high, despite unsatisfactory provision in the library. High attainers show perceptive response to literature. They talk about their work animatedly and speak with clarity and understanding. They read with conviction and discuss their wider reading with interest. They write accurately, with good awareness of how to use appropriate kinds of language for different audiences, as seen, for example, in a professionally produced article on Michael Owen. Low attainers respond to texts such as *Of Mice and Men* with interest. They have good recall of character and plot. They understand difficult vocabulary, such as 'sceptical', when it is put into context for them. They listen well and speak sensibly, though responses lack development. They discuss co-operatively to explore their ideas. Written work is careful and reasonably accurate, though spelling and punctuation are sometimes inaccurate. There is some lack of formality in written expression at times. Pupils of very low ability work carefully and with interest in improving their work, for example, when writing stories for different audiences.

67. Pupils in all areas use the computer regularly to good effect, and there are good links with the information and communications technology department. Pupils now redraft and refine work carefully to improve it, an area in need of development according to the previous report.

68. Attainment at the end of post-16 education is average. In the A level examinations in 1999, attainment was average. All students entered for English literature gained grades between B and D, with almost 40 per cent gaining a B. In the present Year 13, attainment is in line with course requirements. Students take great care with their work and produce of their best. Written work is full, accurate and perceptive, as shown in coursework essays on *Lord of the Flies*. These show sensitive engagement with the text and convincing, sustained argument which develops points in depth. Students speak confidently and with interest and work well together, developing ideas in groups. They read well, but not widely. Few had read other books by the same authors of their set texts, and so their width of appreciation of style is limited.

69. Considering the below-average attainment on entry, pupils make good progress at Key Stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form. Very good planning, both for the development of the department by management and of individual schemes of work and lessons by teachers, ensures good continuity, so that good progress in lessons develops into good progress over the course. This gets off to a good start because of very good links with the primary schools. Primary and secondary teachers are working together to produce a booklet showing different levels of work from level 1 through to level 7. Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs, and these pupils also make good progress.

70. Standards of teaching and learning are good. They are better at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, where they are very good, than at Key Stage 3, where they are good. Teaching ranges from a good proportion which is very good and sometimes excellent, to satisfactory, with very little below this. Teachers know their subjects and the examination systems very well, including new courses in the sixth form. Skilful questioning probes and assesses understanding, as well as drawing out responses, encouraging learning. A strength of the best lessons is high expectations, to which pupils respond accordingly. In a Year 7 lesson, for example, pupils made very good progress in developing understanding of how writers manipulate language for effect, through an examination of fairy stories. Pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 are setted according to ability, and work is appropriately targeted. In the best lessons, where the range is still wide, work is further differentiated to suit all pupils. This was very effective in a lesson on *Nettles*, where pupils in Year 11 worked on different worksheets and all made very good progress in learning about the deeper meaning of the poem. Learning was less effective in a Year 9 lesson on parts of speech, where all pupils did the same work, with some struggling to understand and some leaping ahead. Assessment is very good at both key stages and in the sixth form. Teaching is based on very clear criteria, communicated consistently to pupils and closely linked to assessment criteria and to target-setting. This results in productive lessons, in which pupils and teachers work together to improve standards.

71. The department offers a wide curriculum. Media studies and drama are emphasised and almost all pupils do GCSE English and English literature or the certificate of achievement. In the sixth form, the choice is broad.

72. The department is very well managed. A good system of monitoring and evaluation of teaching and curriculum development has meant that there has been good improvement since the previous inspection, both in the quality of teaching and in standards of attainment.

Literacy across the curriculum

73. The school has sensibly linked the development of literacy awareness across the school with the raising of boys' attainment. The project is well under way and the gap between boys' and girls' attainment has narrowed a little this year. An effectively run summer school this year gave pupils at level 3 and some gifted and talented pupils the opportunity to develop further. The framework of the literacy hour has been adopted in the English curriculum. Teachers from seven faculties have attended training in a range of strategies to improve literacy and have become aware of how enhancing pupils' language enhances their subject learning. The project manager has been given time to attend lessons and advise how subjects can contribute in their own areas.

74. Much good work is under way, though not all subjects have yet accepted the need to focus on literacy. In geography, good use is made of writing frames to organise extended writing more effectively, for example on population density; in history, there is effective teaching of precise technical vocabulary and plenty of opportunities for discussion and building on the views of colleagues; in mathematics, spellings are taught and corrected and some excellent work on developing speech is done; in science, there are very good opportunities for extended writing - for example, imaginative work on Tutankamun; in information and communications technology pupils practise drafting and re-drafting and producing work for a specific audience. However, in music and in modern languages, opportunities to develop speaking and listening and to teach writing are missed.

Drama

75. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is below average. Though some pupils sustain roles, many find it difficult to keep control and to develop ideas seriously. They are unused to the conventions of drama, because of disruption in their teaching in previous years, which has restricted their progress over the key stage, resulting in immature attitudes.

76. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is below average. In the GCSE examinations in 1999, results were below average, with 52 per cent of pupils gaining grades A* to C, against the national average of 67 per cent. Pupils' attainment is in line with other subjects in the school. Similar standards are found in the present Year 11. Pupils work hard and respond promptly to instructions. They work in small groups constructively. Some find oral expression difficult, others express themselves confidently and find appropriate language to represent character. They are developing the ability to analyse their own performances.

77. It is not possible to assess the standards of attainment at the end of post-16 education, as this is a new course and no examination results are available. Year 13 was not observed during the inspection, but attainment in Year 12 is good for this very early stage in the course. Students read with expression, evaluate and discuss purposefully, and have a good knowledge of stagecraft.

78. Teaching is good. At Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form it is very good, but at Key Stage 3 it is satisfactory. Teachers' knowledge of the subject is very good higher up the school, but less assured at Key Stage 3. The best lessons sustain a fast pace and motivate pupils. They are very well planned and the high expectations of the teacher result in independent work from pupils. Less successful lessons, at Key Stage 3, give pupils too much freedom to stray from the task set.

79. Progress is good at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, where drama makes important contributions to pupils' self-esteem and self-confidence. At Key Stage 3, it is satisfactory in lessons, but is unsatisfactory over the key stage because of the lack of continuity of experience. Pupils with special educational needs make progress at a similar rate to the rest

of the class.

80. Management at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form is very good, with very good systems of assessment in place. At Key Stage 3, assessment systems are developing, but are not yet fully in place. Management of Key Stage 3 has not developed the cohesiveness necessary for the teaching to be effective enough to give pupils the experience of drama which could be so beneficial for them.

MATHEMATICS

81. Pupils' attainment in the National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 9 was well below the national average for 1999 for pupils achieving level 5 or above, and below the national average for those achieving level 6 or better. When compared with the results obtained by pupils from similar schools, results were average. Over the years 1996 to 1999, the Key Stage 3 results have been below the national average. The trend in recent years has seen attainment rising in mathematics, and the results for the summer 2000 examinations show a marked improvement. In all recent years, boys have performed significantly less well than girls.

82. The standard of work of pupils aged between 11 and 14, as seen during the inspection, was in line with national norms and reflected satisfactory progress being made in relation to prior attainment. By the age of 14, higher-achieving pupils can produce good work in algebra and can draw effective graphs of cubic and quadratic functions. Average-attaining pupils complete successful work in statistics, finding the mean of grouped data, and can cancel fractions with accuracy. Lower-attaining pupils can plot points on a graph with accuracy in all four quadrants and can do basic division by 10, 100 and 1000, although some have to write the sums down rather than work them out in their head.

83. GCSE results in 1999 were in line with national averages for pupils scoring between A* and C. This composite result conceals the fact that girls were 10 per cent above the national average for girls, and boys 10 per cent below that for boys. Results for summer 2000 were slightly lower than those of the previous year, but in line with a rapidly rising trend of improvement. The percentage of pupils gaining a grade G or higher was broadly in line with national figures. Mathematics results compare favourably with other subject results in the school.

84. The work of pupils at Key Stage 4 seen during the inspection reflected standards broadly in line with those seen nationally. By the time they are 16, most higher-attaining pupils produce sound algebraic work at an appropriate level for GCSE grade C or higher. They do good work on the probability of independent events and on circle theorems and they can solve problems of displacement using sine and cosine rules. Middle-attaining pupils show secure understanding of the trigonometry of right-angled triangles and can solve simple problems using this understanding. Lower attainers can cope with basic statistical work, drawing up tally charts from base data, and can solve simple linear equations by balancing.

85. Progress, therefore, is good for all pupils at both key stages, including those with special educational needs. The learning of those pupils benefits in particular from excellent in-class help from learning support assistants, and especially that of the technician in charge of the 'Successmaker' programme.

86. In the sixth form, students achieved broadly in line with national norms in 1999 and in previous years. The year 2000 results were similar. These results reflect the application and ability of the individual students. Work seen in the students' books reflected this picture. There was evidence of successful work with calculus and some good work on resolutions of

forces and Newton's second law. In class, however, Year 13 students displayed a lack of confidence when trying to recall work learned earlier and they will need to improve on this if they are to gain success in the GCE examination. Year 12 students were receiving their second lesson of the course and were lively, responsive and receptive, readily taking to a comprehension of surds and their use.

87. Improvement in the mathematics department since the last inspection is good. Greater attention is now paid to the pupils learning to use mental arithmetic methods, particularly in earlier years; graphical and written presentation has improved; and pupils are better motivated. Steps have been taken, particularly with the introduction of Cognitive Acceleration in Mathematics Education (CAME) lessons, to improve pupils' ability to discuss mathematical processes and reach a co-operative answer, or find their own ways of solving problems. In this inspection, teaching was satisfactory or better in all lessons seen. Also, lesson preparation was at least satisfactory in all lessons seen. Departmental management is much better.

88. The teaching observed during the inspection was good. In none of the lessons seen was teaching less than satisfactory. The teachers have good knowledge and understanding, and have appropriate expectations of what the pupils should be achieving. In class, most manage the pupils very well, so that no time is wasted. With the notable exception of the CAME lessons, the range of strategies used to ensure that pupils are learning in their lessons could be extended to include more interactive work. Planning could be improved in some lessons, by making sure that the objectives for each lesson relate to the results expected and to what the pupils will be able to do, rather than to the idea or concept to be explained. These objectives should then be made explicit and shared with the pupils, so that they are clearer about what is expected of them and what they can do to improve. The pupils' work is almost always marked, and some good practice exists within the department in this respect. A range of rewards for good work exists and is used. This includes the use of rubber stamps and smiley faces in books and the award of certificates. This is a substantial motivator for pupils. While much of the marking overall is thorough, with helpful and constructive comments, and some is of the highest quality, there are still some examples of perfunctory marking with little more than a series of ticks.

89. Provision for the use of information and communication technology and computer-aided learning is unsatisfactory. The departmental work programmes contain provision for pupils to use computers as a tool for learning, but these lessons are not always taught, because of lack of access to the machines. Many new machines were arriving while the inspection was taking place, and two of the mathematics classrooms were equipped with interactive computer-driven white boards, a most valuable teaching aid. All of the mathematics teachers have some computer skills and many are strong in this area. There is, therefore, likely to be a major improvement in this area.

90. Although the revised whole-school policy for the teaching of numeracy is not yet in place the teaching of skills in numeracy is good, and is improving as the teachers begin to employ lessons learnt from the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. With regard to literacy, in the lessons seen, pupils were encouraged to use language carefully when speaking to the class or answering questions, and teachers did, for the most part, insist on rigorous use of vocabulary in both written and oral work. Each classroom has a list of key vocabulary posted on the wall or whiteboard. Overall, therefore, the position with regard to teaching the basic skills related to numeracy and literacy is satisfactory

91. The pupils respond well to the good teaching they receive. In all of the lessons seen, behaviour and work produced were at least satisfactory. In almost all, they concentrated hard while listening and their behaviour was good. Relationships in the classroom, both between

the teachers and the pupils and amongst the pupils themselves, are good. The quality of relationships does much to contribute to the pupils' progress.

92. Strong elements in the curricular provision are the use of the 'Successmaker' computer programme to enhance numeracy skills, especially for younger and lower-attaining pupils, and the introduction of the Cognitive Acceleration in Mathematics lesson programme for Year 7 pupils. 'Successmaker' enables the pupils to work on their individual areas of weakness. Pupils from all year groups, from Years 7 to 11, are obtaining substantial gains in numerical skills. The CAME lessons are focused on making pupils think about their mathematics, presenting them with problems and activities to challenge their preconceptions about how things work. The lessons not only enhance the pupils' mathematical ability and understanding, but also give rise to effective opportunities to improve literacy skills, as was evident from the lessons seen.

93. The department played a major part in the highly successful summer school organised for pupils from local primary schools and from Withernsea's Year 7. This plays an important part in enhancing numeracy skills of pupils who are currently in the school or will be joining it soon and also enables the enhancement of links, already well developed, between Withernsea and its neighbouring primary schools.

94. Departmental leadership is very good, and keeps the departmental focus closely on improving teaching and learning. The mathematics teachers are well qualified, and there is a strong sense of fellowship and teamwork. Close monitoring of marking and record keeping supports the teachers' work. Regular monitoring of lessons is a feature of the department's work. The department has come through a traumatic period, suffering from an inability to appoint qualified staff and has been wrestling with problems of long-term sickness. It is therefore a tribute to the high quality of the head of department's leadership and the commitment of the staff who so readily collaborate that the standards attained have not only been held steady, but have actually been improved upon.

95. With the exception of the provision of computer-related lessons as referred to above, statutory requirements are met.

Numeracy

96. Numerical skills are well taught in the mathematics department, although there are some pupils, particularly in Years 10 and 11, whose knowledge of multiplication tables is not totally secure. The use of the 'Successmaker' computer programme is seen to be successful for pupils' numeracy skills in other subject areas as well as in mathematics. Pupils use mathematics well in some areas of the curriculum. In geography, the reading and understanding of scale are useful for interpreting maps and good graphical skills are evidenced when producing diagrams and charts, including bar charts and population pyramids. In design and technology, pupils measure weights, volumes and angles. Information and communication technology teaching contributes well to the teaching of numeracy, with work using spreadsheet software for formulae, graph drawing and modelling.

97. The school has a previous numeracy policy in place, but is thoroughly revising this in the light of new national requirements. To this end, training in the National Numeracy Project strategies has taken place in the mathematics department, and the national numeracy strategy is now in place for Year 7 pupils. Useful links have also been forged between Withernsea High and local primary schools, through a forum organised to be held at one of the primary schools and attended by mathematics co-ordinators from the primary schools, which the head of department organises.

SCIENCE

98. In the last three years, the standard of attainment reached by the age of 14 has been below the national average. The average standard attained in the 1999 National Curriculum tests, although below the national figure, matched that of other schools with similar pupils. Recent developments in the teaching of science have resulted in dramatic improvement. The national test results for 2000 show a marked rise in the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard and more than twice as many pupils reaching the higher levels. These results are slightly above the national averages for 1999. When compared with the standards of attainment when pupils enter the school, this represents good achievement. Improvement is fully confirmed by the observation of lessons, examination of pupils' books and the results of internal school tests. Pupils in a top set in Year 9, studying food webs, were able to understand and explain the very difficult concept of biomass. Year 8 pupils with special educational needs independently used computers to search for information on the solar system, and thoroughly enjoyed doing so. In the past, the better attainment by girls than boys has been greater than that seen nationally. The improvement in 2000 has narrowed this gap considerably, and boys, although still on average below girls, out-performed girls at the higher levels.

99. GCSE results at age 16 show similar marked improvement. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher grades (A* to C) in 1999 was only 32 per cent, compared with a national average of 48 per cent; in 2000 this figure rose to 41 per cent. When the average GCSE grade (which reflects the performance of all pupils) is compared, the school's performance is much closer to the national level. In 1999, the average grade achieved by all the pupils in the year matched the national figure. The average grade in 2000 is significantly higher and very likely to exceed the national standard. Again, the improvement is most evident in the boys' performance at the higher levels. In 1999, 39 per cent of girls got a higher (A* to C) grade, compared with only 26 per cent of boys. In 2000, equal proportions of boys and girls achieved higher grades. The work in pupils' books, which is closely marked and consistently graded to national standards, indicates that this improvement in the quality of science education is continuing. In class, pupils are working very productively and at appropriately high levels of difficulty. For example, all the pupils in an average-attaining set quickly grasped the basics of Newton's laws of motion and were able to analyse the forces acting on a moving body. Pupils of all attainments are sharing in this better standard of science. In 2000, only six pupils in the year failed to achieve a pass grade in GCSE science and of these, three did well in the certificate of achievement.

100. Students following A level courses in science are achieving standards that always reflect their prior attainment and often exceed it. There is a very healthy uptake of science at A level and the results contribute proportionally to the school's overall performance in post-16 courses, which is close to the national average. In the 2000 examinations a third of the A level science grades were A or B. The files of A level students form careful and complete records of work that is all set at the standard needed for the highest grades. In class, students work with mature competence and a great deal of independence. All the students in a large Year 13 biology class successfully undertook an investigation of the relative influences of genetic and environmental factors on human development by studying original research papers. Students in the second year of A level physics were able to determine the inductance of a coil by calculations based on their own experimental results.

101. Teaching is very good and has clearly contributed to the recent rise in standards of attainment. In the lessons observed, no teaching was unsatisfactory, in three quarters it was good or better and in over half it was very good or excellent. The basis of this very good teaching lies in meticulous planning, resulting in lessons that are interesting, demanding, often exciting and often fun. Particular care is taken to ensure that pupils are not faced with

work that they cannot do. A Year 7 class containing all levels of ability, in their very first science class, thoroughly enjoyed a lesson involving the observation of burning. Pupils were individually encouraged to extend their work so that each pupil reached an appropriate level. The practical skills involved were nicely judged to challenge the children, but not overawe or frighten them. They left the lesson believing that science is wonderful and that they could do it.

102. Most teachers manage their classes very well and enjoy excellent relationships with their pupils. The personal attention which teachers give to individual pupils' progress and any difficulties, whether with learning or personal problems, is evident in their lessons and in the amount of time teachers spend counselling pupils out of lesson time. Pupils respond with trust, respect and affection. A Year 8 class of lower attainment was put into sensitively arranged groups, provided with a wide range of short sections of work of varying difficulty and all pupils were given personal encouragement and attention. Every child in the class gave of his or her best and all showed great pride in their work. Their reluctance to stop work at the end of the lesson was evident. This aspect of teaching is particularly important in helping the many pupils who have the emotional and behavioural difficulties that often arise from problems faced out of school. Many boys who lack maturity find settling to school work very difficult. The skill and sensitivity with which almost all the science teachers approach these pupils have been a major factor in raising the attainment of boys.

103. Teachers have very high expectations of their pupils, do not accept the pupils' own, often low, self-image and never give up on them. This feature is best illustrated by the introduction and teaching of the 'Science Plus' option in Year 10. Low-attaining pupils can choose to follow a certificate of achievement course that is carefully tailored to their interests and minimises the effects of their weaknesses. This course has been so successful in raising motivation that in 2000 all 15 pupils on the course passed, 14 gained a distinction and the remaining candidate gained a merit. In addition, 12 of these pupils also gained pass grades in the GCSE.

104. A weakness in teaching occurs when teachers fail to establish good relationships with pupils. A slightly abrasive and hectoring approach adopted in one lesson resulted in pupils not being motivated and therefore not as productive as they might have been. A basically well-planned lesson was not fully realised and resulted in satisfactory rather than good learning.

105. The contribution made by science teachers to the improvement of pupils' basic skills varies. They are acutely aware of the difficulties which many pupils have with literacy and are unusually skilled in dealing with these problems. The whole-school approach to numeracy is less well developed, but the science curriculum is carefully designed to ensure that aspects such as measurement and the drawing of graphs are given sufficient attention. The contribution to pupils' learning of information and computer technology is seriously limited by lack of access to equipment.

106. The quality of learning of many pupils is limited by lack of confidence and low aspirations. Tackling these problems is at the heart of the philosophy underlying the work of the science department. By establishing a positive and happy atmosphere in almost all lessons, teachers are gradually helping pupils to become more confident learners. The success that pupils experience in lessons is motivating them to ever greater effort and to setting their sights higher.

107. Management of the department is excellent. The head of department, appointed three years ago, ably assisted by two senior colleagues, has achieved significant improvement in almost all aspects of science education. There is a new and more appropriate course for the first three years. Setting arrangements have been changed so that more pupils can achieve

higher grades at GCSE. A new 'skills' course has been introduced, resulting in better standards in pupils' practical work. These developments are inclusive of all pupils. The provision for pupils with special educational needs has been thoroughly revised and is gradually raising their attainment. A great deal of successful attention has been given to the performance of boys. The particular needs of gifted and talented pupils are being actively addressed by the school piloting CASE (Cognitive Acceleration in Science Education) and by the full involvement of the department in the whole-school policy, designed to meet the needs of such pupils. The assessment of pupils' work and progress is now outstanding. The department is able to analyse the performance of individuals and groups, monitor the effectiveness of teaching and provide pupils with sensible and detailed information on what they need to do to improve.

108. The number of specialist science teachers is barely sufficient to cover the demands of the curriculum. Some of the sets, particularly at A level, are too large. The support staff are well qualified, very dedicated and are making a significant contribution to the raising of standards. However, there are not enough technician hours to do all the work.

109. Since the last inspection, every aspect that was criticised has been radically improved.

ART

110. In art and design, attainment is below average. At Key Stage 3, teacher assessments for pupils in Year 9 in 1999 indicate that standards are below national expectations. However, in the work seen in the school, pupils are achieving national expectations, and this is because standards are steadily rising over time. Pupils can work with confidence in materials in both two and three dimensions, and a good range of work was seen, including pencil, coloured pencil, paint and collage. Pupils also show an ability to experiment with materials to develop their ideas. Sketchbooks are used well to research and investigate art, as well as to record from life. Evidence of the use of information and communication technology is sparse, although plans to increase opportunities in this area are about to be put into action. At the end of Key Stage 4, attainment is below average. In the GCSE examinations in 1999, 30 per cent of the candidates achieved a pass rate at grades A* to C. This shows that standards are well below average when compared with the national average of 61.2 per cent. Results are also low in relation to other subjects in the school, and when compared with measures of previous attainment. The work seen in the school demonstrates slightly higher standards, and results over a three-year period show a steady rise, as a result of good teaching, although they are still below average. Pupils can produce artwork in both two and three dimensions and some good constructions in paper and card are seen, based on the study of the form of the human head. However, they have difficulty in sustaining study in depth, and in combining ideas from a range of influences to produce higher-quality pieces. They also show limited abilities in using broader and bolder approaches to handling materials, particularly paint. At the end of post-16 education, attainment is again below average. In the A level examinations in 1999, students at the school achieved an average points score of 3.0, which indicates low standards. Although these figures show a steadily rising trend over the last three years, results are still low compared with measures of previous attainment. Students gain knowledge of the work of a range of artists and art movements, including the work of Francis Bacon and Lucien Freud, and can express preferences and give reasons for them. They gain skills in drawing, and produce some bold drawings, informed by the work of Henry Moore. However, they are limited in their ability to relate their views to the wider historical context, and there is little evidence of work which is initiated by the students.

111. Achievement at Key Stage 3 is good. Pupils' abilities in art and design on entry are below average, and as they move through they make good gains in drawing skills and in

media handling. For example, in Year 9, some portrait prints based on the work of Andy Warhol show a bold use of colour and produce a striking effect. At Key Stage 4, achievement is satisfactory. Poor attendance, especially by the older pupils, and the limited extent to which broader approaches are used, limit achievement. However, some interesting large-scale pieces in chalk pastel demonstrate competent handling of the materials and a sensitivity to colour harmony. Work in three dimensions is also seen, both in constructions, and in ceramics, which are well finished. In post-16 education, achievement is satisfactory. Students can work with materials and processes that are difficult to control, such as making monoprints, with confidence. This produces pleasing results, and some very creditable prints, based on study of the life model. Good use of information and communications technology is also seen in recording more experimental art works (for example, a car wrapped in fabric) with a digital camera. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well as a result of the good level of awareness of the staff and the strategies that they employ to ensure success. This results in some interesting work in drawing, which makes the most of the skills of the pupils.

112. Pupils' attitudes at Key Stage 3 are good. They show an enthusiasm and a desire to engage in the work, as seen in a lesson on drawing pieces of fruit from life. Here the pupils are keen to start work right from the start, and show a genuine interest in the content of the lesson. At Key Stage 4, attitudes are good, and pupils show a willingness to try new materials, as seen in a lesson on drawing musical instruments, where pupils worked in ink, charcoal and biro and compared the different effects they produced. In post-16 education, attitudes are good, and students feel confident enough to be active in group critiques of their own work, discussing strengths and weaknesses.

113. Both teaching and learning are good throughout the school. At Key Stage 3, a strong feature of the teaching in the best lessons is the use of lesson introductions which clearly set out the learning objectives. This means that pupils know what they have to do to succeed, and can therefore learn effectively. This was seen in a lesson on how professionals choose colours when they design training shoes. In this lesson, pupils first discussed colour and looked at prepared examples, which demonstrated what they had to do. They were then guided into making thoughtful colour choices when working on a prepared template. Another good feature of the teaching seen was the ability of teachers to explain complex ideas. This was seen in a lesson on the work of Picasso, where cubism was clearly explained with the help of pictures and objects. At Key Stage 4, lessons are broken down into smaller sections and this ensures that there is a controlled and well-judged pace. For example, in a lesson on drawing musical instruments, pupils arranged their instruments in groups to a crisp deadline, then worked on their first drawing for ten minutes, before another teaching point was made. This approach produced a very good rate of learning. In post-16 lessons, very good introductions gained the full attention of the students, promoting a positive attitude leading to very good learning. For example, in a lesson on mask-making, students were met at the door with an ink roller, their hand was inked and they immediately made a hand print; the rest of the lesson built on this very immediate starting point. Well-prepared guidance sheets are also used, as seen in a lesson on investigating art, where students could analyse paintings in a structured manner because the guidance they needed was on the sheets in front of them. This enabled students to learn at a good pace.

114. Management of the subject is good. There is a shared commitment to improvement in the department, and good systems for monitoring and improving performance are used. Teaching and learning are effectively monitored, and the best features of teaching are shared and discussed within the department. The schemes of work at Key Stage 3 are well thought out, and their use is monitored, with the aim of continual improvement. There is an exhibition of pupils' art and design work on the Internet, and this is helping to stimulate increased interest in the subject. Although standards are low, they show a steady improvement over

time in all age groups.

115. Since the previous inspection, standards have improved at Key Stage 3, as a result of consistently good teaching and a well-planned scheme of work. Pupils can now use sketchbooks for research and to investigate art and design. There is now increased opportunity for work in three dimensions at Key Stage 4, with some impressive results. Displays around the school are improved, and presented to professional standards, and this makes a significant contribution to the quality of the learning environment.

116. Further improvement should focus on making a wider investigation of ways of raising standards. This is especially important at Key Stage 4 and in post-16 education. In addition, more opportunities for the use of information and communications technology should be provided, and this has been recognised and planned for by the department.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

117. By the end of both key stages, standards are below average, in terms of the numbers of pupils aged 14 who gain level 5 or above, and 16 year olds who gain GCSE passes at grades A* to C. Results at grades A* to G are in line with national ones. Standards of boys' work are much lower than those of girls in comparison with national averages: 52 per cent of girls in the school reached level 5 in 2000 compared with 23 per cent of boys. Standards are a little below the average for other subjects in the school.

118. For GNVQ part 1 manufacturing, the new pupils are building satisfactory portfolios of evidence. The small groups of students taking A level design and technology show standards that are in line with national averages. Pupils aged 14 are able to design and make a variety of artefacts in wood, metal, plastic and fabric, as well as use food products effectively. In textiles, many produce holdalls with features for which pupils have made sound design decisions. Cushions show a range of well-crafted surface decoration, such as appliqué. Pupils know of the properties of materials, such as plastic, which they used to make parts for CD storage units. A project to complete a small electronic organ again produced well-soldered circuits. However, designing is a weakness at Key Stage 3, with many pupils not able to justify their designing clearly, and the evaluation of projects, where they need to compare the performance of the product in use, lacks depth. In two lessons, one featuring a CD rack, and a second in food technology designing a quick snack, insufficient awareness of the design process gave rise to initial ideas that were not based on users' needs and knowledge of the properties of materials. Pupils are able to select from a wide range of GCSE courses, with resistant materials, electronics, textiles, graphics and food, as well as GNVQ part 1 manufacturing. This is a strength of the department. Small numbers of students take A level courses, and succeed, with several gaining B grades, designing well-researched projects, such as a go-kart, which is now serving as a prototype for the school's kart club, developed using local industrial links. Another innovative project is a pillar robot, where the student working on it extended a study of control work developed lower down the school.

119. Achievement through both key stages is below average - in particular, pupils' progressive gains in designing skills. Across Key Stage 4, one feature of pupils' underachievement is found in the grades in folder work. In nearly all of the specialist topics, many specifications are underdeveloped. This gives rise to products that may be well made, but are evaluated imprecisely, with corrections of errors not undertaken. Pupils' progress in understanding industrial practice and control is also below average and does not develop sufficiently across the key stage. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress, especially with making, as in a Key Stage 3 lesson to complete an automaton. Here, clear guidance by the teacher promoted a safe working environment.

120. Teaching is satisfactory. In the best lessons, teachers promote good learning through careful planning, applying their good knowledge and understanding of their subject, especially when guiding making. In a lesson on the use of the sewing machine, explanation was clear and questioning elicited extended responses from the pupils. When teaching design at Key Stage 3, there is a need to provide lessons with greater challenge, as in a lesson considering the production of a CD rack in Year 9. Technology staff also provide a GCSE technology short course alongside the full Key Stage 4 course and this puts some constraints on the time allowed for GCSE design and technology. However, pupils' coursework benefits from the good teaching of applications such as spreadsheets to cost projects and the extra scope for research on the Internet. In a minority of lessons, teachers set relatively undemanding homework, which does not address the needs of the whole range of attainers in the class

121. Pupils' attitudes are good. They usually listen well to teachers' explanations, and take part in discussions, as in a lesson studying vacuum forming. In some Year 11 classes, pupils are reluctant to complete coursework to schedule, and in one Year 7 class, some pupils finding the work difficult and having a shortage of equipment, lost concentration.

122. The accommodation and resources remain poor, but successful bidding for external grants will soon enable the school to benefit from refurbished workshops and food rooms, as well as becoming a technology college, with the promise of new computer-aided design and manufacturing facilities. There is a shortage of technology staff, with two groups of pupils at Key Stage 3 taking different schemes of work, one biased more to graphics work. At Key Stage 4, too few staff means that group sizes are large, causing congestion in cramped workshops and food rooms.

GEOGRAPHY

123. Pupils enter the school with below-average attainment. By the end of Year 9, however, teacher assessments show that standards are above the national average. At the end of Year 11 pupils are also reaching above-average standards of attainment. GCSE results in 1999 were slightly above the national average at grades A* to C and at grades A* to G. In 2000, there was a 100 per cent pass rate at grades A* to G and the results at grades A* and A were well above the national average. The attainment of girls is well above the national average, whereas the attainment of boys is below average. GCSE results, compared with other departments in the school, are above the school average by a quarter of a grade. However, this is mainly due to the girls' results. The attainment of students at the end of the sixth form is slightly below average. The proportion of students attaining grades A or B in 1999 was below the national average, and the proportion attaining grades A to E was below the national average. In 2000, there was a 100 per cent pass rate at grades A to E.

124. At all key stages, the standards of work seen were in line with national averages. There are good standards of presentation and almost all books are well maintained and clearly organised. Year 7 pupils, in their first lessons, demonstrated a basic understanding of geography and understood that places have their own characteristics and identities. They had a good knowledge of places and could use an atlas, with teacher guidance, to locate and name particular features and locations. However, a significant proportion of pupils in Year 7 cannot confidently name places on the National Curriculum maps. Year 8 pupils know that people can damage the environment and can apply that knowledge to a reasoned study of the use and abuse of rivers. They know the distinction between physical and human factors. Most Year 9 pupils are aware that climate changes with distance from the equator, and many have some understanding of the movement of the earth. Their understanding of seasons, length of day and night and the explanations for the Arctic conditions are weaker. Pupils with special educational needs can describe places in photographs and their oral skills are more developed than their writing skills. Difficulties with speed, accuracy of writing and vocabulary

limit their achievement.

125. At Key Stage 4, most pupils have a good understanding of the concept of population density, can describe distribution patterns and begin to make reasoned explanations for the patterns. They can apply their learning to a study of the population of the local area and are aware of 'push and pull' factors that apply to this area. Many produce clear reports, based on their first-hand enquiries in Beverley.

126. Sixth form students can describe and explain the landforms in glacial areas and have a good understanding of the processes involved in producing the Holderness coast. They can apply their theoretical knowledge of settlement hierarchies to planning and retail situations.

127. Learning is good across all key stages. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the attentiveness of class teachers and the good learning environment. Pupils enter the department in Year 7 with below average attainment and they make good progress throughout Key Stage 3. They extend their vocabulary in a systematic way and they learn basic map-reading skills and ways of thinking geographically to answer questions on location, processes and patterns. However, in too many lessons they are heavily dependent on the teacher for pace and direction. They are given opportunities to develop their study and research skills in the extended assignments, although these are often too open ended.

128. At Key Stage 4, pupils make good progress in developing their enquiry skills, analysing data, presenting results and reaching conclusions. However, too many pupils are not confident with basic map skills and are inaccurate with 6-figure grid references and the use of the scale.

129. Sixth formers also make good progress and attain detailed coverage of all aspects of the syllabus. They particularly develop their skills of analysis and the ability to weigh evidence, discuss view points and present arguments. The emphasis on coverage of the syllabus is greater than on study skills, the detailed attention to examination requirements and sustained independent learning - all factors that generally lead students towards clearer insights and higher results in examinations.

130. Teaching is good because of the dedication of staff and their attention to planning. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, both of their behaviour and of their willingness to work. Pupils respond well to such expectations. Teachers have good knowledge of their subject. This is especially so in the sixth form, where they help students to acquire comprehensive files of material. Teaching methods show some variety, although in lessons seen during the inspection, there was quite a strong tendency towards formal delivery. In most lessons, teachers have clear objectives and share these with pupils. Sometimes these objectives are less clear, too simplistic and not related to the National Curriculum. In these cases, learning is less effective. The Year 9 lessons on the Inuit people included some very low-level objectives more appropriate to Key Stage 2. Good work on basic literacy skills takes place: the use of the literacy grids at Key Stage 3 is excellent, and the writing frames used to help Key Stage 4 pupils to write about population density and distribution are very worthwhile. However, the lack of easily accessible equipment has severely restricted the department's ability to contribute to the teaching of information and communication skills. There are plans to rectify this. Teachers manage pupils effectively and sympathetically and as a result, pupils respond well and behaviour is generally very good. In the majority of lessons, there is a good atmosphere and a purposeful approach to learning.

131. The department is well led by a highly professional and committed head of faculty, who is ably supported by a dedicated and enthusiastic team. This is the main reason for the

good examination results. Good improvements have been made since the last inspection, but the staff are not complacent and continue to strive for higher standards.

HISTORY

132. By the time they are 14, pupils have attained standards which exceed national expectations. This is particularly rewarding since pupils enter the school with a low base-line of skills and knowledge. By the end of this stage of their learning, pupils have a good knowledge of the periods they are studying. Pupils are effectively able to use sources of evidence to extract information and to form views about the past. The higher-attaining pupils can extrapolate from evidence and make inferences from the past. For example, in Year 9, from a single picture of Edwardian society at tea, pupils were able to analyse the source in order to evaluate the wealth of the people in the picture, and they could infer from it, through a range of supportive evidence, the relationship between wealth, leisure and social mores at that time.

133. At the age of 16, the standards attained by pupils are above national expectations. For example, in the 1999 GCSE results, 59 per cent of candidates gained A* to C grades, which exceeds the national average. A pleasing feature is that, unlike the national trend, boys outperform girls. Their success is partially linked to extensive use of oral assessment, in which boys show great confidence, but also reflects the well-structured nature of so many lessons with their frequent change of activity and highly participative style. Pupils are particularly good at linking several facts together to make a comprehensive and cohesive historical picture. For example, in a Year 11 lesson on the boom in the economy of the United States in the early 1920s, pupils could link such matters as the application of the technological advances made during the war to industry, together with the new surge of cheap labour as soldiers were demobilised, as being linking factors in the boom.

134. In the sixth form, where small cohorts make national comparisons difficult, there is a trend of rising standards. Of the last cohort, 50 per cent achieved A or B grades at A level and the same proportion exceeded their projected grade at GCSE. This is above national expectations. At A level, students increase their sense of historical analysis and research. For example, they evaluate well and present cogent arguments for a range of historical hypotheses which they set down in their individual personal study projects.

135. Pupils with special educational needs make particularly good progress in Years 7 to 11. Gifted and talented pupils are identified by effective systems of assessment, though their good achievement would be augmented by an increase in the time devoted to their specific needs. Students in the sixth form achieve well, but their achievement is held back by the lack of appropriate and sufficient books which would help them widen their reading around the subject.

136. Teaching is good, overall. It is sometimes very good and is never less than satisfactory. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject. Lessons are well planned and well prepared. In the best lessons, planning is augmented by a range of teaching strategies and resources which challenge, stimulate and motivate the pupils. In the few weaker, but not unsatisfactory, lessons, effectiveness is limited by teachers not varying their teaching methods and classroom organisation sufficiently to motivate and stimulate pupils even further.

137. Generally, a good deal of care is given to ensure that tasks and activities challenge pupils to think and to improve their standards of literacy and build their skills and confidence in interrogating sources of evidence. The department is very effective in all these areas.

Overall, the quality of teaching makes a significant impact on pupils' learning, attainment and progress.

138. The response of pupils is good. Pupils show application to their work. They respond diligently, settle to work quickly and sustain concentration. Their positive behaviour and response, which is often a direct result of good teaching and good classroom management, are important factors in their increased learning.

139. The department is led effectively and efficiently by the head of department who is well supported by his colleagues and an excellent role model for a departmental team committed to raising standards and to high achievement. The department has produced effective and informative policies which are being successfully implemented and which raise the quality of pupils' learning. Assessment, in particular, is a strength. This good work would be enhanced if specific time were allocated to departmental meetings.

140. Accommodation is good, with a suite of rooms around a resource base. The rooms have displays of pupils' work, which act as an incentive and create an atmosphere conducive to learning. Resources are only satisfactory: there are not enough textbooks; there are too few library books to enable pupils to read widely around the subject; artefacts are rare; and visits out to places of historic interest are too few

141. This is a very good department with many strengths. Most of the major issues of the last report have been successfully addressed. Pupils are now confident and good at interpretation and analysis of sources. Boys attain at least as well as girls, and in the public examinations at GCSE actually did better. Testimony to the success of the department is its burgeoning popularity as evidenced by the larger cohorts embarking on GCSE and post-16 courses.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

142. By the end of both key stages, standards in information and communications technology are below average when compared with what is expected nationally and with other subjects in the school, and boys under-perform by a margin that is much higher than the national average difference. Since 1997, there has been a reduction in the numbers of pupils reaching level 5 and above in the teacher assessments for information and communications technology. In 1999, this was 23 per cent. In lessons, using information and communications technology to help present and integrate information is a strength. At level 6, a minority of pupils annotate their work, stating reasons for their choice of software and some can transfer data from databases and spreadsheets, producing well-presented reports of tasks based on running a dance club. In the first year of Key Stage 3, some pupils show good understanding of terms and techniques as they take a skills course introducing them to more rigorous treatment of applications, such as flat file databases. Some pupils in history use information and communications technology, mainly at home, to produce well laid-out posters based on World War 2.

143. When pupils reach age 16, very few gain a GCSE grade in the A* to C range, and A* to G pass rates are poor for the short course taken by all pupils, which is studied alongside GCSE design and technology. Post-16, all students have started, this year, an information and communications technology key skills course. Although standards in previous years were well below average for those not taking GNVQ, owing to there being no alternative provision, present groups show satisfactory standards, as seen in a Year 12 lesson where skills for browsing the Internet were clearly in evidence. In mathematics, science and modern languages, pupils have little knowledge of how to use a variety of tools, such as data logging, modelling and presentation, to extend their work. Basic word-processing skills are used

mainly to draft and redraft coursework. However, in a few subjects, pupils augment their coursework by using some additional tools, such as analysing nutritional data in food technology, and using graphics and desk-top publishing packages to print stylish CD box inserts and posters for media studies. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress, and standards in numeracy are improved by their use of independent learning packages.

144. Teaching and learning are satisfactory at both key stages and for post-16 students. There is a large team of teachers, drawn from a range of departments, providing specialist Key Stage 3 teaching. In Years 10 and 11, the design and technology team provides the GCSE short course. A variety of teaching methods is employed, but with little consistency. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the software applications are generally satisfactory, covering the use of the network, e-mail, presentation and graphics software. However, knowledge of how to teach information and communications technology is a weakness and the sequence of activities in some lessons fails to promote pace and challenge for all. The new government programme of information and communications technology training has not yet started and some staff are unfamiliar with the subject. In the best teaching, staff are able to give whole-class instruction with clear explanations, using data projection to allow sequences of actions to be followed. Some teachers present motivating material to pupils and have high expectations of the full range of attainers. In a lesson using presentation software, the teacher eschewed the use of garish clipart, demanding the use of the digital camera and insertion of appropriate sound clips. Here pupils' intellectual and creative efforts were high as they planned their work. Two lessons, in which there was good application of proof reading and précis of extended text, had strong links with literacy. However, in a Year 8 word-processing lesson, too much time spent by the teacher explaining techniques known by most pupils, followed by undemanding paired work, gave rise to unsatisfactory learning. Through teachers' good management of classroom assistants, pupils with special educational needs show satisfactory learning, comparable with that of their peers. However, in a GCSE Year 11 information studies class, higher productivity by low attainers, as well as by those categorised as gifted and talented, would have been achieved through use of a greater range of written materials beyond the set of textbooks.

145. Pupils' attitudes to information and communications technology at both key stages and post-16 are good. Both boys and girls show enthusiasm and curiosity for the subject, enhanced by the installation of a substantial new network and a multimedia centre through the Education Action Zone initiative funding. Pupils readily help one another, as in a lesson where new e-mail accounts were being set up. However, some pupils do not observe the school's code of practice on sensible use of e-mail and the Internet, mailing objectionable messages or using chat lines. Generally, pupils show patience when using new, untried technology. Some showed signs of boredom in lessons that featured teaching that was too undemanding.

146. There is an inclusive curriculum at both key stages, but details concerning certain aspects, such as control and data-logging, and the promotion of standards through the completion of a portfolio of exemplary material, are still being written. The use of one hour of technology time to provide the GCSE short course is a cause for concern: several pupils have to complete their information and communications technology work alongside that required for design and technology. Some departments currently lack access to sufficient hardware and software, and departmental policies still need to address the implications of the school becoming a technology college.

147. Management of the department is good, with clear planning and liaison with the Education Action Zone and successful bidding for technology college status. However, links with Key Stage 2 information and communications technology policies, and support for new

staff, monitoring and the establishment of common internal policies are not yet complete.

MODERN LANGUAGES

148. In 1999, GCSE results in French and German were well below national averages. Results have been broadly similar over the three years 1997 to 1999 and, in 2000, provisional results show that there has been no improvement. Overall, examination results have not improved since the last inspection and pupils' performance in modern languages has remained significantly lower than in the other subjects they take. The difference between boys' and girls' results is wider than is the case nationally.

149. At the time of the last inspection, no students took A level modern languages. Low numbers of students have taken French and German since then, and there were no candidates in 1999 or 2000. In 1998, one student gained an E grade in French and the other did not pass. These figures are very low.

150. In lessons and other work, the standards reached by the oldest pupils at Key Stage 3 are below national expectations. These standards are broadly similar to the 1999 teacher assessments. Pupils' achievement, given their general attainment on entry, is lower than it should be. French is the first foreign language for all pupils, and a small number from the whole attainment range opt to take German in Year 8. In Year 9, many pupils are very hesitant and lack confidence in speaking. Many pupils are frequently not prepared to listen carefully to their teachers or to the foreign language on tape. Overall, they do not have enough opportunities in class to hear instructions in the foreign language; nor do they have enough repetitive practice in chorus work to develop confidence in speaking skills. Pupils can often recognise single words and whole sentences in reading tasks, but are easily discouraged by longer sections of material in reading passages. From a scrutiny of last year's exercise books, it is clear that a few higher-attaining pupils in Year 9 write letters and accounts of sufficient length but, in general, the written work of the oldest pupils in the key stage is limited to short sentences on familiar topics.

151. At Key Stage 4, pupils' attainment in lessons and other work is also below national expectations. In Year 10, most pupils choose to take a one-year short GCSE course in French or German. Most pupils on these courses, apart from a minority who work to their potential, have difficulty in writing and reading in the foreign language. This large group of pupils is particularly unwilling to practise speaking skills with any enthusiasm or facility. A small class of lower-attaining pupils began Spanish in Year 10 in September 2000 and, as a result of good teaching, are reviving their interest in languages. The number of pupils taking the full two-year GCSE courses is relatively low, but most are keen to do well. They learn to write at length and use tenses with some accuracy to describe their past experiences, for example at home, school or on holiday. Most of these pupils still lack confidence in speaking, but a few show good understanding of a range of material in spoken and written form and take part well in short conversations.

152. At both key stages, many pupils, particularly boys, do not achieve highly enough, because they lack interest and concentration. However, some pupils, as a result of firm management and carefully focused teaching in all four language skills, make satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs can make satisfactory progress when they have extra support, but support is not always available, and their behaviour sometimes precludes real progress in lessons.

153. In the sixth form, overall attainment is below the standards expected of the course. The few students in Year 13 listen carefully, but they are slow in response and in expressing their ideas and opinions in both oral and written forms. Their written work is often very inaccurate.

154. Many pupils have little interest in languages and under-achieve at both key stages. Boys' behaviour is often markedly worse than girls'. The lack of firm control of these pupils by some teachers means that other pupils become demotivated and their progress is affected. However, the small GCSE groups taking the full course, which are mainly girls, show good levels of interest, concentration and commitment to after-school lessons. Both boys and girls respond well to firm control, rewards and purposeful teaching, but these qualities are present too rarely.

155. Overall, the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory, and pupils do not learn as well as they should. A third of the lessons seen were good, a third were broadly satisfactory, but included unsatisfactory elements, and a third were unsatisfactory. Teachers try to keep speaking the foreign language, but they have not yet built up a bank of classroom instructions to be used consistently across the department. There is a general lack of understanding of how to practise and use chorus work to build up pupils' listening and speaking skills. Too much English is spoken unnecessarily. Teachers plan their lessons well and give pupils a clear outline and revision of lesson objectives. However, the methods used to reach these objectives often ignore resources such as overhead transparencies which, well used, would provide an extra visual stimulation and enhance pupils' interest and learning. Overall, teachers' expectations of what pupils should be learning by the end of Key Stage 3 are low. Some teachers do not control their pupils firmly enough for learning to take place throughout the lesson.

156. The recent history of weak leadership and low examination results, and of poor motivation amongst pupils, requires strong management to rectify matters, with the clear purpose of raising expectations so that pupils can achieve more highly. Teaching approaches, schemes of work and some aspects of curricular provision require further revision. Teachers keep good records and the department has good accommodation and resources, and will shortly have a multi-media suite. Additional funds have recently been made available and should address shortages in textbooks at Key Stage 4, the supply of an overhead projector and training in its appropriate use. The programme of visits and exchanges was thin in 1999 and requires re-shaping to give pupils an added purpose for their language learning. Steps are being taken to improve provision during the current academic year.

MUSIC

157. At the end of Key Stage 3, pupils' attainment is below national expectations. In videotaped material from the end of the last school year, some Year 9 pupils were able to compose effective sound tracks to excerpts, for instance, from Wallace and Gromit. In these, pupils had devised imaginative sounds, which added to the effectiveness of the actions. Actions and music were very well co-ordinated. Small groups achieved effective rhythmical performances in raps they had composed on the theme of bullying. Pupils show satisfactory understanding of the construction of scales in a project on Indian ragas, but gain only a limited general knowledge of musical theory and different types of composing. There is little written work and pupils' knowledge of musical literacy and the elements of music prescribed in the National Curriculum is below average.

158. Numbers taking GCSE in music are comparatively small and comparisons between the school's results and those gained nationally are of little significance. While the school's results have been below the national average for the higher grades in most years recently, in 1999, nine of twelve candidates gained A* to C grades. This was well above the average both

for similar and all schools. No candidate in recent years has achieved an A* grade, but pupils' success at GCSE level is often above what might be expected on the evidence of their performance in other national tests. Recorded examples of composing indicate that pupils had a good understanding of the instruments for which they composed and understood basic chord structures. Most had adequate competence in using traditional notation. Pupils' knowledge of important composers and styles of composing from different eras is generally weak. Those composing in traditional styles had too little knowledge of important technical aspects, such as the use of cadences and sequences.

159. Teaching is good at both key stages. Teachers prepare lessons thoroughly and enable pupils to achieve well in relation to their abilities. For example, Year 7 pupils sang competently and in tune and were able to learn new songs quickly because they were skilfully accompanied by the teacher on a guitar. By Year 8, pupils' rhythmic abilities develop well and they were able to clap contrasting rhythms accurately and simultaneously in a project on African poly-rhythms. Most Year 9 pupils showed good listening skills in a project on composing and achieved a good understanding of the use of instrumental and other sounds for dramatic and descriptive effects. In Year 10, there is a very wide range of ability within the small set and a few already have well-developed performing skills. Others are less secure in both their knowledge and practical skills. Lower attainers at both key stages, and those who have special educational needs, achieve well because of the very effective help they receive from teachers and support staff. This is particularly evident in GCSE sets where each pupil is encouraged to compose in his or her own chosen style.

160. Teachers share their enthusiasm readily and this creates positive attitudes to music in almost all lessons. Topics are carefully planned to appeal to all pupils, lessons proceed at a good pace and teachers use a good range of appropriate teaching methods. Carefully prepared and helpful written resources are used to ensure good progress. Pupils listen attentively, organise themselves efficiently with equipment and use it carefully, and work purposefully with each other in group tasks. Only in Year 9 are a few pupils unco-operative, which limits the overall progress of the class. Pupils at Key Stage 4 have very varied levels of musical ability, but all show a genuine musical interest and strong commitment to the work they do. They sustain their effort well, even when introductions to lessons are occasionally too drawn out. For example, advice about GCSE composing was insufficiently illustrated by musical examples to be meaningful to the majority. Pupils' understanding of instructions is not always adequately checked by questioning.

161. The music department is very well organised. The handbook is thorough and up to date, and it includes policies and procedures that reflect well the school's major priorities. The scheme of work is imaginative and provides a good range of musical experiences. Only the element of musical knowledge is under-valued as an aid to pupils' musical development. Resources are generally satisfactory but more equipment is required so that the teaching of music technology can be developed as planned. Music is now taught in less remote accommodation, which has remedied the professional isolation in which the principal teacher of music formerly worked. There are very good assessment procedures for tracking pupils' progress and providing individual help towards improvement. The department is regularly and constructively monitored as a part of the faculty of sport and the arts.

162. All of the weaknesses identified by the previous inspection have been remedied and, overall, provision is much improved. There is a better allocation of time at Key Stage 3; there are very good procedures for assessment and record keeping; documentation is now of a high standard; there has been considerable expansion of extra-curricular music; schemes of work are now good, though the school has yet to modify them to incorporate the changes recently adopted nationally.

163. Music provides good opportunities for pupils' moral, social and cultural development. High standards of behaviour are expected, and pupils are trusted to use expensive equipment independently. Collaborative working is an important means of learning, which helps pupils' social development. Sixty pupils learn instruments from visiting instrumental teachers, and this provision is well organised and monitored. Pupils learn about music from cultures other than their own. They have many worthwhile opportunities to take part in ensembles and concerts, including high-profile staged events that regularly involve feeder primary schools, and which are a source of great prestige to the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

164. Standards in physical education are below average at both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. In comparison with similar schools nationally, standards at this stage are low. The 1999 GCSE results are just below the national average, but the most recent results are well below this. This continues a trend over recent years, where results have fluctuated from the number of pupils achieving A* to C grades being just over 40 per cent (good in comparison to other subjects in school and to similar schools nationally) to just over 20 per cent, which results in unsatisfactory added value. Standards in Key Stage 3 mixed football are low, with girls, especially, unable to perform basic skills. Year 9 pupils are similarly disorientated on a badminton court and have little experience of shot selection and application and games playing experiences. Mixed-ability and mixed-sex classes present teachers with difficult organisational issues: in some cases, teamwork is not a feasible option and this reduces potential levels of performance. A Year 10 GCSE theory class was seen to suggest correctly a range of factors affecting physical performance and Year 11 pupils had a satisfactory working knowledge of a fitness suite. Standards are low at Key Stage 4, especially in Year 11, because of a lack of appropriate targets relating to National Curriculum requirements.

165. On the basis of work inspected, pupils' achievement is satisfactory across both key stages, and the majority of pupils make sound progress. This is due to the considerable increase in pupils' motivation and improved teaching standards over recent years. Pupils in one current Year 11 GCSE group are achieving higher standards than recent results suggest, but the parallel group lacks application and the capacity to analyse the application of skills. At both key stages, boys develop a satisfactory range of basketball skills, but have a poor capacity to adapt these to tactical and strategic court situations. Year 8 swimmers are confident in water-bound tasks and all can achieve distances to 25 metres. Swimming techniques are poorly defined and both the location and large groups make it difficult to remedy this through effective teaching. Pupils with special educational needs have their particular requirements recognised in teachers' planning and make satisfactory progress.

166. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at both key stages and has significantly improved since the last inspection. Good subject knowledge is consistently used to improve pupils' application of a variety of skills and techniques. However, teachers are not consistently using this expertise to develop their pupils' thinking and performance in game situations. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' attention and group collaboration and their enthusiasm and encouragement have improved responses to the subject and the willingness of most pupils to improve. This was observed in a Year 11 GCSE class, where pupils improved their passing applications in basketball because of challenge and encouragement by the teacher. A parallel group failed to improve performance significantly because of uninspired teaching and pupils' poor self-discipline. Teachers are beginning to raise standards of personal development through physical education. Good gains are made in swimming when pupils observe partners swimming and comment on their front-crawl techniques. A small football group in Year 9 made good progress in thinking for themselves when planning to beat a defender in a football exercise. There is a general lack of variety in

the way teachers extend pupils' thinking in games. Few tasks are given where pupils are required to plan and apply themselves in games contexts and to analyse subsequent performance. Planning is an improving feature of the teachers' work, with all pupils' abilities clearly identified, but previously assessed performances and experiences are not used to influence the next stage of learning. Work in Year 7, for example, does not fully consider primary school experiences.

167. The head of department has a committed and developing vision of the role of physical education in pupils' learning. He has successfully led the department through a period of positive change and has built up a basis for continual improvement with a committed team. Recent departmental development planning has emphasised procedures for raising standards. Lesson planning allows teachers to share appropriate National Curriculum objectives and targets with their pupils. However, the wide diversity of ability in most groups is not being matched by an appropriate variety of tasks, resulting in under-achievement in all years. The system of mixed-sex classes leads to significantly lower standards in girls' physical education. This is a major contributory factor to the unsatisfactory standards at Key Stages 3 and 4. The failure to use the National Curriculum to set objectives for teaching in Year 11 is also a major reason for low standards at this stage.

168. The department has made good improvement since the last inspection. Recently developed programmes of study have improved the choice and balance of activities that pupils receive. Assessment procedures are beginning to allow teachers to plan more appropriately and make better judgements about levels of achievement. The next stage of using this information to improve future teaching and raise levels of attainment has still to be developed. The expansion of extra-curricular clubs and team competitions has raised the standing of the subject in the school and is a testament to a hard-working department. Staff appointments and an improvement in curriculum allocation are also significant in this improvement. However, GCSE groups receive lower than national average curricular time, thus reducing the impact teachers can make in combining the theoretical and practical elements of the course.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

169. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 9, their standards of attainment meet the expectations of the local authority's syllabus. They have a sound knowledge of the religions they have studied, and understand some of the underlying themes common to most of them. For example, they know about the layout of the inside of a Christian church, a Jewish synagogue, or a Hindu temple. They have studied some topics, such as the events of the last week of Jesus' life, in more depth. As pupils move through from Year 7 to the end of Year 9, they increase their understanding and are able to apply religious principles to some of life's problems, such as divorce or drugs. They examine the nature of friendship, and write about the qualities they would look for in a friend, such as loyalty or the ability to keep secrets. Pupils understand the need for rules, such as the Ten Commandments, in religious faiths.

170. Analysis of the results of the GCSE short courses, studied by all Year 10 and 11 pupils, shows a steady improvement over four years. The numbers taking the examination have slowly grown and about two-thirds of Year 11 entered in June 2000. Over 60 per cent of those who took the examination gained A* to C grades, and nearly all pupils recorded a grade between A* and G.

171. By the end of Year 11, pupils attain at least in line with the national expectations reflected in the examination requirements. They complete extended study booklets with titles such as 'Looking for Meaning' or 'Our Place in the World.' Through these, they understand some of the issues in such topics as the sanctity of life, medical ethics, and our part in the

world's environment. Some pupils have written about animal rights or hunting, or studied creation stories from the Bible, discovering the Christian belief about man's stewardship of the world. The programme of study they follow enables them to tackle many of the social and environmental issues, such as fox hunting, experiments with animals or the possible cloning of human beings.

172. Pupils across Key Stages 3 and 4 make good progress, including those who have special educational needs. This good progress in their knowledge and understanding is clearly seen when their past work is analysed, including the work produced for examination purposes. Overall, this is due to the good planning of programmes by teachers, and the good atmosphere for learning that they have established.

173. Pupils generally show a good level of enthusiasm for religious education, often achieved by hard work from teachers who bring humour, good pace and challenge to the lessons. Lessons sometimes begin with pupils showing a very relaxed attitude, often being unwilling to answer questions, or show interest. Teachers raise the pace and level of interest by leading discussions, setting research exercises, and using their own ability to motivate. Writing is usually done with more enthusiasm than that given to discussion.

174. Teaching and learning are good, and teachers use their experience and expertise to good effect. The pace and challenge they bring to lessons maintain the level of pupils' interest. Teachers are especially good at establishing relationships, often using humour, but always maintaining good control of the classes. The methods that teachers use, coupled with the challenge they offer, enable pupils to learn well and acquire new knowledge. Teachers encourage discussion, research and the writing of more detailed answers to questions. Planning is good and appropriate homework carries the work of the lessons further. A prominent feature is the encouragement by teachers for pupils to apply what they have learned to their own lives. For example, some pupils, having studied the Ten Commandments, wrote modern examples of their own.

175. The teachers in the department form a strong team. The co-ordinator is new to the school, and the work is therefore based upon previous schemes and plans. However, the curriculum is soundly based upon the requirements of the local authority, and gives pupils a broad and balanced programme. As the new co-ordinator assesses what is being taught, modifications and alterations can be implemented. Resources at present are only just satisfactory, and there are too few books in the library to sustain GCSE research. Accommodation is not entirely satisfactory, since storage for books and equipment has not yet been organised in the most efficient way.

176. Since the last inspection, improvement in this subject has been good. All attainment is now in line with what can be expected nationally, and the provision for religious education meets the legal requirements. Pupils make good progress now, whereas at the time of the last inspection they were said to be only 'steady'. The good features mentioned in the last

report have been maintained and with a new co-ordinator, the subject should move further forward.

SIXTH FORM

177. The school has successfully implemented a good range of learning opportunities to enhance sixth form provision which, coupled with developing pastoral procedures, ensures that this area is adding a valuable dimension to school life. Numbers are rising, and have now

reached 113, compared with 95 last year.

178. The school has worked hard to meet the study choices and requests of pupils, and a steady increase in numbers has ensured financial viability. Senior management has made a priority of this area and has examined various ways of developing it further, notably by linking and sharing provision with local schools and by collaboration with the Learning Skills Council. Successful grants applications to the local Education Action Zone initiative demonstrate the importance the school attaches to the role of the sixth form in the local community.

179. Results generally are satisfactory and the positive trends in achievement and attitudes reflect a strong commitment amongst present students. They are hard working and speak positively of the growing benefits of post-16 studies at Withernsea. This is demonstrated by the high percentage of students who go on to study at higher-education institutions.

180. The sixth form is very effectively managed. The recently developed assessment systems play an important role in counselling students making their choice of studies on entry and contribute to the monitoring and target-setting in Years 12 and 13.