

ERRATUM

Paragraph 200

The second sentence should read: "Results at GCSE in 1999 showed a pass rate of over 68% at Grades A* to C, with a 100% pass rate at Grades A* to G, whilst, at A-level, results showed a pass rate of over 55% at Grades A to **C**."

INSPECTION REPORT

HELLESDON HIGH SCHOOL

Norwich

LEA area: Norfolk

Unique reference number: 121152

Headteacher: Mr W Gould

Reporting inspector: Malcolm Groves

7540

Dates of inspection: 6 – 10 November 2000

Inspection number: 223791

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:	12-18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Creed
Date of previous inspection:	11 March 1996

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Number of full-time pupils:	1110	(larger than average)
Pupils with English as an additional language:	0.9%	(a very small proportion)
Pupils entitled to free school meals:	12.72%	(broadly average)
Pupils on the register of special educational needs:	24%	(above average)
Average number of pupils per teacher:	16.6	(broadly average)

The overall social and economic background of pupils in this mixed comprehensive school for 12-18 year olds is varied, but a significant proportion come from areas of notable deprivation. The overall attainment of pupils on entry to the school at age 12 is lower than is usually found. The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need is much larger than average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Hellesdon High School provides a very sound education for its pupils. Its greatest strength is the good quality of its teaching. In the sixth form this is very good. Pupils are looked after well. Relationships amongst pupils are good. By the age of 14 many pupils are making satisfactory progress in most subjects. By the age of 16 their achievements at GCSE are at least in line with their earlier attainments and are improving. The school's curriculum is generally broad and balanced, but needs development in a few areas. Governors and senior management work closely and effectively together. The school stands clearly for hard work, good behaviour, consideration for others, and commitment to improvement. Overall, the school's strengths are greater than its weaknesses and it is on an upward course. It provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Teaching is frequently good throughout the school, and in the sixth form it is very good.
- Pupils in the top sets often achieve well. Pupils achieve particularly highly in examinations at GCSE and A-level in religious studies, design and technology, and physical education.
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs within the learning support department. The new Social Inclusion Centre is making a very important contribution to this.
- All pupils are cared for very well, and relationships are good.
- The school has clear expectations of behaviour and the behaviour of difficult pupils is often managed well in classrooms.
- Links with and information to parents are good.

What could be improved

- Pupils in middle and lower sets do not always make as much progress as they should, because sometimes teachers do not expect enough of them.
- The way pupils are placed into ability groups for teaching purposes is too rigid, particularly in Year 8. This affects the achievement and the attitudes of some pupils, and limits the teaching time for some subjects.
- What pupils learn in Year 8 does not build sufficiently well on what they achieved in Year 7.
- There is not enough additional adult in-class support for pupils with special educational needs.
- Pupils do not have enough access to or make sufficient use of information and communications technology in their learning.
- There is too much variation in the ways departments assess how well pupils are doing and let them know how they can improve their work.
- The school needs to plan the way it spends its resources more effectively.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1996. Since then it has made satisfactory progress and addressed the key issues raised. It is beginning to improve more rapidly. Standards of attainment have varied year on year, reflecting the variation in attainment of the pupils as they come into the school. The value the school adds to pupils' attainment as they move through the year groups is improving. Attendance has improved, but in Year 11 remains below the national average.

The quality of teaching and learning is much better, although teachers do not always use their assessments of what pupils have achieved to plan what they should learn next. The school has continued to support pupils with special educational needs well. They are taught in smaller groups, which allows more individual attention, but they do not receive enough additional in-class support from other adults. Reviews of the progress of pupils with statements are now in place. The way all pupils are placed in teaching groups to match what is felt to be their ability also causes some difficulties. It affects the time available for some pupils to learn English and modern foreign languages. Teachers do not always expect enough of those in middle or lower sets, particularly in Year 8.

The provision for religious education and collective worship has been improved, but still does not fully meet statutory requirements. The roles of management have been reviewed and developed. There is now a sense of common purpose. Links between senior and middle management are now in place, but the school needs to monitor and evaluate its work more.

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. To make national comparisons, the 1999 results are used throughout the report, as these were the most recent available at the time of the inspection. But the school's improving results for 2000 are also identified.

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

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

There are two factors that affect the standards of attainment at GCSE. Comparison with similar schools is based on the proportion of pupils taking free school meals. Standards of attainment on entry to the school are lower than would be expected using this measure. The school also enters a number of pupils for examinations other than GCSE, which it feels are more appropriate to motivate the students and give them opportunities to succeed. These examinations do not count in the average points score.

GCSE results have been steady over the last three years, although there have been variations in intake. They improved notably in 2000. The school has set appropriate targets for its present students. Overall, standards of work seen are sound, but attainment in English, mathematics and modern foreign languages is below national expectations at Key Stages 3 and 4. Standards in sixth form courses are mainly good. Across the school, pupils make at least sound progress in all subjects, and good progress in many at Key Stage 4. They make good progress in the sixth form.

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are mainly positive and enthusiastic.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good, both in classrooms and around the school. Unsatisfactory behaviour in a very small number of lessons is often related to unchallenging work. Pupils with behaviour difficulties are well managed.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils have good relationships with each other and with teachers. Pupils demonstrate respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. Pupils are trustworthy and capable of showing initiative and responsibility.
Attendance	Satisfactory overall. But Year 11 continues to give rise to some concern.

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 overall is very good in geography, satisfactory in English, and good in all other subjects in key stages 3 and 4. It is very good generally in the sixth form.

The teaching of literacy is broadly satisfactory, with some good practice noted in several subjects. Numeracy is taught satisfactorily in mathematics, but needs further reinforcement. Numeracy skills are also seen in work in geography and science, but the teaching of numeracy across the curriculum is under-developed.

Overall, teaching was satisfactory or better in 96% of lessons observed, and it was at least good in about three-quarters of lessons. Teaching was very good or excellent in nearly one in three lessons. Most pupils take a keen interest in their work, and respond very well in situations that challenge and involve them actively. A few pupils show some reluctance to work and concentrate on the tasks set. Good quality teaching engages them in the lessons and encourages them to learn.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broadly satisfactory but some aspects of its organisation cause problems for some groups of pupils in Key Stage 3 in terms of time for English and for modern foreign languages. In the sixth form the curriculum is wide-ranging in its A-level and AS-level provision, but more limited on the vocational side. Extra-curricular provision is good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs. The Social Inclusion Centre is a good new addition.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall. Moral and social good. But there are some weaknesses in overall planning, and not enough opportunity for spiritual development or for awareness and understanding of other cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for all pupils well. The way it monitors their academic progress is developing, but is not yet fully effective.

The school has an effective and developing partnership with parents.

Provision for religious education and information and communications technology at Key Stage 4 does not fully meet statutory requirements.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The headteacher gives a clear focus to the work of the school. The senior managers now work together more closely and effectively. Departments are in the main well led but need greater consistency of approach in developing and implementing school policy.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. The governors are active in supporting improvement in the school
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has collected and analysed a good amount of data on its performance. Some monitoring of teaching and learning has been undertaken over the past year, but not enough is yet done.
The strategic use of resources	Financial planning is unsatisfactory. There are some inefficiencies in the way the school uses its resources.

There are sufficient teaching staff, but not enough adults working in classrooms to support pupils with particular needs. Accommodation is adequate, although indoor physical education provision is very limited. The provision of information and communications technology is poor, and the library is not adequately resourced or used.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The high expectations of the school. • The fact their children like going to school. • The teaching their children receive. • The support their children receive to become mature and responsible. • Standards of behaviour. • The way the school is led and managed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closer working with parents. • Wider range of activity outside lessons. • More frequent information about their children's progress. • The amount of homework.

These views are derived from 202 questionnaires that were returned by parents and from the views expressed at the meeting attended by 17 parents before the inspection. Parents generally express a very high level of satisfaction with the school. Inspectors broadly agree with this very positive view, particularly with regard to teaching, although they also think expectations could be higher for some groups of pupils in some lessons. Inspectors share some of the concern about homework in Key Stages 3 and 4, but believe the range of extra-curricular activity is good. The school is expanding the opportunities to involve parents in understanding and helping their children's progress.

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Pupils join the school in Year 8. The current information available on how they have achieved in Year 7, as compared with the results of the national tests they took at the end of Year 6, is limited. At present the evidence from their reading ages, taken on entry, indicates they come with a wide range of attainment, and that there is significant variation in the make-up of each year group. Those whose reading ages are slightly above their chronological age constitute between one-third and two-thirds of pupils in present year groups. However, there is also a substantial number, in some cases almost two-thirds of the year group, whose reading ages are very significantly below their chronological age. These levels of attainment match those that were observed in lessons.
2. The judgements of attainment, when compared with similar schools based on free school meals data, do not match to the school's recorded data. The level of attainment on entry is lower than that expected from this comparison.
3. In 1999, pupils' attainment by the age of fourteen in national tests was below national averages in English and mathematics, but close to the national average in science. In 2000, this continues to be the case.
4. Teacher assessments indicate that attainment is a little below the national expectation in most other subjects. However it is significantly below in modern foreign languages and information and communications technology. The evidence of inspection confirms this picture.
5. At the age of 16, in the GCSE examinations in 1999, both the pupils' average points score and the proportion of pupils achieving grades A*-C were close to the national average. The proportion of pupils achieving five or more passes at A*-G grades was below the national average.
6. The proportion of students gaining 5A*-G grades and the average points score of students is reduced by the school policy to enter candidates for examinations other than GCSE. These examinations are felt to be more suitable for the pupils and they achieve high grades. This is seen by the school to be a more positive achievement than gaining a low grade at GCSE.
7. Over the last four years, the trend for improvement has been a little below the national trend but this has been affected by variations in intake attainment. The proportion of students gaining 5+A* - C grades, having remained steady at 40% in 1997, 39.5% in 1998, and 41% in 1999, rose significantly to 47% in 2000. This was a more able cohort, but the results were nevertheless better than would have been expected.
8. This overall picture masks some variation in performance between subjects. In 1999, a significantly higher proportion of pupils than the national average achieved A*-C grades in design and technology, food and textile technology, physical education and religious studies. In information and communications technology, modern foreign languages and science, the proportion achieving these grades was significantly lower than the national average. In 2000, results in science improved considerably to exceed the national average, and in English they also slightly exceeded the national average. But in mathematics they did not advance at the same rate.
9. In the sixth form standards of attainment are good. Those students who take GCE A-level courses make good progress and attain higher levels than might have been expected in relation to their previous examination results. At A-level in 1999, the proportion of students gaining higher grades was above the national average in English, mathematics, and religious studies. In history the proportion achieving higher grades was well above average in 1999, and in 2000, all students achieved higher grades. Students who take the vocational qualifications also attain good standards.

10. The school has set appropriate targets for GCSE improvement following detailed consideration of the known previous attainment of pupils. This has generated target minimum grades for each pupil and collective school targets. The school is making sufficient progress towards its targets.

Achievement by pupils currently in the school

11. In English, higher attaining pupils make good progress at Key Stage 3, but those in the middle or lower sets are not making the same rates of progress. Boys also achieve significantly less well in English than they do in other subjects. This pattern of progress continues at Key Stage 4, where the proportion of pupils who achieve A* grades is well above the national average.
12. A similar pattern of progress exists in both mathematics and science. Higher attaining pupils make generally good progress, and greater progress than middle or lower attaining pupils. They achieve well. But overall progress in mathematics at Key Stage 4 is less good than it is in English and science. In mathematics also, in 2000, girls achieved less well than boys at GCSE.
13. In information and communications technology pupils are now making sound progress from a low baseline in Key Stage 3 and those who are taking an examination course make good progress at Key Stage 4. However, skills are not well developed or used in other subjects and pupils' learning is not assessed. Pupils in the sixth form demonstrate very good skills.
14. In other subjects, pupils make mostly sound progress at Key Stage 3 and good progress at Key Stage 4. In modern foreign languages, pupils come to the school with very limited prior experience of language experience and make satisfactory progress. The very small numbers of pupils with English as an additional language make good progress.
15. Progress in the sixth form is often very good, particularly in science, design and technology, mathematics, English, history and geography. Students on the advanced GNVQ business studies course make very good progress.
16. Standards of literacy improve as pupils move through the school. Although there is more to be done, particularly for lower attaining boys, there is evidence of the school's strategy beginning to have an effect.
17. Standards in numeracy are satisfactory, but need further reinforcement. There is some development of numeracy skills evident in lessons other than mathematics, such as geography and science, but there is no coordination in place yet across the school.
18. There is a significant number of pupils with high levels of special educational need. Twenty pupils attend the school at the request of the local education authority, which funds staffing and resources for the specialist unit for pupils with learning difficulties. For their age, their standards of achievement when they enter the school are well below the level expected. Also almost a quarter of the school's population is on the school's register of special educational needs for problems to do with behaviour or learning.
19. Progress for these pupils is satisfactory in English, mathematics, science, art, information and communications technology, and modern foreign languages and good in history and geography in Key Stage 3. Where pupils work on computerised literacy and numeracy programs designed to help reading, spelling and numeracy, their progress is recorded electronically. They make progress at a pace which matches their potential.
20. An analysis of subject departments' reports for annual reviews for pupils with statements of educational need shows that they make good progress towards the targets that are set for them.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

21. The majority of pupils are enthusiastic about school and have a positive attitude towards their work. This is particularly the case in lessons that involve practical activities, such as art, music, science, design technology and physical education, where pupils work purposefully, concentrate well, and persevere with lengthy tasks. In other subjects pupils respond well when the teaching is interesting and involves a variety of methods and activities. Pupils at all levels of attainment react well to a challenge, take a pride in their work and look for ways to improve. Those with special educational needs can concentrate and progress well if sufficient support materials are provided and the lesson is conducted at an appropriate pace. In the small minority of lessons where the pace is slow or expectations not high, pupils' concentration spans are shorter and conversation levels tend to rise, restricting learning. Where the teacher does not challenge pupils with an interesting range of activities, they are much less motivated to work independently and less progress is made. This is occasionally true of higher attaining pupils as well as, more frequently, those in lower sets.
22. Behaviour in lessons is usually good-humoured and co-operative, with mutual respect between teachers and pupils creating a pleasant and productive atmosphere. In a small number of classes some immature and silly behaviour was observed, often related to less challenging lessons. Pupils move around the school in an orderly and purposeful way between classes, despite the narrow corridors and stairways, which can become extremely crowded. Most are polite and friendly to adults. In the whole school assembly observed during the inspection week, pupils listened attentively and responded sensitively to readings on the theme of Remembrance Day.
23. A small minority, mainly boys, has serious behaviour problems that the school is successfully tackling in a variety of ways. There are a few low attaining sets in Key Stage 4, with a large proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or who are becoming disaffected with school, where poor behaviour can affect learning. Serious offences such as violent or abusive behaviour result in exclusion. Last year there were 60 fixed period exclusions and one permanent exclusion, involving 43 pupils. This is in line with most schools of this size. The majority were excluded only once. This year the new Social Inclusion Centre forms a source of new support for pupils whose behaviour leaves them in danger of exclusion.
24. By the time they reach the sixth form, students are mature, self-confident and able to take responsibility for their own work. Their attendance in lessons is closely monitored, but the school gives them the opportunity to plan their own study time without supervision. Most students have developed good independent learning skills, which will prepare them well for higher education. In Key Stages 3 and 4, pupils work independently when required to do so, but in many subjects the opportunities are still limited. The library is not widely used as a resource centre, and a lack of access to computers is restricting the use of the Internet as a research tool.
25. Relationships between staff and pupils in most classes are strong and based on mutual respect. This has made a significant contribution to improved results in some departments. Pupils also help and support each other in class and enjoy working productively in small groups, for example in drama and music. Many take part in a range of extra-curricular activities, and there is a strong commitment to reaching high standards in sport and in music and drama performances. The year councils are well supported and meet regularly, and pupils have been involved in drafting the code of conduct. Half the present Year 12 students are involved in helping younger pupils in maths and paired reading. The school pantomime, which involves pupils from all year groups, has been written and produced this year by sixth form students.
26. The strength of relationships in the school means there is little bullying. Pupils will often help each other and encourage anyone who might be bullied to seek support from staff. Most understand the impact of their actions on others and know that they are accountable for their own behaviour. In practical lessons, such as science and design and technology, where potentially dangerous chemicals or machinery are in use, pupils show that they are aware of

safety issues and act responsibly. In religious education, and in sixth form philosophy classes, there is a growing ability to reflect on and discuss their own values and beliefs and to be aware that others may differ. In other subjects, particularly in Key Stages 3 and 4, pupils are often not given enough opportunities to engage in discussion and explore a range of views and beliefs.

27. Attendance in Years 8 to 11 last year averaged 90.2%, in line with the national average for secondary schools. This has improved over the last three years. In September and October of this year the attendance rate has remained close to 90%. However, a small number of very poor attenders, some of whom are school refusers, is keeping attendance for Year 11 at around 88%. Lower down the school, attendance rates are often brought down by family holidays taken during term. The current lack of a permanently assigned educational social worker is restricting the school's attempts to raise attendance further. Punctuality in the mornings is closely monitored and is improving, and punctuality to classes during the school day is good.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

28. At the time of the last inspection, teaching was judged to be at least satisfactory in nearly 90% of lessons, good or better in 40%, and very good in a minority of lessons. Since then, there has been substantial progress. In this inspection, teaching was judged to be at least satisfactory in 96 % of lessons observed, good or better in 75%, and very good in just under a third. It continues to be very good overall in the sixth form, and it was judged to be good overall in most subject areas. In geography it was very good in all key stages, but in English, although very good in the sixth form, it was just satisfactory in Key Stages 3 and 4.
29. In the few lessons with major shortcomings, it was often the case that teachers were teaching outside their area of specialism or that the class was taken by a temporary teacher. Sometimes the lesson lacked pace or challenge and work was not well matched to the needs of the pupils in that class
30. The very best teaching is characterised by good planning, based around clear learning objectives which are then shared with pupils and students. Teachers have very good subject knowledge. There is particularly skilful management of both pupils and resources, and teachers make very effective use of a variety of teaching techniques, including exposition, demonstration, and questioning of pupils.
31. For example, a Year 9 history class moved swiftly from a discussion on the causes of the First World War to examine a picture of trench warfare and a video extract of "All Quiet on the Western Front". Pupils of all abilities were actively and enthusiastically involved in discussion in order to build up questions of enquiry and understand the value of different sources for an imminent project on the War.
32. In geography, a high attaining class of Year 8 pupils acquired knowledge of aspects of the complicated European agricultural policy through teacher led discussion and observing a video, and went on to debate the merits and disadvantages of the setting aside of land use. A lower attaining class was able to associate Italy with many of that country's products with which they are familiar such as pasta and Fiat cars. The teacher introduced these as keywords in line with the literacy strategy. Pupils went on to gain in confidence and knowledge as they located principal cities on maps and labelled diagrams accurately.
33. In weaker teaching, lessons lack pace and variety, and work is not well matched to the needs of the class. In social science, a lesson previously taught satisfactorily to a middle set, failed to offer sufficient challenge to a top set, and they became restless. More often, expectations of middle and lower attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenging, and sometimes this will give rise to boredom or chatter. In a Year 11 science class, the teacher failed to make any

connection between the rusting of metals and its relevance to real life, and as a result, pupils quickly lost interest.

34. In the newly opened Social Inclusion Centre the quality of teaching is very good. Pupils work with a very experienced and skilled teacher, who manages reluctance, truculence and disaffection well through a mixture of praise, rewards and encouragement to build self-esteem. She provides challenging tasks and shows a genuine desire to help the pupils understand and confront problems. Lessons in this room are not always peaceful and the amount of work produced is variable. It includes a very good piece of story writing, a discussion about a 'new' political party 'The Football Party'. It also includes one individual wandering about for a time just looking at others' work, but without disturbing the rest of the class, which for that pupil was an achievement in itself. The small successes already being achieved by some of the pupils with extreme difficulties are very significant and indicative of the potential value of the centre.
35. Pupils in the lowest sets in Key Stage 3 and 4 are taught very well in music and geography and satisfactorily in most other subjects. Teachers in science, mathematics and modern foreign languages in particular have good knowledge of the targets set for pupils on the register of special educational needs. In some classrooms key words are displayed prominently to help with spelling and meaning. Where teaching is good, there is a variety of activities which help pupils to concentrate, and reduces the loss of concentration which often happens because an hour is too long for some pupils. Writing is kept to an appropriate amount and discussion and subject based games activities are introduced. In one lesson on Romeo and Juliet, two groups of boys acted out the fight scene and despite their limited reading ability and the difficult language, were able to act convincingly and with understanding. Their interest was maintained by the use of a video to show professional actors playing a scene from the same play. In some lessons the range of special educational needs and the levels of attainment is so varied that despite small group numbers, a second adult is needed to help pupils progress. The very limited number of additional adults available is a disadvantage and limits considerably the achievements of some classes and individuals.
36. Through the school, the most effective learning occurs in lessons where pupils are actively involved through a well-chosen range of activities. Where tasks are carefully planned to allow this, pupils of all abilities respond well. They show they can work productively and develop their knowledge and skills effectively. This is particularly true of students in the sixth form. For example, in a religious studies lesson, students conducted a debate on the meaning of religious language without assistance from the teacher, chaired by one of their number, with contributions included from other students who had prepared good quality material beforehand. In the small number of lessons where this is not the case and teacher expectations are too low, pupils can quickly lose interest and concentration.
37. Homework is regularly set for most pupils, and the work provided helps to reinforce and extend what is learned in school, particularly for higher attaining pupils. However, the expectations of what pupils in middle and lower sets will achieve through their homework are sometimes lower than they should be, and work is not as consistently set in some subjects.
38. The school is good at providing appropriate opportunities for individual gifted and talented pupils, for example in music and sport. There are examples of pupils having very good results across a range of subjects in GCSE and at A-level. Tests of potential ability have recently been introduced in Year 8 which will assist the process of identifying the most able pupils, but the school has not yet developed an overall approach to teaching and extending their learning, beyond the setting arrangements.

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

39. The curriculum provided by the school in Years 8 and 9 is broad and balanced and covers all of the core and foundation subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. In addition to statutory requirements, which are all met at this key stage, an hour of drama is included every two weeks but this is not enough to do justice to the subject and reduces the

time available for teaching English. This leaves higher and middle attaining pupils with only 10% of curriculum time in English, which is low. A course of personal and social education is also made available for an hour each week, which is good.

40. The curriculum at Key Stage 4 includes English, mathematics, science, physical education, a modern foreign language and a technology subject for all. In addition, all pupils take a course in social science, which leads to a GCSE in sociology or a Certificate of Educational Achievement in life skills. Statutory requirements are not being met for information and communications technology, as no scheme of work or audit exists to show how each pupil is receiving their entitlement through their subjects. Statutory requirements for sex education, careers education, and preparation for the requirement in citizenship are met through the course in social science as well as in other activities. Whilst this course includes topics on sex education and a few on careers education, the provision overall is unsatisfactory in the amount of time given to these topics. The way they are approached tends to be driven by what is needed for the sociology syllabus, rather than covering these topics in their own right. The requirements of the Agreed Syllabus for religious education have also been planned in part into the scheme of work for social science, but the delivery is dependent upon the individual teacher. The range of topics covered does not include all those in the syllabus and there is insufficient time available to cover the required topics in enough depth. This does not meet statutory requirements.
41. Pupils then select a further two options, drawn from one or more humanities subjects, a second modern foreign language, art, music, drama, and examination courses in religious studies, physical education, child development or information and communications technology. As an alternative to all these optional subjects, pupils can take a GNVQ (Part 1) course at intermediate level in leisure and tourism. The take up of optional courses is very uneven. There were insufficient pupils choosing courses in the second modern foreign languages, in music and in leisure and tourism to justify them being run. Most pupils are entered for ten subjects at GCSE or a mixture of GCSEs and Certificates of Educational Achievement.
42. Grouping is by prior attainment, across the curriculum. Years 8 and 9 are divided into two equal populations, which are then set into teaching groups by ability. But in effect they are placed in the same set for all subjects in Year 8. This rigid approach also affects curriculum planning. In languages, only the top two sets have access to studying two languages and only these pupils are allowed to choose two languages in Key Stage 4. The lower sets also only have 8% of time for a single language, which is low. Such fine grouping tends to result in staff not recognising the range of abilities within the groups. It is recognised that there are children who are misplaced or who tend to perform better after time, and yet little flexibility exists to move sets during the year, although sets are regrouped at the beginning of Year 9 for English, mathematics, science, physical education and design and technology. Overall, grouping arrangements are unsatisfactory in terms of social inclusion, and limit equality of access. This directly affects the standards achieved by middle and lower attaining pupils.
43. The AS-level offering in Year 12 is taken up well. Twenty subjects are run at the school, many with relatively large group sizes. The range is further extended through links with other schools and the further education college. But, although broad, the curriculum is strongly biased towards the advanced study of academic subjects and so does not provide sufficiently for the wide range of potential students who may wish to enter post-16 education.
44. All students in the sixth form attend a compulsory hour every two weeks entitled 'Conference', which provides for some of their general education and for statutory religious education. There are six sessions on philosophy and ethics taught by the head of religious studies, as well as other topics of moral and social issues. These meet the requirement of the Agreed Syllabus, but there is insufficient time available overall to provide a sufficiently broad programme of general education.

45. Strategies for teaching the basic skills of literacy are satisfactory. The school has agreed a policy for the teaching of literacy, which is published in the staff handbook and has appointed a literacy co-ordinator. Most subjects have subject specific vocabulary lists on display and in pupils' books, and sets of sentence patterns have been agreed.
46. Strategies for teaching the skills of numeracy across the school are not yet in place. The school plans to develop the numeracy strategy during this school year. A numeracy coordinator will shortly be identified.
47. Extra-curricular provision is good. A wide range of sporting and other clubs are available, mainly at lunchtime but also after school. These are supervised by a wide group of the staff. The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme is promoted vigorously, and twelve pupils have this year completed either bronze or silver awards. The school hopes that up to seven may go on to gold awards. The activities week, held during the summer term, contributes significantly to the experience of pupils beyond the classroom; a range of visits, residential experiences and sporting, musical and other activities are made available. An attractive display of last year's week adorned the front corridor of the school during the inspection.
48. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development overall is satisfactory, although provision for spiritual development is unsatisfactory. Religious education in Years 8 and 9 makes a valuable contribution to spiritual development, but the syllabus is more directed towards philosophy and ethics than towards spirituality. There is insufficient material of a spiritual nature in the social science course in Years 10 and 11.
49. Assemblies are often valuable corporate occasions but they are rarely spiritual experiences, and they make little attempt to meet the requirement for a collective act of worship. Year assemblies also lack the quality of planning, delivery and ambience to make them as effective as should be. However a whole school assembly on the theme of remembrance was a moving and spiritual occasion, assisted by readings given by pupils and the haunting quality of the last post, played on a bugle by a pupil, although even here an explicitly religious perspective was absent. Tutors make some use of the 'thought for the day' which is supplied school wide on a weekly theme, and occasionally this is successfully woven into their whole approach, but opportunities for quiet reflection are rare and opportunities for exploring the spiritual are frequently passed over. There was little evidence of spiritual development across the curriculum except for some lessons in English and drama, which dealt well with sensitive issues related to feelings, relationships and prejudice.
50. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is good. The strong code of behaviour contributes to this, as do the good relationships forged by teachers with pupils and the way they provide good role models. A clear set of expectations is contained in the staff handbook and a code of conduct is displayed in every classroom. The school promotes a sense of community and pupils decide upon a local, a national and an international charity to support each school year. Where pupils are given opportunities to work collaboratively in groups they use these well. Opportunities to explore moral issues within the curriculum are used, for instance in relation to the holocaust in history, and in aspects of science. But there is no overall planned approach across the curriculum to any of these areas.
51. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils' awareness of their own culture is well served by work in subjects and visits which are arranged out of school to France and Germany and to theatres and art galleries. However, whilst awareness of other cultures is raised in a number of subjects, including art, music, history, geography, and religious education, a systematic approach to education for a multicultural society, which is needed in this monocultural school, is missing.
52. Provision for personal and social education is satisfactory overall. It is better in Years 8 and 9, where an hour a week is dedicated to a well-planned course. The teaching seen in the lessons in this key stage was usually good and sometimes very good. The use of role play, for example, to illustrate issues such as adolescence and bullying enabled pupils to talk openly about bullying incidents and to draw out their own experience of behaviours which improve or worsen conflict situations. Where teaching was weaker, the pace was slow, with

few resources were used beyond the whiteboard, and the potential attainment of pupils was not recognised, resulting in pupils feeling bored and engaging in distracting behaviour.

53. Personal and social education in Years 10 and 11 is integrated into the social science course, which follows the syllabus either for GCSE sociology or for the Certificate of Educational Achievement in life skills. The teaching seen in this key stage was always satisfactory and sometimes good or very good. The use of interesting material, for example, of video extracts about drugs and of debates about social justice, enables pupils to engage with the lesson and to learn well through, for example, having to argue for something they do not personally believe in. Weaknesses in teaching involved insufficient material being prepared for the whole lesson, poor timing and lack of follow up of topics that were of interest to pupils.
54. A small group of pupils in Years 10 and 11 follow a well-planned course related to the world of work has been provided for pupils in Key Stage 4 for whom a full academic course is not suitable, which involves them being disapplied from aspects of the statutory curriculum, mainly modern foreign languages and science. In its second year, it is effectively combining a one week experience of work each term, along with a day each week of release to a local college to learn practical skills, and continuing GCSE studies in school. Pupils have responded positively to the course and attend well. It is well supported by parents.
55. Careers education is satisfactory. There is an Industry Day for Year 9 pupils and a Young Enterprise group for sixth form students operates after school. Work experience is provided for all pupils in Year 10 during June and July, when Years 8 and 9 are on activities week. Careers guidance is provided by the local service and there is a careers library, accessible at breaks and lunchtimes, where older pupils can work on literature and computer based careers resources.
56. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is unsatisfactory. Whilst there are occasional visitors into school, there is insufficient of a planned approach to enable business and the community to contribute to the curriculum. The school has constructive relationships with partner institutions. Increased effort is now going into curriculum liaison with the middle schools that feed Year 8, but the discontinuity that does exist in many subjects does hinder pupils' progress. There are good partnership relations with the local college and with another local school, with whom the sixth form provision is jointly run through a management committee.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

57. Pupils at Hellesdon High School are cared for very well, and staff make great efforts to ensure that the environment is safe and secure. A high level of individual support is offered, particularly to those pupils who may be in danger of dropping out of education or of being excluded from school. An extensive pastoral team draws on a range of external agencies to help pupils, including a visiting behaviour support teacher and local family therapy units. The formation this term of the Social Inclusion Centre allows extensive one-to-one support for pupils who are becoming disaffected with their work and for those who require gradual re-integration back into school after prolonged absence. A number of pupils with personal problems also receive very effective support from a member of the teaching staff who has taken on the role of school counsellor. This level of pastoral support enables the school to provide well-targeted help to pupils who are struggling because of low attainment, poor attendance or family problems.
58. Pupils with special educational needs are well cared for, both personally and academically, and they make satisfactory progress in all key stages. Those with statements have appropriate individual education programmes that are available to all teaching staff. However, not all targets are yet specific enough to provide guidance to subject teachers on how best to support those pupils.
59. The school has recently changed its system for providing individual education plans and targets for pupils with special educational needs. The system used previously is appropriate

and manageable for the pupils with statements but is time consuming for the large numbers involved. The new system is manageable and depends on subject teachers using the basic information and targets as starting points for deciding on subject based targets for individual pupils in their classes. This process is just beginning, but teachers are aware of pupils' needs and try to provide for them. The limiting factor in many lessons is not teachers' willingness but the wide range of need, which cannot always be met by one person.

60. Staff continually promote the importance of good behaviour and breaches of discipline are well-monitored and consistently dealt with. Pupils understand what standard of behaviour is expected of them. A range of strategies is used to deal with the small minority – mainly boys – who have severe behavioural problems, including the appropriate use of individual pastoral support programmes, work-related learning and part-time attendance at the local Pupil Referral Unit. An effective support system is in place to help teachers deal with disruptive incidents in the classroom. Pastoral staff keep careful track of all pupils exhibiting poor behaviour, and monitor patterns over time in order to provide the best possible support. Attendance of individual pupils in Years 8 to 11 is regularly monitored by heads of year.
61. Teachers' class management is mostly good, and poor behaviour, where it occurs, is often due to a lack of practical activity in the lesson, leading to low concentration levels. Setting arrangements, which group together low attaining pupils and those with behavioural difficulties, may also contribute to these problems. However, in some lessons behaviour is sometimes over-controlled, restricting the variety of teaching methods and restricting pupils' ability to take the initiative in their own learning.
62. Procedures for child protection are tight and effective. Staff are well-trained in how to deal with disclosures of abuse and the guidance in the staff handbook is clear and comprehensive. Links with social services are mostly satisfactory although there have been occasions when the school has not been informed when a pupil was on the "at risk" register. Children who have been abused or about whom there is a concern are well looked after and supported, particularly when court proceedings are involved. The school is also aware of the needs of looked-after children, and takes pains to build good contacts with all the adults involved in such pupils' care.
63. Good progress has also been made in reducing the incidence of bullying. The anti-bullying policy is widely displayed and promoted through assemblies and the personal and social education programme. Pupils are also given strategies to help them deal with bullying if it occurs. Threatening or violent behaviour normally results in a period of exclusion. Staff presence around the school reduces the possibility of bullying at breaks and lunchtimes, and gives younger pupils a feeling of security.
64. Health and safety is meticulously monitored, and risk assessment is carried out annually in all parts of the school. Departments such as science, design technology and physical education ensure that pupils respect safety measures during practical work, and the school site is regularly checked for potential problems. Support staff undertake inspections of electrical equipment. Procedures for reporting and recording accidents are satisfactory, and pupils who are ill or injured are well looked after. Staff are aware of pupils who have specific medical needs, such as diabetes or epilepsy, and know how to deal with emergencies when they arise.
65. Heads of year keep track of pupils' academic progress through a series of termly reviews and assessments, which are also made available to parents. In Key Stage 4 and the sixth form, target minimum grades are set from previous examination results and progress monitored against these targets. Pupils identified as under-achieving or having difficulties with their work are set targets for improvement and closely monitored. An academic review day for Years 10 and 11 gives parents and pupils individual time with tutors to discuss progress so far and set focused, achievable targets to help them improve their grades. In Key Stage 3 pupils are graded good, satisfactory or poor in each subject, with the grade reflecting attainment in relation to their ability range. This is less satisfactory than the process in Key Stage 4 since not all staff understand clearly the criteria for allocating grades and heads of department do

not regularly monitor grades to ensure that they accurately reflect pupils' achievement. In both key stages the role that form tutors play in monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress has not yet been fully developed.

66. The school is about to review its long-standing assessment policy, which charges individual departments with setting up their own procedures to meet statutory regulations and record pupils' progress and attainment, but without specific guidelines for doing this. There is currently a wide range of practice across departments. Some, such as modern languages, English, history, geography and physical education, have effective policies in place and implement them well. In these areas pupils are assessed regularly against National Curriculum levels and are set targets to improve their work. However, in some areas such as music and information and communications technology, assessment of pupils' academic performance is weak. It does not give a clear view of how well they are doing or what they need to do to improve. The quality of marking and day-to-day feedback to pupils also varies significantly between, and sometimes within, departments. Constructive self-assessment by pupils is not widespread or well-developed. Although teachers use National Curriculum levels, these are not commonly shared with pupils or used as a means of helping them improve.
67. The school systematically analyses all its external examination results and compares performance at individual and subject group level with predicted results. However, the lack of dependable data on attainment at entry in Year 8 has limited the usefulness of this analysis at Key Stage 3. The introduction this year of cognitive ability tests for the new intake will give the school a consistent baseline from which to work in the future. Data on how well pupils achieve is not used widely or effectively in planning the school's curriculum or in evaluating teaching and learning. The arrangements by which pupils are placed into ability groups, or sets, are not always flexible enough to allow easy movement between classes, particularly in Key Stage 3. More consistent, ongoing assessment is needed to ensure that the setting accurately reflects pupils' attainment in each subject.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

68. The school enjoys a substantial level of support from parents who appreciate that it promotes good behaviour and helps pupils develop successfully into mature adults. The reputation of the school locally is reflected in the growing number of applications for entry, which have left it oversubscribed. A flourishing Friends Association raises substantial sums of money for the school each year, and has made a significant contribution to building up the school's resources. All parents receive monthly newsletters that keep them abreast of events in the school.
69. The school recognises the important role that parents can play in helping children progress, and it is expanding opportunities for them to be involved. The Academic Review Days for Year 10 and 11 pupils are attended by more than 90% of parents. Parents of all year groups receive regular interim reports on progress and current attainment in addition to the end-of-year annual report. Written reports are informative and well constructed. They give parents useful information on what topics their child has covered, what their attainment is in relation to National Curriculum levels or in terms of GCSE grades, and details their strengths and weakness in each subject. Teachers write as if they know each child well and give constructive suggestions about how to progress. Some departments also recognise the importance of involving parents in their children's work. For example, the modern language department's homework policy refers to the support which parents can give with homework and recognises that they have an integral role in helping children organise their work in Key Stage 4 so that coursework is completed on time.
70. Teachers also attempt to involve parents throughout the year whenever children have problems with their work or behaviour. Parents are an integral part of pastoral support programmes, have a role in helping children meet their targets, and are present at review meetings. There is a good flow of information to parents of pupils with special educational needs, with regular reviews of progress to which parents are invited.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

71. The headteacher, recently in post at the time of the last inspection, gives a strong focus to the work of the school. He maintains a strong visible presence around the school and has a clear view of priorities. There is a firm commitment to improvement. The school has a clear ethos of hard work, good behaviour, consideration for others, and commitment to improvement, which is strongly supported by staff and parents. The school's aims, though broadly drawn, do reflect and guide its work.
72. The head gives clear leadership in maintaining the ethos of the school and is well supported by his senior staff. The deputy headteachers and the wider senior management team now work together much more closely and effectively than at the time of the last inspection. Effective links from senior managers to subject departments have been established.
73. Subject departments are in the main well led and efficiently administered. But expectations of the role do vary. There is a clear and developing focus on improvement, which is beginning to have an effect in most departments. Since the last inspection, progress has been made in establishing greater consistency in implementing school policies. However, there is a need to strengthen this still further, most notably in the area of assessment policy. Heads of departments are being encouraged to observe lessons, using agreed guidelines and written feedback. As yet, apart from history and geography, few subjects have developed very active monitoring systems and further work is needed here.
74. The membership of the governing body has changed substantially this term. The new governing body is committed, and very supportive of the school. The members represent a good range of expertise and experience. There is an effective committee structure in place. Governors have been fully involved in key strategic decisions faced by the school, particularly over finance. They are becoming more effective at holding the school to account, and are developing their responsibilities for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of school management and, through this, the quality of pupils' work. They fulfil most of their statutory responsibilities, but there are some omissions in the provision of religious education and collective worship.
75. There is a clear process of school development planning involving management, staff and governors. The development plan identifies a limited number of appropriate whole-school priorities. It takes a three-year view and is linked to an analysis of the school's present situation. The criteria set against which the success of the plan will be judged are not always sufficiently specific and measurable to be helpful.
76. The day-to day financial administration by the bursar is very efficient and controls are good. The specific grant is administered efficiently. There is an effective bidding process for development funding for subject departments closely related to whole school priorities, though the level of funding required is not always shown. Governors are more critically analysing budget proposals.
77. However, the overall quality of financial planning in the school is not satisfactory. In its desire to expand its educational provision and improve standards, especially in information and communications technology, the school has taken on a budget deficit of £172,000, which has been approved by the LEA. A three year plan has been agreed which will reduce the deficit whilst protecting the education of current pupils. Its success depends on maintaining pupil numbers at the current levels, which looks feasible for the main school. For the sixth form it is based on reasonable but less reliable estimates, as shown by the late and unexpected fall in this year's intake, which is causing further funding difficulty.
78. Neither the governors nor the senior management have fully applied the principles of best value to the schools' financial arrangements. Departmental expenditure is inadequately evaluated for its effectiveness in raising standards, although many departments receive a budget which is more generous than that often found in similar schools. There are significant examples of inefficiencies. On average, staff teach for 75.7% of a full timetable. This is a little

below the average for similar schools, but more importantly the school has not closely analysed this figure or looked critically at the way this time is used. There are not enough learning support assistants in the classrooms, despite an above average budget for special educational needs. The school has proposals to address the low ratio of computers to pupils, which is nearly half the national average, but limited access to those that are available is also hindering the development of information and communications technology through other subjects.

79. The library is also under-used as a resource, and stock and annual losses are not monitored closely enough. There is no full-time librarian and the development of the library as a whole school resource centre is at present limited. The range of fiction is adequate, but the restrictions on staffing mean that pupils do not regularly borrow books to read. The low use of the library is limiting the effectiveness of the school's drive to improve literacy. Books relating to most subject areas are in short supply and there is no tradition of departments using the library as a resource for developing pupils' work.
80. The staff are well experienced, with nearly half having taught for at least 20 years. A fifth of them having taught that length of time in the school. Thirteen teachers have less than five years experience. There is a small amount of non-specialist teaching in art and drama. The teaching of a number of classes is shared between more than one teacher. Both do have some effect on standards in the subjects affected. Long-term absences have also disrupted learning in modern foreign languages and English.
81. There are good procedures for the induction of newly qualified teachers and students in initial teacher training, organised by a senior member of staff. They include appropriate teaching loads, close mentoring by heads of department, regular classroom observation and the appropriate written feedback. The arrangements work well. There are also effective mentoring arrangements for newly appointed staff, including heads of department.
82. Other procedures for the support and professional development of staff in general are satisfactory. Provision for in-service training is well organised by a senior member of staff with a staff committee monitoring and approving all requests for training. Training needs are linked closely to the school's development plan and training courses are evaluated afterwards. The school has made a commitment to apply for the Investors in People award. The school is preparing well for the introduction of performance management.
83. Much school-based training has been organised on issues raised in the last inspection, such as raising achievement. There are good examples of effective training in history, geography and science. The New Opportunities Funding has been used to train 22 staff in information and communications technology. However, staff training has been insufficient in modern foreign languages, and the non-specialists in art and drama are in need of more training. In general, there is not enough opportunity for all staff to share good practice, both within the school and more widely.
84. Several specialist teachers have expertise in both learning and behavioural difficulties; most are heavily committed in teaching the pupils with special educational needs and have little time to share ideas, guide colleagues or monitor progress. Monitoring with a focus on evaluating the effectiveness of departmental and individual planning for pupils on the register of special educational needs is not yet in place. Consequently the expertise within the learning support department and in some subject departments, is not yet being used fully to raise the quality of teaching for these pupils.
85. The match between the demands of the curriculum and the number of educational support staff is not satisfactory. The five learning support staff, one in the special needs unit and four classroom assistants for special educational needs, are experienced, skilful and well qualified. But the 140 hours provided each week is well below the national average for the size of school. This is having a significant effect on the learning of pupils with special educational needs in the classroom. Moreover these staff have a very wide range of responsibilities, for example managing the computerised learning work, first aid provision for the whole school, physiotherapy for individual pupils, administrative tasks and support for the re-integration of

pupils from the new support centre into classes. This means that there is little time for them to be in the classroom. They are also rarely able to meet as a group, although short meetings are now being chaired by the special needs co-ordinator. As a result their valuable knowledge is not shared sufficiently across departments and the school, except informally when time and opportunity allows.

86. The provision of technician support is satisfactory. It is good in information and communications technology, art and design and design technology, but just adequate in science where there are large groups in A-level science and lessons require much preparation. The school is well served by its administrative, clerical and site staff, who make an important contribution to its smooth running and appearance. Spending on these areas is generous and above average compared with similar schools.
87. The school occupies a spacious and well-maintained site that provides a pleasant environment for pupils and staff. The buildings and surroundings are clean and free of litter and graffiti. Classroom space in most departments is adequate for class sizes, and the quality of accommodation in the new E-block is particularly good. However, accommodation in the art department is barely satisfactory, with the lack of space restricting the scale of routine work which can be attempted. There is no space here dedicated to sixth form students, which limits their ability to work independently on practical projects. In physical education pupils have access to large outdoor playing fields, but in wet weather indoor facilities are inadequate to accommodate all classes. Display around the school and in classrooms is of a high quality and is designed both to help pupils learn and to show their best pieces of work.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

88. In order to build on the progress the school has made, the senior managers and governors should:

- (1) Focus strongly at key stages 3 and 4 on improving the attainment and progress of pupils who are middle or lower attainers, especially in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, by:
 - planning greater challenge and relevance in lessons for these groups
(paragraphs 11-12, 21-22, 29, 33, 36, 103, 120-121, 135, 137, 151, 182)
 - introducing strategies to reduce the particular underachievement of boys in English in both key stages, and girls in mathematics at Key Stage 4.
(paragraphs 11, 23, 99, 116, 206-7)
 - reducing the number of classes where teaching is split between two teachers.
(paragraphs 80, 106)
 - increasing provision for and making better use of information and communications technology to support learning.
(paragraphs 13, 40, 78, 129, 151, 179, 195, 217)
 - providing more in-class adult support for pupils with special educational needs.
(paragraphs 35, 59, 84-85, 162)
 - making more effective use of the library.
(paragraphs 24, 79, 108)
 - improving the nature and regularity of homework for these pupils.
(paragraph 37, 103, 197)

- (2) Raise significantly both pupils' and teachers' expectations of what they can achieve, by:
 - reviewing the present arrangements for setting to create less rigidity and greater flexibility, removing or reducing the inequalities arising from the present operation, and basing organisation and teaching on more secure initial assessment in each subject, particularly in year 8.
(paragraphs 1, 38, 42, 59, 67, 132)
 - balancing the current strong emphasis on controlling behaviour with greater expectation that pupils can and will succeed themselves, particularly through encouraging greater use of praise and reward, better use of year assemblies, and more attention to the development of speaking and listening skills.
(paragraphs 26, 49, 61, 167)
 - taking further steps to encourage good attendance throughout the school, but especially in Y11.
(paragraphs 27, 101)
 - monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning more systematically, and providing more opportunity for all staff to share good practice, internally and externally.
(paragraphs 73, 83, 128, 138)

- (3) Review the curriculum so as to focus more clearly on the needs of all pupils, and in particular to:
- achieve a more balanced allocation of time for some subjects and meet statutory requirements in religious education and information and communications technology.
(paragraphs 39-40, 39, 43-44, 52, 190, 212)
 - plan more systematically and coherently to provide opportunities for pupils' spiritual and cultural development. *(paragraphs 48-51, 56, 139, 211)*
 - include arrangements to ensure learning in Year 8 builds more closely on what pupils learn and achieve in year 7, particularly in the core subjects and modern foreign languages. *(paragraphs 1, 56, 135, 174, 185, 190, 193)*
- (4) Review the policy and approach to assessment, so as to:
- ensure a coherent and consistent approach across all departments.
(paragraphs 67, 183, 198, 212)
 - make further use of assessment data to inform individual target setting for subjects, pupils and teachers.
(paragraphs 65-67, 141, 155)
 - improve marking in such a way as to let pupils know more consistently and in more detail how they can improve their work.
(paragraphs 105, 141, 145, 189)
 - develop the role of form tutors to take greater responsibility for monitoring pupils' academic progress.
(paragraph 65)
- (5) Improve the quality of financial planning by:
- carrying out a baseline review of all current expenditure.
 - monitoring and evaluating the cost-effectiveness of future spending decisions.
(paragraphs 77-79)

THE SIXTH FORM

89. A joint sixth form centre is run with another local 12 -16 school. There is a dedicated sixth form centre on the Hellesdon site. Most lessons take place there but some are taught at one of the other partner schools or the college. A small number of teachers from the 12 -16 partner school come to Hellesdon to teach courses.
90. The philosophy is that of an open sixth form, which aims to meet the needs of most students for post-16 education. However, in practice, the curriculum is heavily weighted towards AS and A-level courses, with only a few students taking either intermediate or advanced GNVQs. Consequently, although 75 per cent of students in Year 11 in 1999-2000 remained in school or further education, only 56 per cent enrolled at this sixth form centre.
91. The sixth form is unusual locally in that it runs an extended day from 7.45 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. and does not require students to stay in school all day; if they are not being taught they can sign out and go home. Similarly, there is only one registration a week for both Year 12 and Year 13. An individual tutor period is arranged for all students during the timetabled week. The tutoring arrangements allow for study periods in the library to be supervised. In general, these arrangements appear to work well and students are satisfied with them, but the lack of a routine daily registration leads to lateness and absence from the weekly registration, which was observed during the inspection week.
92. Students receive good individual guidance in choosing their programme of courses. A useful sixth form information evening is held for the parents and students in Year 11 at Hellesdon and from other schools. This was well attended and gave general information on life in the sixth form as well as opportunity for students and their parents to visit attractive stalls for each subject area where they could talk to staff and present students and collect literature relevant to the courses.
93. The school operates a prior attainment requirement of 5.5 or more points at GCSE, with a grade B or better in certain subjects, in admitting students to four AS courses in Year 12 under the new Curriculum 2000 arrangements. Less is required of students joining the advanced GNVQ courses or taking individual AS-level subjects with them. In the current Year 12, 21 students came from the partner school, 100 students came from Hellesdon, two from other schools and eight students rejoined Year 12 after completing an intermediate GNVQ course in Year 12 in the previous year. The school estimates that between 10% to 20% students on two year courses do not continue their studies from Year 12 into Year 13.
94. The sixth form curriculum is wide-ranging in the programme offered at A and AS-level. The AS-level offering in Year 12 is taken up well. 20 subjects are run at the school, many with relatively large group sizes. The range is further extended through links with other schools and the further education college to provide for minority subjects requested by small numbers of students. Most students are studying 4 AS subjects in Year 12 in line with the recommendations of Curriculum 2000. A good-sized group of students study psychology and English for GCSE as part of the adult education centre programme. Partly because of this, there is now an extended day in the sixth form, with classes being run from 7.45am to 5.15pm and during the school lunchtime.
95. But provision and take-up of vocational courses has been limited. Only leisure and tourism of the intermediate GNVQ courses produced enough students to run a group and there are groups only in advanced GNVQ business and travel and tourism. So, although broad, the curriculum is strongly biased towards the advanced study of academic subjects, and, as a result, does not provide sufficiently for the wide range of potential students who may wish to enter post-16 education.
96. The quite complex partnership arrangements that have been made contribute to the fact that the cost of the sixth form does not act as a drain on the resourcing of other parts of the school.
97. The teaching in the sixth form is good in nine out of ten lessons, and in just under half it is very good. Students have very good attitudes to their studies. They make good progress in all

subjects and very good progress in science, history, geography, design and technology, mathematics, English, and advanced GNVQ business studies.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	202
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	132

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	29	44	21	4	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y8 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	894	221
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	95	4

Special educational needs	Y8– Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	52	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	322	19

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	27
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	52

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	9.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.7

National comparative data	7.9
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National comparative data	1.1
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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	101	103	204

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	34	53	49
	Girls	59	63	58
	Total	93	116	107
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	46 (65)	57 (59)	52 (61)
	National	63 (65)	62 (60)	55 (56)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	20 (38)	30 (34)	21 (30)
	National	28 (35)	38 (36)	23 (27)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	43	49	41
	Girls	61	62	51
	Total	104	111	92
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	51 (67)	54 (57)	45 (55)
	National	64 (61)	64 (62)	60 (61)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	26 (39)	30 (33)	18 (24)
	National	31 (30)	37 (37)	28 (30)

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	95	103	198

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	32	85	92
	Girls	50	90	98
	Total	82	175	190
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	41 (39)	88 (84)	96 (94)
	National	46 (45)	91 (90)	95 (94)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	36 (35)
	National	37.8 (36.8)

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

Vocational qualifications	Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	9
	National	N/a

Attainment at the end of the sixth form

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	49	35	84

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	15.2	17.2	15.9 (15.7)	3.0	4.2	3.5 (2.7)
National	17.7	18.1	17.9 (17.6)	2.7	2.8	2.8 (2.7)

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	26	85
	National		N/a

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	1102
Any other minority ethnic group	2

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	60	1
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y8 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	66.96
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.6:1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y8 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	308

Deployment of teachers: Y8 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	75.7%
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Average teaching group size: Y8 – Y13

Key Stage 3	23.11
Key Stage 4	21.36

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	2,810,048
Total expenditure	2,967,004
Expenditure per pupil	2717
Balance brought forward from previous year	18,030
Balance carried forward to next year	(138,926)

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	880
Number of questionnaires returned	202

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	33	57	7	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	33	52	1	0	11
Behaviour in the school is good.	24	51	7	1	15
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	23	59	10	3	4
The teaching is good.	30	56	0	0	13
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	23	48	14	1	12
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	43	44	7	1	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	57	41	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	23	48	12	3	13
The school is well led and managed.	30	46	7	0	16
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	33	50	7	1	8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	25	45	9	2	19

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

ENGLISH

98. There is a wide range in the standards of pupils' English when they join the school in Year 8, with significant variation also evident from year to year. The higher attainers, who constitute between a third and a half of pupils in each intake, are good readers; they have a wide range of language structures and vocabulary at their disposal, which they use well in their speaking and their writing. However, there is a substantial number, in some years almost two thirds of the year group, whose skills are severely limited. For these pupils, reading levels are well below average for their age, and they have great difficulties in writing.
99. Over the last four years the school's results in the national English tests for 14-year-olds have been below national averages and well below average for pupils in similar schools, although results for higher attainers are close to the average for similar pupils nationally. Work seen in Years 8 and 9 during the inspection confirms these results. Pupils in the higher sets are producing writing that is often impressive; they have made good progress during their time in the school. Pupils in the lower sets present a different picture. Reading, especially that of the boys, lacks fluency and, although the weakest readers are given time to work on an intensive computer program, and to work individually with sixth form students, they are not making the progress they should. Writing is often poorly presented and is limited in range and quantity.
100. At the end of Key Stage 4 almost all pupils take the GCSE examination in English, and more than three quarters of them additionally take the English literature examination. In 1999 the results in English in grades A* - C were just below national averages, with a similar pattern to that in Key Stage 3: higher attainers doing very well – the number gaining A* grades well above national averages, while pupils in lower sets did not reach appropriate levels. Results in English literature were below national averages, even in the higher sets, and this has been the case for the last three years. English results in 2000 show improvement on those from previous years and are in line with national averages, but English literature remains below average. Pupils who take the Certificate of Educational Achievement do well.
101. Overall attainment in Years 10 and 11 is adversely affected by poor attendance in the lower sets. Some pupils with the lowest grades in the most recent examinations had missed coursework assignments, and in some cases, failed to appear for the written paper. Work seen during the inspection showed wide variation from set to set in the standard and the amount of written work. A high set in Year 10, in discussion on a section of their set novel, showed very good knowledge of the text. They supported the points they were making by detailed reference to other sections of the novel, showing clear perception of character and of the context and setting. Pupils in a middle set in Year 11 studying media showed similarly sound understanding of film technique and use of symbols. However, the folders of pupils in some other sets were sparse in content, and the quality of the writing was poor.
102. The GCE A-level course attracts large numbers of students. The results they obtain in the examination are consistently above national averages, as they were in the most recent entries in 1999 and 2000, when all passed the examination and well over half reached the two highest grades. The quality of work seen, both the classroom discussion and the written analysis of texts in students' essays, was impressive. The students speak and write with conviction and involvement, using appropriate style and expressing independent opinion that is well argued and clearly structured.
103. The department is large and has well-qualified teachers, with a useful mixture of long established teachers and those who have trained recently, with some of these bringing experience in previous careers. All but a very small proportion of the teaching seen on the

inspection was at least satisfactory and almost half was good or very good. But teachers do not always have high enough expectations of pupils in the middle or lower sets. This is evident in both key stages, though not in the sixth form. These pupils are not given the support they need to produce writing of quality and length. Pace in lessons is slow and they are given less homework than pupils in higher sets.

104. The strengths of the department are most evident in the teaching of higher attaining pupils, especially in the sixth form. But, at all levels, good use is made of the resources at the department's disposal: a full and varied book stock, and a generous allocation of TV and video equipment. Pupils and students experience a range of methods and activities including group discussion, film appreciation and oral presentation, as well as the study of language structures. There is stimulating visual display, particularly of pupils' work, in all classrooms and in the surrounding area used by the department.
105. Marking and assessment of pupils' work varies more than it should from teacher to teacher. At its best it is of very high quality, with clear, well-focused comment, often of some length, for all pieces of extended writing, but marking of the work of some groups is brief and lacking in detail.
106. There is an unacceptably large number of classes with more than one teacher of the subject. This inevitably creates some lack of consistency in the teaching and also causes problems for teachers in storing work and materials. Pupils have to identify with different rooms for their lessons and are less likely see their work displayed. Eight of the eleven classes whose teaching is split are in lower sets, three of them in their examination years. This aspect of school organisation adversely affects attainment.
107. The head of department has been in post for less than two years. During that time she has taken positive steps to improve the coherence of the delivery of the subject, through a strong scheme of work and through improvements in use of rooms and storage; for instance, she has organised the creation of a large resources and working area for the team. She does her best to cope effectively with a staff vacancy that has existed for nearly two terms
108. The strengths reported on in the last inspection still apply, but there has been little movement in two identified weaknesses – the limited use of information and communications technology, and the underachievement by some pupils, particularly in Key Stage 3. The use of the library also remains underdeveloped, as noted in the last report. The school only employs a part-time librarian, who is qualified, but whose role has not yet been developed sufficiently to enable the library to become a fully effective learning resource centre.

Literacy

109. Improvement in pupils' literacy is a key and necessary strand in the school development plan. All staff have taken part in training in order to establish coherent practice in literacy support for all pupils in all subjects. The literacy coordinator, who is a member of the English department, with special responsibility for the school library, works effectively with other departments, devising language patterns for writing and the use of specific vocabulary. All departments use display to promote subject-specific vocabulary. There has been particularly good progress in the use of sentence patterns in the history, science, and design and technology departments. In music there is strong and consistent focus on use of words, stressing the use in music of Italian and words derived from Latin. This work is helping to improve the standards of writing pupils achieve as well as contributing to achievement in those subjects.

Drama

110. In Years 8 and 9 drama is taught as part of the English course. Where possible, lessons take place in the drama studio. The newly appointed head of drama provides a scheme of work for her colleagues who have benefited from working alongside her in order to observe some lessons.
111. At Key Stage 4 drama is offered as an examination option. Examination results are generally well below national averages, as was the attainment of the class seen during the inspection. This is, at least in part, because recruitment to the course comes largely from lower attaining pupils, many of whom have learning difficulties and poor patterns of attendance.
112. Results of students taking theatre studies at GCE A-level have been consistently good for some years. The work of students at this stage seen during the inspection was of high quality.
113. The teaching of drama is good. It offers opportunities for exploring relationships and for developing the skills of working collaboratively. For instance, the class in Year 10 worked on family problems between parents and teenagers. Through the skilful teaching, pupils used role play techniques to analyse cause and effect in the breakdown of relationships and during the lesson improved their group organisation skills. In the sixth form work seen, students showed very good development in skills of negotiation as they worked on their group improvisation.
114. The department makes a good contribution to extra-curricular opportunities through school productions. There is regularly a whole school play in the autumn term. The current project has been written and cast by students in Year 13, who are also directing.

MATHEMATICS

115. Attainment in mathematics of fourteen year-olds, in national tests, has improved slightly over the last four years. The 1999 results for the school were nevertheless below the national average at level 5+ and at level 6+, and well below average in comparison with similar schools. The performance by boys and girls is very similar at all levels. In 2000, the proportion of pupils gaining level 5+ has improved further, but the proportion gaining the higher levels remains similar to the 1999 figures.
116. At the end of Key Stage 4 in 1999, the proportion of pupils achieving GCSE grades A*-C was 42.5%, below the national average. 96% of pupils gained an A*-G grade, which is in line with the national average. The results for 2000 show that a small rise in the percentage of pupils achieving the higher grades A* - C. However this is a much smaller rise than achieved in the other core subjects in the school. Despite a significant improvement by boys in achieving higher grades, a decline by girls adversely affected the overall improvement. Almost all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieved an A* - G grade in GCSE. Since the last inspection the proportion of pupils achieving these grades has not changed significantly and the four-year trend remains below the national trend.
117. At the end of year 13, the standards achieved by students in 1999 at GCE A-level A - B grades was 52.6%, above the national average. All students who entered A-level mathematics gained a pass grade in 1999. The figures for 2000, for both A - B and A - E grades, were down on those in 1999. There are substantially more boys than girls continuing with their mathematical studies at advanced level. The improvement achieved by sixth form students resitting their GCSE is generally disappointing.
118. Evidence from observation of lessons, discussion with pupils, and an examination of their work, during the inspection, indicates that achievement by pupils in Years 8 and 9 is below the national expectation. Mental recall, number patterns and other topics from working with number are done well, but further opportunities for the development of basic skills are needed in both years.

119. The higher attaining pupils achieve well. These pupils are challenged by their work and have a wide range of opportunities to apply their mathematics in different situations. For example, a group of Year 9 pupils quickly grasped the rules for working with negative numbers through a variety of contexts.
120. The attitude, behaviour and sustained concentration in lessons by middle and lower attaining pupils was variable across both Years 8 and 9. Where these are of a high level they make a very positive contribution to the standards and the satisfactory progress being achieved. Where attitudes and behaviour are less positive, it is because the lessons have only limited objectives for learning and pupils are not clear what is expected of them in terms of work or behaviour.
121. The work seen in lessons during the inspection indicated that overall attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is marginally below average. The high attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11 have very good knowledge, understanding and competence in the various aspects of the subject. In a top set pupils were calculating percentages in an investigation into the risk factors associated with car insurance premiums. They set out their work in a logical way, demonstrating confidence and understanding with dealing with complex topics. The quality of coursework for GCSE is of a particularly good standard. They are clearly challenged and stretched by their teachers, but this is less true of those in middle and lower sets.
122. The large proportion of pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress through Key Stage 4 in their confidence with basic mathematics, such as using and applying the four rules of number, working with decimals and measurement of length, capacity and time. But in some lessons in Year 11 the attitude and behaviour of a small number of pupils resulted in a loss of concentration and a sense of purpose for working.
123. Students in Year 12 demonstrated a sound understanding of the major aspects of the subject in lessons. Those working towards the Further Mathematics A-level were equally confident when considering the effect of friction on the motion of objects on an inclined plane. Others coped confidently with the differentiation of logarithmic and exponential functions. They displayed good learning habits and were capable of research and independent learning.
124. The quality of teaching in mathematics is always at least satisfactory, and in just under three-quarters of lessons it is good or very good. It is always good or better in the sixth form. This is an improvement on the last inspection report. All teachers have very good subject knowledge, which is effectively used through exposition, demonstration and questioning of pupils, but at present the considerable strengths and variety of teaching styles that exist amongst them are not widely shared and applied.
125. In the very good lessons, teachers plan carefully structured activities that move on at a brisk pace. Expectations are high and pupils make good gains in knowledge and understanding. Tasks are well matched to the range of ability within the teaching group. Teachers share the purpose of each lesson with these pupils at the start, and readily use responses from them to stimulate ideas and develop approaches to learning of the topic. The skilful mix of probing questions, discussion and range of challenging activities enables pupils to achieve good standards.
126. Where teaching is not so effective, expectations for the pupils are unclear and the pace of the lesson is insufficiently brisk. In these lessons some pupils become less focused on their work, and inclined to chatter, even when they are expected to listen to instructions or participate in whole class activities.
127. The marking of work is systematically undertaken and pupils receive good feedback from teachers on where they can improve. The frequent assessment of pupils' work undertaken by teachers in Year 8 provides solid evidence of their level of attainment, and assists with the placing of pupils in the appropriate set for Year 9. The regular use of recap tests and the setting of target minimum grades for pupils in Years 10 and 11 acts as a strong motivator, but there are few opportunities for self-assessment by pupils. The assessment of sixth form students' work is good.

128. A recently appointed head of department leads the department very effectively. A team of dedicated, enthusiastic and experienced teachers shares the management of the subject. The working practices of the team are of a high standard. The sharing of ideas and good practice occurs informally throughout the day, but formal monitoring and evaluation of the work of the department is not yet sufficiently developed.
129. The department has made some progress with the issues arising from the last inspection but needs to address the under-use of information and communications technology. The updating of resources to support the new scheme of work for Year 8 is now a matter of some urgency.

Numeracy

130. The department is developing its policy to improve pupils' numeracy skills. The recently revised scheme of work for Year 8 makes provision for this and for an increase in the use of information and communications technology. Sometimes in subjects other than mathematics pupils apply their numeracy skills in a satisfactory way, but generally these skills are not well developed across the school.

SCIENCE

131. Attainment in science at both Key Stages 3 and 4 is broadly in line with national expectations. The national tests at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999 show that results are broadly in line with the national average and this has been a consistent picture over the last three years. In 2000 the results for levels 4 and 5 are slightly below those for 1999, but they are improved for levels 6 and 7.
132. In 1999 GCSE results for double award science the proportion of pupils achieving A*-C grades was below the national average for this subject at 36%. The proportion achieving A*-G grades was above the national average. In 2000 the percentage of pupils gaining A*-C grades rose very significantly to 54.6%. Pupils' progress from Key Stage 3 was above average by comparison with schools with similar Key Stage 3 results. This pattern is consistent over the last three years.
133. At the end of Year 13, results at GCE A-level were broadly in line with the national average in 1999. In 2000, the provisional results showed improvement in the numbers of pupils gaining highest grades in biology and chemistry.
134. At Key Stages 3 and 4, the level of scientific knowledge evident in lessons is satisfactory or better. For example, pupils in Year 8 across the ability range confidently recalled the characteristics of living things. A mixed group of higher ability pupils in Year 9 exhibited an excellent understanding and knowledge of food groups. Low ability Year 9 pupils showed a reasonable knowledge of heat transfer. An all boys higher ability group in Year 10 showed a good understanding of the variables which can affect the rate of a chemical reaction, though some confused volume with concentration. A Year 11 group of higher ability girls showed a very good understanding of the mechanics of transpiration. All pupils at these key stages are confident in the use of practical equipment.
135. The quality of learning is good or very good at Key Stage 3, and satisfactory or better at Key Stage 4. Where learning had shortcomings, progress was limited because of low expectations by the teacher, slow pace in lessons and unsatisfactory behaviour of some pupils. Learning at Key Stage 3 does not build clearly enough on the work pupils have done in their middle schools.
136. Students in the sixth form show very good levels of knowledge and understanding. For example, Year 12 biology students exhibited a range of understanding regarding enzyme activity consistent with previous attainment. The same students showed a good

understanding of the complex structure of a membrane and co-operated well on a group task to summarise the key facts. Year 13 physics students sometimes lack sufficient mathematical understanding to support their learning.

137. Most pupils in the higher ability sets in Key Stages 3 and 4 make good or very good progress, showing interest and sustained concentration in lessons. These pupils comment that the separate gender groups for top sets at Key Stage 4 enables them to learn better. There has been some improvement since the last inspection in providing enrichment and extension work for more able pupils, particularly in chemistry. Learning in the lower sets at Key Stage 4 is sometimes limited by a lack of relevance in the planning of topics.
138. The quality of teaching is often good. In the sixth form it is very good. The best teaching was characterised by good planning, clear learning objectives, skilful management of pupils and resources, and lively and varied styles of delivery. Where the teaching was unsatisfactory the pupils failed to engage with the subject matter or to see the point of the lesson. There were some very good examples of skilful use of questioning enabling students to consolidate their learning. All teachers have very good subject knowledge and the department benefits from being fully staffed in all three subject areas. The teaching in the sixth form is a strength of the department. The department does not yet have in place a programme of lesson observation enabling wider discussion and practice of techniques and strategies, and this would assist in further improving the quality of teaching.
139. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. The use of information and communications technology remains underdeveloped, and the department does not yet plan sufficiently for its contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
140. Accommodation is good and has improved since the last inspection by the addition of two new laboratories. One laboratory is currently in need of refurbishment in order to enable better management of pupils and resources. Technicians have difficulty with the amount of heavy equipment that has to be carried between floors.
141. The leadership of the department is strong with good organisation for all key stages and well-developed data analysis of pupil progress. Technician support is very good despite the recent cut in hours. Staff support each other well. The department shows a willingness to innovate in order to improve pupils' achievements. There is a need to improve feedback to pupils through explaining the learning objectives for each lesson and by making comments on their written work which help them understand more clearly how they can improve.

ART AND DESIGN

142. By the end of Key Stage 3, standards are broadly in line with national expectations. At Key Stage 4 the percentage of pupils who achieved grades A* - C in the GCSE examination in 1999 was below the national average. However in 2000 the percentage of pupils who were awarded A*-C grades improved very significantly. A high percentage of pupils who are entered for the GCSE examination each year achieve the highest grades A* -B. Overall, girls perform better than boys in the subject. Standards in the sixth form are satisfactory. The evidence from lesson observations and scrutiny of students' work suggests that standards are improving in the sixth form.
143. At Key Stage 3, pupils develop confidence in exploring ideas, materials and processes. Sketchbooks are used well to record from observation, to make visual and informal written notes and to generate ideas. Pupils design and make images and artefacts for different purposes. They also gain some knowledge of different styles and traditions from different historical and cultural contexts. There are currently limited planned opportunities at Key Stage 3 for pupils to make appropriate use of information and communications technology. When access is provided pupils are highly motivated. At Key Stage 4, the small number of pupils who opt for the examination course show increasing independence in the way in which they develop ideas. They look at the work of artists, craftspeople and designers, as sources

of inspiration in developing their own work. Skills are refined, particularly in printmaking, and knowledge is broadened and deepened.

144. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. There is a better match of task to ability in lessons, and pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 3 and good progress at Key Stage 4. The difficulties associated with the cramped and dispersed accommodation have not yet been resolved.
145. Teaching is usually satisfactory and frequently very good. There is a high level and range of subject expertise. Weaker teaching is associated with the use of non-specialist staff. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to receive additional guidance out of school hours. For example, the opportunity for post-16 students to engage in 'life-drawing' after school is a real strength. Teaching is well planned, energetic and committed to improving the quality of pupils' experience and standards in the subject. However, more use could be made of well-timed questions and verbal assessments of pupils' work. Greater precision is required in informing pupils of how well they are performing, and what they must do to improve. Most pupils make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 3 and frequently good progress at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. Pupils enjoy the subject. Most are keen and eager in art lessons and often prepared to persevere with lengthy tasks. Very many pupils gain considerable satisfaction from their efforts and investigate art with enthusiasm and a sense of discovery. By the end of Key Stage 4 students show a mature response to the flexible organisation and management necessary in art lessons, in particular by settling to work unprompted and respecting other pupils' entitlement to work unhindered. Students in the sixth form rapidly develop an individuality of approach within a framework of well-taught practical and critical skills.
146. There is inadequate storage for pupils' three-dimensional work and the cramped accommodation constrains the scale and ambition of the work that can be routinely attempted. For sixth form students the lack of a dedicated studio space inhibits independent study and production. Pupils at all levels do not always have enough access to resources, including computers, books and other publications, and large scale reproductions, in the department and in the school library

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

147. Although published levels of attainment in design and technology at the end of Key Stage 3 are below the national average for 14 year old pupils, the inspection of lessons and coursework shows that actual standards at the end of Year 9 have caught up with national expectations. Integrated tasks, such as the construction of a peg board game, which involve making in a range of materials, enables pupils to make good progress from Year 8 to Year 9.
148. GCSE results in 1999 were substantially above the national average for the proportion of A*-C grades attained. The relative performance is almost one grade higher than the school average for all subjects and these results reflect an improving trend. In lessons and

coursework at Key Stage 4 standards of attainment are generally high. The careful planning and precision that pupils in Year 11 bring to the making tasks in the resistant materials Radio Styling project are repeated throughout all coursework in design and technology at Key Stage 4.

149. Results in food and textile technology and child development have improved to be significantly above the national average. Most pupils with learning, attendance and behavioural difficulties who take the Certificate of Educational Achievement attain merit or distinction grades, but this means that some pupils who had made good quality products in Key Stage 3 do not have the opportunity to take GCSE examinations.

150. By the age of 18, at A-level, two thirds of candidates achieve A, B and C grade in 1999, and in the GNVQ Intermediate in engineering almost all candidates completed the qualification. Attainment at A-level reflects a culture of independent learning, for instance when students prepared very thoughtfully for a food technology session on micronutrients.
151. Since the last inspection the developing quality of knowledge, skill and understanding in design and technology has been consolidated in the thoroughness seen in Key Stage 3 notebooks and GCSE and A-level coursework folders. Examination results have remained good, normally significantly higher the national average, and the quality of teaching and learning has improved to be sound or better in almost all lessons. Learning tasks are being matched more closely in groups to the range of ability levels but there is still a need for more sensitive challenge in tasks for individual pupils. Teacher expectations of what can be achieved by high attaining and low attaining pupils are sometimes limited. Despite some excellent applications of computer-aided manufacturing processes, there is not enough access to information and communications technology.
152. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 3 is good or very good in almost all lessons. The most effective teaching matched the learning needs and styles of the pupils. In a Year 8 food technology lesson, a mixed group of pupils, some with learning difficulties successfully tackled the task of making and evaluating scones, through a lesson that was fast paced, demanding and well structured. The pupils enjoyed using a range of tools, materials, equipment to measure, form and process ingredients and, when problems arose with mixtures, adapt their designs.
153. Most teaching at Key Stage 4 is good, and a smaller proportion satisfactory. In one unsatisfactory lesson a group of lower attaining pupils were offered inappropriate learning tasks. The lower attaining pupils in Key Stage 4 learn most effectively, as in textiles and food technology, when tasks are based on physical skills and making. The most able and talented pupils are capable of producing work of excellent quality when presented with industry standard exemplars and access to computer-aided design. Learning is supported by thorough and well paced schemes of work.
154. The standard of teaching and learning in the sixth form groups is either good or very good and this is reflected in students' attitudes and approaches that are mature and independent, leading to high quality design and making outcomes. One student has designed and is making a specialist bicycle for younger children which meets an identified market need and is developing it as a real, industry supported, new product.
155. Although teachers assess pupils effectively on a regular basis to see how well they are doing and to help them improve their work, their assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 are not accurate, and broadly one level too low.
156. Design and technology makes a valuable contribution to pupils' literacy levels through the systematic use of key terminology, especially in food technology and textiles, and provides practical opportunities to support numeracy. Social skills, seen in co-operation in group tasks and in the use of potentially hazardous equipment, are well developed.

GEOGRAPHY

157. Standards of attainment in geography are broadly in line with the national expectation across the key stages 3 and 4. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected National Curriculum Level 5 in teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 has improved recently. There is a similar picture at Key Stage 4, where the most recent GCSE results in geography at A*-C grades are close to the national average. In the sixth form, the standard of attainment is above the national expectation.
158. At Key Stage 3, most pupils have sound basic map skills. They can locate features on Ordnance Survey maps by the use of symbols and the appropriate geographical terms. In Year 8, most pupils can plot temperature changes on graphs but lower attainers find difficulty

in relating with accuracy seasonal activities to points on a graph where the year starts from January. By Year 9, high attaining pupils produce creative and detailed accounts of the impact of tourism on Cromer following a field study visit. Average and lower attaining pupils are capable of producing written work which is well illustrated with diagrams and graphs of their findings but the written content is more limited. These pupils become more confident in the use of geographical vocabulary with the help of writing frames and the Cromer project has been successful in producing a standard of written work beyond expectation.

159. At Key Stage 4, high attaining pupils produce passages of good extended writing, especially in their coursework, where they employ hypotheses in testing a range of statistical information to contrast the quality of life in different areas of Norwich. Average attaining pupils undertake similar survey work with a more restrictive range of presentation. Lower attaining pupils produce neatly presented coursework but the conclusion and evaluation are more limited. A minority of the coursework is word-processed but the use of information and communications technology is not sufficiently developed to enhance the presentation of graphical work. High attaining students in the sixth form produce well-structured essays, with the majority word-processed. Average attaining students show competence in their enquiry work but have yet to attain the degree of fluency that will guarantee the higher A-level grades. Most students have good technical ability in analysing physical processes, such as coastal erosion, with a sound background understanding of geomorphology.
160. Geography has made sound progress since the last inspection, particularly at Key Stage 3. There is more emphasis on enquiry work by pupils in planned lessons using a range of teaching methods and activities. The detailed scheme of work provides a good structure for teaching and this is supported by fieldwork at all key stages. The use of computers is still insufficiently developed in the scheme of work to enhance enquiry work and presentation. Assessment arrangements are now sound. Teachers make more systematic use of National Curriculum assessment levels directly with pupils. This helps them understand better what they need to do to improve.
161. A significant strength of geography is the quality of the teaching, which is consistently good with some excellent features. Teachers are knowledgeable and this combined with a good use of resources, from videos to maps, takes pupils' learning forward at a good pace. Good teaching is characterised by thorough preparation, well-researched notes related to local knowledge and good pupil management. Teachers are aware of different abilities and provide different materials for lower attainers and those with special needs, which result in good progress. Aims are shared with the pupils and they are skilfully questioned on their understanding. This helps them to consolidate and build on their knowledge.
162. At all key stages pupils and students gain skills in the use of maps, graphs and statistical data both in oral and written presentations. At Key Stage 4 high attaining pupils understood a graphical model which skilfully demonstrated the process of a storm hydrograph and can estimate the time lag between peak rainfall and peak flooding. Pupils were highly motivated when relating the process to the circumstances of storm damage and flooding in various parts of the country. Lower attaining pupils make best progress when they grasp the concept through individual support, such as was observed when dividing statistical information into the appropriate categories in order to construct choropleth mapping to illustrate differences in the rate of unemployment in different areas of Norwich. Teaching in the sixth form is challenging and most students cope well with the intellectual content and large amount of work covered. This is supported by well-structured coursework notes which provide an adequate basis for revision.
163. Pupils are keen to learn overall and behaviour is good. They work together well in pairs or groups, remain on task and enjoy their work. The head of department provides effective support to a team of experienced teachers who also have other responsibilities within the school. The well-structured scheme of work provides progression in geographical knowledge and skills. In the sixth form, there is good collaboration with staff from the partner school.

HISTORY

164. Standards by the age of 14 are in line with the national average as indicated by the proportion of pupils reaching level 5 and above in teacher assessments in 1999. Results for 2000 have remained at these levels, with the proportion of pupils attaining level 6 and above also being in line with the national average. Girls achieve better than boys at both levels to the same extent as is the case nationally.
165. By the age of 16, the proportion of pupils attaining A*-C grades at GCSE in 1999 was below the national average. It was at the same level in 2000 as it has been for the last three years. However, this is an improvement on the situation at the time of the last inspection when A*-C grades were well below the average. The proportion of pupils attaining A*-G was in line with the national average in 1999 and 2000. Although there is no clear difference in attainment between boys and girls, girls did less well in history than in many of their other subjects compared with boys. At age 18, in 1999 the proportion of A-B grades at A-level was well above the national average, with half of both boys and girls entered gaining these higher grades; A-E grades were also above the national average. In 2000, results markedly improved as all students passed at grades A-B, again with boys and girls performing equally well and doing better in history than in their other subjects. There has been a significant and consistent upward trend of improvement in standards at A-level over the last three years and history has become one of the best performing subjects in the school.
166. Standards in work seen by the age of 14 are in line with the national average. Compared with the pupils' attainment on entry to the school, this represents satisfactory progress in the level of pupils' achievement by the time they reach 14. They have a good knowledge and understanding of the key characteristics of the subject and can differentiate fact from opinion. Nearly all pupils can effectively select and record information from written and pictorial sources, though lower attaining pupils find this difficult if the source is too long or inappropriate. Most pupils can identify a number of causes of an event, with higher attaining pupils evaluating them effectively.
167. Extended writing skills are at least satisfactory as pupils are given the opportunities to write in various forms. For example, middle and higher attaining pupils in Year 8 are able to write with strong empathy and analysis as if they are Queen Elizabeth having to deal with Mary Queen of Scots. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are supported in their written work by writing frames and starter sentences. Most pupils are also developing skills of interpretation and evaluation of various sources, for instance in comparing different accounts of the Gunpowder Plot. However, some middle and lower attaining pupils still find this difficult. Nearly all pupils by Year 9 are beginning to effectively identify bias and reliability, though middle and lower attaining pupils are less confident about quoting from sources. Enquiry skills are being well developed through the depth studies in both years, involving research in the library and on the Internet. Listening and discussion skills are not so well developed.
168. In work seen, the attainment of pupils by the age of 16 is in line with the national average. This is better than the latest GCSE results as the Year 11 cohort doing history is generally of higher attainment and they have benefited from the recent stronger emphasis on developing history skills and targeting.
169. Pupils therefore make satisfactory progress in their level of achievement by the end of Year 11. They achieve average standards at the end of Key Stage 3 and sustain them throughout Key Stage 4. Nearly all pupils have good historical knowledge and most can select and identify information satisfactorily using a variety of sources. However, weaknesses in literacy in middle attaining pupils often constrain higher achievement in recording evidence. Nevertheless, nearly all pupils write evidence in their own words rather than copy, a criticism in the last report. Effective support materials and clear explanations help lower attaining pupils on the Certificate of Achievement course in this.

170. Most pupils have a good understanding of change and continuity, as when they compared developments in medicine in two different historical periods in Year 10. They build on their firm understanding of causation at Key Stage 3, though not all can effectively evaluate and prioritise different causes, including higher attainers. Higher attaining pupils write well at length, making good use of supporting evidence, as seen in their coursework studies. Middle and lower attaining pupils write competently, but the skills of supporting arguments are less well developed in lower attainers. Interpretation skills and recognition of bias and reliability in sources are being developed in most middle and higher attaining pupils. Most pupils can express themselves quite well orally though some higher attaining pupils are reluctant to become involved in whole class discussion.
171. Attainment in work seen by the age of 18 is above the national average, an improvement compared with the standards at the time of the last inspection. This represents good progress in the level of achievement compared with the average level of attainment with which the students begin the A-level course. Nearly all students have good note-making skills and have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the main features and concepts of the period. Most express themselves confidently and reasonably fluently, encouraged by the frequent opportunities to engage in rigorous and critical discussion of a more analytical nature. Most students are developing appropriate skills of independent enquiry and interpretation, promoted through the challenging and stimulating tasks set, such as Year 13 students working in pairs to present their views to the rest of the group on the most significant domestic changes in England during the First World War.
172. The quality of teaching is good or better in nearly three-quarters of the lessons seen. It is never unsatisfactory. It is best at Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form. This is considerably better than at the time of the last inspection when a significant number of lessons had shortcomings in teaching and learning. Teachers now have higher expectations and more varied and appropriate activities involve and challenge pupils of all abilities. Teachers have good subject knowledge, plan their lessons well and set appropriate learning objectives, which are clearly explained to the pupils. The very good behaviour of the pupils and their readiness to listen, concentrate fully and to cooperate with the teacher and with each other, promotes a good atmosphere for learning. Pupils are managed well, relations are very good based on mutual respect and high standards of behaviour are expected and set. There is good monitoring of pupils' progress through frequent questioning and interventions in class. In most lessons, there is a good pace, time is well used and deadlines are clearly set to focus attention. Homework is set regularly and effectively. Marking, criticised in the last report, is now done regularly, thoroughly and consistently throughout the department, with helpful comments and targets to inform the pupils on how to improve.
173. Significant improvements have taken place since the last inspection. They are largely due to the committed and enthusiastic head of department who has given a very clear and strong educational direction to the department.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

174. At the end of Key Stage 3, teacher assessments for both 1999 and 2000 indicate standards of attainment well below national expectations. On entry into Year 8 standards are similar to those normally expected for Year 7 pupils. The department, with only one hour of teaching each fortnight, has to teach pupils all the skills demanded by the Key Stage 3 curriculum. However, the standards in lessons seen indicate the introduction of a new scheme of work, designed to overcome this problem, is raising achievement in both Years 8 and 9. The higher attaining pupils seen in Year 9 are working at levels close to national expectations.
175. At Key Stage 4 in 1999 the proportion of pupils achieving GCSE grades A*-C was 33%, which is well below the national average, but those attaining A*-G were in line with national expectations. The results in 2000 indicate a similar situation.

176. However, the quality of work seen during the inspection in both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 is satisfactory, and pupils are now making good progress in both key stages. In Key Stage 3, pupils are able to save information and to use it when appropriate. They can manipulate text and graphics to create a range of effects, and analyse and understand how to target work for specific audiences. Pupils demonstrated this when creating an information sheet on 'How to make a cup of tea'. The pupils make good use of the Internet, and frame questions to ensure meaningful responses result. In geography pupils were able to search the Internet effectively to collect data on weather conditions in Italy. Many pupils can insert different forms of information from a variety of sources into their work, and they take a pride in producing high quality and attractively presented work.
177. By Year 9, pupils are able to use their information and communications technology skills to present information in different forms and in a way which shows understanding of the intended audience. In one lesson pupils were designing a menu card for a restaurant and discussed which fonts would look attractive and allow customers to read the menu clearly. Pupils use e-mail to exchange information and to transfer it to another location so that they can continue work outside the school environment. Pupils have some understanding of the role of information and communications technology in the community, although this is an area of study that could be developed further.
178. Overall, there is insufficient use of these skills in other subjects. Where information and communications technology is accessed in Key Stages 3 and 4, it is used well. In Year 9, in religious education, pupils were set the task of researching the Holocaust from web sites on the Lodz ghetto. In art and design, pupils are frequently referred to the Internet for homework. However, there is no co-ordination of the application of information and communications technology across the curriculum, and subject departments do not use the ICT rooms.
179. The work seen at Key Stage 4 is of a satisfactory standard, and some of it is very good. Pupils use of the Internet as a research tool is good, and they use a variety of presentational devices to enhance their work in an appropriate way for the specific audience. For example, a web site on 'cats' produced by a GCSE pupil was an excellent example of the application of these skills. Pupils are able to assess the quality of their work and to improve it after discussion. Most pupils are able to work independently and can select the most appropriate tools for the purpose. There is little evidence that information and communications technology skills are used in other subjects at Key Stage 4.
180. Sixth form students make excellent use of their information and communications technology skills in many subjects, and they use the Internet very well to access information and data to support their studies. In business studies, students had used the Internet to collect data on the International Monetary System and inserted the information into their essays. In science, there is good use of information and communications technology provision in the sixth form, and software is provided for use at home. In English, students research authors through the Internet. Good application of information and communications technology skills was also seen in projects in physical education.
181. The quality of teaching is always satisfactory, and two thirds of the teaching is good or very good. Where teaching is good or better, the lessons are well planned, with pupils being made aware of the specific aims and expected outcomes of their work; pupils are encouraged to share what they learn and to co-operate with each other. In good lessons the teacher maintains the pace of the lesson and the work set is challenging. A teacher in a Year 8 lesson, where pupils were designing a 'flyer', maintained the pace of learning by frequently bringing the group together to discuss interesting examples of pupils' work and at the same time explained how these ideas could be developed even further. A key skills lesson in the sixth form developed into a searching discussion on the use of information and communications technology in society.
182. Where teaching is less successful teachers emphasise pupils should work on their own, so that they are unable to share either their learning or excitement at mastering new skills. Where pupils are not encouraged to explore the full range of presentational devices possible,

work lacks creativity and some more able pupils become bored. This was seen in a Year 9 class where pupils were asked to follow a work sheet individually. Although this helped students learn the skills of manipulating text, font, and importing graphics, pupils' progress was limited because they were not allowed to help each other or look at work other than their own. Pupils behave well in lessons; teachers and pupils respect each other and work in an atmosphere of co-operation and support. Teachers are sensitive to the needs of the pupils and give them positive support and encouragement.

183. There has been some progress made since the last inspection report. The new scheme of work for Key Stage 3 addresses the difficulties raised by the transfer of pupils to the school at Year 8, and gives precise guidance and targets for both pupils and teachers who may not be specialists. Recently progress has been made in overcoming staffing difficulties, especially with the GCSE groups. There is still no co-ordination of the delivery of the subject by other subject departments at Key Stages 3 and 4, although the head of department is planning to undertake a curriculum audit. Provision at Key Stage 4 does not therefore meet statutory requirements. Insufficient attention is given to assessing pupils' work and setting targets for improvement. An excellent technician supports the department, and the limited resources are generally used well by the information and communications technology department, although there is insufficient use of the information and communications technology rooms by other subject departments.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

184. In 1999, GCSE results in French and German were well below national averages. Pupils performed significantly worse in languages than in the other subjects they took. The difference between boys and girls' results in French was wider than is the case nationally. In German, boys performed better than girls, which is unusual in national terms, but the boys' performance was still not as good as in the other subjects they took. In 2000, GCSE results in both French and German improved. Pupils performed broadly in line with the other subjects they took. Boys performed as well as girls in both languages. Since the last inspection, there has been a consistent rise in GCSE results. Over the last three years, a significant number of lower-attaining pupils have taken the Certificate of Achievement in either French or German, and many have gained success with distinctions or merits. The number of students taking languages at A-level has been relatively low over the last three years, making comparisons with national averages invalid. In 1999, out of three students taking French, two passed with an E grade. In 2000, one student gained a B grade and the other a D grade; these were similar to results in their other subjects.
185. In lessons and other work, the standards reached by the oldest pupils in Key Stage 3 are below national expectations. Teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 for 2000 confirm this picture of performance. Pupils enter the school with a variety of language-learning experiences behind them. Teachers report that, in some cases, pupils have been taught by non-specialists in languages. There is little liaison between the contributory schools and the high school to ensure good progression. Such lack of planning affects the speaking skills of the middle and lower-attaining pupils to a greater extent than those of the higher attainers. The writing skills of higher attainers are inadequately developed on entry to Year 8, and teaching across the key stage does not address this to the degree necessary to enable pupils to reach the higher levels within the National Curriculum.
186. At Key Stage 4, pupils perform more in line with national expectations, and more particularly so in French than in German. Nonetheless, overall attainment in lessons and other work remains below national expectations, because of the significant number of pupils doing the Certificate of Achievement in either French or German. The discrepancy between the GCSE results in 2000 and the standards seen in the current Year 11 lessons is explained by the lower general attainment level of the present Year 11 pupils, and the larger size of classes, which makes the development of oral work more difficult. Many pupils are very hesitant in speaking the foreign language and most middle and higher attainers are unsure of grammar

in describing past events. Pupils develop their writing skills well, however, and most take full advantage of the support and guidance given by teachers for pupils' coursework. Most pupils listen and read satisfactorily in the foreign language within a limited range of familiar words and phrases. Apart from the higher attainers, pupils find it difficult to recall recently encountered vocabulary, unless they receive a lot of reminders from the teachers.

187. In the sixth form, the most talented students learn to express their ideas and opinions very well in both written and spoken form. Other students are less confident, but most of them make good attempts to join in discussion and gain greater accuracy and fluency in writing.
188. Most pupils achieve satisfactorily by the end of Key Stage 4 and make satisfactory progress during the key stage. However progress is less good than it could be because of the gap in learning between Years 7 and 8 and, in some cases, because of the relatively low amount of curricular time they are taught modern foreign languages. Pupils with special educational needs make at least satisfactory progress in the smaller classes created for them. Progress is good in a number of classes, where the quality of teaching is high.
189. The quality of teaching is good overall. A third of the lessons seen were good, and a few were very good. The remaining lessons were satisfactory, except for a small number of unsatisfactory lessons where the activities were inappropriate for the range of pupils, and control was not firm enough. Teachers have a good, and in some cases very good, knowledge of the languages they teach. However, teachers across the department do not use the foreign language consistently enough to develop pupils' listening and speaking skills adequately. They do not use chorus-work and pronunciation practice enough for pupils to achieve real confidence. The range of teaching activities does not always include enough work with overhead projectors, language games, television and computers. In one Year 11 German class of lower attainers, however, pupils responded very well to a language game, in which they practised the household vocabulary they had just learnt. Teachers mostly have high expectations of what pupils can learn and several teachers adopt a very purposeful and direct approach, to which pupils respond very well. In a Year 9 French class a group of middle attainers made very good progress in understanding the notion of the past tense and how to form it. The teacher used a combination of very clear explanation and competitive 'fun' activities. Teachers mostly manage their pupils well. In a few lessons, where teachers are either inexperienced or untrained, small numbers of pupils, particularly boys, are uncooperative and disturb the progress of others. Teachers have devised good testing procedures, but the marking of exercise books is inconsistent in style and detail across the department.
190. The head of department gives a clear direction to the work of the department and has begun some monitoring and evaluation of teaching. A more rigorous approach is needed to include the monitoring of written work at Key Stage 3. Standards of attainment are affected by lack of liaison with the contributory middle schools, the low curricular time for languages (which was reported at the time of the last inspection), and a continuing long-term staff absence. Shortages that affect standards in varying degrees include a lack of overhead projectors, and textbooks in Key Stage 4.
191. Since the last inspection, the GCSE results have improved considerably. The quality of teaching has been maintained, although a number of shortcomings persist. The previously poor accommodation has been upgraded well.

EAL provision

192. One pupil in the school receives support for learning English as an additional language. The LEA provides the teacher. The pupil is making good progress and is integrated into sets appropriate to her ability. The four other EAL-speaking pupils are making good progress without additional support and are well integrated.

MUSIC

193. Standards in music have been maintained since the previous inspection. By the age of fourteen pupils achieve in line with national expectations. When pupils transfer from middle school they have had a very varied experience of music and many of the basic skills have not been learnt. Pupils achieve well by applying what they know about music to what they hear and can describe musical features such as pizzicato strings and melodic shape. For most performance and compositions keyboards are used. Apart from those who have piano or keyboard lessons, most pupils use one finger on both hands to play a melody. This inhibits their understanding of melodic shape and though they may understand what to do they lack the technique. They are encouraged to internalise sounds through singing but as this is also a weak area they gain little benefit from this.
194. Pupils with special education needs achieve very well. They enjoy the practical opportunity which music offers and are diligent in applying themselves to keyboard work when they work in pairs and help each other. They can play a simple melody with chords reading from notation and when learning a simple version of 'Für Elise' could identify the two main melodic ideas. In most lessons the teacher dictates the pace of work, so opportunities for working on their own are limited. An enthusiastic number of about 70 pupils throughout the school who learn an instrument make up the school bands and string orchestra. There is also a choir of mainly upper school pupils and staff who meet regularly and together with the other musicians take part in a major musical event every term, such as in the cathedrals in Norwich. Because of the high standard that they reach, they are in demand for other events in the area.
195. At Key Stage 4 the number of pupils opting for GCSE is very small. In the present Year 11 there are five students and two in Year 10. Lessons take place after school and although pupils are willing and enthusiastic they are also tired. Comparisons with national averages are unhelpful because of the small number of pupils, but, when compared with the average in their other subjects, most pupils do not do as well. In the listening component they are all able to distinguish instrumental sound and historical period and style accurately. Composition is good and reflects the instrumental experience, which most pupils have. The previous report stated that pupils needed more opportunities to imagine and invent. The whole group was shown a water-colour of a sea-scape as a stimulus. They improvised a short piece using their own and a few classroom percussion instruments to create an evocative piece with effective use of melodic development and instrumental effects. In individual composition pupils make use of simple harmonic progressions, modulation and melodic devices such as sequence and organic growth. However the lack of new technology to refine and improve work limits attainment. Ideas are simple and well thought out, but finished work does not match that of other pupils nationally who have access to computers and recording equipment. There are many opportunities for performance both in school concerts and in the community, both solo and in ensemble, and this is an area where many pupils excel.
196. Students in the sixth form reach a high standard, attending Norwich City College for A-level courses. One of the present students is the Norfolk Young Musician of the Year. Analytical skills are good and students have an adequate understanding of harmony for the demands of the course.
197. All teaching is at least satisfactory. Half the lessons seen were very good and one was excellent. Excellent musicianship is at the heart of all teaching and this both inspires pupils and gives them a good example to follow. Passion for music is shared and pupils become open-minded and willing to be guided in their learning and listening. There are high expectations of what pupils can do but this is not always balanced with teaching of skills to achieve objectives. Pupils are not encouraged to extend their learning outside the classroom with the regular setting of homework. One of the main strengths is the very good relationships fostered in the classroom. This works particularly well with lower ability pupils. Their needs are understood and teaching strategies, such as short-term targets to aid concentration and sharing with pupils how well they are doing, are in place to meet them.

Praise is appropriately used and this results in pupils reaching a higher standard than might be expected.

198. Since the previous inspection standards have been maintained. The choir is not as popular with pupils as before and the department is aware of the need to find ways to revive interest and to put singing firmly in the curriculum at Key Stage 3. The access which pupils have to new technology remains unsatisfactory. There is also a need to bring assessment procedures into line with the new requirements to report pupils' attainment in National Curriculum levels. Curriculum time in music has been increased and is now average at Key Stage 3.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

199. The attainment of pupils in physical education by the ages of 14 and 16 years is in line with national expectations. Pupils' progress, including those pupils with special educational needs, is satisfactory at both at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 with high levels of individual skill and ability shown by girls in Year 8 swimming and Year 11 netball. Progress and attainment by both boys and girls in GCSE and A-level classes is always good and, by certain individuals, very good.
200. Pupils continue to perform at above national average level in both GCSE and A-level examinations. Results at GCSE in 1999 showed a pass rate of over 68% at Grades A* to C, with a 100% pass rate at Grades A* to G, whilst, at A-level, results showed a pass rate of over 55% at Grades A to E. Results at GCSE in 2000 improved yet again with a pass rate of over 86% at Grades A* to C. Results at A-level were similarly outstanding with students gaining five A grades and three C grades from a total entry of ten candidates.
201. Pupils are extremely enthusiastic, well behaved and co-operative at all ages in their approach to physical education. They enjoy the subject. They have a clear understanding of what is expected of them in both outdoor and indoor activities and respond positively. They have sound knowledge of muscle groups and understand the need for warm-up exercise, which is, on occasion, directed very successfully by the pupils themselves. Pupils of all ages work hard and stay on task, working well together as a class, in groups and in pairs. They are very willing to evaluate their own and others' performance, readily accepting praise and criticism from their peers in striving to improve technique and skill levels. There is clear evidence in all lessons of increasing knowledge and understanding.
202. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good and, in some lessons, very good. Teachers are well qualified, for the most part experienced, have broad subject knowledge and use time and resources effectively. Lessons are well planned, usually challenging and have good pace with an example of highly successful team teaching in the Year 12 A-level group. Teachers have high expectations of and a positive and caring relationship with pupils. Safety instructions and regulations are given a high priority.
203. The subject is well managed and teachers work well together in a shared appreciation of both the department's and the school's aims. Finance is adequate and well controlled. Outdoor facilities are good. Indoor facilities are adequate when the weather is fine, but in wet weather conditions they are inadequate to accommodate all classes. The school is particularly fortunate in having its own swimming pool. Equipment is of good quality and ample for all activities.
204. A broad and balanced curriculum, available to all pupils, is enhanced by a wide range of extra-curricular activities, residential trips and school team fixtures. Since the last inspection, rugby and girls' soccer have been introduced to the curriculum at Key Stage 3 and will, progressively, become available to all year groups. School teams are generally successful and the school is equally well represented by individual pupils at district, county and national levels.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

205. The results achieved by those pupils and students who take GCSE and A-level examinations are very good. In 1999, all of the 21 candidates who took GCSE religious studies gained a C grade or better and nearly half of them gained an A or A* grade. This was nearly twice as good as the national average for A* to C grades and well above the national average for A*, A and B grades. Results in 2000, for a new GCSE syllabus in 'Philosophy and Ethics', are at least as good. Again, all the 26 students entered gained a C grade or better, and 12 of the candidates gained an A*. All the students entered for the Certificate of Educational Achievement in 2000 achieved a distinction. The results of those students who entered either or both of religious studies and philosophy at A-level are also very good, and well above the national average for religious studies at A-level in 1999.
206. Standards seen in class and in the work of pupils from the age of 12 to 14 years are often at the level expected for the age group. Pupils' work reflects knowledge of different religions and their practices and they can understand and empathise with the place of prayer in the Christian religion. They understand concepts like the Just War and can relate it to modern ethical dilemmas, such as the dropping of a nuclear bomb on Hiroshima. Higher attaining pupils write well, using well-developed language skills, about the Zealot uprising at Masada, and with sensitivity about the experience of the victims of concentration camps. Lower attaining pupils can rank school misdemeanors in an ethical order and justify their decisions and they are developing their understanding of actions and their consequences. Some lower attaining boys produce poorly presented work, which contains many technical errors, and pupils at this age have developed little understanding of the feelings of individuals and faith communities as they practise their faith today.
207. It was not possible to judge in depth the standards achieved by those pupils between the ages of 14 and 16 years who do not take an optional GCSE course in religious studies, as they are taught religious education in the context of their social science course. Standards in religious education in those classes and work seen were below the levels expected by the Agreed Syllabus for this age group. Again, the work of some boys at this age is not detailed or well presented.
208. It was also not possible to judge in depth the standards achieved in the sixth form in general religious education by those students who do not take an examination course in the subject.
209. In A-level work in philosophy and religious studies, which is chosen by a larger than average proportion of Year 12 and 13 students, standards are generally above or well above what might be expected at each stage in the course. Students in Year 12 have a satisfactory basic knowledge of the main systems of ethics and are beginning to analyse them using the framework of an ethical map. They write lengthy essays, for example, on the question of what is consciousness, drawing upon illustrations from several thinkers and using rational discourse at a high level.
210. The quality of teaching in the subject was good in all the lessons seen, and in about a quarter, it was very good or excellent. There is little difference between key stages, but it is best in the sixth form. The strengths of the teaching are: good teacher exposition, which includes personal examples from their own life experience and evokes good attentive attitudes from pupils and enthusiastic responses to questions; good use of a range of resources, especially worksheets and video extracts that aid motivation and enable pupils to acquire knowledge, develop ideas and reinforce their understanding; good classroom management, which is achieved without loss of the friendly and unthreatening atmosphere that prevails in lessons; good levels of demand and expectation of pupils at all levels of attainment and good expectations of the presentation of work, especially of lower attaining pupils.
211. High standards of written work were encouraged by grouping pupils around some displayed examples of work by last year's pupils and homework was set on writing a prayer of thanks, with reference to a website from which more inspiration could be gained. Lessons are

generally well planned and often have good pace. From Year 8 onwards, use is made of Internet websites and the library to research material. Examination work is well supported by worksheets, which create clear signposts for pupils on the structure of the course and provide significant amounts of content and opportunities are given for expressive work on longer passages of prose and full essays. Class work is supported, particularly in examination courses, by visits to the British Museum and to a student conference held for sixth formers in London. But there are few opportunities for younger pupils and those not studying examinations to visit places of worship and to encounter the adherents of religions other than Christianity.

212. Since the last inspection, standards in Key Stage 3 have been maintained. There is little evidence of the variability noted last time, although there is considerable variation between different levels of attainment in years 8 and 9. Results at GCSE have been maintained and in recent years have been very good. Results at A-level are also very good and well above the national average. The quality of teaching has been maintained and has improved. The school has moved closer to meeting statutory requirements for the subject, but the time allowed to fulfil the Agreed Syllabus is not sufficient in Key Stage 4. Statutory requirements are not therefore met in full. The department continues to be well led. There is evidence of the use of information and communications technology, but pupils and students do not have enough opportunity to work with information and communications technology resources in school time. Assessment is planned in detail and supports students' learning well, but the detailed grading of assessed pieces of work needs to be further developed. The accommodation for religious education is very good and significantly assists standards in the subject. Levels of display in both base rooms are extensive and of very good quality.

VOCATIONAL COURSES

213. The school is currently running GNVQ courses in advanced business studies and leisure and tourism in Year 13, the new advanced Certificate of Vocational Education in business studies and travel and tourism, and the intermediate travel and tourism in Year 12.
214. Standards at age 18 in the advanced GNVQ business studies were in line with the national average in 1999 with four distinctions and three merits out of eleven students. These standards were markedly improved in 2000 with five distinctions and four merits from nine students, similar to results in 1998. It demonstrates the best value-added in terms of student progress of any subject in the school at any level. Advanced GNVQ leisure and tourism had no entries for 1999, but in 2000 six students achieved two distinctions, two merits, and two passes. At intermediate GNVQ leisure and tourism, results have improved from being in line with the national average in 1999 to above in 2000. The results in intermediate engineering were below average in 2000, as were those for art and design in 1999. Though these courses were offered for 2000-2001, too few students applied for them to be able to run.
215. Standards of attainment in work seen in both GNVQ advanced and intermediate courses are in line with the national average. At advanced level, students have a good knowledge of business terms and concepts and can effectively enquire into various sources, especially using the internet in Year 13 to compare Britain's trade position with other countries using the International Monetary Fund website. They showed very good skills in information and communications technology. They evaluated and analysed competently the limitations of various evidence sources, with higher attaining students in advanced travel and tourism showing particularly good enquiry and evaluative skills in designing a holiday for older people. Students on the intermediate course had good planning and organisational skills and evaluated their work with honesty. Higher attaining students conducted enquiry work well and were progressing well in examining leisure facilities in Norwich. Most students selected and recorded simple data satisfactorily, though literacy weaknesses made this difficult for lower attaining students.
216. The quality of teaching is good in nearly three-quarters of the lessons, and it is never unsatisfactory. It is best in the advanced level GNVQ. Teachers have very good subject

knowledge and plan lessons well, especially the carefully planned assignments, which stimulate students and allow the performance criteria to be reached. Teachers set high expectations, especially at the advanced level, where the lesson is often briskly paced with a variety of activities. Classroom management and the relationships with pupils is very good. Teachers are generally aware of the different ability groups within the class and respond well, especially at the intermediate level. However, higher attaining pupils at this level need either tighter deadlines or extension work to challenge them more. The high quality teaching encourages good progress in the students' learning. They make considerable gains in acquiring new knowledge and skills, especially of research and learning to work effectively by themselves. The good initiative shown by the students in their planning also helps them to make progress, as does their strong motivation. Students display a mature attitude to their studies, working well with each other on projects. They readily take on the responsibility of independent study and research, but they are too dependent on the Internet when book sources are readily available as alternative resources.

217. The GNVQ Coordinator has provided clear educational direction for the subjects. There is thorough policy documentation and schemes of work; short and long term planning is clear and reflects well the aims of the school. New courses such as the advanced Vocational Certificate of Education have been well planned and the students well informed of procedures. Assessment procedures are good with close targeting and monitoring of progress. Staff are well qualified and most have the appropriate internal verification qualifications, with one in the course of training. The large number of staff delivering leisure and tourism creates some problems of communication and continuity. Computer facilities are generally easily accessible, but those in the sixth form area require updating.