

INSPECTION REPORT

**SAINT EDMUND CAMPION RC COMPREHENSIVE
SCHOOL**

Wrekenton, Gateshead

LEA area: Gateshead

Unique reference number: 108412

Headteacher: Mr H J Edwards

Reporting inspector: Mr Alan Haigh
2630

Dates of inspection: 16 - 20 October 2000

Inspection number: 223882

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	11 - 19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Rugby Gardens Wrekenton Gateshead
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Father A A Duffy
Date of previous inspection:	February 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Alan Haigh	Registered inspector		What sort of school is it?
			Results and achievements
			How well are pupils taught?
			How well is the school led and managed?
			What should the school do to improve further?
Mickie Jacobs	Lay inspector		pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents
Peter Bannon	Team inspector	Mathematics	
Tony Barringer	Team inspector	English	How good are curricular and other opportunities
Doug Beaumont	Team inspector	Design and technology	
Winifred Burke	Team inspector	Art	
Brian Downes	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	Special educational needs
Jim Edwards	Team inspector	Physical education	How well does the school care for its pupils?
Charlotte Evers	Team inspector	History	Equal opportunities
Clare Lee	Team inspector	Business education, GNVQ	
Helen Olds	Team inspector	Geography	
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The Registrar
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a Catholic comprehensive school educating 1045 boys and girls aged 11 - 19 years. It is a little above average in size. It opened in 1986 following reorganisation and has grown steadily in recent years. It is located in Wrekenton, a part of the Gateshead Local Authority. One third of the pupils are entitled to free school meals; this is above the national average. More than 99 per cent of pupils are from white ethnic families. Five pupils are in the early stage of learning English. One sixth of pupils are on the special educational needs register and two per cent of pupils have statements of special educational needs. These figures are in line with the national averages. The attainment of pupils entering the school is a little below average and has improved in recent years. The socio-economic circumstances of the area from which pupils are drawn are below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an improving school with clear strengths but some significant weaknesses. Most pupils achieve standards appropriate to their prior attainment. The teaching and quality of pupils' learning are good. There is a shared commitment to improvement and senior staff provide satisfactory leadership. However, there are weaknesses in management and the governors are not closely enough involved in the school. The school provides good value for money but the sixth form is not cost effective.

What the school does well

- The results in the year 2000 national tests in English, mathematics and science for 14-year-olds were in line with recent national averages.
- The skilled teaching in English and science results in pupils attaining higher standards than might be expected.
- Year 7 pupils' progress in spoken French and learning new vocabulary is very good.
- Teaching is good overall and in about one in six lessons it was very good or excellent, with high expectations, successful management and a good pace raising standards in many subjects.
- The atmosphere created in school by the dedicated teachers results in a good learning environment with an absence of oppressive behaviour, bullying, sexism and racism.
- The pupils respect the feelings, values and beliefs of others and get on very well together.
- There is a very effective pastoral system and the school's provision for the pupils' moral development is strong.

What could be improved

- The General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) results are not good enough - especially in art, geography, history, mathematics and RE. The A-level results are poor in mathematics.
- Standards are not high enough in information technology across the curriculum, in games skills and in the use of tools in design and technology.
- There is very little support for pupils with special educational needs and these pupils consequently make slow progress.
- Attendance is unsatisfactory and punctuality is not good enough.
- The curriculum at Key Stage 3 provides too few creative and aesthetic opportunities and that at Key Stage 4 has gaps in information technology and physical education for many pupils.
- The aims and direction of the school are not clear enough, governors are insufficiently involved and monitoring of the school's work is unsatisfactory and the headteacher delegates insufficiently.
- The accommodation and resources for learning are unsatisfactory; there are many minor health and safety concerns.

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 February 1996 and has made satisfactory progress since then. Standards have risen in the core subjects at the end of Key Stage 3. Standards have not improved at GCSE, although boys did relatively well in 2000. Results for boys and girls remain well below the national average and also well below those in similar schools, as defined by the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals. The GCE Advanced level (A-level) results remain well below the national average. The quality of teaching has improved. Much more statistical data on pupils' performance is collected and analysed but the use of this information remains insufficient. The quality of school reports is better. All the senior management team are new to their posts since 1996. The roles of senior staff are now clearly defined but they have too little involvement in monitoring the work of the school. There are more resources for information technology but still too few books in the library and insufficient resources in most departments. The personal and social education (PSE) work is of much better quality. Most sixth formers are now taught RE but the time allocation for this in Year 13 is inadequate.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
GCSE examinations	E	E	E	E	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E

A-levels/AS-levels	E	D	E	
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The results in the national tests taken in 1999 by 14-year-olds were close to the national average in English and well below it in mathematics and science. When compared with similar schools, the English results were well above average, the science results were below and the mathematics results well below average. The small differences between boys' and girls' results are similar to the national differences. The mathematics and science results improved significantly in 2000 and those in all three of these subjects were in line with recent national averages. There is an upward trend in the results at this stage which is similar to that found nationally. The GCSE results for boys and for girls were well below average in 1999. Unlike the national picture, there is no upward trend in GCSE results. The strongest subjects are English, double science and modern foreign languages. The weakest subjects are art, geography, history, mathematics and RE. The results for 2000 showed a small improvement, and unlike the pattern nationally, boys did better than girls. The GCE A-level average points score per pupil was well below the national average in 1999. It improved in 2000. Results in the Intermediate level examinations of the General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) were a little below average in 1999 and average in 2000. All five pupils following the Advanced level GNVQ in 2000 were successful.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	These are good; many pupils are enthusiastic about their work and try hard. The extra-curricular sporting and musical activities and clubs are supported well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	This is good in most lessons and generally good around school. There is no oppressive behaviour and there is very little bullying. Sexism and racism do not feature. The rate of exclusions is average.
Personal development and relationships	The pupils' personal development is satisfactory and relationships are good. Pupils show a clear respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others.
Attendance	This is unsatisfactory, falling below the national average. Punctuality at the start of the day and to lessons is often poor.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The overall quality of teaching is good. That at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form is a little better than that at Key Stage 3 and the best teaching is in Years 11 and 13. These figures are reflected in the quality of pupils' learning. The quality of teaching in English is good at Key Stage 3 and very good at Key Stage 4. That in mathematics is satisfactory at Key Stage 3 and good at Key Stage 4. That in science is good at both key stages. The teaching of art, food technology, geography, modern foreign languages and music is good. That in the other subjects is largely satisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge, plan well in most subjects and generally expect high standards of work. Methodology is particularly effective in English and in food technology and the management of pupils, which is a general strength, is very strong in modern foreign languages. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. The school meets the needs of most pupils but those with special educational needs have too little support and so make unsatisfactory progress. The teaching of 94 per cent of the 203 lessons observed was satisfactory or better. In 16 per cent of lessons the teaching was very good or excellent. Teaching was less than satisfactory in six per cent of lessons. Pupils' acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding is good and their intellectual, physical and creative efforts are good.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	These are unsatisfactory at Key Stages 3 and 4 and satisfactory in the sixth form. The Key Stage 3 curriculum is short of aesthetic content with too little time for art and music and no drama. Half the pupils at Key Stage 4 do not cover sufficient information technology and the physical education curriculum is deficient at this stage. The careers and PSE work are of good quality. Curricular planning is unsatisfactory in art, history, geography and physical education. Sixth formers are offered a good range of academic and vocational courses but too little time for RE.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	This is poor as there is very little additional support available. Pupils' individual needs are rarely met. The little support provided is good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for pupils' spiritual development is good, although not all pupils are given the opportunity to attend a daily act of collective worship. Music makes a significant contribution to the spiritual life of the school through its contribution to worship. The quality of morning prayers is occasionally unsatisfactory. The provision for pupils' moral development is good with effective PSE lessons. The pupils' social development suffers from the absence of social areas and provision is only satisfactory. That for cultural development is sound.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Arrangements for child protection are good but there are many health and safety concerns, some unresolved since the last inspection. Guidance and support for pupils are good with well co-ordinated effective work by form tutors and year tutors.

The school has satisfactory links with parents. Reports are mostly informative but of mixed quality and the contribution parents make to their children's learning is sound. Parents are generally pleased with the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	This is satisfactory overall and the school is improving. There are weaknesses in monitoring and development planning. Senior staff work very hard but do not identify priorities clearly and tasks are not always seen through to completion. The headteacher delegates insufficiently.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are not sufficiently involved in the work of the school and do not fulfil all their responsibilities satisfactorily.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The strategies for this are sound and a good start has been made on this. Current practice still needs to be improved. Senior staff and the chair of governors have a realistic grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school's aims are not clear enough, however.
The strategic use of resources	This is satisfactory. Much information technology equipment has been acquired recently but there is as yet little use of new technology in most subjects and in management. Funds are directed appropriately at educational goals. There are sufficient, well-qualified teachers but very few support assistants are available for pupils with special educational needs. Accommodation is not adequate and there are too few resources for learning.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like the school. • They can approach the school with their questions or problems. • The school expects their children to work hard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some consider that the amount of homework is not right. • A very small number consider that they are not well enough informed as to how their child is getting on. • A very small number think the school could work more closely with them.

The inspectors' views support the parents' positive views. The amounts of homework are generally appropriate. The school works closely with parents and handles complaints well.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Pupils enter the school with levels of attainment that are below the national average. The results in the national tests taken in 1999 by 14-year-olds were close to the national average in English but well below that level in mathematics and science. When compared with similar schools, the English results were well above average, the science results were below and the mathematics results well below average. The small differences between boys' and girls' results are similar to the national differences.
2. The mathematics and science results improved significantly in 2000. The mathematics results were close to recent national averages and the science results were in line with them. The English results slipped a little in 2000 but were still close to recent national figures. There is an upward trend in the results at this stage which is similar to that found nationally and most pupils achieved standards a little higher than might have been expected when their prior attainment is considered.
3. The inspectors' judgements indicate that standards in English and in science are now in line with national expectations for 14-year-olds. Those in mathematics are a little below this. Pupils present written English work carefully but their oral work is not good enough. They handle data well in mathematics and low attainers cope with co-ordinates and grid references well. The high attaining pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding of quite complex science work. Most pupils have good practical skills in science.
4. Teachers assess 14-year-old pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science and in several other subjects. Their assessments in both English and science are in line with the test results but those in mathematics are well above the test results.
5. The most recent assessments by teachers indicate standards in design and technology to be similar to those found nationally. The teachers' assessed standards in geography at the end of Year 9 as well below the national average in the last two years. Teachers' assessments indicate that standards in 2000 in history were much better than the previous year when they were well below average. Teachers consider standards in information technology for 14-year-olds to be below average. The teachers' assessments of pupils' work in modern foreign languages indicates that standards are improving and in 2000 were much better than recent national averages.
6. The overall standards for 14-year-olds are below average. The standard of work of 14-year-olds seen in English and in science was, however, similar to that in most schools. That in mathematics was below average.
7. The work observed in design and technology in Year 9 was generally of below average standard, except in food studies where it is often above average. The work inspected in geography was below average but many pupils had good map skills. The work seen in history was only a little below average. Most pupils make too little effective use of historical evidence. Inspectors confirmed that standards in information technology were below average. Word processing skills are used well but most other aspects of the subject are below average. The central resources for information technology are

very good but only very recently installed. There is too little use of computers in most departments and so pupils' progress suffers.

8. Standards in modern foreign languages are below average. Much good work was seen and many pupils are confident speakers of modern foreign languages. The youngest pupils have made a very good start to learning French but overall standards by the age of 14 are below average.
9. Inspectors judged standards for 14-year-olds in art to be a little below the national average and those in music to be below average. Pupils' performance and listening skills are developing well in music. Standards in physical education are in line with the national average. Pupils are good at swimming but their knowledge of games is below average.
10. The GCSE results for boys and for girls were well below average in 1999. Unlike the national picture, there is no upward trend in these results that have varied widely over the past four years. In 1999 19 per cent of all 16-year-olds achieved five or more passes with grades A* to C. The national figure was 47 per cent. Girls did much better than boys. Seventy two per cent achieved five or more passes with grades A* to G against a national figure of 91 per cent. In 2000 the figure for five or more A* to C grades was 21 per cent and that for five or more A* to G grades was 72 per cent. Boys did better than girls in 2000, which goes against the national trend. No national data is available for 2000.
11. The school has a target of 25 per cent of pupils achieving five or more GCSE grades A* to C which is realistic but has not been achieved in the past two years. Additionally, its target of 95 per cent of pupils achieving one or more GCSE grades A* to G has not been met.
12. The strongest subjects at GCSE are English, double science and modern foreign languages. The weakest subjects are art, geography, history, mathematics and religious education (RE).
13. The overall standards for 16-year-olds are below average. Standards of work seen in English are in line with expectations for pupils in Year 11. Those in mathematics and science are a little below average. Problem solving skills are not good enough and few apply their mathematics knowledge well enough across the curriculum in their GCSE courses.
14. Standards in art are below average in the GCSE course and pupils do not use sketchbooks well enough. Pupils have an inadequate knowledge of the subject and the work of artists. The work in business studies is similar to that found in most schools. Standards in design and technology are below average but strengths in food technology continue to develop. Pupils' skills with tools are not as good as they should be. Standards in information technology are below average; pupils do not use spreadsheets, databases or the Internet well enough.
15. Standards in geography are below average by the end of Key Stage 4 and progress is hampered by the absence of information technology work. Standards in history are well below average. Those in modern foreign languages and music are below average. Pupils are not good enough at basketball but the overall standards in physical education are average at this stage.

16. The GCE A-level average points score per pupil was well below the national average in 1999. It improved in 2000 but remained below recent national averages. The numbers involved in most A-level courses are too small to allow safe comparisons with national data. In summer 1999 all four pupils passed in art. The five pupils achieved average results in biology as did the five studying Christian theology, the five studying chemistry and the nine studying English. Mathematics had only three candidates and results were below average as were those for the four historians. The general studies results were average.
17. The 2000 A-level results were similar to recent national averages in biology, art and design, Christian theology and English literature but below average in general studies. The chemistry results were a little below recent averages. The numbers in mathematics, physics, home economics, geography and French were very small (one or two candidates) and results were generally below average in these subjects.
18. The overall standards in A-level courses are similar to those in most sixth forms. Pupils following GNVQ courses generally work at the expected levels. The pupils' work is above average in the A-level course in English. That in mathematics is below average. Science standards are average. The sixth formers' work in art is a little better than that in most schools. The pupils' personal studies at A-level and the GNVQ ceramics work in the style of Claris Cliffe are of a good standard. Standards in the GNVQ business studies courses at both Advanced and Intermediate levels are a little below average. Standards in A-level history are average. Those in the GNVQ engineering course are below average. Standards in modern foreign languages are below average. Pupils have a good grasp of energy systems and the physiology and psychology aspects of A-level physical education, where standards are average.
19. Examination results in the Intermediate level examinations of the GNVQ were a little below average overall in 1999 and generally average in 2000 although the picture is mixed. Some students drop out of GNVQ courses, some leave having attained a certificate of unit achievement, and a few continue their studies into a second or third year. The GNVQ Advanced course results in 1999 in business studies were above average but the Intermediate level results in this subject were below average. All five pupils completing Advanced level GNVQ courses in 1999 and 2000 were successful.
20. Pupils with special educational needs rarely achieve the standards they ought to and often make unsatisfactory progress towards their individual targets. Their progress is too slow in most subjects, because they have too little additional support. They make satisfactory progress in English, science and information technology. The small number of pupils with statements of special educational needs receive effective support and progress well. The five pupils who have English as an additional language only joined the school at the start of this term and were not present in the week of the inspection.
21. Pupils' literacy skills are broadly similar to those seen in most schools. Progress is evident and the current emphasis placed on literacy by the school is a major factor in this. Pupils' reading is average. Written work is generally of at least an average standard and many pupils take notes well. Pupils speak clearly and the higher attainers and sixth formers achieve high standards in this explaining their work well and answering questions fully. Listening is often good although some pupils are inattentive in science, geography, design and technology and physical education classes. Pupils are particularly attentive in their English, art, history and business studies classes.

22. Pupils' skills in numeracy are typical of those found in most schools. Most handle, interpret and present data well. Many measure and estimate accurately in science. Lower attainers struggle in design and technology in applying number skills and some Year 9 pupils demonstrated a poor grasp of decimals in history. They were unable to calculate the change in Ireland's population in the potato famine when it went from 8.2 millions to 6.8 millions. Pupils in Year 7 were confident in using four-figure grid references in geography.
23. Pupils' information technology skills across the curriculum are mostly below average, largely because they make very little use of computers. Very little use of computers was seen outside that in specialist rooms.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

24. Pupils' attitudes to all aspects of school life are generally positive. They mostly behave well and show genuine consideration for each other. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour were very good in a quarter of all lessons, good or better in three-quarters and at least satisfactory in 96 per cent. They were always satisfactory in Years 11 and 13.
25. At the time of the last inspection, pupils were found to have good attitudes to their work and application to studies. This is still the case. Pupils are mostly interested in their work and want to succeed. They respond well to good teaching. At lesson changeover time, many pupils move quickly to their next lesson and settle down without fuss. However, a significant minority loiters and is late to lessons. Pupils with special educational needs generally show good attitudes to work and behave well in lessons.
26. Although pupils interviewed said they liked school, they did not show a great deal of enthusiasm in their comments. Pupils who take part in extra-curricular activities enjoy the opportunities to pursue additional interests such as sports and music. Pupils mostly behave well in and around school. They move quietly and sensibly along corridors and up and down stairs. They are usually polite to adults. At lunchtime, pupils wait their turn sensibly, both inside and outside the dining room. There is a pleasant and sociable atmosphere in the dining room. They walk around during the breaks in small groups or find somewhere to sit and talk. There is no social seating provided. The number of pupils whom the school has to exclude for a fixed period of time is about average. The number of permanent exclusions is below average. The school only excludes pupils when all other support and help have failed.
27. Pupils, parents and teachers report that there is very little bullying or any form of harassment and that any incidents are dealt with quickly and fairly. Pupils show consideration for each other. They listened with respect to a pupil who, in an English lesson, talked about his asthmatic condition. In science, pupils in a practical group were extremely helpful to a deaf boy working with them. Younger pupils learn to care for animals at the animal club and pupils with special educational needs especially benefit from this club.
28. There are few opportunities for pupils to take on responsibility. There is a school council, which has successfully argued for girls to be allowed to wear trousers all the year round and is helping to develop a new anti-bullying policy. Sixth formers have no additional responsibilities. Relationships in the school are good. Pupils generally mix well together. Relationships between pupils and teachers are also good and this often enhances learning. In a low ability Year 10 English group, for instance, the strength of the teacher's rapport with pupils resulted in very good response and learning. Pupils

- have confidence in their form tutors and heads of year and know they will be listened to if they have difficulty with their work or experience personal problems.
29. Attendance is unsatisfactory. It has remained relatively static for the past four years. Last year attendance overall was 88.3 per cent, which is below the national average. Unauthorised absence is above the national average. Punctuality at the start of the day and to lessons is also unsatisfactory. Attendance so far this term is again averaging between 88 and 89 percent with some significant poor attendance, particularly in all tutor groups in Year 11 and the lower band in Year 9. However, during their week of work experience, most Year 11 pupils attended their chosen placements every day. Pupils in the sixth form mostly attend very well. Their attendance has improved significantly since the introduction of the education maintenance allowance, which is withdrawn if they are not at school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

30. The overall quality of teaching is good. That at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form is a little better than that at Key Stage 3 and the best teaching is in Years 11 and 13. These figures are reflected in the quality of pupils' learning. The teaching in 94 per cent of the 203 lessons observed was satisfactory or better. Sixty per cent of the lessons were good or better. In 16 per cent of lessons the teaching was very good or excellent. Teaching was less than satisfactory in six per cent of lessons.
31. The quality of teaching in English is good at Key Stage 3, very good at Key Stage 4 and excellent in the sixth form. The main strengths of the teaching of English are the planning, methodology and management of pupils, resulting in interested, motivated pupils who attain good standards. This was amply demonstrated in a very successful lesson with a middle set of Year 11 pupils working on the poems of Simon Armitage where attainment was above average and learning was very good. The teaching of single sex groups, as seen in a Year 11 lesson to girls on persuasive writing, is succeeding in raising standards.
32. Teaching in mathematics is satisfactory at Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form and good at Key Stage 4. The teacher's probing questions, good use of the overhead projector and successful summing up ensured that a Year 8 top set understood demanding work on the area of a trapezium. That in science is good at all stages. A very good Year 10 science lesson on investigation techniques challenged the above-average pupils to attain well above average standards. The style of delivery was clear and lively and the teacher's enthusiasm transferred to the pupils.
33. The teaching of art, food technology, geography, modern foreign languages and music is generally good. A very successful German lesson on leisure and entertainment, with a low attaining set of Year 11 pupils, was conducted largely in the foreign language, had high expectations and elicited a very good response from committed pupils. An effective art lesson, with Year 7, on colour mixing, used good strategies that facilitated learning. The most able were challenged well. A very successful Year 10 food studies lesson with lower-band pupils followed on well from earlier work on healthy eating and had very clear aims. The thorough planning ensured good learning for a very co-operative group of pupils. A bottom Year 7 set behaved very well and learned a lot in a French vocabulary lesson because the teacher had created a very good learning environment, challenged the pupils well and used a very effective and lively opening routine.

34. The teaching in the other subjects is largely satisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge. Methodology is particularly effective in English and in food technology and the management of pupils, which is a general strength, is very strong in modern foreign languages. A Year 12 GNVQ engineering lesson supported individual pupils well with a clear emphasis on safety. The lucid guidance resulted in good learning.
35. The planning of lessons is good in general. It is not satisfactory, however, in business studies and in physical education. Too little account is taken of the National Curriculum in the latter subject. Individual pupils' needs are not met well enough in business studies. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are generally high in most subjects but not inappropriate. However, they are not high enough in business studies and the planning of art work limits the aspirations of both higher and lower attaining pupils.
36. The very good management of pupils is a clear contributory factor to the successful teaching in English, modern foreign languages and music in particular. Management is not good enough in physical education, however, as the needs of all pupils are not provided for and time is not used well enough.
37. The six per cent of lessons that were unsatisfactory had a variety of characteristics. A Year 7 science lesson was not satisfactory because the pace was slow and many pupils were unclear what they were expected to do. Consequently many learned very little. A Year 8 design and technology lesson on designing and making tilting mirrors was not successful because the demonstrations were not effective and pupils' prior knowledge was not used. There was insufficient attention to safety and pupils made too little use of hand tools; their learning was unsatisfactory. The pace of a Year 9 art lesson was too slow and the needs of pupils with statements of special educational needs were not met. A Year 10 physical education lesson on the circulatory system was not challenging enough and allowed pupils to spend time unnecessarily copying from a textbook. The learning and attainment suffered accordingly. Some teachers have not yet adjusted to the new length of lessons. Other lessons had too much didactic teaching, insufficiently involving pupils.
38. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. However, the shortage of special needs staff means that the needs of many pupils who have literacy and numeracy problems are not met. A Year 8 literacy lesson with low attaining pupils was successful because the teacher used effective strategies including good assessments of pupils' progress. The teaching of *Key Skills* to sixth formers is generally sound but some A-level mathematicians found the numeracy work far too easy and others found the literacy work not challenging enough.
39. The school meets the needs of most pupils but those with special educational needs have too little additional classroom support and so make unsatisfactory progress. Pupils' acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding is good overall and their intellectual, physical and creative efforts are also of a good standard. Pupils generally work well in lessons. Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are of satisfactory quality and contain appropriate targets. The consistent use of assessment to ensure targets are kept up to date is only now being developed.
40. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs who are withdrawn from lessons is good. Where they are taught in mainstream classes, teaching is less effective. Although there are examples of good practice, in history and modern languages for example, there is a lack of work tailored to the individual needs of these pupils in most lessons.

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

41. During the last academic year the planning and organisation of the curriculum have been reviewed and strengthened by the appointment of a deputy head with this responsibility. There is now a clear rationale for curricular provision and a plan for the monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum. Since the beginning of this term the school has become involved in the Local Education Authority partnership 'Excellence in Cities'. A learning support unit has been established and the school has been chosen to take part in a national Key Stage 3 pilot on the curriculum scheme for literacy. Similar work has begun to improve numeracy. These initiatives are comparatively recent and have not, as yet, had full impact on the curriculum in the classroom. An audit of departmental development planning has, however, taken place. One change that is in place is the alteration to the school day with six single periods rather than four double lessons. A small number of teachers have found difficulty in re-adjusting to the new length of periods.
42. The curriculum at Key Stage 3 meets with statutory requirements but has some unsatisfactory features. There is a lack of balance because insufficient time is provided for the aesthetic and creative aspects of pupils' learning. Although the organisation of music and art has been altered in response to reservations expressed in the last report, only one lesson per week is allocated to each subject. This does not allow programmes of study to be covered adequately. Drama as a separate subject is not provided and, although some elements are taught within English, a whole range of skills and knowledge is not covered. The time allocated to physical education is less than that recommended and some pupils studying a second modern language miss their full entitlement of lessons to physical education because their extra modern foreign languages lesson is taken from physical education.
43. At Key Stage 4 the curriculum fails to meet statutory requirements in information technology for about half the pupils and in physical education for all and is, thus, unsatisfactory. An adequate range of options is available and these are clearly set out in a helpful booklet. The allocation of time to subjects is, in the main, adequate.
44. In the sixth form pupils have a wide choice covering A and AS level as well as GNVQ courses at different levels. The lack of provision for religious education noted in the previous report has been partially remedied but there is still insufficient time and statutory requirements are not met. There are many small groups, particularly at GCE A level, with some containing only one or two pupils. Although the school is understandably keen to retain a range of A-level courses, the sixth form is not cost effective, particularly in the light of insufficient staffing for support in lessons at Key Stage 3 for pupils with special educational needs.
45. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is the same as that offered to other pupils. Pupils with physical handicaps are fully involved in all activities. Six pupils are disapplied from the National Curriculum but none is withdrawn from collective worship.
46. Extra-curricular provision is satisfactory overall. It is good in physical education with a wide range of activities on offer. It is also good in music. There are a few subject-related activities but not as many as are often available in similar schools. The animal club run by the science department for Years 7 and 8 is very popular. The geography

- department runs successful field trips and a breakfast revision club for pupils in Year 11.
47. Personal and social education (PSE) is taught to all pupils for one period a week and is of good quality. There are suitable policies for sex education and drugs awareness. There is good provision for sex education; this is an improvement since the last inspection. PSE work also includes environmental education, citizenship and careers education and guidance. In one lesson with Year 9 pupils, the school chaplain focused on prayer and challenged pupils as to which type of prayers they used. Pupils responded very well. Pupils in Year 8 discussed the qualities of friendship and what makes a good friend. The school makes positive use of outside speakers. On one occasion, sixth form pupils used role-play effectively to support pupils in Year 8 on drug education. The Drugs Awareness Officer from the Local Education Authority led the session and pupils were given the opportunity to discuss the dangers of drugs such as heroin, cannabis and alcohol. Pupils reported that they enjoyed the sessions and valued the contribution made by the sixth form pupils.
 48. Careers education and guidance begin in Year 9. The quality is good and the work is enhanced by good resources and visiting speakers. The pupils are supported well in making option choices for Key Stage 4. Parents and pupils report that they are satisfied with the school's efforts. Work experience takes place in Year 11 and, although it is only for one week, most pupils find it to be a positive experience. In a successful Year 11 lesson, pupils discussed their feelings about their work experience; many had learned from it and had their career aspirations confirmed. The teacher was able to guide pupils into career opportunities in the locality, some on a part-time basis. Pupils in the sixth form report their satisfaction with the careers and guidance advice received, especially into the next stage of their education.
 49. The school provides a clearly defined supportive structure in which pupils are taught Christian values. The school adopts a wide range of suitable strategies to stimulate spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Many of these are successful. Overall the provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. This is evident in the good relationships at all levels within the school. Most pupils are valued as individuals and encouraged to fulfil their potential but the inadequate provision for pupils with special educational needs makes the reality much less successful than the philosophy in their case.
 50. Spiritual development makes a good contribution to the life of the school and is promoted in religious education, worship, the harvest festival and some out-of-school visits. However, further development of this aspect is missing in most subjects of the curriculum. The school plans for a daily act of collective worship for all pupils but not all form groups benefit from this. The music department plays an active role during the regular hymn practice assemblies. The school employs a chaplain on a half timetable dedicated to promoting the pupils' spiritual development. A team of staff and pupils meets regularly to discuss the further development of spirituality. A very good reflective service during a personal and social education lesson with responsive Year 9 pupils was led by the chaplain and encouraged by the form tutor. Although still of overall good quality, provision for spiritual development lacks whole school consistency and has not improved sufficiently since the previous inspection.
 51. Provision for the pupils' moral development is good. The personal and social education programme is effective. Sex education is suitably integrated into the personal relationships part of this programme. The classroom code of conduct is also a strong feature of this programme and its success is evidenced by the good behaviour, respect for people and property and tolerance of other people's values and

opinions demonstrated throughout the school. Expensive school property is particularly well looked after in music and information technology. Teachers provide very good role models in the aspect of moral development and provision has improved since the previous inspection.

52. Despite the school's philosophy stated in the brochure, the provision for social skills is barely satisfactory. It is limited to large-scale ventures such as fund raising and organising Christmas parties for the handicapped. There is no formal system of prefects or monitors and opportunities to be on the school council are limited in number. The best opportunity for real responsibility in a social context is to be a school librarian. Extra-curricular activities are limited to the customary physical education, music and drama. There are no social areas for pupils to meet and sixth form pupils no longer have their own common room. Sixth formers continue to play an insufficient role in the life of the school. In lessons there is a culture of didactic teaching in most subjects other than English and modern foreign languages, which restricts initiative. In music pupils share equipment and help each other effectively. Provision for social development has not improved since the previous inspection.
53. Provision for cultural development has improved since the previous inspection and is now sound. In music there is a good balance of work from other cultures including Caribbean and Indian. Pupils attend orchestral concerts and have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument and sing in the choir. In modern foreign languages, particularly in the sixth form, there is good quality multi-cultural provision in many lessons. There are also excursions to Rome and Sorrento and an adventure holiday in France. In mathematics wall displays illustrate number systems from different cultures. However, overall there are too few opportunities for pupils in an almost all-white school to become aware of other cultures they will meet in society.
54. The school has satisfactory links with its main feeder primary schools and works very closely with them, particularly to ensure a smooth transfer for Year 6 pupils moving up. Curricular links are beginning to develop in literacy and there has been some exchange of expertise in information technology, music and physical education. Links with the local college have been created which are benefiting some sixth form pupils. The school is used in the evening for adult education and, in response, college tutors support some A-level and GNVQ teaching.
55. Links with the community are weak and the school is working to improve these. It is situated in an area where there is little business or industry with which to develop ties. The local Rotary Club conducts mock interviews every year to help pupils prepare for job interviews. GNVQ health and social care pupils work with the local community as part of their course. Some charity fund raising is undertaken in response to specific drives such as the Macmillan coffee mornings and the Romanian Shoe Box appeal, and pupils support these events well.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

56. Pupils are supported effectively by a well-organised pastoral system where tutors and heads of year have a key role. A deputy headteacher co-ordinates year teams successfully. The director of sixth form has responsibility for sixth form pupils and their welfare. Parents and pupils are pleased with the care and support given to pupils throughout the school. Tutors remain with their groups throughout the school and acquire a good knowledge of individual pupils. Tutors meet with their groups for fifteen minutes on three mornings in the week when prayers normally begin the day and

homework diaries are checked. This time is not used effectively by all teachers. It is not used, for example, to extend the PSE work done on Tuesday morning by the tutor with his or her group. Pupils' academic progress is monitored by heads of year and tutors ensure that targets for raising standards are adhered to. Tutors and other teachers mentor a group of underachieving pupils in Years 10 and 11 with a view to improving their GCSE results.

57. Procedures for child protection are in place and all staff follow the guidance of the Local Education Authority. The support from the Social Services is good. There is no health and safety officer in the school and no policy in place. Risk assessments do not take place systematically throughout the school, particularly in physical education and in design and technology. Some health and safety issues identified in the previous inspection have yet to be attended to and these have been reported to the school. The flagged areas and pathways around the school are particular hazards.
58. The school works very closely with its feeder primary schools to make transfer as smooth and unthreatening as possible for pupils arriving in Year 7. There is a very strong emphasis on pastoral links. Schools share information sensitively to enable pupils to settle in quickly and confidently.
59. Attendance is closely monitored by form tutors and heads of year. New ideas to encourage pupils to attend regularly are tried. The best attending tutor group in each year group is recognised each week. Individual pupils who achieve 100 per cent attendance for a month have a reward sticker placed in their planner. Pupils are also given certificates for achieving full attendance for a half term and a term. A pilot scheme to telephone parents of Year 9 pupils on the first day of absence has been introduced this term as have efforts to improve the attendance of pupils in Years 10 and 11 whose attendance averages around 85 per cent. Each sixth form pupil is monitored every week for attendance, attainment and progress and attitudes. Punctuality is followed through less well in the sixth form but satisfactorily lower down the school.
60. Awards evenings have been introduced to recognise achievements in work and effort in Years 8 and 10, which have been very well received by pupils and parents. On the first Friday of each month, there are special assemblies that again recognise pupils' efforts and letters home inform parents of their children's awards. Merits are stamped into pupils' planners and they are proud of these rewards.
61. Assessment practice has improved since the previous inspection. Whole school documentation sets out a clear philosophy for assessment building on day-to-day practice leading to a suitable record for each pupil. A mid-year review of this follows up negative responses in three or more subject areas with parental interviews to set targets for improvement in the relevant skills. All pupils receive full reports towards the end of the academic year. Parents are invited to respond in writing to the report and attend a progress evening within weeks of receiving the report. Punctuality and attendance are suitably recorded. The assessment, recording and reporting of the progress of pupils with special educational needs is inadequate.
62. Assessment on a day to day basis is usually up to date. The quality, however, is still too variable both within and between departments. The best assessment involves pupils and informs future learning. The quality of marking is satisfactory overall. The best tells pupils how to improve their work. However, there is no culture across the whole school of regularly giving written feedback in exercise books with clear steps for improvement. Monitoring of marking within departments is left to individual heads of

- department, creating inconsistencies in quality. Senior management do not have an overview of marking.
63. The school policy on assessment, recording and reporting states that all departments attempt to track the attainment levels of all pupils from Year 7 onwards. However, whilst good practice in using assessment to help planning the curriculum occurs in modern foreign languages and design and technology, such planning is much less effective in physical education, geography, history and business studies.
64. Analysis of results and target setting are at an early stage. There is an analysis of examination results of boys and of girls and this information is passed to departments. Data about pupils' standards when they arrive at the school and the results of standardised tests in Years 7, 9 and 10 are used to set targets upon which a departmental performance analysis is based. Some departments have found difficulty in accepting that these targets are realistic. The very thorough analysis of both target and results data that began less than a year ago is not yet accompanied by systematic monitoring of individual departments to provide support and disseminate good practice where it exists.
65. All pupils leave with a well-presented National Record of Achievement. There is a major awards evening for this in April of Year 11. Despite the improvements that have taken place over the last two years and the comprehensive policy that is in place, assessment practice is no more than satisfactory.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

66. Parents are mostly supportive of the school and its work with their children. They cooperate well with teachers when asked to discuss individual problems and concerns. Parents are kept informed about progress through meetings and reports.
67. The vast majority of parents who completed the questionnaire and attended the inspection parents' meeting were very positive about the school. They feel the school enables their children to achieve good standards in their work and to develop well as young people. The school tries hard to involve and interest parents in their children's education. Social events organised by the parents-school association are aimed primarily at encouraging parents to come into school rather than at raising money. New ideas for the organisation and timing of parents' evenings have been well received and an appointments system has now been introduced. New awards afternoons and evenings have also proved popular with parents and are planned to be annual events. Parents value seeing their children rewarded for effort as well as achievement. Most parents sign home-school diaries, but the section for comments is not often used for messages between school and home.
68. When parents are invited to discuss the school's concerns about their children's progress or behaviour they usually attend. Teachers find most parents very supportive and helpful. Parents sign report forms and back up the school's efforts to improve behaviour. However, some do allow their children to be absent without good reason. Parents usually attend annual reviews for pupils with special educational needs and the school maintains satisfactory formal and informal contacts with them.
69. Reports to parents, although satisfactory overall, are of variable quality. At Key Stage 3, there is no discrete report on information technology. The reports show how pupils are doing in relation to others and to their expected level of work and also grade the effort pupils are making. Some subjects describe well what pupils have been learning;

others are more generalised. Teachers make suggestions for improvement and development, but this is not standard. Parents are invited to comment on the reports and many do, recognising their own children's strengths and weaknesses.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

70. The senior managers of the school are all new to their posts. The headteacher has been in post for a little over two years, one deputy for a little over a year and the other for a few weeks. Other members of the senior team are also relatively new to their posts. They work well together and provide satisfactory management for the school. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school.
71. Despite the general soundness of management and the fact that the school is improving, and is generally effective, there are significant weaknesses in management. The school's aims are not explicitly stated although there is a mission statement that is meaningful and successfully implemented. Senior staff work very hard but do not identify priorities clearly enough and tasks are not always seen through to completion. The headteacher delegates insufficiently and undertakes tasks and duties that should be done by others.
72. Teaching and learning are promoted effectively in the main. The senior staff do not, however, monitor the quality of teaching although there are plans to do this. The headteacher spends very little time around the school. He, and his senior colleagues, do have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The heads of the mathematics physical education departments do some monitoring of teaching in their subjects.
73. The governors are not sufficiently involved in the work of the school and do not fulfil all their responsibilities satisfactorily. A small number of governors demonstrate a clear awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors have not ensured that the needs of pupils with special educational needs are met although the governor with specific responsibility for special educational needs is conscientious and hardworking. They have allowed a large number of health and safety concerns to run on for a long time - several of which were identified at the time of the last inspection. There are gaps in the curriculum at Key Stage 4 with regard to information technology and physical education and in the sixth form there is insufficient time for RE. Not all pupils attend a daily act of collective worship. The governors do not sufficiently provide a sense of direction for the school nor hold the school to account for the standards achieved. No performance targets have been set for the headteacher.
74. The monitoring of the school's performance is at an early stage. Suitable mechanisms are in place and useful data on examination and test results and pupils' backgrounds has been collected. The school has conducted realistic audits of its achievements and identified shortcomings and areas for development. Examination targets are not clearly stated. The current school development planning documents do not form a useful working tool. There is no concise statement of what needs to be done, how it will be done and how success will be measured.
75. The quality of departmental development planning is good. A uniform format has been adopted and most heads of departments have produced clear and workable documents. All staff demonstrate a clear and shared commitment to improvement.

76. The school fulfils legal requirements with regard to equal opportunities. There is a member of senior management with responsibility for monitoring equality of opportunity. The Equal Opportunities policy is brief and does not include clear guidelines about how the policy is to be put into practice, or monitored. Recent staff development has included some work on boys' attainment but not on other aspects of equality of opportunity. Appropriate provision is made, where possible, for pupils with physical disabilities.
77. Day to day administration is adequate. The office manager and clerks know their individual roles. They work well as a team. Teachers are relieved of routine administration such as bulk photocopying. Most importantly office staff are a friendly, welcoming first point of contact to pupils, parents and other visitors either in person or on the telephone. There is currently no cohesive filing system, which means that essential information cannot always be tracked down. A part-time administrator is in the early stages of developing a new system. New information technology systems for administration, monitoring and assessment of all aspects of the school are being put into place.
78. The headteacher has worked hard to reverse a significant budget deficit which he inherited. This had a major impact on the resources for learning which could be purchased and which were found to be inadequate at the last inspection. The school is now beginning to plan forward spending. Appropriate use is made of specific grants - for example, to extend provision for special educational needs, to set up the Trinity Centre for disruptive pupils and to develop new administrative systems.
79. Routine financial management is secure. There are good systems in place to monitor and manage the budget and careful checks are made of all transactions. Heads of department manage their own budgets, which they monitor themselves. Governors monitor spending at meetings of the finance committee and in full sessions of the governing body. The school is beginning to apply the principles of best value to management and the use of resources.
80. A major concern is the recent audit report. Although the overall judgement is that financial procedures are running well and that budget monitoring is sound, there are many recommendations to be implemented. Most worryingly, some of the recommendations were made at the previous audit and had not been acted upon.
81. Taking into account the pupils' social and academic backgrounds, the fact that the school has low income and expenditure per pupil, the good teaching and quality of learning, the school gives good value for money.
82. There are enough teachers to meet the demands of the curriculum and the match between qualifications and subjects taught is good. The pupil to teacher ratio is a little more favourable than average and the proportion of time spent teaching is slightly below average for the type and size of school.
83. The number of teachers and learning support assistants for pupils with special educational needs is inadequate. The very recent appointments made will not radically improve this position. The co-ordinator for special educational needs has shown good leadership in preparing individual education plans and in ensuring that staff are aware of them. However, she does not have sufficient time available, either for teaching pupils with special educational needs, or for effective administration of the learning support department. The senior management and governors have been

aware of this problem for some time and, because of budget constraints, little effective action has been taken until very recently.

84. Since the last inspection a technician has been appointed for information technology and the librarian is now a full time appointment. There is no technician in art. There has been a slight increase in the amount of administration and clerical staff and they provide good support for the smooth running of the school.
85. Many of the professional development needs of staff are met but some need further training to develop confidence and expertise in the teaching of information technology. There are no strategies to enable the dissemination of the much good teaching that takes place throughout the school. Many staff are unaware of the successful developments in other schools. The arrangements for the support and induction of newly qualified teachers are good and much appreciated by the beneficiaries.
86. There has been a small improvement in the quality of the accommodation since the last inspection including replacement of exterior window frames in some blocks but there has been no increase in the number of teaching rooms and many safety hazards remain. The accommodation for food technology, modern foreign languages and music is good but refurbishment is needed in design and technology and art rooms. Some English and mathematics lessons are taught in the dining hall. The assembly hall is unsuitable for gymnastics and the library is too small for development as a central resource facility. There are not enough playing fields and no social areas or seating outside. The accommodation overall is inadequate.
87. There has been an increase in centrally located information technology resources but there are serious shortages of up-to-date equipment for use in almost all subject areas. There are still not enough books in the library. Teachers bring their own personal audio equipment for use in English lessons and there is a shortage of audio-visual equipment in art. There are not enough resources for pupils with special educational needs and insufficient equipment for gymnastics. Overall, there are insufficient resources for learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

88. In order to sustain the current improvements and further the sound quality of education provided, the governing body and senior staff should now:
- (1) Improve the GCSE results, particularly in mathematics, art, geography, history and RE by ensuring that lesson plans cater for the needs of all pupils, the pace of lessons is appropriately brisk, the work set is challenging enough and that assessment information is used fully in the planning. (see paragraphs 12, 37, 108, 129, 145 and 152)
 - (2)
 - (a) Raise the standards of information technology across the curriculum by making sure that all subjects make full use of the available resources, that appropriate resources are provided for departmental use and that staff are fully trained, competent and confident in the use of computers. (69, 82, 85, 112, 121, 124, 135, 144, 156, 159, 160, 170 and 174).
 - (b) Improve pupils' games skills by ensuring they understand the rules and practise the necessary skills. (9, 15, 180 and 181)
 - (c) Increase pupils' proficiency in using design and technology hand tools. (14, 37 and 134)
 - (3) Increase the amount of support for pupils with special educational needs. (20, 38, 39, 49, 73, 83, 93, 111, 120 and 165)
 - (4) Improve pupils' attendance and punctuality. (24, 25, 29, 68, 115 and 127)
 - (5)
 - (a) Improve the balance of the curriculum at Key Stage 3 by providing more aesthetic experiences for pupils. Ensure that art and music have sufficient time and, when possible, offer a course in drama. (42, 98, 131 and 176)
 - (b) Ensure that the curriculum at Key Stage 4 covers the expected content for information technology and for physical education for all pupils. (43, 73, 160 and 186)
 - (6) Clarify the school's aims, improve the whole-school development planning, introduce systematic monitoring of the school's work and ensure that the governors are more involved in the work of the school. Ensure that the headteacher delegates appropriately. (62, 64, 71, 72, 73, 74, 83 and 145)
 - (7) Improve the quality, appearance and maintenance of the accommodation and the quantity of learning resources and attend urgently to the many minor health and safety concerns notified to the school. (57, 73, 86 and 87)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	203
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	85

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	12	44	34	6	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	923	122
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	308	48

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	18	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	176	0

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	16

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	11.4	School data	1.4
National comparative data	7.9	National comparative data	1.1

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	79	94	173

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	41	25	28
	Girls	67	38	35
	Total	108	63	63
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	62 (57)	36 (38)	36 (46)
	National	63 (65)	62 (59)	55 (56)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	19 (17)	14 (12)	6 (14)
	National	28 (35)	38 (36)	23 (27)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	38	34	24
	Girls	66	47	40
	Total	104	81	64
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	61 (52)	47 (46)	37 (19)
	National	64 (62)	64 (63)	60 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	18 (7)	25 (15)	9 (4)
	National	31 (31)	37 (37)	28 (31)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	66	89	155

GCSE results		5 or more grades A to C	5 or more grades A to G	1 or more grades A to G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	6	43	59
	Girls	23	69	83
	Total	29	112	142
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	19 (31)	72 (80)	92 (92)
	National	47 (46)	91 (88)	96 (93)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score	School	24 (27.5)

per pupil	National	38.0 (36.8)
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Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of the sixth form

Number of pupils aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	5	12	17

Average A/AS point 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	15.6	9.1	11.1 (14.1)	n/a	14.0	14.0 (0)
National	17.7	18.1	17.9 (17.1)	2.7	2.8	2.8 (2.7)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	0
Indian	3
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	1038
Any other minority ethnic group	0

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	59	2
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	64
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	7.3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	265.3

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	76.1
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y13

Key Stage 3	22.8
Key Stage 4	23.6

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	2,201,895
Total expenditure	2,224,763
Expenditure per pupil	2129
Balance brought forward from previous year	69445
Balance carried forward to next year	46,577

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1045
Number of questionnaires returned	91

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	42	52	4	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	41	46	4	2	7
Behaviour in the school is good.	27	52	10	2	9
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	47	16	2	0
The teaching is good.	42	42	7	1	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	38	38	14	2	7
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	25	4	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	27	1	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	37	40	12	2	9
The school is well led and managed.	42	42	4	0	12
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	42	4	4	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35	37	11	1	16

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

ENGLISH

89. Pupils' overall standard of attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with that found nationally. In the 1999 national tests for 14-year-olds, the percentage of pupils reaching at least levels 5 and 6 was close to the national average. Performance was well above average when compared with that of similar schools. The average points score of boys was nearer to boys' national average than that of girls was to their national average. Results in the tests in 2000 fell a little for the percentage reaching level 5, although the percentage reaching at least level 6 matched the 1999 figure.
90. The general standard of work seen at the end of Key Stage 4 and the most recent GCSE results are in line with the national expectation. In GCSE English language and English literature in 1999 the percentage of pupils achieving grades A* to C was below the national average. The average points score of boys and girls was roughly the same degree below their respective national averages. Pupils do better in both language and literature examinations than they do in the majority of other subjects. Performance in GCSE in 2000 showed a marked upward trend, with a significant improvement in literature.
91. The standard of attainment in the sixth form exceeds course requirements. At A level in 1999, pupils' average points score was below the national average but in 2000 there was a marked improvement, with the average points score above the recent national averages.
92. Pupils of all ages listen attentively. They work productively in pairs and small groups. The quality of speech varies considerably. Most pupils answer questions enthusiastically but do not always have the confidence to develop ideas. Some pupils in Year 7 lack audibility and fluency, but one group of pupils with special educational needs read aloud clearly from a modern version of *Beowulf*, and gave lively and articulate short talks based upon their own experiences. With regular practice through planned oral work, standards improve steadily and, by the end of Key Stage 4, the majority of pupils make competent use of the spoken form of standard English in formal situations. Pupils listen closely and patiently in groupwork and communicate effectively with each other. High attaining pupils in Year 11 collaborate very successfully, work at pace, and benefit from sharing ideas. In the sixth form, pupils develop close and detailed analysis of texts through mature and well-informed discussion.
93. Attainment in reading is in line with that found nationally. The general standard of reading comprehension throughout the school is average and enables pupils to enjoy a wide range of literature. A significant number of pupils have a reading age below their chronological age on entry to the school. Many benefit from withdrawal for specialist help but there is insufficient assistance in classrooms for those encountering difficulty with reading. Pupils with special educational needs are managed with great sensitivity and skill within the department and great care is taken to provide reading materials closely matched to pupils' level of attainment. The shortage of books in the library, noted in the last report, has not been remedied and the book stock is still inadequate to provide proper support for the curriculum.

94. The standard of written work is average overall. It is, in the main, neatly presented throughout the school. Most pupils edit and draft their work effectively but a few average and low attaining pupils fail to notice and correct frequent errors in sentence structure, spelling and punctuation. Most pupils write for a range of audiences and purposes. High attaining pupils in Year 11, for example, write convincingly and accurately, using persuasive language in various pamphlets promoting good causes and charities. At the end of Key Stage 4, some writing of well above average standard is produced in assignments for examination assessment, especially in response to the study of literature. This work is skilfully crafted and accurate in detail. Much lively and attractive work is on display in classrooms and corridors, particularly pupils' own poems.
95. Almost all pupils throughout the school are well motivated and eager to learn. Relationships are mutually respectful and pupils show tolerance and understanding of the views of others, especially when working in groups. Behaviour in class is uniformly good regardless of pupils' levels of attainment, with particularly positive responses from average and lower attaining pupils. These positive attitudes are a strength of the department.
96. There has been a clear improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection, with little evidence of the over reliance on teacher exposition noted then. Management has improved. Marking has also improved and is now consistent and conscientious with much helpful and constructive comment aimed at raising standards. Consequently, standards of attainment have risen.
97. The quality of teaching is good at Key Stage 3, very good at Key Stage 4 and excellent in the sixth form; it is never less than satisfactory. Teachers' knowledge of the subject is very good with especially high academic standards in the sixth form. Lessons are very carefully planned and thoroughly prepared. Pupils are clear about their tasks and know what is expected of them both in attainment and behaviour. Teachers use a wide range of methods and approaches, matching these skilfully to pupils' interests and levels of attainment. Questioning of pupils is rigorous. In almost all lessons relationships are very positive, with pupils responding well to very good classroom management and organisation. Teachers constantly draw pupils' attention, in a sensitive way, to differences between local variation in language and standard English.
98. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. Departmental documentation is very thorough and informative. Schemes of work are related to National Curriculum requirements and allow teachers freedom in their use of methods. Some drama is taught in English lessons but drama is not available as a separate subject. Regular, timetabled drama lessons throughout Key Stage 3 would help pupils to develop a wide range of skills and to improve their self-confidence. There is no adequate accommodation for drama. Most English classrooms are close together but two teachers have no rooms of their own and have to teach in inappropriate spaces that adversely affect the quality of pupils' learning. Funding for the subject is inadequate, and after set-texts have been provided, fails to allow the purchase of a sufficient choice of fiction for wider reading. The highly committed staff are well qualified and thoroughly experienced. They share a keen sense of unity and purpose. Management is both effective and efficient and the department is very well led with great energy and vision.
99. In most other subjects across the curriculum pupils listen attentively. Pupils work effectively in groups in music and modern languages. Pupils respond well to

questioning and answer well in geography. In history and business studies, pupils in the sixth form use discussion as an essential part of their learning. Development of ideas through discussion is rarely employed in mathematics or design and technology, and, in the latter subject, low levels of literacy adversely affect the pupils' learning, especially those of average or low levels of attainment.

100. The reading comprehension of the majority of pupils in all areas of the curriculum is sound enough to enable them to understand their textbooks and other reading materials. In both music and information technology, key words are displayed and emphasis is placed upon accurate use of technical vocabulary. Only in a few subjects are pupils encouraged to read aloud. They are rarely exhorted to read widely for research or to broaden their knowledge and understanding.
101. Written work is, on the whole, carefully presented in most subjects. Pupils produce extended pieces of writing in history and are trained in note taking and essay planning. There is also sound written work in science, geography, modern foreign languages and in personal and social education.

MATHEMATICS

102. In the 1999 national tests for 14-year-olds results were well below the national average. Results were also well below those in similar schools. Teacher assessments in 1999 were significantly higher than test scores. In 2000, however, the test results improved and were close to recent national averages. There is no clear trend in the results. By the end of Year 9 standards are a little below those expected. Higher attaining pupils solve problems using Pythagoras' Theorem. They also use trial and improvement methods to solve quadratic equations. Average attaining pupils predict terms in number sequences and understand how to obtain and use general formulae for such sequences but never check whether these formulae are correct. Lower attaining pupils know the names of plane shapes and identify lines of symmetry by using mirrors and by folding their own accurate *cut-outs* of the shapes. They do not spot patterns in their results. When prior attainment is taken into account, pupils achieve at least what could be expected of 14-year-olds, as was the case at the time of the previous inspection.
103. Results in GCSE in 1999 were well below the national average. The 10 per cent level of non-entry compared unfavourably with the national figure of five per cent. Results had shown a downward trend in recent years but in 2000 there was some improvement. A Certificate of Achievement was obtained by seven per cent of Year 11 pupils. The standards currently evident in the school are better than those indicated in recent GCSE examinations but remain below average. In Year 11 higher attaining pupils find unknown angles using the geometry theorems involving parallel lines. They construct and use cumulative frequency graphs but lack expertise in rearranging, factorising and solving quadratic equations. Average attaining pupils appreciate the many ways of representing data graphically and construct and use pie charts well. Lower attaining pupils calculate the probability of choosing a particular letter from a word but find difficulty transferring this skill to different contexts. Pupils are achieving standards commensurate with their prior attainment.
104. Results at A level are well below average. In 1999 only three pupils were entered and results were poor. In 2000 the only candidate was ungraded. This downward trend has been prevalent in recent years. By the end of Year 13 pupils use formulae for compound and double angles but only by looking up the formulae. Pupils manipulate

formulae to prove equivalence to another but too often this is with considerable guidance. Observed work was below course expectations.

105. Throughout the school, pupils are respectful of each other, teachers and of both their own and the school's property. Work is well presented, exercise books are free from graffiti and pupils work hard particularly when they are challenged and lessons have pace. Attitudes to learning are satisfactory and behaviour is good.
106. Improvements in management and leadership have resulted in some improvements in teaching. Standards at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 are no better than at the time of the last inspection and there has been a decline in the sixth form standards.
107. Teaching is satisfactory overall but ranges from unsatisfactory to very good. In Years 7, 8 and 9 it is mostly satisfactory and is sometimes good or very good. It is, however, occasionally unsatisfactory. In Years 10 and 11 teaching is always at least satisfactory and is often good or very good. Teaching in the sixth form is satisfactory.
108. Teaching is most effective when pupils are given a variety of challenging tasks that engage all of them, either individually, as members of a small group or as a whole class for almost the entire lesson. In a very good Year 8 lesson with higher attainers, the pupils worked individually for two minutes to solve a difficult mental mathematics problem showing initiative and a good grasp of mental calculation. After suitable discussion of their attempts an excellent transition was made using a quality diagram of a trapezium on an overhead projector to challenge pupils to again use initiative and also oral skills to explain to the whole class how the area could be calculated. After some good explanations by the pupils on how to split the trapezium, the standard formula was agreed following good questioning by the teacher. A period of individual work to reinforce the formula was followed by demanding group work linking area to perimeter for different shapes associated with the trapezium. This contrasts sharply with the majority of lessons in Year 7 and Year 8 where mental starter activities did not engage all of the pupils and often concentrated on easy multiplication tables. Most lessons in Years 7 and 8 involve teachers' explanations that sometimes last too long, followed by an exercise from either a textbook or worksheet. Pace is often lacking, and there is rarely an attempt to check understanding by changing the context.
109. One unsatisfactory lesson on the equivalence of decimals and fractions with lower attaining pupils used a question and answer technique for most of the lesson. Although keen to participate, pupils became frustrated as only one of them could offer an answer at any one time. Lower attaining pupils in Year 11 learned very effectively when the concept of compound probability was placed in the context of a fruit machine. Pupils showed perseverance in listing all of the outcomes of a two-reeled machine with five fruits per reel. Discussion in groups helped progress.
110. The quality of learning is satisfactory. Pupils learn well if given just enough information, work is new and time and resources are used to maintain pace and variety. However, when they are led too much, work is repetitive or they are required to listen to teachers for too long, then their interest understandably wanes. Most pupils are making sound progress; however, those with special educational needs do not because they have too little additional support.
111. Teachers regularly give appropriate homework and mark it promptly. Marking follows a consistent scheme but does not allow for effort and quality to be considered separately. Marking overall is satisfactory with the best marking giving clear advice

for improving in the subject. The weakest marking is where encouragement or criticism is not qualified with advice. Assessment both on a medium and long-term basis is satisfactory. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory because work is not matched well enough to their needs and there is a serious shortage of classroom assistants to help them.

112. The curriculum covers the requirements of the National Curriculum. Work is not matched closely enough to pupils' needs in Years 7 and 8. Leadership in the department is good. Although in post only a year, the head of department has prioritised well. His energy in motivating and organising work for those classes without regular teachers has been vital in maintaining stability. All teachers, including the newly qualified teacher, have been supported well in terms of resources and teaching support. Accommodation and resources are adequate but the use of information technology is in need of significant development.
113. Although no whole school numeracy policy exists, standards of numeracy across other departments are broadly satisfactory. Pupils' number concepts and knowledge of number bonds are sound, particularly in Years 7 and 8, owing to the implementation of the national numeracy strategy in primary schools and the continued, albeit less well focused implementation of a similar strategy in these years. Pupils in Year 7, however, find difficulty measuring in both physical education and design and technology. Lower attaining Year 9 pupils in history could not calculate population decline in Ireland following the potato famine. Population figures quoted in millions exposed a deficiency in subtraction and a problem with the decimal point. This is consistent with a lack of practice in using mathematics in a real context seen in the early years in mathematics lessons.
114. Pupils' progress in most subjects is not restricted by a lack of numeracy skills. Year 7 pupils in geography use four-figure grid references confidently and GCSE pupils construct and interpret a variety of graphs including scatter graphs effectively. In science pupils measure accurately and use tables and graphs appropriately. Whilst a whole school audit has been conducted by the head of mathematics, this has not been translated into a policy both to inform departments and to learn from good practice.

SCIENCE

115. Standards achieved by the end of Key Stage 3 are in line with expectations and by the end of Key Stage 4 standards are close to the national average. Sixth form pupils achieve standards in line with course expectations. The results of the 1999 national tests for 14-year-olds were well below the national average and below those for similar schools. From 1996 to 1999 standards have been well below the national averages for boys and below average for girls. There was a significant improvement in 2000. The GCSE results in 1999 were in line with national averages in double science but well below average in single science. Girls gained a significantly higher proportion of A* and A grades in double science. In 2000 the GCSE results were below those of 1999 in double science but similar in single science. However, boys gained a much higher proportion of A* and A grades than the girls. One half of the Year 11 pupils on the Certificate of Achievement course gained the highest grade with the other half failing to complete the course because of poor attendance. The A-level results in 1999 were close to average in biology and physics and below average in the proportion gaining A or B grades in chemistry. The A-level results this year were broadly similar to those of 1999 in biology and physics and much lower in chemistry.

116. Pupils enter the school with attainment levels in science that are a little below average. Progress and learning are usually good in lessons and sometimes very good. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils have acquired a sound knowledge and secure understanding of the subject. A significant number of pupils with weak literacy skills experience difficulties in comprehending written questions and in expressing themselves both orally and in written work. Most Year 9 pupils identify parts of the body and describe some of their functions. Lower attainers describe energy changes in various devices and higher attainers have a very clear understanding of photosynthesis. The good progress in lessons continues through Key Stage 4 except for a few pupils, mainly boys who have poor attitudes. The progress and attainment of a significant number of pupils who are mainly lower and middle attainers are adversely affected by their absence. Year 11 higher attainers describe enzyme action and most pupils calculate numbers of sub-atomic particles from data. Lower attainers describe features of chemical changes in simple terms. Practical skills develop to above expected levels and some analyses and evaluations done by Year 11 pupils are particularly good. Most pupils have the numeracy skills enabling them to process their experimental results but many in a group of lower attaining Year 10 pupils were unable to draw a 'line of best fit' on their graphs. In an A-level chemistry lesson, pupils rapidly consolidated their understanding of complexions and developed good examination technique. Pupils studying A-level biology have a secure understanding of mitosis and those studying physics applied their previous knowledge well when starting a new topic on gravitational fields. Pupils on GNVQ courses take increasing responsibility for their own learning and act on appropriate guidance from their teachers. From independent research one pupil explained the advantages and disadvantages of using optical fibres for communication. In all years standards of presentation are above expectation.
117. Most pupils are well behaved, attentive, interested and keen to succeed. There is a small number of older pupils, mainly boys, who have poor attitudes, do not want to learn and frequently need to be reminded to pay attention and keep on task. Pupils co-operate in group-work safely and productively and handle equipment carefully. In one lesson pupils were very helpful towards a boy with hearing difficulties and made sure that he was fully involved in the team.
118. Attainment in GCSE and A-level examinations is similar to what it was at the time of the last inspection. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since then. Work is now more challenging and there are more opportunities for the development of investigative skills. There is more use of well-prepared materials to cater for the particular needs of pupils with differing attainment levels.
119. The quality of teaching is good overall. A little is unsatisfactory and it is very good or excellent in one third of lessons. Teachers exploit their good knowledge of pupils in establishing positive relationships and questioning them. They know their subject well and make it comprehensible by using examples to which pupils readily relate. Some tell pupils about their own personal experiences, immediately capturing their interest. Older pupils particularly benefit from the good knowledge which teachers have of course and examination requirements. Lessons are usually well planned with lively informative exposition and a good variety of activities. Management of pupils is usually a strength and teachers ensure that practical work is carried out in a safe and orderly manner. In most lessons pupils are kept busy throughout. In one lesson the teacher gathered pupils around the front bench and with a warm, friendly, caring yet firm approach explained what the lesson was about and encouraged pupils to put forward their ideas. This they did readily with the teacher sensitively curbing enthusiasm, and correcting misconceptions. Very profitable discussion involving all

ensued. A competent demonstration and a class activity leading to a final summary followed this. Pupils were fully engaged and enjoyed the lesson throughout. However, in another lesson the teacher did not ensure all pupils were listening and allowed incidental chatting and inattention to persist. Consequently the pace was slow. There was little enthusiasm and for some the task was insufficiently challenging and time was wasted. Few made any progress.

120. The need for more in-class support was evident in most classes having pupils with special needs. Their progress was only just satisfactory. Teachers were unable to meet the immediate demands of pupils needing individual help and learning was adversely affected. Gifted and talented pupils make good progress as a result of grouping arrangements and the quality of the teaching. Teachers mark pupils' work promptly, regularly and conscientiously. They often include detailed comments that help pupils move forward. Homework often reinforces classwork.
121. The curriculum has added breadth with two GCSE courses and vocational courses for sixth form pupils. The animal club organised as a lunchtime activity for pupils in Years 7 and 8 enhances it. This has particularly helped some pupils with special educational needs by improving their attitudes and behaviour. The department does not have the equipment required to develop pupils' information technology skills. Assessment procedures are accurate and the information obtained has been used to modify the curriculum. Some Year 11 boys and girls have been taught in single sex groups this term as a strategy to address underachievement. Early indications are that this is meeting with success for both sexes. Some individual target setting is taking place and needs to be developed throughout the department.
122. The department is well led and competently managed with very able subject heads. Staff work hard as a team receiving very good support from the technicians. There is a united commitment to improvement. The monitoring of teaching is informal, as are strategies for disseminating the good teaching practices throughout the department. Teachers new to the department and those who are newly qualified receive good support. There is enough accommodation but some laboratories do not have mains services on central benches, resulting in crowding during some practical work. Apart from a serious shortage of up-to-date information technology equipment, there are adequate resources.

ART

123. Over the period 1997-1999 the proportion of pupils gaining GCSE A* to C grades was well below the national average. More girls than boys achieved the higher grades, but no pupils achieved the highest grade. Pupils' performance in this popular subject in 1999 was significantly below that in most other subjects. At A-level, over the 1997-1999 period, the proportion of pupils gaining the higher grades range from well above to well below the national average, although the number achieving a pass in the subject is above the national average. The 2000 GCSE results were well below recent national averages; those at A level were better than average.
124. By the age of 14, pupils' overall level of attainment is below average. Pupils can use the digital camera, enlarge and distort imagery and paint in the style of optical artists such as Bridget Riley. Skill development in drawing and painting, in higher sets, is at least average, but pupils' knowledge and understanding of what they are doing or why they are doing it are often less than might be expected by this age. Pupils in lower sets are unaware of the correct terms for equipment, materials or processes and

have low skill development in two and three-dimensional work. Sketchbooks are under-used for planning or problem-solving activities although used well for homework. The use of information technology is currently limited by the lack of appropriate software.

125. By the age of 16, pupils' overall level of attainment is below average. Pupils in higher sets generally draw, paint and use graphics techniques appropriately and use these to communicate their ideas. These pupils research a subject before selecting a course of action. Lower attainers, usually boys, often show initial interest in their chosen theme but are not always prepared to invest sufficient time or energy in order to improve their standard of attainment.
126. By the age of 18, pupils' overall level of attainment is above average. Drawing skills are more secure and freer painting styles are evident in figurative studies as well as in views taken from the local industrial landscape. Life drawing classes and visits to local galleries are beneficial in increasing knowledge and understanding. Personal studies, based on interviews and first-hand experience of the work of living artists, are generally of a high standard.
127. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are generally good in Years 7 to 11 and very good in the sixth form. Pupils offered good support to a wheelchair bound pupil. Regular absence from school, particularly for boys, leads to a lack of motivation and slows progress.
128. The department and the senior staff in the school have not made sufficient progress in responding to the criticisms in the last report, and this is reflected in the failure to improve standards at GCSE. The quality of teaching has been maintained, however, and departmental management has improved.
129. The quality of teaching is good; a little is unsatisfactory and some is very good. The best teaching occurs with higher sets or with A-level and GNVQ classes; the less effective, in both key stages, is with pupils with special educational needs. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and understanding and high credibility as artists. They use this status to advantage in extending pupils' vision beyond the school situation. Teachers enrich the subject being studied by visits from illustrators, participation in local initiatives, such as the family sculpture day for Year 9 pupils, and by encouraging pupils to celebrate their own area's contribution to the visual arts. They recognise the need to keep a tight control over pupils' working practices, even in the sixth form. Their classroom assessment in Key Stage 3 is, however, not diagnostic in identifying gaps in individual learning, and planning does not take sufficient account of the problems pupils have or how they might overcome them. Teachers have had little opportunity for staff development in the use of literacy within art, as is evident in the lack of visual clues to aid learning such as key word displays or time-lines for artists. There is little evidence of teachers having reflected on their current teaching styles and considered the impact their practice has on pupils' learning.
130. Pupils enter the school with below average artistic knowledge and skills. The current Year 7 pupils make sound progress in skills development during their foundation course, as they learn about colour mixing and application, and benefit from regular art lessons. Year 8 pupils, having been taught previously in a carousel arrangement with music and information technology, struggle to regain lost ground and this slows progress as they try to relate the work of the American artist James Rizzi to the North Eastern townscapes with which they are familiar.

131. Insufficient time for art at Key Stage 3 prevents pupils from having their full entitlement and knowledge and understanding suffer more than skills development. Good progress is evident in Year 10 pupils' abstract portrait paintings based on photographic studies. Gifted and talented pupils do not reach their full potential at GCSE level, although those who continue into the sixth form make good progress.
132. The leadership and management of the subject are good. Documentation is clear and schemes of work appropriate, except for opportunities for literacy development. The pupils are well cared for and there is a welcoming ethos in this department. The department has, however, several major problems. There are serious inadequacies in the accommodation and resources provided, and this is adversely affecting teaching, learning and standards. Teachers are hampered in their work and face difficulty in implementing Curriculum 2000 because of the lack of software and books, including decent sketchbooks for Key Stage 3 pupils. There is no adequate storage for bags in the ceramics area. This is a health and safety issue. One classroom, used as a corridor for other classes, has inadequate provision of suitable furniture, storage and sink facilities. There is no dedicated area for sixth form use.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

133. Standards at GCSE overall are well below those attained by pupils nationally, but nevertheless are on average one third of a grade higher than those achieved in other subjects in the school. Pupils studying food technology attain high standards and achieve well in relation to their ability, averaging more than one grade higher than in other subjects. In other design and technology courses, attainment is more variable. Some higher and lower attaining pupils achieve grades in line with their ability, but there is also underachievement in both ability groups. Attainment in GNVQ engineering and in health and social care is appropriate in relation to the ability profile of the pupils.
134. The teachers' assessment of 14-year-olds indicates standards in line with those found nationally. However, lesson observation and analysis of pupils work at Key Stage 3 indicate that standards are below the national average. Observations at GCSE level indicate an improving picture, but standards are still below those found nationally. However, in food technology, skilled and competent teaching is raising standards at Key Stage 3. This continues at GCSE level, enabling a high proportion of pupils to achieve high grades. Graphic and design skills in all material areas are not high enough and tool skills in work with resistant materials are below average. Access to computers and CAD/CAM facilities within the department are poor and this limits learning in this important area. Pupils' attitudes to their work are good and their behaviour and personal development are satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their ability.
135. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. However, the department is not clear enough about what standards should be attained, nor what impact the display of work has on this. The refurbishment of rooms, and a major injection of information technology facilities, is urgently needed to provide modern technology facilities. Standards in food technology have continued to improve and the quality of education and teaching has improved.

136. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, but that in food technology is good and in some classes very good. It was unsatisfactory in three lessons. In the good and very good teaching the lessons are carefully planned with clear learning objectives. The teacher introduces new knowledge and re-enforces existing learning, through a well-organised series of activities and increasing demands on the pupil. For example, a lower band food studies group investigated a range of similar foods with varied fat content. The resources were already set out and the tasting stages and recording chart presented on the whiteboard. Previous learning was re-established through good questioning and a clear link made with the food products to be tasted. A time limit added to the pace of the lesson and the depth of learning was enhanced by debating different views of texture, taste and smell. Homework was used to analyse results and draw conclusions for the next lesson. Good teaching was also observed in electronics and textiles. In the less effective teaching the input is too long and does not put the onus on pupils to think and provide possible answers, limiting learning.
137. Leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. There is extensive documentation and schemes of work are carefully related to the National Curriculum. However, in resistant materials and in some other material areas, unit objectives are geared to the stages of completing the project, and do not make clear what is to be learned. Consequently progression in the subject across the lower school is unsatisfactory. The head of department has worked hard to link data from the primary schools with projected grades based on pupil ability profiles, to set improvement targets for the subject at GCSE level, and to introduce assessment units to establish lower school attainment levels. Where the information is well used, the strategies are beginning to produce results, but they are not linked with the day to day assessment of pupils' progress. Current safety standards are not in place for using the circular saw.

GEOGRAPHY

138. Teachers' assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999 indicated standards well below the national average. The 2000 figures were similar. Girls achieved more highly than boys did. The 1999 GCSE examination results were well below the national average and did not improve in 2000. There is no upward trend in GCSE results which are improving nationally. Pupils perform less well in geography than in most of their other subjects and are less successful when compared with pupils in similar schools. Geography is one of the weaker subjects in the school but there are clear indications that standards are starting to rise. At A level the single candidate was successful in 2000.
139. At Key Stage 3 and at Key Stage 4, attainment is below the national expectations. In Year 7, pupils build on their Key Stage 2 skills, understanding and knowledge to achieve elementary map skills. Pupils in the upper sets describe the journey of a knight by finding grid references and place names. This standard is nearer to the national average. Lower attaining and pupils with special educational needs use four figure grid references. A minority of above average attaining pupils in Year 9 have good oral and thinking skills. Pupils select information from the atlas and the text and use a spider diagram to explain why people choose to live near to the danger zones of active volcanoes. Pupils of below average ability respond to oral questions confidently although the majority have limited writing and recording skills.

140. Higher attaining GCSE pupils demonstrate a good understanding and knowledge of the subject and explain the advantages and problems associated with the growth of population in India. The individual coursework enquiry from this group of pupils is thorough. Pupils use a broad range of accurate cartographic skills. Descriptive writing is accurate. Low attainers interpret their pedestrian count data simply but accurately and on occasion give a very clear explanation of the purpose of their enquiry.
141. At A level, there is now a larger group of pupils in Year 12 who work at or a little above course related expectations. They explain the sequences for the ground storage of water and the changing patterns of industry although a minority find it difficult to interpret data. Pupils gain a greater understanding of the requirements for advanced level answers from marking each other's work.
142. Most pupils respond well to the subject. Behaviour is good and the majority of pupils are keen to answer questions. They often work independently. A small minority of lower achieving younger pupils are easily distracted and find it difficult to listen; some are disruptive. Older pupils benefit from the well-designed group activities used in the fieldwork.
143. Since the last inspection the standards have improved a little, although GCSE results are not good enough. Overall the quality of education has improved. There has been an increase in the range of teaching and learning strategies. The resources and storage facilities are now satisfactory. The leadership and management of the specialist department are good and there is a good corporate ethos.
144. The teaching and learning are good at all stages and on occasions very good at Key Stage 3. Progress is often good in relation to pupils' prior attainment. Specialist teachers have good knowledge and understanding of their subject and promote the acquisition of geographical skills well. Lessons are well planned to challenge pupils' understanding of geographical knowledge and skills. Clear targets are set and good attention is paid to the learning of basic skills. Question and answer sessions skilfully probe pupils' understanding and encourage pupils to offer geographical explanations. This is a feature of most lessons. There are insufficient opportunities for paired or group work. Lessons are conducted briskly. Tasks are particularly well suited to encourage lower attaining pupils although their progress is barely adequate. Time and resources are used well and lessons conclude with a summary although this was less evident in the sixth form where the planning has not always made sufficient adjustments to the amount of new learning to be undertaken in the shorter lesson. There are insufficient opportunities for information technology, particularly at GCSE and A-level.
145. The end of key stage assessments are thorough. The procedures are satisfactory and often accurate but not enough attention is given to the use of assessment for curricular planning. Pupils' work is marked regularly but there are too few comments to explain how pupils could improve their work. The monitoring and evaluation of the department's teaching are informal and not effective enough. The undue delay in finalising the timetable and option groups has had an adverse effect on progress, particularly at Key Stage 4. The department has targets to improve standards and this together with the curriculum review is effective in raising standards from Key Stage 3.

HISTORY

146. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils' attainment overall is in line with that expected nationally, an improvement on the standards reported at the time of the last inspection. Only a small proportion reach the very highest standards. Most pupils begin the key stage below the national average. Teachers assessed their pupils as being below the national average in 1999, but the standards assessed in 2000 were close to the 1999 national average. Pupils with special educational needs achieve appropriate standards. Most pupils reach standards that are appropriate for their ability.
147. Pupils in Key Stage 3 see the causes of past events, and some successfully explain the reasons for actions taken by people in the past, as seen in a lesson on the reasons for the abolition of the slave trade. In work on the dissolution of the monasteries, pupils in Year 8 successfully identified and categorised a range of contributory factors. Pupils use a variety of sources adequately to describe and explain the past but many are unable to evaluate the reliability or usefulness of historical sources.
148. Results at GCSE are well below the national average, a similar situation to that reported at the time of the last inspection. The percentage achieving grades A* to C in 1999 was well below the national average. The overall results in 2000 were a little better than those of 1999, but still well below the 1999 national average. Only a small number of pupils take the GCSE course; a large proportion are entered for the Certificate of Achievement, a less demanding course more suited to their abilities.
149. The overall standard of work seen in Key Stage 4 was well below that expected nationally. Pupils taking GCSE successfully give valid reasons for events, but few have sufficient depth of understanding to make complex links between causes. Pupils in Year 10, for example, identified some of the reasons for the outbreak of World War 1, and some could explain the links between the countries involved, but most could not explain the significance of the alliance system in 1914. Many pupils in Year 11 had difficulty understanding and explaining the political issues underlying Hitler's rise to power in the 1930s.
150. In 1999 the proportion of pupils who achieved a pass grade at A level was well below the national average. In 2000 no pupil gained a pass grade. No pupil has gained a grade A or B in the past two years. The work seen in the sixth form was of a standard expected from pupils taking A level. Pupils in Year 12 used text sources to identify and evaluate the roles of individuals in the Renaissance and Reformation, and successfully used information technology to aid their research. A presentation by a pupil in Year 13 showed good understanding of the topic, as did the comments made and questions posed by the other pupils in the group.
151. Standards have improved at Key Stage 3 but have not improved at later stages since the last inspection. The quality of teaching is better. Management is still unsatisfactory.
152. The quality of teaching is good overall, but a little was unsatisfactory. It is best at Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form. Teachers have a secure knowledge of their subject, and communicate it clearly. As a result the majority of pupils acquire sound knowledge and understanding about the past. In a lesson in Year 7 the teacher encouraged pupils to use the Latin names for tools and weapons used by Roman soldiers. In most lessons teachers have appropriately high expectations of pupils, and set suitable work. In a minority of lessons, however, the work is not sufficiently

demanding for the highest attainers. On occasions the work set and resources used are too complex for many of the pupils. In a lesson on the causes of World War 1, for example, very detailed maps of the positions of the various armies in 1914 confused rather than clarified the point the teacher was trying to make.

153. An appropriate variety of teaching methods, including individual study, work in pairs or groups, and whole-class discussion, ensures that pupils have opportunities to learn in a range of different ways. Many lessons consist of a series of short activities each followed by a check on the pupils' work, an approach that helps to maintain the attention of the many pupils who have short concentration spans. In many lessons the last five minutes are used effectively to check what pupils have learned. Teachers manage their pupils well and ensure that there is a good working atmosphere in which all pupils who wish to learn may do so, although in a minority of lessons a small number of noisy pupils was allowed to disturb the work of others. Teachers use a good variety of resources, including artefacts, information technology and videos, as well as a suitable range of textbooks.
154. Most pupils show enthusiasm for their work. As a result, they usually make good progress in acquiring new knowledge and understanding. A minority of pupils in some lessons are less enthusiastic, occasionally attempt to prevent others from working and do not learn much themselves. The majority try hard, even with work they find difficult. Pupils with special educational needs in Year 9, for example, extended their knowledge about the causes and effects of the Irish famine. Some pupils in Key Stage 4, however, do not ask for help with work they do not understand. Pupils in the sixth form show good commitment to work, and prepare well for lessons. Paired and group work is done with good co-operation and tolerance.
155. The subject meets the statutory teaching requirements at Key Stage 3. The leadership and management of the department are unsatisfactory. There has been no head of department for over a year and the head of humanities, a geography specialist, has had to take responsibility for both the history and the geography departments. This has made effective leadership and management of history extremely difficult. Three teachers in the department have whole-school pastoral roles and the two others, one of whom is newly qualified, are temporary appointments. As a result the scheme of assessment at Key Stage 3 is still not fully in place, there is no monitoring of the teaching, and the development plan for the department lacks detail. There is a clear commitment to improving both the attainment in examinations and the overall attainment of boys. There is insufficient information technology hardware and a recent change of centrally-provided hardware has meant that much of the department's software is no longer useable. The department does, however, make good use of centrally provided information technology facilities for research purposes with pupils in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

156. No pupils were entered for the 1999 or 2000 external examinations. In lessons and in work seen during the inspection the overall attainment at Key Stage 3 was below the level expected. This judgement reflects the teachers' assessments at the end of the key stage. The main reason for this is that until the beginning of the present academic year pupils did not have enough lessons for information technology. This has now been remedied and all pupils at Key Stage 3 now receive weekly lessons.

157. Many pupils enter the school in Year 7 with limited previous experience, but with the benefit of regular lessons they make satisfactory progress. Most pupils are familiar with word processing and by the time they reach Year 9 they are confident users. Although pupils' typing skills are slow they are familiar with the main functions of the keyboard. They understand the shortcuts to alter the style and size of the font, use the backspace key for editing and save and print their work. Few pupils are familiar with the 'cut and paste' facility for editing. Pupils have used a desktop publishing program, placing graphic images and re-adjusting the size to fit their publication. Pupils have an unsatisfactory understanding of spreadsheets. Although some use formulas for simple spreadsheet calculations few understand their use in a wider context to display information.
158. Pupils have knowledge of a database and understand its purpose but few can explain how to retrieve information or give examples where or how it could be used in a social context. Pupils have experienced control, using Logo, in their mathematics studies and in using computers to control an electric circuit in design and technology. Pupils who have had the advantage of regular information technology lessons in their primary school and those who have their own computer at home understand the concept of the Internet for research purposes and e-mail for communication but there are few opportunities to use these applications in school. However, the school is soon to be connected to the Internet and the use of this and e-mail is imminent.
159. The overall attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is below the expected standard but close to it for those pupils studying the Intermediate GNVQ information technology course and the business studies course. Although there is provision for pupils to study a key skills course, many pupils at Key Stage 4 do not have regular access to computers. There are few opportunities to use their skills in other subjects. Pupils following examination courses have satisfactory knowledge of the word processing application and use the facilities well to present a publication with an audience in mind - for example, when presenting an agenda for a meeting. They have an understanding of a spreadsheet and sound knowledge of the formulas required for calculating and displaying their findings in graphical form. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress, as the teachers are aware of their needs; where appropriate these pupils work with more confident pupils.
160. Although most subjects include the use of information technology in their planning, it is underused across the curriculum as a tool to support learning. This is partly due to the lack of access to computers and the limited subject related software that is compatible with the present hardware. Consequently, many pupils do not cover the expected National Curriculum content for information technology at Key Stage 4. However, some subjects have used the information technology facilities; for example, history and geography departments have used the Encarta program for research purposes and music uses information technology to support composition.
161. The standard of attainment has declined since the previous inspection. The teaching has not improved and the monitoring of work and the management of the subject are still not good enough. The provision for information technology and the resources have improved considerably and, combined with the increased allocation of time for pupils at Key Stage 3, the standards in the subject are well placed to rise.
162. The overall quality of teaching at both key stages is satisfactory with some good features. A little is unsatisfactory. Teachers who teach information technology as a discrete subject have good knowledge and understanding and they use this well to

demonstrate skills to pupils, resulting in satisfactory progress and sound learning. Teachers have good discipline, insisting on quiet when explaining a procedure. Although the planning is appropriate to develop skills, some of the tasks are mundane, involving typing exercises that pupils find tedious. The planning focuses insufficiently on the communication element of the National Curriculum. Learning is better when there are clear explanations at the beginning of lessons, identifying the tasks involved and combined with the use of the overhead projector to demonstrate procedures to a whole class. Although teachers use the plenary sessions to ascertain pupils' understanding, assessment is generally unsatisfactory. In the less effective teaching, the aim of the lesson was not clearly explained to pupils. The outcome of this was that pupils were not on task for a substantial part of the lesson, resulting in a slow pace of learning. Pupils settle quickly to their work and remain on track. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and create an atmosphere where pupils feel confident to seek help, contributing to their progress and learning. Teachers are unsure of pupils' individual skills in Year 7.

163. The management of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has worked hard to revise the schemes of work in order to familiarise pupils with the updated network and has a commitment to the raising of standards. There is however a need to increase the access to information technology for all pupils at Key Stage 4 and to develop the use of information technology across the curriculum.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

164. In the 1999 GCSE examinations the proportion of A* to C passes in both French and German was below the national average. The 1999 results were, however, better than those for most other subjects in the school. Results for the year 2000 show a rise in the proportion of A* to C grades in French and all achieved a pass. Results in Spanish were well below average because many lower attaining pupils studied the language. There are too few pupils entered for A level to make statistical comparisons valid. One pupil was awarded a grade E in French in 2000 and the two entered in 1999 achieved grades B and C respectively.
165. In work seen during the inspection, pupils' standards at age 14 and at age 16 are below those expected in all three languages studied. There is only one pupil in the sixth form. There are no significant differences in attainment between boys and girls or across the four aspects of the subject. German is taught in Years 9, 10 and 11 and pupils who opt to take the subject make good progress. In general, pupils with special educational needs are taught well, and this leads to good progress and appropriate standards. There is, however, a lack of extra support for them. The highest attaining pupils do not always make good progress or achieve the expected standards.
166. By age 14, pupils answer questions in a basic way about such topics as their likes and dislikes, leisure and pastimes, shopping, descriptions of people and travel. The majority of pupils listen carefully to the teacher, to audio-tapes and to other pupils when they are speaking. A minority find concentration difficult and do not listen carefully. Pupils have sufficient opportunities to practise speaking. Most are confident speakers and try hard with pronunciation and by the end of Year 9 carry out short conversations with two or three exchanges. Where teaching is at its best, pupils rapidly develop a good range of vocabulary that they use and vary with confidence. This was clearly seen in Year 7 French lessons where pupils are already able to carry out good conversations with partners and where English is not spoken

- during the whole fifty-minute lesson. Pupils develop their reading skills mainly by reading textbooks to find the answers to questions. The texts they use are generally suitable to their levels of attainment. Most write phrases or short sentences from memory with reasonable accuracy by age 14. Some higher attaining pupils produce extended paragraphs about topics such as their leisure pursuits and their likes and dislikes in which they use a reasonable vocabulary, but few use a range of tenses or write with accuracy in spelling or grammar.
167. By age 16, pupils studying for GCSE extend these topics and add others such as descriptions of the local area, accounts of what they do at weekends, their hopes for jobs in the future, and self portraits. Many pupils improve their concentration and listening skills. Pupils extend their speaking skills and those in Year 10, for example, discuss television programmes with some confidence. Pupils' writing skills also improve and most write short paragraphs such as a description of their bedrooms. Higher attaining pupils write longer paragraphs with the use of different tenses and some descriptive language, but the weaknesses in spelling and grammar seen previously remain to some extent.
168. Pupils in the sixth form converse at greater length although their speaking is rather hesitant at times for work at this level. They read authentic texts, about the roles of men and women in society for example, and discuss the main points contained in them. Their written work shows an extending range and they write letters for job applications, descriptions of family life including relationships within the family and accounts of interviews with various people.
169. Taking into account the steady rise in standards, the good teaching and the effective leadership and management, the subject has made good progress since the previous inspection. Resources have improved considerably.
170. The quality of teaching is good overall. It is never less than satisfactory and there is good, very good or excellent teaching in over three-fifths of the lessons. A strong feature of all of the teaching is very good pupil control. This is achieved without fuss and pupils are treated with respect. Pupils' behaviour is very good as a result, and they show good attitudes to work. There are good relationships. In particular pupils show respect for each other by not laughing or making jokes at others' expense when they make mistakes. In the best teaching, the lessons are carefully planned to provide a range of activities that move at a brisk pace and provide challenge, variety and interest. This was clearly demonstrated in an outstanding lesson with a Year 7 class that led to excellent learning. In this lesson the use of music, games, mime, clever use of the overheard projector as well as speaking, listening, reading and writing tasks meant that pupils were highly involved throughout and showed clear enjoyment of their work. Teachers have good subject knowledge and explain, in ways that pupils understand, the more difficult aspects of languages such as tenses, gender and agreement of adjectives. This is particularly evident in the sixth form. There is good use of the language being taught in most lessons. All teachers set regular homework. The use of information technology is poor at present. In a minority of lessons that are otherwise satisfactory, the teaching methods used mean that pupils are rather passive during the lesson and do not have good opportunities to practise and experiment with the language being used. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. There is a good range of work tailored to their individual needs and this compensates, to some extent, for the poor level of extra support they are given in lessons. However, this is not always the case for the highest attaining pupils and work provided does not present sufficient challenge to raise standards.

171. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' moral, social, cultural and personal development. There are school trips to France and Spain that make a good contribution to both social and cultural development. There is also a cultural element in lessons, especially in the sixth form. There are good schemes of work in place and members of the department have worked hard to ensure that they provide continuity for the pupils across all years. There are good assessment procedures in place. Pupils know what level they are working at and what they need to do to improve. There is good use of assessment for checking and developing the curriculum. The accommodation is very good. There is no formal system of monitoring and supporting teaching by either senior or middle management, although the head of department is clearly aware of what is happening in classrooms. Leadership is good.

MUSIC

172. The five pupils entered for the 2000 GCSE examination all achieved pass grades, with one pupil achieving a grade B. The numbers are too small to make a national comparison. Results in the three previous years have been below the national average and have not improved. There is no significant difference in attainment between boys and girls. No pupils have taken A levels.
173. In lessons and in work seen during the inspection the overall attainment at Key Stage 3 is below the national average. This reflects the teacher's assessments at the end of the key stage. However, since the improved arrangements for the subject's continuity, progress since the beginning of the academic year has been good. This, combined with the good quality of teaching, means that pupils in Year 9 are destined to reach the expected standard by the end of the key stage.
174. Pupils enter the school with little previous musical experience and make good progress. They quickly gain confidence and develop their performing skills. Those in Year 8 recognise the notes on a keyboard and, reading from formal notation, play simple melodies that are rhythmically correct. An example of this was during a Caribbean music topic. Pupils successfully combined independent melodies and percussion rhythms during a class performance, maintaining a steady pulse with a 'riff' accompaniment. Pupils in Year 9 understand the structure of primary chords and recognise the harmonic sounds. This was most noticeable during a Blues topic. Using the Blues mode scale pupils changed the melody at the correct point to fit with the chord progression. Composing skills at this stage are not good enough. Pupils' understanding of a structure of a composition is of a basic standard, lacking in ideas and creative development. Information technology is underused as a tool to develop composition skills. Pupils' listening and appraising skills are sound and many are beginning to appreciate a range of music. Pupils comment sensibly about each other's performances, suggesting ways that they could improve. They have knowledge of music from other cultures and use the appropriate language when describing the important elements, in particular when discussing Gamelan music. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress with work that is planned to meet their individual needs.
175. The overall attainment by the end of Key Stage 4 is below average but standards are better in Year 10. Pupils in Year 11 have completed several compositions in different styles. Higher attaining pupils have successfully composed pieces for different combinations. Examples are a composition for a solo instrument with a piano accompaniment that has progression and structure and a Christmas Carol.

Compositions from other pupils lack a structured development. Pupils in Year 10 have already established composition skills, using different procedures to develop their work, such as inverting or repeating a phrase to extend their melodies. Knowledge of the historical developments is varied. Although they have an understanding that music is divided into different periods, pupils have too little knowledge of composers and the instrumentation that contributes to different styles of music. The attainment of pupils who play musical instruments is good and they perform with confidence.

176. The general level of attainment has declined since the previous inspection. The good quality of teaching has been maintained. The recently re-organised curriculum arrangement means the subject is now well placed to raise standards, although the time allocation at Key Stage 3 remains too low.
177. The quality of teaching is good at both key stages with many good features. None is unsatisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge and understanding and they are used well to explain skills to pupils. This, combined with good demonstrations at the keyboard, is having a positive effect on their learning and progress. Teachers have good relationships with pupils, creating an ethos where pupils feel confident to ask questions and perform their prepared pieces for an audience, leading to an increased level of confidence. Lessons are well planned and have pace, with a variety of activities to meet the needs of the all pupils. An example of this was the pre-recorded accompaniment for a Blues topic, in which pupils developed a clear understanding of the Blues style, helping them to accurately identify the chord changes. Teachers have expectations of their pupils, providing challenging work for higher attaining pupils and encouraging instrumentalists to contribute to class performances. There are, however, occasions when learning is slowed due to the noise level during practical sessions. The reason for this that there are no headphones for keyboards during individual practice sessions, resulting in pupils experiencing difficulty hearing their own creative work. Teachers assess pupils' progress well during plenary sessions, encouraging them to perform together with targets to help improvement.
178. The management of the department is very good. The head of department has a clear view on raising standards. Pupils enjoy the subject and comment favourably, viewing it as very worthwhile. This interest is noticeable in the increase in pupils choosing music as an option in the present Year 10. The resources for the department are good, contributing well to pupils' progress. However, the development of information and communication technology within the department is unsatisfactory and compositional work consequently suffers, with only one computer available for pupils' use. The extra-curricular activities are of a good standard. They are well supported and pupils enjoy the involvement.
179. Music contributes well to pupils' spiritual moral, social and cultural development. There is a good range of music from other cultures in the curriculum. The extra-curricular activities enhance learning and the department's contribution to religious occasions, concerts and annual musical productions are appreciated.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

180. The standards achieved by pupils in the GCSE examination in 1999 were well below the national average. The results in 2000 improved slightly but they are still well below those expected. There is no difference in the attainment of boys and girls. The standard of work observed was average. However, that at both Key Stages 3 and 4

varied between activities. All pupils are able to swim 25 metres unaided. By the end of Key Stage 3 standards are in line with those expected in swimming, gymnastics and health related fitness. They are below average in basketball, netball and soccer. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 demonstrate the correct swimming technique in a range of strokes, and pupils in Year 8 know how to link a sequence of movements together on the theme of balancing in gymnastics. Pupils have little knowledge and understanding of games techniques and skills.

181. Knowledge and understanding of netball and soccer is are weaknesses at Key Stage 4. Pupils' footwork is below average in netball and basketball, some not understanding the rules of travelling. Some know the court markings but are unable to play the game at this level. A GCSE group learning about sponsorship in sport used discussion effectively to further their knowledge and understand the effects of sponsorship in sport, but in Year 10 pupils had insufficient knowledge when discussing the circulation of the blood. They were required to copy text from the blackboard and many of them had weak attitudes to the subject.
182. The standards of work at A level are average, and pupils' attitudes are very good. A small group of pupils used discussion effectively to understand the energy levels required to participate in sport. The same group of pupils also demonstrated a sound understanding of the psychology of leadership and the qualities that make a good leader in sport.
183. The attitudes of pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 are usually satisfactory. They are good in Years 7 and 8 in swimming; pupils concentrate and show interest in their work. Many pupils in all year groups lack concentration, have poor listening skills and sometimes behave unacceptably. Some pupils studying the GCSE course lack interest and have little enthusiasm for the subject. There was a high level of non-participant pupils in lessons, many showing a lack of interest and causing disruption in some lessons.
184. Standards are no higher than at the time of the last inspection. The quality of teaching and the education provided are similar. A number of health and safety issues remain unattended to. Progress since 1996 has been unsatisfactory.
185. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall; a small amount was unsatisfactory and about a third was good. Teaching is good in the sixth form. The unsatisfactory teaching at both key stages was the result of a lack of challenge and too low expectations of pupils. Teaching is good when lessons are planned with clear learning objectives. The plans do not contain strategies to ensure that all pupils' needs are met. As a result, pupils of lower ability and those with a special educational need make unsatisfactory progress. Most lesson plans do not consider the requirements of the National Curriculum. Teachers have good subject knowledge, especially in the A-level work, but their knowledge of the National Curriculum is less secure. The best lessons were in swimming, where teachers made good use of floats to encourage less able swimmers. All pupils were challenged to produce good stroke technique in backstroke and front crawl and the teacher's demonstration was used effectively. The pace in some lessons is slow and pupils are inactive for too long, listening to teacher's explanations. Teachers do not involve non-participant pupils in lessons in a positive way.
186. Pupils at Key Stage 4 do not have full access to the National Curriculum. At present there are two groups of pupils; those studying the GCSE syllabus, and those covering the Certificate of Achievement. The programmes of study in the National Curriculum

are not taught systematically and statutory requirements are not met. Curriculum planning is unsatisfactory. Boys cannot do dance in Year 9; time for swimming is not the same for boys and girls and the top band of pupils in Year 9 lose a period of physical education to study German.

187. The head of department is enthusiastic and is committed to raising standards. GCSE results are analysed and there are systems in place to raise achievement. Monitoring of the teaching in the department is systematic and contributes to improving teaching. Assessment takes place at Key Stage 3 only and reports to parents do not indicate what pupils know, understand and can do in the activities taught. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities and the school has achieved success in a range of sports in the locality. Individual pupils have achieved success in football, cricket and athletics, where the school has been east Gateshead champions.
188. There is no resuscitation equipment in the swimming pool for emergencies and the outside netball courts are uneven and dangerous in some parts of the play areas. Risk assessment does not take place. Resources are adequate but there is a lack of portable gymnastics equipment to extend pupils in their apparatus work.

VOCATIONAL COURSES

Business Education

189. Results in the GCSE business studies course are below the national average. Those in GCSE economics are broadly in line with the national average. At the end of Year 12, the Intermediate GNVQ results are below average, three pupils out of eight achieving the full award (one distinction, two merit grades), but three other pupils are continuing with these studies. The Year 13 Advanced GNVQ results are above the national average.
190. Standards achieved in the lessons observed were in line with course expectations at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. At Key Stage 4, pupils understand the basic principles of co-operatives and business terms such as 'limited liability', and identify fixed and variable costs, and calculate average and total costs as part of their preparation for producing business plans. Sixth formers following the Intermediate GNVQ course planned sensibly and co-operatively for a meeting with an external speaker. They use the newly installed computers for work on spreadsheets, inputting data and altering column width and emboldening column headings. They use case study comprehension material to identify business aims. Advanced GNVQ pupils understand the basic principles of motivation theory. They understand the needs of target audiences for particular products. Attitudes to the subject are generally good and pupils' behaviour is mostly satisfactory.
191. Since the last inspection, the courses offered have changed completely to reflect current needs at Key Stage 4 and Curriculum 2000 in the sixth form. Pupils can therefore progress from business courses provided in Key Stage 4 to the Intermediate GNVQ in business studies or to the GNVQ Advanced single, double or three unit award post-16. The numbers of pupils in Advanced GNVQ classes is very small, but the numbers on the Intermediate programme have doubled this year. All sixth form pupils have the opportunity to gain the key skills of communication, information technology and application of number. There is also a number of extra-curricular opportunities available: a school bank, mini-enterprise and Young

Enterprise. Since the last inspection the school won stage one of the Young Enterprise Area Board competition in March 1999 with their team 'Perfect 16'.

192. Teaching in both key stages is satisfactory with some lessons being good. One lesson was unsatisfactory. In the successful lessons, classwork draws on pupils' own experiences of the world of work and relevant business contacts, appropriate homework is set and marked, and there is effective whole-class question and answer work. However, lesson plans do not take account of the individual learning needs of pupils, and extension work is not demanding enough. In a small number of lessons pupils are noisy, and teachers tend to shout, with a consequent loss of pupils' attention and time. Pupils in both key stages mainly respond well in lessons, and cooperate well in small group work. In good lessons they listen carefully and voice their ideas clearly in response to questioning.
193. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Departmental work on value-added analyses, and monitoring and evaluating the work of pupils and staff, are developing in line with new whole school planning. A friendly and welcoming atmosphere has been created for pupils, as well as a well-equipped business base room and good access to new computers. Overall targets for Key Stage 4 pupils have been raised this year. There are inadequacies in departmental planning and communication; for example, departmental meetings do not include all staff who teach business studies. The time allocation for GNVQ Intermediate business is over-generous: teachers believe they will complete the course before the end of the academic year. There is no joint formal departmental planning focused on raising the attainment of particular individuals or groups of pupils. Departmental planning does not include the use of assessment feedback to help plan the curriculum.

GNVQ Courses

194. The school offers two Advanced GNVQ subjects, business and science in the sixth form, taken up by very small numbers of pupils. In Year 12, Intermediate GNVQs are provided in art and design, in business, in health and social care, and in science. An engineering GNVQ is also provided for a mixed class at Foundation and Intermediate level. The numbers recruited are small but have increased for engineering (eight pupils) and business (17 pupils) this year. The recent results in health and social care Intermediate GNVQ were above the national average, but results were lower than average in the other subjects. Several pupils who did not complete the full GNVQ last year are continuing with their work in Year 13. Three pupils from the advanced business GNVQ continued on to higher education last year.
195. All year 12 GNVQ pupils are following the new Curriculum 2000 programmes, and also attend discrete key skills classes in information technology, communication and application of number. Teachers of the engineering and health & social care programmes have relevant prior industrial/health service experience.
196. The quality of teaching is generally good and never less than satisfactory in all courses. A very successful GNVQ science lesson on metals at Intermediate level with Year 12 pupils was well organised with due account taken of the safety of the pupils. Expectations were high and the pace was brisk. This, coupled with the pupils' enthusiastic involvement and very good attitudes resulted in successful learning. In an engineering lesson with the same year group, also following an Intermediate course, safety was again addressed well. Individuals were supported well and the pupils improved their skills in using hand tools. Most were heading for a

pass grade. The Year 12 pupils following an Intermediate course in health and social care worked well together on case studies dealing with early adolescence. They responded positively to the good teaching. The teaching in art and design was good and supported pupils' learning well, with gains in pupils' confidence and self-esteem.

197. The time provided for Intermediate GNVQs is over-generous, and with the additional discrete class time for key skills, creates a potential limitation on possibilities for studying other subjects and courses (apart from GCSE resits) alongside the Intermediate GNVQ.