

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **REDHILL SCHOOL**

Nottingham

LEA area: Nottinghamshire

Unique reference number: 122846

Headteacher: Mrs D M Parrish

Reporting inspector: Leslie Stephen  
12240

Dates of inspection: 16<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> October 2000

Inspection number: 223932

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 - 18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Redhill Road Arnold Nottingham
Postcode:	NG5 8GX
Telephone number:	(0115) 926 1481
Fax number:	(0115) 967 6922
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr S Shaw
Date of previous inspection:	6 <sup>th</sup> November 1995

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Leslie Stephen (16419)	Registered inspector		How high are standards? – School's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Lillian Brock (9952)	Lay inspector		How high are standards? – Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Roland Portsmouth (19528)	Team inspector	Mathematics	
Tom Foster (21978)	Team inspector	Science	
Peter Lawley (28199)	Team inspector	English	
Jack Haslam (7084)	Team inspector	ICT Design and technology	
Michael Elson (10448)	Team inspector	Religious education	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Peter Austin (19866)	Team inspector	Art	
Ron Cohen (18447)	Team inspector	Tracking YR 11 pupils	
Tom Allen (31218)	Team inspector	Geography	
Gillian Murray (30794)	Team inspector	History Equal opportunities	
Gill Holland (31783)	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	Staffing
J David Ward (8645)	Team inspector	Music	Accommodation; learning resources
Iain Kerr (4454)	Team inspector	Physical education	
Elizabeth Barthaud (30317)	Team inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language	
Anne Bridger (13145)	Team inspector	Sixth form	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Redhill School is a popular 11-18 comprehensive school situated in Arnold, a suburb to the north east of the city of Nottingham. The school was opened in 1948 and a new building was added in 1973. The school is larger than most comprehensive schools with 1274 pupils on roll. Pupil numbers have risen steadily and the school is now over-subscribed with many pupils coming from outside the school's designated catchment area.

Pupils come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs (14.8 per cent) is lower than the national average; there are no pupils with statements. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals (18.3 per cent) is broadly in line with the national average. There are approximately equal numbers of boys and girls. The percentage of pupils speaking English as an additional language (0.2 per cent) is well below the national average. School standardised tests and inspection evidence on pupils in Year 7 indicate that pupils enter the school with below average standards and there are very few higher attaining pupils. Since the last inspection, the sixth form has more than doubled in size and there are now 154 pupils: a third of pupils aged 16 stay on to study advanced level and vocational courses. Around 25 per cent pupils aged 16 go on to other further education institutions.

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

Redhill is a good school. The headteacher provides very good leadership and a clear vision and direction for the school. Redhill is an orderly harmonious community where pupils take pride in their school. When factors such as school characteristics and pupils' achievement are considered the school gives satisfactory value for money.

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

- The school enables pupils to make good progress and achieve well.
- Results in A level examinations are above average.
- The overall quality of teaching is good with a significant number of very good lessons; teachers are hard working and they have high expectations of pupils.
- The overall leadership and direction provided by senior managers and governors are very good.
- The school has established a very good ethos through a commitment to high standards which permeates all aspects of school life.
- Provision for extra-curricular activities is very good.
- Pupils' cultural development is good and moral and social development are very good.
- The behaviour of most pupils and their attitudes to learning are good.
- Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance and behaviour are very good.

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

- Overall attainment, including literacy and numeracy skills.
- Support for special needs pupils at Key Stage 4.
- The annual written report to parents on pupils' progress.
- Provision for collective worship, religious education at Key Stage 4 and information and communication technology (ICT).
- School development planning, the use of school data to improve standards and monitoring of teaching and learning by key staff.
- Overall accommodation; most urgently in science and art.

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

The school has many more strengths than weaknesses. The governors' action plan will set out how the weaknesses identified during the inspection are to be addressed. The plan will be sent out to parents and carers of pupils.

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

As a result of strong leadership and commitment and the hard work of teachers the school has maintained the strengths identified in the 1995 report and has made considerable improvements in a number of areas. Most of the key issues for improvement identified at the time of the last inspection have been dealt with fully or are being addressed by the governing body and senior management. Monitoring of teaching and learning is well underway, but is not yet rigorous or consistent enough to have a full effect. Good record-keeping systems are in place for assessment processes and to support the monitoring and tracking of individual progress. The overall quality of teaching has improved and standards of pupils' work have improved, for example in subjects such as art and music. A number of management measures have improved overall standards. They include extending the senior management team to reflect the school's priorities, job descriptions for all staff, the development of appropriate whole school policies, staff restructuring and a comprehensive staff training programme to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

The school does not provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils and statutory requirements are not fully met for religious education at Key Stage 4 and for information and communication technology. These were key issues in the last inspection. Although the school is trying to improve its accommodation, there are still deficiencies and health and safety issues need to be addressed. Some of the deficiencies in accommodation are beyond the school's control, but they need to be addressed to provide a stimulating and well-maintained learning environment. Overall, the school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection and is now well placed to improve further the achievement of pupils through its key initiatives and priorities.

## 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	C	C	C	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
A-levels/AS-levels	D	D	B	n/a	

Examination results at Key Stage 3 have risen steadily, but they are still below national averages. Results at Key Stage 4 are broadly in line with national averages. Results in the sixth form are above average, when compared to all schools. Pupils enter school with standards which are below the national average. Standards of work seen in lessons are satisfactory in Key Stages 3 and 4 and good in the sixth form. Standards in vocational courses in Key Stage 4 are above average. The achievement of pupils as they move through the school is good at Key Stage 3, satisfactory at Key Stage 4 and good in the sixth form. The school's targets for 1999 were appropriate and were met, except for the proportion of pupils attaining 1 GCSE grade A\*-G.

Standards of literacy and numeracy are below national expectations. Standards of information and communications technology across the school are below national expectations.

Overall, pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress when taught in either sets or mixed ability groups within the main body of the school. When pupils have support from a learning support assistant their progress is usually good.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have good attitudes to school and work.
Behaviour in and out of classrooms	The behaviour of most pupils is good across the school.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development and relationships are very good.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory.

The promotion of good behaviour is a target within the school development plan. The headteacher and staff have high expectations of behaviour in classrooms and around the school and pupils respond well. Parents and pupils appreciate the support provided by staff in this aspect of school life.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

The quality of teaching across the school is good and there are a significant number of very good lessons. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. Ninety nine per cent of lessons were satisfactory or better and 20 per cent of lessons were very good or excellent. Only 1 per cent of lessons, three in all, were unsatisfactory or poor. Overall, teaching is consistently good in all subjects. In history and music it is very good in the sixth form.

As a result of good quality teaching across all year groups, pupils' learning is good and often very good. In the best lessons, there are regular opportunities for pupils to consolidate and reinforce their learning. Pupils know exactly what they have to do, they are encouraged to think for themselves and at the end of the lesson the work is summarised to help pupils to reflect on what they have learned. In the three unsatisfactory lessons, learning outcomes were not clear, the pace of the lessons was slow and the management of pupils was weak. The school is taking part in the literacy and numeracy national pilot scheme to raise standards in Key Stage 3. Where reading and writing are a focus of teaching in lessons, pupils' literacy levels and their level of understanding of the subject improve. Basic numeracy skills are reinforced in subjects such as science, information and communication technology and in design technology. The school has yet to fully implement its whole school numeracy policy.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory, overall, but too few opportunities to learn ICT skills and inadequate provision for collective worship and religious education at Key Stage 4. Very good range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory, overall, but classroom support by learning support assistants insufficient at Key Stage 4.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Pupils' moral and social development are very good and provision for cultural development is good. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The care of pupils is very good. Pupils feel secure in the school and are given very good guidance and support, including support from older

	students.
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The school's links with parents are satisfactory. The general information sent to parents is satisfactory. Subject comments in annual reports to parents on pupils' progress do not always give a clear indication of pupils' strengths and weaknesses and areas for improvement.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good, overall, but with some weaknesses in the process of monitoring and evaluating.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good support from the governing body for the work of the school. They fulfil most of their responsibilities well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory, but greater consistency needed in the monitoring of teaching and learning by all subject leaders.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory, overall. Some weaknesses in the link between development planning and financial planning.

The school has sufficient teaching staff, but there are too few support assistants for pupils in Key Stage 4. Overall, learning resources are satisfactory, but there are insufficient computers to promote the use of information and communication technology across the school. Overall, accommodation is unsatisfactory: insufficient science laboratories, small classrooms in art, English, mathematics, history and business studies that have a negative impact on learning and impede the school's drive to improve standards.

The school has established a very good ethos through a commitment to high standards of achievement, behaviour and care. The leadership provided by middle managers is effective. The governing body is very committed to improving standards in the school. There are satisfactory procedures for ensuring best value.

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

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils like school.</li> <li>• Pupils are making good progress.</li> <li>• Pupils behave well.</li> <li>• Pupils are taught well.</li> <li>• The school has high expectations.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• Parents find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems.</li> <li>• Pupils are helped to become mature and responsible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of homework.</li> <li>• More information to parents about pupils' progress.</li> <li>• Links between the school and parents.</li> <li>• Range of activities outside school.</li> </ul>

Overall, the inspection largely confirmed the positive views of parents. In addition, inspectors found that the range of activities outside lessons is very good, that the school is aware of the need to work more closely with parents, that pupils receive homework regularly in line with the school policy, but that the quality of marking is varied. Inspectors were in agreement with some parents that annual reports on pupils' progress could be improved.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Overall, pupils' performance in national tests at age fourteen has risen steadily over the last three years, but has remained below the national average. Results in the 1999 tests at the end of Key Stage 3 are below the national average for all schools. Results in the GCSE examinations at age sixteen are broadly in line with the national average and students' results in A level examinations in the sixth form are above the national average. Improved teaching and a greater emphasis on basic skills are having an impact on pupils' standards of work. Standards of work seen during the inspection are in line with national expectations at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 and above national expectations in the sixth form. Standards in vocational courses at Key Stage 4 are above average. Pupils enter the school with standards which are below average and there are very few higher attaining pupils. The school's targets for 1999 were appropriate and were met, except those for lower attaining pupils.
2. In the National Curriculum tests in 1999 at the end of Key Stage 3, pupils' performance in English was broadly in line with the national average. The results were above average when compared to similar schools nationally. In mathematics, standards were well below average when compared with all schools and with similar schools. In science, they were below national averages and well below averages for similar schools. The unconfirmed results for 2000 show an improvement in mathematics and a good improvement in science compared with those in 1999. The school is still awaiting final English results, following a re-mark.
3. In 1999 GCSE examinations, the proportion of pupils obtaining five or more passes at grades A\*-C was close to the national average for all schools and for similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving five or more grades A\*-G was below the national average and below the average for similar schools. The unconfirmed results for 2000 GCSE examinations show that the proportion of pupils achieving five or more grades A\* to C has improved compared to 1999. Overall, based on figures for the last five years, the average total points score per pupil was broadly in line with the national trend. In 1999, GCSE pupils achieved their highest standards in art and design, drama, English Literature, geography, history, music and religious studies. They did less well in economics, French and mathematics.
4. The school does less well with lower attaining pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 than similar schools. In 1999, fewer pupils than average achieved 1 A\*-G grade in GCSE. Results for pupils achieving 1 A\*-G have improved in 2000; nevertheless, 7 per cent of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 did not achieve any graded results in GCSE. The school is aware of the high proportion of underachievers at end of Key Stage 4 and its concern has led to the establishment of a group led by a senior manager to track the progress of such pupils. The school has now gathered considerable data on these pupils, using Cognitive Ability Tests (CATs) and Statutory Assessment Tests (SATs) scores to produce a comprehensive register of such pupils. This is a very useful base, together with school approaches to improve pupils' attainment levels through a greater use of curriculum flexibility and improvements to teaching and learning. These measures are at an early stage. Seventeen Key Stage 4 pupils have been disapplied from the National Curriculum so that they can follow an Alternative Learning Programme (ALP) leading to a Certificate of Achievement.
5. Students' results in 1999 GCE A Level courses are above average. In 1999, the average points score rose above the national average. In 1999, pupils achieved the highest standards in history, physics, mathematics, geography and English. The average point score per student for 2000, as yet unconfirmed, shows a decrease compared to the 1999 results. During the inspection some good standards of work were seen in all subjects. For example, in English, students discuss and write about complex ideas with maturity and original thought; in drama, students use practical performance techniques with originality and imagination to investigate and share with each other

- their understanding of plays they have studied. In science, students can manipulate formulae to estimate the size of stars, understand patterns of different elements and explain the behaviour of different types of muscles.
6. Pupils enter the school with below average literacy skills. The school recognises the low levels of reading and writing of pupils on entry to the school and recent work promoting better standards of literacy in the school is starting to have a very positive effect. This applies particularly to pupils in their first three years at the school. In drama, history and science, pupils listen to each other attentively and co-operatively to share and improve their ideas together in discussion. Standards are lower in writing than in speaking and listening. In response to this, science, mathematics, English, art and religious education help pupils to spell, understand and use the technical words of each subject. There are good examples of pupils developing their ideas and writing at length in English, history and mathematics, using correct punctuation and spelling. English lessons adopt a variety of successful methods to help pupils who are struggling to write, spell and use punctuation correctly. Additional reading activities organised by the teachers of English, with the involvement of many sixth form students, are helping younger pupils to make good progress with their reading and steadily overcome their difficulties of comprehension.
  7. Many pupils lack the confidence to write accurately and at length, to consolidate facts and ideas and communicate to others what they have learned in lessons. Where literacy is a focus in lessons, carefully organised and systematic help is given to pupils in their first three years at the school. The teaching of basic skills of reading and writing in some subjects is starting to have a very beneficial effect. It improves effectively both pupils' literacy and their levels of understanding of the subjects themselves. Where teachers fail to adopt these principles pupils make errors of spelling, sentence construction and layout. Despite this, there is much good practice, recently introduced, but not yet consistently applied in all lessons and to all homework. A more uniform and determined approach to the teaching of basic skills by all teachers across all subjects and all age ranges in the school would help to improve examination and test results for all pupils.
  8. Standards of numeracy for pupils entering the school are below average. Low standards of numeracy do not affect access to any part of the curriculum, but a lack of basic numerical skills is affecting the quality of pupils' work. There is a whole-school numeracy policy in place, but this has not yet been fully implemented across the school. The reinforcement of numerical skills plays a regular part in the mathematics curriculum and the department is involved in the national numeracy pilot. The effect of this will take time to become evident throughout the school. There is no over-reliance on electronic calculators. In science, Year 7 pupils are competent in the use of data handling skills and graph drawing, but, as pupils progress through the school, they are less proficient in these skills. In information and communication technology (ICT), pupils could make charts and prepare diagrams from information and are able to use spreadsheets effectively when making comparisons. In design and technology, pupils use scale and perspective to good effect.
  9. Pupils' attainment in ICT at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 is below average. However, there have been improvements since the previous inspection. The use of ICT across the curriculum is continuing to develop. In English and mathematics, pupils use computers to support learning. For example, in a Year 10 mathematics class pupils used spreadsheets to compile data and produce graphs. In English lessons, pupils use computers to develop their creative writing skills. However, pupils have too few opportunities to use computers, partly because there are insufficient computers and partly because not all teachers are planning for the use of computers in their lessons. Although the school has invested considerable funding in new computers in 1999, there are still too few computers to provide good access for pupils. An audit of the use of computers across the curriculum has not been conducted and there are few opportunities for the co-ordinator to monitor and review developments throughout the school.
  10. Overall, the attainment of pupils with special educational needs is well below national averages for pupils of the same age. The achievement of pupils with special needs seen during the inspection is at least satisfactory and often good. Pupils with special needs make at least satisfactory progress. Across Key Stage 3, many pupils with special educational needs are taught either in sets or within mixed ability groups within the main body of the school. In some lessons, in addition to the classroom teacher a learning support assistant is also present. In one of the

lessons, sixth form pupils provided good support for a group of Year 8 pupils. Pupils with individual education plans (IEPs) taught within such groups make at least good progress and attainment is in line with expectations for this stage in the academic year. Across Key Stage 4, additional support within classes is limited and the progress of pupils with IEPs rests solely with the classroom teacher. However, progress continues to be at least satisfactory. In Key Stage 4, where the lesson is taught by a specialist special needs teacher, pupils make good progress.

11. The standard of work seen across the school during the inspection is satisfactory; it is better in the sixth form than in Key Stages 3 and 4. Taking into account the below average attainment on entry at Year 7, the achievement of pupils is good at Key Stage 3, satisfactory at Key Stage 4 and good in the sixth form.
12. At the meeting with the Registered Inspector and in replies to the questionnaire sent out before the inspection, parents expressed a high level of satisfaction with the standards that their children are achieving at the school.

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

13. The behaviour of pupils and their attitudes to learning are good, as was reported at the time of the previous inspection. Across the school, pupils respond positively to the school's expectations of a strong commitment to learning and this makes a significant contribution to their academic and personal development. Pupils and teachers treat each other with courtesy and respect. Pupils grow in maturity whilst at the school; they are sensitive to others' needs and are prepared to voice their own opinions in a mature manner. The number of fixed term exclusions has risen since the previous inspection, but this reflects the school's determination to implement its strict policy for expected standards of behaviour and sustain a suitable learning environment. The fixed term exclusions involve a relatively small number of pupils who repeatedly disregard the school's expectations of good behaviour.
14. Pupils' response in lessons is mainly good and sometimes very good. The vast majority of pupils are well prepared for their work, show a willingness to learn and many are cheerfully enthusiastic and interested in their lessons. They sustain their efforts and generally concentrate well; only very rarely is their response less than satisfactory. For example, Year 11 pupils showed very good attitudes in a drama lesson, which involved choosing and acting out a powerful scene from a poem.
15. Records of achievement show that most pupils take a pride in their work and value their achievements. Pupils make good use of their planners in managing their class work and homework and for setting themselves targets for improvement. Opportunities for independent learning and research are used well. In a key skills lesson on communication, Year 12 students gave good presentations and demonstrated the depth of their research.
16. The school is an orderly and harmonious community. Pupils' behaviour in classrooms and around the site is generally good, although there were a few examples of inappropriate behaviour. Relationships with each other, with teachers and other adults are very good, resulting in a tension-free, purposeful learning atmosphere in most lessons. Students in the sixth form show an increasing maturity in their response to their learning. Students listen well and ask pertinent questions, for example in a lesson where they were being prepared for higher education interviews. This maturity extends beyond the classroom.
17. Pupils readily participate in the many opportunities for personal development offered by the school. Many pupils belong to sports teams, to groups such as the environmental group, the student council and a committee preparing for a trip to Nepal in the year 2002. Year 11 pupils act as peer counsellors for younger pupils. Year 7 pupils confirm that they could discuss any concerns and worries with their peer counsellors. Sixth form students act as mentors for Year 11 pupils and give valuable support to Year 7 pupils in the early morning reading club. These self-help initiatives reinforce the values of the "family" of Redhill School. Pupils and students commit themselves to

personal challenge and community work through the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. Employers who accept pupils and students on work experience comment very favourably on their positive attitudes and initiative. Pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 and students in the sixth form state that they are proud of their school and the contributions they make to Redhill's strong sense of community.

18. Overall, attendance levels are satisfactory. Unauthorised absence is higher than the LEA average and the national average. Most of the absence is due to a small number of pupils. The school receives good support from the education welfare officer whose main focus is on reducing the amount of unauthorised absence. A large percentage of the authorised absence is due to parents taking children on holiday in term time. At the time of the previous inspection, it was noted that pupils in Key Stage 4 had the worst record for attendance in the school and this is still the case. The "First Day Strike" system for early identification of poor attenders is having an effect on the attendance of Year 11 pupils. Records for the current term to date show some improvement on their attendance. At the end of the year, fifteen per cent of pupils gained awards for 100 per cent attendance. Attendance records for the current term show an improvement with an overall figure of 93.6 per cent and absences for both authorised and unauthorised are at the national average. During the inspection, most pupils arrived at school and to lessons on time. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.
19. Attendance of special needs pupils at all lessons observed was good and behaviour in lessons delivered within the specialist area was at least satisfactory and often very good. In one Year 8 lesson when a small group of boys displayed extremely challenging behaviour the class teacher skilfully managed the situation which helped the pupils make satisfactory progress by the end of the lesson.

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

20. Teaching is an aspect of the school that has shown considerable improvement since the last inspection. Overall the quality of teaching is good. Nearly 99 per cent of lessons were satisfactory or better. Fifty-seven percent of lessons were good and 20 per cent of lessons were very good or excellent. There was a small number of excellent lessons and only three lessons were unsatisfactory or poor. In Key Stage 3, 74 per cent of lessons were good or above with 23 per cent being very good or better. In Key Stage 4, 74 per cent of lessons were good or above with 13 per cent being very good or better. In the sixth form 94 per cent of lessons were good or above, with 20 per cent very good or excellent. As a result of the good quality of teaching across the key stages in the school, learning is good.
21. Overall, teaching is good in all subjects. In history and music it is very good in the sixth form. Teachers work hard and are keen to ensure that pupils achieve high standards. There are consistent strengths in the teaching of most subjects. Most lessons are characterised by high expectations of work and behaviour, good subject knowledge that helps teachers prepare lessons effectively to ensure that pupils make good progress in their learning, and good planning with clear learning objectives that are communicated to pupils. The general enthusiasm of teachers in the school creates a classroom ethos that results in good effort by pupils. The good management of pupils and good relationships between teachers and pupils promote positive learning.
22. In the best lessons, teachers lead, but do not direct. Skilful questioning successfully extends and reinforces pupils' learning and there are regular opportunities for pupils to consolidate and reinforce their learning. Pupils know exactly what they have to do, they are encouraged to think for themselves and, at the end of the lesson, the work is summarised to help pupils to reflect on what they have learned. For example, in religious education where teaching was very good, pupils benefited from the depth and detail of their teachers' knowledge, learning objectives were clearly stated and intended outcomes are monitored both during and at the end of lessons. In the very few unsatisfactory lessons, learning outcomes were not clear, time was not used effectively, the pace of the lessons was slow with pupils dictating the pace and the management of pupils was weak. In these lessons, the overall planning of the lesson was unsatisfactory.

23. The quality of teaching and learning in the sixth form, reported as sound and often good in the last inspection, is now good and frequently very good in the majority of lessons. Teachers use their extensive subject knowledge to provide stimulating learning experiences and give good individual support for students. Teachers encourage students to become independent learners by providing them with opportunities in lessons to contribute ideas, to challenge and to debate. The quality of relationships between sixth form students and their teachers is particularly noteworthy. Students stated that they put great value on these relationships and the support they receive from subject teachers.
24. In the lessons observed during the inspection, the teaching of pupils with special educational needs was very good in three lessons and unsatisfactory in two lessons. Good teaching was characterised by lessons having a clear structure, aims being shared with the pupils and, where available, the skills of the learning support assistant being appropriately used. In the unsatisfactory lessons, the structure of the lesson was not clearly defined, the pupils determined the length of each activity planned within the lesson and the lessons did not have a sharp enough focus from the outset. All teachers in the special needs department need to develop as wide a range of teaching strategies as possible.
25. The use of homework to support learning is generally satisfactory, although it is not always used consistently by teachers to consolidate, reinforce and extend what is learned in school. The quality of marking and comments to help pupils improve vary considerably across the school.
26. There has been a distinct improvement since the last inspection in the quality of teaching. The good match between teachers' qualifications and subjects they teach, the school's work with Nottingham University to improve the quality of teaching and learning and the review of subjects such as art have contributed to improvements in the quality of teaching. A strength of the learning is the very positive attitudes of most of the pupils and their good behaviour in lessons. There is a strong emphasis by all teachers on improving standards in the school and this has a significant impact on learning. There is scope for teachers to broaden further the range of approaches they use to extend pupils' learning skills and their capacity for independent study. This is particularly important for lower attaining GCSE pupils, where tracking of Year 11 pupils during the inspection showed that such pupils behave markedly differently in lessons depending on stimulation, challenge and teaching approaches.

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

27. Since the last inspection, curricular opportunities as a whole have improved in response to both internal and external initiatives, such as Curriculum 2000. The current content and organisation of the school curriculum provide pupils with access to a wide range of learning experiences. The curriculum promotes good achievement and personal development. The time provided for lessons at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 exceeds the nationally recommended minimum, but is still lower than in most secondary schools. Currently, the learning opportunities provided for pupils by the school curriculum are good and meet statutory requirements, except in religious education at Key Stage 4, a daily act of collective worship for pupils, and in ICT. Religious education provision in Key Stage 4 does not fully meet the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus and the lack of consistency in the provision for the use of ICT in subjects means that coverage does not fully meet National Curriculum requirements.
28. At Key Stage 3, all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are in place. Separate lessons in drama make a significant contribution to the English curriculum. The school has reviewed the organisation of the curriculum and pupils at Key Stage 3 are now appropriately grouped according to prior attainment in English and mathematics. There has been a considerable improvement in the personal and social education programme since the last inspection. This is taught by tutors to their forms in weekly one hour lessons. The programme includes sex education, drug resistance education and careers education and guidance. The

curriculum at Key Stage 3 has been strengthened by the school's participation in the national pilot for the development of numeracy, literacy and thinking skills. Further support has come from the school's partnership with Nottingham University in the 'Improving the Quality of Education for All' project and from 'Project Respect' in Year 7. These initiatives have supported the school's drive to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. Since the last inspection, there have been developments to improve the use of ICT in subjects such as English, mathematics, science and design and technology. However, there is room for considerable improvement in other areas of the curriculum.

29. For most pupils, curriculum provision at Key Stage 4 consists of the statutory core of the National Curriculum plus courses chosen from a range of options. There is also a programme of personal and social education. Most courses lead to GCSE examinations. There are opportunities for pupils to select vocational courses as alternatives to GCSE, such as GNVQ Part One courses in health and social care or leisure and tourism.
30. The curriculum at Key Stage 4 does not fully meet statutory requirements. Two areas of weakness remain since the last inspection. The school has improved provision for ICT since the last inspection, but there is still insufficient coverage of some aspects and statutory requirements in all subjects. Provision of religious education is unsatisfactory. The shortage of time for religious education for pupils who do not follow a GCSE religious education course at Key Stage 4 and the lack of continuity prevent pupils from achieving the standard expected.
31. Since the last inspection the sixth form has more than doubled in size. Application procedures for entry to the sixth form have been formalised and there is some flexibility for students who do not achieve their anticipated GCSE grades. Curriculum provision in the sixth form consists of sixteen AS and A level courses plus one year intermediate level GNVQ courses in business and finance and in leisure and tourism as alternatives to the A level courses through a consortium with other local institutions. There is also provision for students to retake GCSE English or mathematics if they have failed to achieve a grade C or better by the end of Key Stage 4. The number of students opting for a vocational course in the sixth form is low. The school is aware of the importance of GNVQ and other vocational courses in the sixth form to widen provision to meet the needs of all students.
32. The majority of post-16 students are able to select the combination of subjects they want. Personal and careers guidance in the sixth form is provided through a good weekly tutorial lesson which includes key skills and religious education. All students now follow the key skills programme which was at an early stage in the last inspection. Many students take advantage of opportunities to engage in work experience, linked either to their career interests or as part of their community activities. There are a number of sixth-form links with the local community, for example, a two-day Understanding Industry course each year for Year 12 and regular involvement of students with local primary schools such as through the drugs awareness programme operated by the police. In addition, charity fund-raising is an important aspect of sixth form life.
33. Throughout the school, provision for extra-curricular activities is very good. It is excellent in music. Before school, during lunchtime and after school there are many opportunities for pupils to take part in different kinds of choral and instrumental music. In sport and games, there is a very good range of activities. There are clubs and competitions at lunchtime and matches in most of the major team games after school. In addition there are drama clubs and productions, study support groups, the Duke of Edinburgh awards, French and German exchanges and, within the curriculum, many visits outside and visitors coming into the school. The range and variety of opportunities enrich the provision and are a feature much appreciated by pupils, including sixth form students who play a major role in the running of some of the activities. The school has worked hard to establish good links with feeder primary schools through visits and pupils participating in primary school events.
34. The curriculum offered to pupils with special needs is broad and balanced and in line with National Curriculum requirements. In Key Stage 4, seventeen pupils are currently disapplied from modern foreign languages to follow an Alternative Learning Programme. They follow a course leading to a

Certificate of Achievement in Life Skills. This helps them to focus in more depth on courses that fall within the vocational area. This arrangement meets the needs of pupils who are below level 3 in National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3. The programme for disapplying pupils meets current legal requirements and is appropriate as it meets the needs of the pupils.

35. All subject departments have clear schemes of work. Some departments such as science are currently reviewing their schemes to incorporate areas such as ICT. A new French course for pupils with special educational needs has been developed and is being trialled in Years 8 and 9.

### **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

36. The school makes very good provision for pupils' moral and social development and good provision for cultural development. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Opportunities for moral, social and cultural development are provided in most subject areas of the curriculum and in the wide range of extra-curricular activities. Since the last inspection, the school has improved its provision for these aspects of pupils' personal development. At the meeting with the Registered Inspector, parents were very positive about the values promoted by the school.
37. The school is very good at providing opportunities for the moral development of pupils. Pupils have very good opportunities in lessons to reflect and distinguish right from wrong. In history, pupils consider moral issues in their study of the Holocaust and slavery. During the inspection, pupils in a PSE lesson had good opportunities to explore and reflect on issues related to bullying. Moral issues feature in geography through consideration of global and regional development in places such as Brazil and southern Italy and, in science, pupils reflect on the moral issues related to genetic engineering. In physical education, pupils are taught adherence to the rules, self-discipline and to develop a sense of fair play. The school provides pupils with a moral code, which is promoted throughout all aspects of its work.
38. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. The school provides regular opportunities for pupils in subjects such as geography, French and German, to work in pairs and in small groups to help them develop collaborative skills. Drama is used very well to promote co-operation and for role play in lessons such as science, when pupils were studying nuclear power. In physical education, there is teamwork through problem solving in outdoor activities and drama productions offer opportunities for pupils to learn purposeful co-operation. Pupils have good opportunities for their social development through the Year and School Councils to put forward ideas as well as to raise their concerns.
39. Sixth formers have very good opportunities for their social development; for example, through a structured programme to help pupils in Year 7 to improve their reading. Provision for social development is a key part of the personal and social development programme and this is strengthened by Year Councils and the School Council. Sixth form students organise their own sixth form committee. They are involved in many fund-raising schemes to finance activities such as the repainting of their common room, overseas visits such as the planned Team Challenge trip to Nepal and the forthcoming tour in the United States of the concert band. Sixth form students successfully negotiated the conditions for their study leave arrangements and most show a responsible attitude towards signing-in or out procedures when travelling to off-site activities, or home study periods.
40. The school provides good opportunities for pupils' cultural development. Pupils are taught to appreciate their own and other cultures in English, history and geography. Opportunities to experience French and German cultures take place in modern foreign languages through visits to France and Germany and also through the school French exchange. Studies in food technology, textiles and resistant materials help pupils to appreciate their own cultural tradition. Pupils also have opportunities to extend their social and cultural development through taking part in school productions and visits to the theatre. Recent school productions such as "Oliver" and "Grease" have been very successful in providing opportunities for the cultural development of pupils. Across the curriculum as a whole, pupils benefit from opportunities to learn about the culture and

traditions local to the school. The school is aware of the need to ensure that pupils have good understanding and knowledge of a culturally diverse society. There are some opportunities, as in subjects such as English, where pupils studying their set text can discuss issues related to racism. In mathematics, pupils have an opportunity to study Rangoli patterns and Urdu numbers.

41. Overall, opportunities for pupils' spiritual development in the school are satisfactory. However, good opportunities are provided for pupils' spiritual development in personal and social education, religious education at Key Stage 3 and in Key Stage 4 religious studies examination courses. In religious education, pupils have good opportunities to discuss and reflect on religious issues and their own and others' beliefs. Speakers from local churches take assemblies on topics such as caring for terminally ill patients. Weekly assemblies provide good opportunities for pupils to reflect on issues relevant to their lives such as bullying. In some assemblies, prayers are said and music is used to help pupils to reflect but the requirement to provide all pupils with a daily act of collective worship is still not met. The effectiveness of the 'Thought for the Week' in tutorial time varies considerably. Across the rest of the curriculum, opportunities for spiritual development are infrequent and unplanned. Teachers listen to and value pupils' ideas, but insufficient opportunities are provided across subjects for reflection on pupils' own and other people's lives. In this aspect of the school's provision, there has been limited improvement since the last inspection.

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

42. The monitoring of pupils' academic and personal progress is good and the monitoring of behaviour and attendance is very good. Pupils feel secure in the school and have sufficient trust in their teachers to turn to them for help when they need it. Form tutors regularly monitor pupils' attendance, punctuality and their planners. Good records are kept of pupils' and students' attainment and progress from Year 7. All tutors liaise closely with the heads of year to keep their records up to date. Heads of year know their pupils well and successfully combine the monitoring of pupils' academic achievements with their wider role of support and guidance for pupils' personal development. Pupils who are considered to be underachieving or who have problems in conforming to the school's code of conduct receive support and guidance. The additional support systems in the school include a health care assistant, a school nurse and two counsellors. Pupils are given access to a wide range of advice and guidance, including support from older students. During discussions with inspectors, pupils stated that teachers are accessible and responsive to their needs and that the quality of the support they receive is good. A clear policy for guidance and support provides a framework for teachers.
43. The personal and social education programme is comprehensive and equips pupils and students with skills to make informed decisions about their lives in and out of school. It caters very well for the developing maturity of pupils as they progress through the school. In the sixth form, a very good enrichment programme, which includes a wide range of careers education and guidance and personal and social development is provided for students. The learning in personal and social education lessons observed was at least satisfactory and in almost 50 per cent of lessons, it was good. The quality of teaching of the programme varies; it is satisfactory, overall, with some good and very good lessons. Pupils in Year 7 are introduced to the project "Respect" and, in a Year 8 lesson, pupils openly discussed issues around bullying. Careers guidance is good across the school. The careers teacher and the careers adviser work in partnership and work experience gives pupils a good insight into the world of work. In 1999, 98 per cent of pupils in Year 11 and 84 per cent of students in the sixth form progressed to either further education, employment, higher education or training.
44. Arrangements for child protection are good. The designated teacher ensures that her own training is up to date and also that of members of staff. All teachers understand the procedures and training is given to newly qualified teachers. Appropriate support agencies are contacted as and when needed. Four members of staff are fully qualified to administer first aid but the main bulk of first aid is the responsibility of the health care assistant. Departments conduct their own risk assessments and the site manager and the health and safety officer conduct regular risk assessments of the building and the site. Much time, effort and funds are spent on the

maintenance of the site which the school shares with the Leisure Centre. A number of potential hazards such as the paving slabs around the school, the need to clearly identify fire routes and exits, the need to ensure that all the fencing is securely held around the school and the potential risk of the pond were reported to the headteacher.

45. The school has very good procedures for promoting and monitoring behaviour and these are applied consistently across the school. The system of rewards and sanctions is used effectively and pupils confirm that they value the merit system with the bronze, silver and gold certificates. The school is continually looking at ways to improve the behaviour of a small number of pupils who demonstrate challenging behaviour. Parents at the Registered Inspector's meeting and pupils in discussions at the school, confirmed that any incidents of bullying are dealt with quickly when reported. The theme for the week in PSE lessons was on bullying and its effects and this was reinforced in tutorials and assemblies during the inspection.
46. Sixth form students are very visible around the school. Many students volunteer to assist younger pupils through the breakfast club paired reading scheme, or within the Toe by Toe reading programme. They also act as mentors for some pupils who do not attend regularly and who might benefit from peer support to complement the care available from the staff. There are many examples of A level students volunteering their personal time by supporting younger pupils during lessons, such as in science, or design and technology. Sixth form students play an important role in the maintenance of good behaviour during lunch periods, or break times, when they will not hesitate to step in to defuse potentially disruptive activities when these are observed.
47. The procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are very good. A senior manager with support from teachers and the guidance team has refined the procedures for identifying any emerging patterns of poor attendance. The rigorous following up of absences as well as the good liaison with the education welfare officer have not yet resulted in improved attendance, although there are some signs of improvement in the current academic year. Sixth form students have volunteered to be mentors for Year 11 pupils who have difficulty in attending regularly. When initiatives such as these have had time to prove whether they are effective or not, they will be evaluated and reported to staff and governors. The school feels that some parents do not give a high enough priority to the regular attendance of their children. Most pupils enjoy school and attend willingly as confirmed by parents at the meeting prior to the inspection and by pupils in discussions at the school.
48. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good. Pupils take a series of standardised tests upon entry to the school. These tests are analysed in conjunction with the pupils' Key Stage 2 results to provide information to teachers about the relative strengths and weaknesses of pupils on entry to the school. These results are also used to provide the basic setting structure used in the core subjects, to provide a curriculum that is tailored to pupils' needs. The assessment process in most subjects has improved considerably since the last inspection. The school has started to make good use of assessment information to identify those pupils who are underachieving. Steps to mentor these pupils are now being taken by the school. This initiative is being introduced in small stages throughout the school to ensure that the system is manageable. There is a high level of commitment amongst the teachers involved to ensure that the scheme operates successfully and the school is well on the way to using available information throughout the school. There is a wealth of well-analysed data available, but the prime aim of the school is to give the teachers sufficient data for their pupils without overwhelming them with figures. Teachers' use of data for targeting underachieving pupils is making a difference. The school is currently seeking to extend the process throughout the school. In the target-setting process, parents of pupils are involved as much as possible. When the process is explained to parents they are very supportive. The school planner plays a key part in the process and is used to record targets and the progress made at each review stage.
49. There have been major improvements in the use of assessment across the school since the last inspection. Overall, the use of assessment to inform planning is satisfactory. Departments now have effective systems in place for assessing pupils' progress and attainment throughout Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4 and the sixth form, with many departments having good subject-specific features in their practices. Assessment is also used to inform curriculum planning with targets for

pupils; they are regularly reviewed. There are some examples of very good practice in science, modern foreign languages and mathematics at Key Stage 4, where results of formal tests are analysed for each attainment target to highlight pupils' weaknesses and to plan future action. This good practice is not consistent across all subjects. The school marking policy is generally consistently applied and pupils understand the process. Only a few departments give clear advice to pupils on how to improve their work to progress further at Key Stages 3 and 4. Marking is generally encouraging rather than helpful in showing pupils how to improve. Marking is better in the sixth form where most subjects give pointers for improvement. Many departments in the school have some positive features of assessment that could be profitably shared.

50. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are given every opportunity to be involved in working with the school to ensure that their children make progress. The individual education plan review meetings to which parents are invited are now separate meetings not linked to the traditional parents' evening. This gives more time to review the progress made by pupils and the setting of future targets. Parents who are unable to attend these meetings are offered alternative meeting arrangements.

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

51. Parents are very supportive of the school. Nearly a third of parents responded to the survey of parental opinion prior to the inspection. A high percentage say that pupils are making good progress, that their children like the school and that the school has high expectations of their children and that behaviour is good. Most also think that children are well taught and helped to become mature and responsible. However, a significant minority believe that parents are not sufficiently informed about pupils' progress, that the school needs to work more closely with parents, that pupils do not receive the right amount of homework and that the range of activities outside lessons is not adequate. The inspection largely confirmed the positive views of parents. In addition, inspectors felt that the range of activities outside lessons is very good, that the school is aware of the need to work more closely with parents, that pupils receive homework regularly in line with the school policy but that the quality of marking is varied. Inspectors were in agreement with some parents that annual reports on pupils' progress could be improved.
52. The school encourages parents to become involved in its work and it receives active support from a small but dedicated group of parents in the PTA. Funds raised by the PTA have been used recently for purchases of window blinds and blackout curtains. Parents view the school as good and consider that its attitudes and values are having a positive effect on their children. The school has attempted to increase the involvement of parents by seeking their opinions on various aspects of school life; for example, with a questionnaire seeking their views on the format of school reports. At the meeting held prior to the inspection, parents confirmed that Redhill is a "listening" school and that they are made to feel welcome. Parents particularly mentioned the induction programme for Year 7 pupils, which included a meeting for parents. They are pleased at the way new pupils settle down in school and comment that their earlier concerns and worries had been without foundation.
53. The general information for parents, including the prospectus, annual report of governors and newsletters, is satisfactory. The school follows its philosophy of focusing on positive achievement by sending out letters celebrating the pupils' success and parents welcome this. There is an interim report on pupils' progress as well as an annual one. These provide a general view of progress. However, in the annual report to parents on their children's progress, some subject comments lack detail in the identification of strengths and weaknesses and of targets for improvement. Pupils' planners are used as a two-way communication system for parents and teachers. Parents are invited to coursework and revision evenings in order to support Key Stage 4 pupils. Parents with pupils who have special educational needs are invited to reviews to discuss their progress. There are also information evenings for parents on attendance and bullying.
54. Parents are involved at an early stage if the school has any concerns about their sons or daughters. Most parents feel that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible. About forty parents every year help when pupils go on expeditions, which are part of

the Duke of Edinburgh Awards. Parents are always invited to concerts and celebrations. The recent school production "Oliver" was "sold out" and parents commented on the very professional production by pupils. A small number of parents help the school with reading. At the meeting with the Registered Inspector, a few parents said that occasionally they would have liked more guidance on particular homework to support their children. Some parents said they would also like more time with teachers on parents' evenings. The school is planning to address this concern by providing more time, particularly for Year 11 parents.

55. Parents at the meeting prior to the inspection and through the responses to the parental questionnaire confirm that the school has made good progress since the previous inspection. Parents have confidence in the school and the headteacher and feel that staff work well together as a team.

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

56. Since the last inspection, the school has improved and changed through the very good, firm leadership and clear vision of the headteacher for the work of the school. She has been instrumental in promoting strategies to improve the attainment of pupils, such as the introduction of Key Stage 3 literacy and numeracy pilot scheme. The headteacher strives for improvements in the quality of education being provided and is supported by an effective governing body and strong senior management team.
57. The headteacher and senior management team maintain a very visible profile within the school, setting high standards by monitoring the work of the school, including the quality of classroom teaching and learning. There is a strong sense of teamwork and individuals bring different but complementary strengths to the senior management team. They have a good overview of the school and this helps them to provide very good direction and focused support both to strategic planning as well as day-to-day management. Senior management team members, as line managers, monitor middle managers, but there is not a sufficiently consistent, rigorous approach to this aspect of their work based on agreed success criteria in order to further raise standards in the school. Staff feel that the senior managers are approachable and the school's management structure is supported by a regular cycle of meetings so that staff can be consulted and can make contributions to the decision making process of the school.
58. The school has established a very good ethos through a commitment to high standards of achievement, behaviour and care. All staff share a commitment to a common goal to raise standards in all aspects of the school's life and work. Aims, values and policies are appropriate and define a clear purpose for the school, which is reflected clearly in its work. At the time of the previous inspection there was no whole-school policy on equal opportunities, although some subject departments had their own written policies. The school now has a full and detailed policy with separate statements on each aspect of equal opportunities, such as harassment. There is also detailed guidance for staff and pupils on how to deal with problems and how to make a complaint. Most departments also have their own statements. The Equal Opportunities Working Group has monitored and reviewed the policy during the last year and an in-service day supported by Nottingham University focused on issues relating to classroom attitudes, for example the need for teaching approaches to take into account the different ways boys and girls learn.
59. The school has maintained the strengths identified in the 1995 report and made considerable improvements in a number of areas. Most of the key issues for improvement identified at the time of the last inspection have been dealt with fully or are being addressed by the governing body and senior management. Standards in art and music have improved and music is now a strong curriculum area. The overall quality of teaching has improved. Monitoring of teaching and learning is well under way, but is not yet rigorous enough to be fully effective in highlighting what works well and less well. The school has taken into account changes required by Curriculum 2000 and recent government legislation such as performance management. Regular use is made of students' individual planners and good record-keeping systems are in place for assessment processes and to support the monitoring and tracking of individual pupils' progress. Statutory

requirements of the National Curriculum are met fully in all subjects other than in information and communication technology and religious education in Key Stage 4 and for collective worship. These were issues in the last inspection. Although the school has considerably improved provision for ICT it still does not fully meet statutory requirements, as ICT is not integrated into teaching and learning approaches in all subjects. The school is now well placed to improve further the achievement of pupils through its key initiatives and priorities, which are rightly focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning.

60. The school has made significant progress since the last inspection to improve the overall quality of leadership and management of the school. A number of measures have contributed to this improvement, including staff restructuring, such as extending the senior management team, new key staff appointments, job descriptions for all staff and staff training days to discuss the school development plan. For example, where weaknesses were identified in the last inspection in subject areas such as art, the school has used local authority advisers to review the department and to suggest ways forward. Working groups have also been established to support the development of the school's key priorities such as literacy, and data analysis. The headteacher is very aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and effectively uses the expertise of the senior management team and middle managers to steer and support improvements in the work of the school. The school's senior and middle managers have been very successful in promoting a positive learning environment in the school.
61. The current three year school development plan which ends in 2001 and the current one year development plan for 2000 have been developed after extensive consultation between staff and governors. The plans identify relevant broad priorities, resource implications, outcomes and who is responsible for reviewing targets. The main focus of the plan has been to 'Create a Learning School'. Whilst there is a more systematic approach to development planning since the last inspection, the means of evaluating progress and costs are still not specific enough. The school highlights the importance of subject department plans reflecting the school's priorities. In practice, the links between the school development plan and departmental plans are not strong enough as there are no clear indications of the links between them. Targets are not specific enough and costed. However, the current plan has been successfully used to drive the process of change and to identify the necessary issues which the school needs to address to bring about improvements in pupils' attainment. Progress on school development plan targets is reported to the full governing body. Improving the overall quality of teaching has been the focus of attention over the last three years. A comprehensive staff training programme to improve the quality of teaching and learning is in place supported by the University of Nottingham. The school has improved its planning process from the last inspection; it is now well placed to include some of the necessary improvements in its next development plan.
62. The overall system for the monitoring of the progress of pupils and curriculum developments within the school has improved since the last inspection. In the last inspection, this was identified as an area that needed to be strengthened. The school continues to have an emphasis on high achievement and the present system of monitoring, which includes the use of Cognitive Ability Tests, provides valuable information for senior managers to review the effectiveness and impact of developments on raising standards in teaching and learning. The school now needs to use this information to set out a clear programme that outlines strategies in classrooms for improving the performance of lower attaining pupils at GCSE.
63. Overall, the leadership provided by middle managers is effective. They have a clear understanding of their role in promoting higher attainment and improving the quality of provision in their subject areas and are firmly committed to improving standards in their subjects. All subject leaders, through the school's link with Nottingham University's project, are part of the school's drive to improve the quality of teaching and learning. However, there is a lack of consistency in their approaches to monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning in the classroom and the use of existing school improvement data to improve pupils' attainment. Most subject departments do not have clear criteria within their development plans to ensure a link between specific targets and their impact on improvements in standards. Links between the special needs department and subject departments in monitoring the effective use of information relating to pupils with special

needs are improving, but these processes are not yet firmly established.

64. The management and administration of post-16 education are good. Structures are in place which enable the curricular, pastoral and personal development of students to operate effectively. There is clear direction for the work and development of the tutorial and guidance aspects of sixth form organisation and a shared commitment to improvement. There is a strong team spirit which contributes to the pleasant atmosphere within the sixth form.
65. Communication is good within the school. Staff and pupils are well informed about what is happening in the school; there is a clear calendar of events. Parents are informed about school events through a monthly newsletter. The day-to-day organisation of the school is made effective through regular staff briefings and meetings. The school operates smoothly, with a sense of purpose and intention. Administrative staff are friendly and efficient and information technology is used well to support their work. Working relationships between staff and between staff and senior managers are good. Documentation to support the planning and work of teachers is good. The staff handbook gives clear procedural guidance on implementing policies covering all aspects of school life.
66. The governing body has an appropriate structure with three committees assigned to specific areas of the school. It is very committed to the school, provides very good direction and benefits from an experienced and effective chair of governors. There is a good balance of expertise and experience, including financial expertise, and governors work well as a team with senior managers, sharing the same aims, goals and vision for the school. The governing body committees meet regularly. They are fully involved in setting educational priorities and also take an active part in ensuring that resources are deployed effectively to further raise standards and meet identified needs. The governors' committees work closely with key members of staff to support the work and development of the school and to meet statutory responsibilities. The school is meeting the requirements of the Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs and the governors' annual report provides full information to parents.
67. The learning support department is effectively managed and well led by an experienced special needs co-ordinator (SENCO). Staffing within this specialist area is appropriately deployed using the skills of the team of available teachers. The SENCO also manages a team of very effective learning support assistants, funded through monies held by the Local Authority. The present number of learning support assistants does not enable the school to provide the levels of support required for special needs pupils at Key Stage 4.
68. The school financial policy has been in place since January 1995. The Governing Body last reviewed it in March 2000. The finance committee of the governing body maintains a clear overview of financial planning and budget maintenance. The committee meets regularly and governors are closely involved in decisions about the way resources are allocated to improve teaching, learning and the curriculum.
69. There are clear lines of responsibility for managing the budget under the leadership of a deputy headteacher supported by a senior administrator. During the current financial year, the budget is in deficit. However, the school and the Local Authority have agreed a plan which aims to return a balanced budget within two years and return the school to a surplus within three. The senior management team, in consultation with governors, is actively engaged in short and long-term planning for the maintenance, replacement and extension of the current ageing buildings, many of which are in a poor condition. The present buildings are expensive and difficult to maintain within the current budget. The school has however improved the accommodation and facilities for ICT and music since the last inspection.
70. Specific grants are used appropriately, but their impact on pupils and teaching is not always monitored. The school and departmental development plans contain appropriate targets, but the absence of costings does not help subject leaders to identify and prioritise annual requirements systematically. Governors are aware of the implications of planning decisions linked to the

available budget and also the need for priorities to be costed in the next school development plan.

71. The school places considerable emphasis on data analysis and on comparing its achievements with those of other schools. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good. Consultation occurs at all levels with governors, staff and where needed with parents. The school applies the principles of best value satisfactorily.
72. Financial administration is good. The Local Authority last audited the school in July 1998 and, at that time, all but one of the recommendations made in the 1995 audit report had been fully implemented. The report concluded that, overall, the arrangements for the school's financial management are sound. The school's voluntary funds are audited annually and at the last occasion in November 1999 the auditor concluded that the accounts were well maintained. Overall the school gives satisfactory value for money when factors such as below average intake at Year 7, the quality of teaching and learning, the achievement of pupils and the characteristics of the school are considered.
73. The school has sufficient teaching staff to teach all subjects. Teaching staff are well qualified and there is a good match between teachers' qualifications and the subjects they teach except in religious education at Key Stage 4 where there are a number of non-specialists contributing to the programme. There are sufficient classroom support assistants for pupils with special educational needs at Key Stage 3, but not at Key Stage 4. The majority of the staff are experienced and over one-third have been in the school for ten years or more. The appointment of key staff since the last inspection has made an effective contribution to raising standards in the school. Non-teaching staff contribute to the successful day-to-day management of the school and provide effective administrative, professional, technical and clerical support. They make a valuable contribution to school life, often well beyond the requirements of their role in the school.
74. The procedures for staff development are very well established. The school has made good progress since the last inspection in linking the professional development of teachers to the priorities of the school, which are rightly focused on raising the achievements of pupils. Staff development is well planned for all teaching and non-teaching staff. Requests for in-service training are carefully matched to the school development plan and departmental priorities. There is an on-going programme of training in the use of ICT for all staff. Good policies for the induction of newly qualified staff, students from teacher training institutions and newly appointed staff contribute to the effectiveness of the school. Arrangements for performance management are well under way.
75. Overall, the current accommodation is unsatisfactory. The school site is large, difficult to keep secure during the day and very vulnerable to vandalism. This has meant that the senior management team has to spend considerable time and effort away from normal duties to ensure that the site is secure during the day and also to keep up with the repairs that are needed because of vandalism. As a result of piecemeal provision over the years and an increase in the number of pupils on roll, the many problems of the site make working practices difficult. The school is working hard within its existing budget to maintain the site, particularly classrooms and corridors. Many of these have been recently painted and are in good decorative order.
76. The present accommodation significantly impedes teaching and learning in some subjects. This has meant that although teachers, pupils and students work hard, the unsatisfactory accommodation hinders the school's drive to further improve standards. In English, pupils' achievements are held back because some classrooms are too small and discussion work is constrained. In mathematics, the size of the classrooms restricts teachers using a range of teaching approaches and presentations to improve standards, and in science the lack of specialist accommodation means that not all lessons can be taught in appropriate laboratories and storage space is not adequate. In art, accommodation is cramped and unsuitable for the growing numbers of pupils studying the subject and for the wide range of appropriate activities such as three-dimensional work. In history, the classrooms are small and the concentration of teachers and pupils is often disrupted. In business studies the very small specialist classroom is not adequate and restricts the range of learning activities. The previous inspection report identified that the

available accommodation affected the delivery of the National Curriculum in art: this is still the case.

77. The pathways around the school connecting teaching blocks are in very poor condition. Many of them have cracked and insecure paving slabs which are a potential hazard and, in some areas, especially outside entrances such as changing rooms, poor drainage results in the ground becoming water logged when it rains. The site is currently inappropriate for access by physically-disabled pupils. There is an urgent need for the school in collaboration with the local education authority to review the current accommodation. This should be carried out in relation to the short and long-term requirements of the National Curriculum, the size of the school and its organisation, so that the pupils learn in an environment that supports and promotes high standards.
78. Overall, learning resources are satisfactory. Since the last inspection the school has improved the number of computers available for use by pupils. In 1999, £60,650 was spent on the purchase of new computers, but the current ratio of computers to pupils is still below the average compared to similar schools and is impeding the development of ICT. The provision of textbooks is generally adequate in most subjects, except for some classes in science and modern foreign languages. In art, there is a lack of three-dimensional resources. The library is well used by pupils and staff. The school has a full time librarian who works well with subject departments to promote the use of the library. The stock of resources, although small, is varied and the school uses the education library service to support its current reading resources. The range of fiction books in the library is barely adequate to meet the needs of pupils and to help them improve their literacy skills. A world book day and a book fair to promote pupils' reading were held recently. The school has created a good learning area in the library with a networked cluster of computers with CD ROMs and Internet access. The school is aware of the need to improve the present accommodation for the library as it is small in relation to the number of pupils on roll and there is little space to improve in its present location.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

In order to further improve the quality of education the school offers its pupils, the headteacher and staff together with the governing body should:

- i. improve pupils' attainment through;
  - continuing the focus on improving pupils' literacy skills across the school, particularly comprehension and writing (Paragraphs 6, 7);
  - improving numeracy skills across the school by seeking to fully implement the whole-school numeracy policy (Paragraphs 8, 99, 100);
  - continuing to improve the overall quality of teaching, including that in withdrawal groups, to the best already in the school by extending the range of teaching styles and approaches (Paragraphs 23, 24, 26);
  - improving the overall quality of marking so that it is constructive and consistent across the school (Paragraphs 49, 92, 110, 117, 139, 169);
  - ensuring that pupils with special educational needs at Key Stage 4 have sufficient support in classrooms (Paragraph 67, 73);
  - improving annual written reports to parents to clearly identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses in all subjects and include targets for improvement (Paragraph 53).
- ii. Ensure that provision for religious education at Key Stage 4, and for information communication technology fully meets statutory requirements (Paragraphs 9, 27, 30).
- iii. Improve whole-school and departmental planning by:
  - ensuring that plans contain clear specific targets that are quantifiable where possible;
  - ensuring that all plans are fully costed to inform future budget planning;
  - ensuring that whole-school and departmental plans are more closely linked (Paragraphs 61,

70).

- iv. Ensure that senior and middle managers consistently monitor and evaluate more closely the effectiveness of teaching and learning, and make more consistent use of school data to improve the standards of pupils (Paragraphs 57, 59, 62, 63, 132, 139).
- v. Continue in collaboration with the local education authority to seek improvements to the overall accommodation to enhance the working environment for pupils and staff for subjects such as art and science and address all health and safety issues (Paragraphs 75, 76, 77, 86, 93, 108, 109, 118, 139).

The following additional issues should be considered for inclusion in the governors' action plan:

- meet adequately the statutory requirement for collective worship (Paragraph 41);
- seek to improve the range and quantity of fiction books in the library (Paragraphs 78, 86).

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	202
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	62

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	17.3	57	21.3	0.5	1	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	1120	154
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	202	

Special educational needs	Y7– Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	179	0

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	37
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	39

### Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	7.2	School data	1.7
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	109	102	211

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	60	56	45
	Girls	74	57	47
	Total	134	113	92
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	64 (56)	54 (53)	43 (50)
	National	63 (65)	62 (60)	55 (56)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	26 (20)	26 (26)	13 (20)
	National	28 (35)	38 (36)	23 (27)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	49	53	57
	Girls	66	60	54
	Total	115	113	111
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	55 (48)	54 (50)	54 (48)
	National	64 (61)	64 (64)	60 (61)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	26 (25)	27 (25)	23 (27)
	National	31 (31)	37 (37)	28 (30)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	122	101	223

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	46	110	115
	Girls	45	85	91
	Total	91	195	206
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	41 (45)	87 (88)	92 (93)
	National	46.6 (44.6)	90.9 (90.9)	95.7 (93.4)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	33.8 (34.2)
	National	38 (36.8)

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

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

### Attainment at the end of the sixth form

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	26	12	38

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	20.3	15.8	18.8 (14.7)	n/a	n/a	n/a
National	17.7	18.1	17.9 ([ ])	2.7	2.8	2.8

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number in their final year of studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	n/a	n/a
	National		n/a

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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	25
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	5
Indian	16
Pakistani	3
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	1
White	1163
Any other minority ethnic group	28

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

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	1	1
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	32	1
Other minority ethnic groups	10	1

*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)	72.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.6

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Education support staff: Y7– Y13**

Total number of education support staff	18
Total aggregate hours worked per week	440

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

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	80.5
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#### **Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y13**

Key Stage 3	25.1
Key Stage 4	21.2

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999 / 2000
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	£
Total income	2855610
Total expenditure	2915616
Expenditure per pupil	2346
Balance brought forward from previous year	37037
Balance carried forward to next year	-22969

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	1274
Number of questionnaires returned	380

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	39	52	6	1	2
My child is making good progress in school.	40	48	3	1	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	29	52	6	2	9
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	23	55	12	3	5
The teaching is good.	26	61	4	0	8
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	26	45	12	3	10
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	47	43	6	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	58	39	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	24	50	13	3	8
The school is well led and managed.	32	50	6	1	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	34	51	5	1	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	25	44	10	2	16

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

### **ENGLISH**

79. Results in the national tests taken at age fourteen rose over the past three years. Previously, they were below the standard expected nationally. Results in 1999 are above those found in similar schools and match national averages for all schools. Boys do less well than girls, as is the case nationally, but while boys score close to the national average for other boys in their age group, girls score below that of other girls. Results for 2000 have not yet been finalised pending an appeal by the school.
80. In the 1999 GCSE examinations, more than half the pupils gained a grade A\*-C in English Language, although the proportion remains below the national average. This is part of a continuing upward trend in standards since the last inspection, confirmed by the GCSE 2000 English and drama examination results. At this age, girls achieve closer to the national average for all girls than boys do compared to the national average for all boys. In English Literature, where a smaller number of pupils are entered for the examination, both girls and boys achieve above the average levels for their respective genders nationally. GCSE results in drama are very good. Over three-quarters of those entered gained the top three grades, above the national average for the subject.
81. At age eighteen, in 1999, all A level students taking English were successful, with a significant number achieving A and B grades. The 2000 A level results show a similar trend, but girls did better than boys; no boys obtained the top two grades. Results in 2000 in A level media studies show a quarter of students gaining the top grades. A level theatre studies examination results in 2000 have improved from 1999; three-quarters of students gained a pass grade.
82. In their current work, attainment is satisfactory for the majority of pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form. By the age of fourteen, three-quarters of pupils produce work in English at the nationally expected standard. Both boys and girls make good progress from relatively low starting points. They discuss ideas sensibly together and read aloud fiction of moderate difficulty with fluency and understanding. They also demonstrate well their understanding of what they have read. For instance, they clarify and distinguish between fact and fiction when reading a piece dealing with the complex moral issue of cruelty to animals. All, including pupils with special educational needs, produce satisfactory written work, with legible, properly formed handwriting, acceptably presented. They use the common rules of punctuation competently and arrange ideas effectively into paragraphs to communicate their ideas. At the same time, lower attaining pupils often lack accuracy in their spelling and this problem persists as they move on through their years at school. In drama, pupils work enthusiastically. They demonstrate a high level of skill in the use of space, muscular control to manipulate body language and in making decisions together.
83. By the age of sixteen, pupils' attainment is satisfactory in the technical skills of writing, such as spelling and punctuation. They produce a good range of work, including autobiographical pieces, letters and book reviews. They grow in confidence in their ability to tackle more complicated ideas they have read and discussed in the plays and books set for study. Examples of this include the way in which higher attaining pupils question and examine Emily Bronte's narrative techniques in 'Wuthering Heights' or deal sensitively with the way in which attitudes to disability are presented in John Steinbeck's 'Of Mice and Men'. In drama, pupils use a good range of theatrical skills and techniques to explore ideas and themes. For instance, one group explored and made effective use of stylised movement to interpret a poem, while others developed ideas skilfully on how to produce a piece for performance dealing with the theme of domestic conflict. Advanced level students in English discuss and write about complex ideas with maturity and original thought, illustrating their arguments with relevant quotations and examples from their set texts. In drama, sixth formers use practical performance techniques with originality and imagination to investigate and share with each other their understanding of the plays they study. Overall, the achievement of pupils is good across the age range of the school.

84. Across the age range of the school in English and in drama, pupils' behaviour is good and attitudes are very good in nearly all lessons. Their conduct is never less than satisfactory, except for a minority of younger pupils withdrawn for help with their special educational needs. Otherwise, pupils respond very willingly and apply mental energy to what is asked of them. They listen attentively to each other to share ideas and suggestions and this has a beneficial effect on the outcome of written and performance work when they plan it together. This is especially true for higher attainers in Key Stage 4 and of all A level students, who persevere to discuss ideas at length.
85. The overall quality of teaching in English was good in the majority of lessons seen. It was very good or excellent in two thirds of lessons in Key Stage 3 and never less than satisfactory. An exception to this is the inconsistent quality of teaching of younger pupils withdrawn from ordinary classes for help with their special educational needs. By contrast, in ordinary classes, teachers are very good at recognising the special needs of individual pupils to help them with the development of basic reading and writing skills. In Key Stage 4, three-quarters of the teaching observed was good and none was less than satisfactory. In the sixth form, teaching in English and media studies was always good. Drama teaching, too, was always at least good and very good with pupils in their first year at the school. All teachers plan lessons well and this has a positive effect on the good rates of pupils' learning. Teachers involve pupils by varied and interesting methods and activities, including reading, discussion and different types of writing exercises which sustain strongly their interest and curiosity. As a result, nearly all pupils make good progress. Characteristically, teachers use their very good subject expertise to check, probe and extend their pupils' understanding. They do this through good class questioning and the supportive interrogation of individual pupils as they work on their own or alongside others. They match work well to challenge pupils at different levels of attainment, sustaining their interest and effective involvement as a consequence. Since the last inspection, teaching has improved and standards, particularly at age sixteen, have risen as a result.
86. The department is managed very effectively. The head of department plays a key role in enabling subject specialists to work very well together as a team. Drama is also very well organised and planned, with the result that pupils' work develops coherently to achieve high standards. In English, as a result of considering and making judgements about pupils' work together, the department has developed successful practice in marking, checking up on pupils' progress and in finding ways to help pupils know what it is they need to do next in order to improve their work further. This is leading to a steady improvement in standards. To help pupils with their reading, the department makes good use of the resources it has and liaises well with the school library. Nevertheless, the stock of books is barely adequate to promote good reading habits, particularly for pupils in their first three years in the school. In addition, some of the rooms used for English and for drama hold back pupils' achievement because they are too small and insufficiently equipped for teachers to make full use of the good skills they have. For example, discussion work is constrained and potential for movement in the room is too restricted for pupils to compare notes or to share ideas easily.

## **MATHEMATICS**

87. Pupils' results for the 1999 examinations at Key Stage 3 were well below the national average when compared to all schools and similar schools. Although the 1999 results showed a slight drop, the overall trend over the last three years is upward. The boys achieved slightly better results than girls, the margin of difference being in line with the national trend at Key Stage 3. Pupils' results in 2000 indicate an improvement from 1999.
88. The 1999 GCSE results were below the national average for grades A\*-C, with a marked difference in the proportion of pupils gaining grades A\*, A and B but above the national average for pupils gaining grade C. The results represent satisfactory achievement given the pupils' starting points. Girls at GCSE level achieve better results than boys and this is broadly in line with the national trend. Compared to other subjects, performance in mathematics is below that of most subjects in the school, but broadly similar to that of English and science. The 2000 GCSE results show a

slight drop. Overall, results show an upward trend over the last three years.

89. Results at A level in 1999 were very good with most students gaining the highest grades. A level results in 2000 were slightly lower than in 1999. However, with only a small number of students entered, comparisons with national figures are not totally valid. Encouraged by these results, the number of students following A level courses has been increasing over recent years.
90. Standards of work seen at Key Stage 3 are comparable with those expected nationally, but few pupils achieve high levels. The emphasis on numeracy skills is having an effect on standards. This was very evident in Year 7. By Year 9, some of the work produced by higher attaining pupils was at least in line with national expectations, with pupils extending their knowledge of manipulating formulae in algebra to other areas of the curriculum, to solve right-angled triangles using Pythagoras' rule. Average attaining pupils use data handling skills with confidence. Lower attaining pupils reinforce their number work and understanding of time in a range of real-life situations but this work was below national expectations. At Key Stage 4, very high attaining pupils' work was at the level expected for them to gain the higher grades at GCSE level. Their algebra skills were of the highest order required for this level and pupils displayed a sound knowledge of a range of topics. Average attaining pupils, who make up the majority of the year group, were also working confidently on a range of topics for the Intermediate level examination and could use their data handling skills to analyse information and display their results in a variety of different ways. The lower attaining pupils continually reinforce their number skills and apply them in a variety of ways including percentages, weights and measures. Students in the sixth form show a good knowledge of their previous work and the course builds on this. Work seen during the inspection indicates that all students are working at an appropriate level and display good thinking and analytical skills in investigating number sequences and in correlating data. There is a difference between the attainment seen in lessons and the performance of pupils in national tests and examinations. This is because the changes in teaching have not affected previous results, but have an influence on current work.
91. When prior attainment is considered the achievement of most pupils is good at Key Stage 3, satisfactory at Key Stage 4 and good in the sixth form. Higher attaining pupils make good progress in both key stages. Gains in progress can be seen in the increase in numerical skills and the development of previous skills and knowledge, with pupils able to relate new work to prior knowledge. The progress of pupils is also due to their positive attitude to lessons. In many lessons pupils work hard and tackle work with interest and sustain concentration. Pupils with special educational needs are in very small groups; they make good progress supported by specialist teachers. A few pupils are supported by learning support assistants in mainstream classes and they make at least satisfactory progress.
92. Teaching was at least satisfactory and in over half of the lessons seen was good or very good. There was no significant variation between teaching in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4; teaching was better in the sixth form. Setting pupils by attainment throughout the school enables teachers to plan lessons that are relevant to the experience of the pupils and, therefore, helps to engage them in their lessons. Lower attaining pupils benefit from lessons that are divided into small sections with a balance of written work and exposition or discussion; this helps them to maintain their concentration. Teachers plan their lessons well; this enables pupils in many lessons to progress well with good gains in understanding and knowledge. The best lessons proceeded at a brisk pace that encouraged pupils to work effectively and contained material that was within the pupils' experience. Some lessons also conveyed the wonder of mathematics to pupils. Pupils with special educational needs also made good progress and there were specific targets set for these pupils and many others to assist in their progress. Marking of pupils' work is generally encouraging, but there are very few comments to help them to improve. There were some good examples of constructive marking of examination papers where a detailed analysis of pupils' responses was made to highlight weaknesses and areas for improvement.
93. The management of the department is effective and all the teachers are very hard working and mutually supportive. The unity of the team has played a major part in maintaining standards

during the long-term absence of the current head of department. The department development plan focuses on raising standards, but the plan lacks detailed costing which makes it difficult to prioritise spending. The revised scheme of work is closely referenced to the National Curriculum. The department is also involved in the Key Stage 3 numeracy pilot scheme. The effect of this is just beginning to become evident in Year 7 in a rise in the standards of numeracy. Some of the techniques involved are also being used effectively in other years. The accommodation is unsatisfactory, as some of the teaching rooms are too small for the number of pupils in the classes using them. This restricts the range of teaching strategies available and the methods of presentation that can be used. Some blackboards are in poor condition and writing cannot be seen clearly from the back of the classroom. There are overhead projectors for the department to use, but there are no correctly mounted screens and the rooms are too small to enable them to be effective. This is affecting the quality of lessons and also overall standards. The department is housed in two separate areas of the school and, as a consequence of this, there is no one area that has a mathematical identity and unity. This is partly counteracted by the high quality of the display of pupils' work supplemented by some commercial posters. This encourages pupils to produce work of a similar high quality. Sixth form groups are very nomadic and are often taught in different rooms outside the mathematics area. This is partly remedied by their positive attitude, but inhibits display of advanced mathematics to encourage other pupils to pursue mathematics further.

94. Since the last inspection, there have been several changes. The scheme of work has been revised to take into account statutory changes and now includes opportunities for investigational work. The use of ICT has increased and this is still being developed and extended. Assessment procedures have been developed and analysis of results has led to improvements in teaching. Numeracy now has a greater focus and is an integral part of many lessons.

## SCIENCE

95. Prior attainment in science of pupils on entry to Redhill is below national averages. In the Key Stage 3 tests, results at level 5 or higher in 1999 were below the average for all schools nationally. When compared with schools of a similar nature, they are well below average. Key Stage 3 results have significantly improved in 2000. Between 1996 and 1999 the performance of pupils was below average for their age group, but the trend of the Redhill results is broadly in line with the national trend. The performance of girls in the tests in 1999 was similar to that of boys but in 1998 and 2000 was significantly below.
96. In the GCSE examinations, at the end of KS4, the proportion of pupils achieving grades A\* to C in 1999 was significantly below the national average. The 2000 results show a good improvement. The proportion of pupils achieving grades A\* to G in 1999 was close to the national average. When compared with other subjects, the relative performance in science in 1999 was lower than the average for the school, but was better than English and mathematics. Over the past 10 years, the percentage of pupils achieving grades A\* to C in science has been broadly in line with the national level. In some years it has been exceeded, but in each of 1996, 1997 and 1999 the percentage dipped significantly. In 1999, girls did better than boys, as is the pattern nationally, but in 2000 the position was reversed.
97. In A-level examinations, in 1999 the average points scores for students in biology, chemistry and physics exceeded the national averages. For the past three years the proportion of students achieving a pass grade in the A-level science subjects has been broadly in line with national averages; however, at Redhill, the proportion of students attaining A or B grades has risen and in 1999 exceeded the national averages.
98. Observation of work, in lessons and pupils' books, showed that at ages 14 and 16 attainment is now broadly in line with national expectations, but at the age of 18 exceeds them. These improvements are reflected in the external examination results for 2000. At Key Stage 3, the greater emphasis placed on preparing the pupils for the formal tests has been beneficial and at Key Stage 4 the improvement effected in the standards of scientific investigation has made a

significant difference.

99. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils are confident when handling scientific apparatus and have a clear idea of the need for fair testing in experiments, but have difficulty interpreting and making sense of the results of experiments, especially when they are displayed as a graph. Most pupils find spoken instructions much easier to follow than relying on written information. This reveals a weakness in their skills of reading comprehension. Most pupils have good recall of scientific vocabulary, but lower attaining pupils are unable to use it accurately.
100. By the end of Key Stage 4, science investigation is a marked strength, but pupils still experience difficulty with the interpretation of graphs and lower attaining pupils need help with displaying results in tables. Pupils are able to talk about the science that they are studying with confidence, but their abilities to make concise and accurate written records are not sufficiently developed. Pupils can explain that photosynthesis depends on the presence of light and involves the release of oxygen. Higher attaining pupils show a very good understanding of the factors affecting the rate of chemical reactions and can apply this to their investigative work.
101. In the sixth form, students can manipulate formulae to estimate the size of stars, understand patterns in the chemistry of different elements and explain the behaviour of different types of muscles.
102. Pupils' progress in science is good during Key Stage 3 where they experience a broad range of science topics and develop their practical skills. Progress is satisfactory during Key Stage 4 where the pupils gain a more detailed understanding of science, but they still experience difficulty in identifying links between related topics studied in different branches of science. In the sixth form, the pupils make good progress.
103. In the majority of lessons teaching is good; a small number of lessons are very good or better. Good management of pupils by teachers is an outstanding feature that helps most lessons to proceed at a good pace. Teaching is most effective where links are identified with previous work and when a variety of activities is used, based on a progression of logically arranged stages. Progress is best where teaching is sensitive to the pupils' prior knowledge and understanding of the subject and pace is maintained by the teacher closely working with individuals or small groups and using probing questions to promote clearer understanding. Where teachers use objects, pictures or diagrams to illustrate their explanations the pupils' understanding is much greater than with verbal descriptions alone. In one lesson, a large-scale picture of a volcano was used to illustrate the rock cycle. The activity involved all the pupils, drew on previous learning, encouraged sustained concentration and led to clear understanding.
104. At both Key Stages 3 and 4, progress is least where strategies are not employed by the teacher to overcome weaknesses in the pupils' basic skills or where activities are not well matched to the wide range of individual needs and some pupils are left unoccupied. Where there is dependence on worksheets to provide the lesson structure and content, pupils make less progress.
105. In the sixth form, the teachers' good knowledge and understanding of their subjects, allied with detailed appreciation of the students' individual strengths and weaknesses, enable them to produce work that is well matched to the needs of the students.
106. When pupils with special educational needs receive additional support, this is very effective in enabling them to play a full part in the activities. Such support is only available in a small minority of lessons.
107. Overall, the behaviour and attitudes of pupils are good and this helps to raise the standards of teaching and learning. The prompt arrival at lessons ready to start work is especially noticeable. Pupils enjoy science and want to do well. Relationships are very positive and, during lessons, pupils work co-operatively and supportively with each other. They are particularly keen to supply answers to questions asked of the whole class. The calm, patient and assertive manner of the teachers does much to create a harmonious working atmosphere.

108. The dedication of staff allows the department to provide pupils with a satisfactory variety of educational activities despite the unsatisfactory standard of the accommodation, which limits the effectiveness of the good teaching and constrains the possible range of teaching and learning styles. There is too little specialist accommodation to allow all lessons to take place in the existing laboratories, which are too small for some of the classes. The open plan nature of much of the space causes disruption, as pupils must use some rooms as thoroughfares and the sound of teachers' voices, video programmes and practical work transfers between rooms.
109. The provision of storage and preparation areas is inadequate. The space available has not increased since the last inspection, despite the additional demands of new courses and larger pupil numbers. The technicians are forced to disperse equipment around the department, including on open shelves in classrooms and have very limited bench space available. The lack of tray storage space and of a fume cupboard for the dedicated use of the technicians creates inefficiencies in the use of time. Despite the hard work of technicians, there are sometimes delays in the start of some practical lessons. Resources are satisfactory, except that the lack of suitable textbooks for some pupils to use at home restricts opportunities for private study and limits the setting of homework tasks.
110. Since the last inspection, very good leadership by the director of science and the hard work of the team of teachers have led to a number of positive developments, including an increase in the range of teaching and learning styles used. Revision of schemes of work for use at Key Stage 3 is now under way and the number of opportunities to use computers has increased in science lessons. Differentiated teaching material to provide appropriate challenge for all pupils is being developed: a thorough review of its effectiveness and continued development will help raise standards of attainment further.
111. The use of regular tests, based on National Curriculum test material, to assess progress more formally and give pupils a clear understanding of their level of attainment, is a positive development. The best examples of the marking of pupils' work now include constructive comments from teachers, so that pupils know what they need to do to improve. However, there is a lack of consistency, as some marking provides little more than a brief comment and a mark. As with teaching, more effective monitoring is needed to encourage the further spread of best practice. The department has begun to use a system that provides teachers with accurate information to track the progress in pupils' attainment. This facilitates the setting of targets, for individuals and for groups, but needs to be refined to supply a clear understanding of the steps required to reach the targets. The science teachers and technicians form an effective department that has made progress in raising standards and has the capacity for further improvement.

## **ART**

112. In 1999 GCSE results A\* to G were better than results nationally, but those at A\* to C were lower than the national average with few pupils achieving the highest grades. The school's GCSE results for 2000 show a similar trend. However, the current work of pupils shows that attainment is broadly in line with national averages. In the sixth form, too few students are entered for the A Level examinations to make valid judgements about standards, but, in the work seen during the inspection, standards in Year 13 were consistent with those to be expected at the middle grades of the examination syllabus. Attainment on entry to the school is lower than that expected at age 11. In their current work, by the age of 14, pupils have made good progress, so that their attainment is broadly in line with national averages.
113. During the inspection, the head of department was on extended absence due to illness. Her lessons were being taught by a non-specialist supply teacher. A part-time newly qualified specialist teacher and full-time specialist teacher, both of whom were appointed at the start of the school year, staff the department. Judgements about the quality of teaching and learning have, therefore, been drawn from discussions with pupils and students, from the scrutiny of their work and from work displayed or available in the department as well as observations of lessons.

114. In the small number of lessons seen during the inspection, teaching was at least satisfactory or better. Where teaching was good, the teacher made effective use of visual aids and questioning of pupils in order to probe their learning from previous lessons. The teacher maintained a fast pace and a flow of demands on pupils so that they made good progress in their learning. For example, in a Year 9 lesson pupils were asked how Picasso had used distortion in order to express emotion in painting and then learned how to cut and re-arrange photographs in a collage as part of their preparatory work for a painting. These pupils were able to organise their materials quickly and they co-operated well with each other and with the teacher, with whom they had a good relationship. The teacher conveyed that she enjoyed the lesson and this had a good effect on the attitude of the pupils who responded well to her enthusiasm and good knowledge of the subject.
115. In the lessons observed in Years 10 and 11 teaching was satisfactory. However, from the evidence gained from discussion with pupils and from looking at the folders of the work done since the start of their course, it was apparent that the normal specialist teaching is at least good and at times very good. Pupils progress well and consolidate their skills and understanding. They learn to work on a larger scale and more imaginatively. In a Year 11 lesson, pupils were preparing ideas for a painting based on the theme of war. An earlier visit to the Imperial War Museum had provided them with the opportunity to gather information and to make first-hand observation drawings from tanks, planes and weaponry. A display in the art room of war relics and of visual images, including paintings and lines of poetry by the war artists and poets, provided further stimulus and reference material. This had a good effect on the learning of the pupils and their understanding of how to research and prepare ideas. They showed good investigative skills and were able to draw accurately and expressively. In the absence of their usual teacher, they showed a good level of responsibility for their own learning and progress.
116. In the lessons observed in the sixth form, teaching and learning were very good. This was because the teacher has a very good knowledge of the subject, apparent in her dialogue with students and in the very helpful and carefully prepared worksheets which contain guidelines and ideas for the tasks they were doing. The teacher was able to create a purposeful and industrious atmosphere, as in a Year 12 lesson, where students worked with commitment and interest on an observational assignment of still-life. Their drawings and paintings were accomplished and expressive and showed that they had been able to build on their learning from previous years. The students listened carefully to the teacher's advice and they made very good progress as a result.
117. The leadership and management of the subject are good and are having a good effect on standards, on pupils' attitudes and the overall ethos of the department. Schemes of work have been well prepared, but, because there are few opportunities for three-dimensional work, the art curriculum is not broad and balanced. Teachers are clear about their roles and responsibilities and they work well as a team. During the inspection, in the absence of the head of department, pupils were able to progress well with the work they had been set. For example, in a Year 13 lesson a student working on a still-life drawing could discuss confidently the progress he had made with the several sheets of work he had done in his teacher's absence. Assessment procedures are good and they allow pupils to contribute to the evaluation of their own achievements but there is a need to ensure regular and more consistent marking of work in a way that tells pupils more clearly how they can improve.
118. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. However, accommodation remains cramped and is unsuitable for the growing numbers of pupils studying the subject and for the wider range of activities that are appropriate in a broad and balanced curriculum. For example, scope for three-dimensional work is very limited and this is a weakness. Lessons are also frequently interrupted because it is necessary to use rooms for access to other areas. There is no computer in the department and this limits opportunities for pupils to explore more fully the possibilities of information and communication technology as a tool for experiment and research in their art lessons. Because the display of pupils' work is limited to the art rooms, the opportunity to celebrate their achievements, to improve the appearance of the school and to enrich the quality of experience of all pupils, is missed.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

119. The results of teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999 show that a significant number of pupils are achieving below the national average. The results show that 47 per cent of the year group are attaining national averages. The Key Stage 3 teacher assessment results for 2000 show that pupils continue to improve. The GCSE results for grades A\*-C in 1999 were in line with the national average. When the pass rate is compared to other compulsory subjects it is just below the school average. The GCSE results in 2000 show that 47 per cent of pupils gained grades A\*-C close to the average for the previous year. Girls perform better than boys at both key stages. Results for post 16 pupils in 1999 are in line with national averages.
120. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils' attainment is in line with the standard expected nationally and this reflects the improvements seen in the 2000 statutory assessments. Teaching emphasises a concentration on developing skills in all aspects of the subject and this has ensured good quality outcomes in resistant materials, textiles and food technology. Pupils aged 14 have a sound understanding of designing and ways of presenting their work to communicate their ideas for designs. Pupils understand the working characteristics of a range of materials and how to use tools safely and accurately. The quality of finished products demonstrates an attention to detail, accuracy and precision. When making a desk-tidy, pupils fit their design to very specific criteria, select suitable materials and use construction processes confidently and with some accuracy. They become familiar with electronic systems when designing and making an electronic game. In textiles, pupils demonstrate good technical skills, contributing to high quality products, as seen, for example, in a project making a bag from fabric. In food technology lessons, pupils are able to write a specification for making pizza and produce a product to a very high standard. They are able to make decisions about suitable ingredients and have an understanding of what constitutes a healthy balanced diet. They carry out investigations into the technological influences on food production. Teachers' planning ensures that pupils' knowledge of design and technology increases steadily because they have opportunities to solve problems and to develop their practical and design skills and their skills of investigation and research. In a lesson on making snack foods, pupils made good progress because they were briefed about what they had to do in detail, listened to instructions carefully and worked in teams to specific time limits. Pupils enter Year 7 with levels of attainment that are below average overall. In their early lessons, pupils make good progress in learning practical skills and the underlying theory on tasks that are precisely structured with clear learning objectives for each week. They begin to develop ICT skills, but this aspect is not fully developed.
121. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 4 is in line with national expectations and reflects the examination results. Current work with resistant materials, graphic design, electronics and food technology is in line with the expected standard and teachers' high expectations ensure that pupils pay particular attention to accuracy, quality of finish and the selection of ingredients. In their design work, they develop a clear understanding of construction techniques and presentation of work is of high quality. The quality of design drawings and illustrations is of a good standard. Pupils have limited experience of control technology and computer aided design at present, although they have opportunities to design electronic circuits using the computer and they use the Internet to carry out research for their projects. Their project designs provide a wealth of detail and they are able to make informed decisions on the choice of ideas. They give consideration to form, function and style. Their work shows attention to accuracy and they work to a rigorous specification.
122. The quality of teaching ensures that pupils make good progress. Lessons are planned to ensure their knowledge of designing and making improves steadily because pupils are able to consolidate their learning satisfactorily and build on their skills of designing, their practical competence to solve more complex problems of design as well as their knowledge of food preparation. Teachers ensure that pupils know how their work is assessed and they quickly learn how to judge their standards and how to improve, using the targets set for them. Pupils can design and make packaging for different products and use control systems to solve problems. In graphics lessons, they use a range of illustration techniques in their design drawings; they can design and produce

models to demonstrate their ideas. Pupils are able to produce detailed specifications for producing a meal and carry out in-depth analysis of commercially produced food products, recording their results in detail. At both key stages 3 and 4, pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

123. In the sixth form, students' work in A level and A/S courses is of the expected standard. Their projects provide sufficient detail and they are able to make informed decisions on the choice of ideas. They give consideration to form, function and style. Their project work shows attention to accuracy and they work to a rigorous specification. Students make good progress in the sixth form. As part of the examination course, they develop their skills and improve their techniques in the design of products to meet specific needs.
124. The behaviour of pupils and their attitudes to learning are always good. Pupils show an interest in their work and maintain good levels of concentration and work to their best standards. They listen attentively and watch carefully to understand what they must do and show pride in their achievements. They respond well to teachers and they are able to work without close supervision. There are opportunities for pupils to develop their creativity and imagination. They take responsibility for their areas of work and in organising their tasks.
125. Teaching throughout the department is good. Teachers use appropriate strategies and have good subject knowledge to expand and develop ideas. The thorough planning ensures that lessons have suitable pace and challenge. Practical activities are well organised and supervision of lessons is effective, with appropriate interventions to support and sustain individual pupils' learning and maintain appropriate expectations. Work is sufficiently linked to the requirements of the National Curriculum. Teachers' expectations of pupils' performance and behaviour are high. Learning objectives are clearly stated and work is flexibly planned to provide for pupils' different levels of attainment and interests. Pupils' work is assessed regularly and teachers give helpful oral and written comments about what pupils need to do to improve their work. Assessment concentrates upon tracking experiences and outcomes and individual targets are used to inform pupils what they need to do to improve their work. The department sets overall targets for attainment across each year group. There are regular meetings of staff to moderate pupils' work so that there is consistency of marking across the department. Homework is set to reinforce the content of lessons. A lack of access restricts teaching in computer-aided design and control. The department helps to improve literacy across the school by the use of key words to develop vocabulary.
126. The leadership and management of the department are good, with a clear vision and direction leading to effective strategies to promote curricular improvements. There is a very good scheme of work and the department handbook outlines clearly the policies, aims and objectives of the department. The programme for monitoring teaching has no written feedback or improvement targets for teachers. Curriculum time is adequate.
127. The department has made good progress with the areas identified for development in the last inspection. There is a good scheme of work and projects provide opportunities for pupils to develop their research skills in a variety of contexts. The joint planning covering all aspects of design and technology ensures that the work is challenging and provides progression. There are regular department meetings. The department still has to develop projects which include the use of computers. Accommodation is adequate and there is a good level of tools, resources and equipment available. The lack of resources for control technology and ICT limits coverage of the programmes of study and the standards that pupils can attain.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

128. At the end of Key Stage 4 and post 16, standards attained in geography are in line with national expectations. In 1999, GCSE results were above the national average and the 2000 results show a further improvement. GCE A level results have fluctuated over the past four years, but show an upward trend in the number of students as well as the percentage achieving grades A and B.

129. The standard of work seen, by pupils at Key Stage 3, is in line with the level expected nationally. Pupils know that maps are an essential tool of geography and can give grid references for a specific location. They understand the complex forces at work in shaping economic activity when they study development issues in Brazil. They apply relevant skills to investigate urban land use through a transect from school to the central business district of Nottingham. At Key Stage 4, pupils demonstrate their understanding of factors which affect migration from under-developed regions of Europe such as Southern Italy and make detailed case studies of selected industries. In the sixth form, students show an awareness of the interplay of physical and human factors and make cost-benefit analyses which influence decision-making.
130. Overall, pupils make good progress from a below average attainment, at entry, to in line with expectations nationally, by the age of 14. They make good progress throughout their time in school and achieve standards in line with or above expectations. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in withdrawal classes, but receive insufficient additional support in their geography lessons and this inhibits the good progress made elsewhere. In the work seen, there is no significant difference in the rate of progress between boys and girls.
131. Overall, the quality of teaching is good; more than one third of lessons were very good. Where teaching is good or very good, teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge so that pupils and students receive accurate information, obtain clear understanding of the principles involved and acquire new skills in dealing with geographical studies. The teaching of basic skills is good and students recognise the need for accurate use of scales and other features of map work. They understand how to interpret landscape features by analysing contour lines and can make relief models from the information on Ordnance Survey maps. Good teaching is characterised by enthusiasm in lessons, which stimulates the interest of the students and motivates them to make good intellectual efforts to solve problems. However, there are occasions when opportunities are missed to challenge pupils to think for themselves. The management of students is a strength of the department and the relationship between staff and pupils is very good. This good relationship is conducive to effective learning and pupils and students generally work at a good pace and do not waste time. Homework is well used in the department to reinforce learning.
132. Leadership and management in the department are good and there is a shared commitment to raise standards. There have been significant improvements since the last inspection. Schemes of work have been updated, GCSE results have improved and A level results are no longer unsatisfactory. There is a great deal of enthusiasm for the subject by staff, and this contributes to a good learning environment, enhanced by colourful displays reflecting the range of topics studied. Resources are satisfactory overall with good provision of maps, textbooks and audio-visual aids. Classrooms are sometimes cramped for the number of pupils in lessons. Some monitoring of the work of the department takes place in the form of planning and discussions between staff but there is a need for a formal system to monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning. There is also a need to improve the use of ICT in the subject to enhance pupils' learning and improve standards further.

## **HISTORY**

133. Teacher assessments indicate that between 1998 and 1999 standards at the end of Year 9 had declined to below the national average. In 2000 the trend is upwards. In the 1999 GCSE examinations, the proportion of pupils gaining A\*-C and A\*-G grades was above the national average. The proportion of pupils gaining A\*-C in 2000 is lower than the previous year, but, overall, only one candidate was ungraded. The department has analysed the GCSE results and strategies are already in place to improve them. The 1999 A level examination results are good and there is a similar pattern in 2000.
134. Work seen during the inspections confirmed the upward trend in Years 7, 8 and 9. Attainment at the age of 14 is in line with national expectations. The department is aware that attainment in history is adversely affected by poor literacy skills and is taking good steps to improve pupils' literacy. Lists of the most used historical terms are posted in history rooms and the head of

department has piloted a project to improve spelling. There is an element of written work in every lesson. Close attention is paid to essay planning. A Year 9 lower attaining group selected single adjectives to describe the conditions depicted in photographs of trenches in World War I. Higher attaining pupils, studying the same topic, are able to evaluate evidence and to explain how to construct a balanced argument. Year 9 pupils working on the reasons why men joined up in 1914 are able to analyse the motives behind World War I recruiting posters and to appreciate the power of propaganda. They are also able to appreciate the necessity of considering the horrors of war from the German perspective. At the age of 16, attainment is good. Year 11 pupils consider and explain the courses of action open to Hitler as he moved towards dictatorship in 1933. Many pupils make intelligent connections and ask their own questions, but are not yet ready to initiate classroom discussion. At the age of 18, attainment is good. Sixth formers interpret evidence and use it effectively to construct an argument. Their very professionally produced individual studies indicate their independent research skills and their intellectual maturity.

135. The majority of pupils, including those who entered the school with low prior attainment, are making at least satisfactory progress by the end of Year 9. In each lesson, the introductory questioning by the teacher shows that most pupils have understood and can build on information gained in the previous lesson or homework. By the end of each lesson, pupils have added to their factual knowledge and have further developed writing or specific historical skills. From Year 7 they begin to use evidence to form opinions of their own. For example, Year 7 pupils use comments from Roman writers to construct a letter to Claudius advising him for, or against, the invasion of Britain. By the age of 16 and in the sixth form, progress is good. A Year 11 class studying the ways in which Hitler removed his political opponents developed pupils' understanding of motive and ruthlessness. A comparison between a Year 12 lesson, in which students discussed the techniques involved in writing their second A level essay and a Year 13 class, in which students produced their polished individual studies, shows the distance they have travelled.
136. The good progress made by pupils is largely the result of good teaching. Overall, teaching is good; three quarters of lessons were good or above and a quarter of lessons were satisfactory. In the sixth form, teaching is very good. Teachers create a safe environment. Pupils feel secure and are enabled to learn quickly, effectively and with enjoyment. The best teaching is confident, energetic and vivid, ensuring that pupils are fully involved in lessons, their attention held and their concentration sustained. Clarity of explanation is a strength of most lessons. Pupils know what is expected of them. Expectations are high but teaching styles are varied and lessons are carefully pitched at the right level for differing groups. Most pupils respond positively to more difficult work. A Year 8 class, fascinated by the lurid Tudor punishments for the poor, was led on to consider the differences between sixteenth and twenty-first century attitudes to the poor. Classes are well managed so that potentially restless groups are kept active and involved. Pupils work co-operatively. Well timed and well planned lessons have a firm structure. The teacher provides a clear framework for a topic but the information to fill it out is drawn from the class by patient questioning. The reinforcement of learning is good. Lower attaining Year 10 pupils studying Greek medicine give quick and accurate answers in a spot test, using, as a reference, a time line produced by Year 11 pupils, which stretches half way round the room. In lessons where teaching is satisfactory pupils flag because the pace is too slow or the exercise set is not challenging enough. Occasionally, teaching is too directive and teachers try to cover too much ground in a lesson, so that too little time is left to complete an exercise. In a minority of classes, some groups of pupils are passive and do not contribute to the lesson. More often, pupils are given the time, the opportunity and the encouragement to join in the lesson and do so with enthusiasm. In the more relaxed atmosphere of sixth form classes most lessons are a co-operative venture in which the teacher acts as a guide. A sixth form lesson on Tsar Alexander III, which combined careful questioning, discussion and practical advice on the approach to essay writing, provided both factual knowledge and intellectual stimulation. Relationships between pupils and with teachers are very good. Courtesy and good humour are evident. Sixth formers appreciate being treated as intellectual equals.
137. Pupils with special educational needs are treated sensitively. They are given appropriate materials which teachers have produced in co-operation with the special educational needs department. Support staff are effective when present, but very little help is available in class time. These pupils

make progress in line with their peers. Able pupils make good progress.

138. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. In Years 10 and 11 the GCSE topics studied are selected according to the ability of the group. Pupils for whom GCSE is not suitable are entered for the Certificate of Achievement. The department now has access to information technology facilities. Each year group will study a specific topic, e.g. Year 7 will study castles. An Internet guide for GCSE pupils has been set up with direct help from Nottingham University. The curriculum gives ample opportunity for pupils to gain an appreciation of other cultures, e.g. that of Native Americans, and to consider moral issues, for example, in their study of the Holocaust. They also learn tolerance and they begin to appreciate that there are at least two sides to every question. Extra-curricular opportunities in the form of visits to places of historical interest are good.
139. The Department is well organised and well led. Teachers are committed to improving pupils' attainment. They are forward looking and receptive to change. They work as a team and share good practice. The head of department monitors the work of the department through the moderation of assessment exercises and the regular, formal scrutiny of pupils' written work. The Nottingham University project helped staff to become accustomed to the monitoring of teaching, but, as yet, this is not done systematically. The departmental development plan sets out clear aims but the criteria for success and the financial implications are not specific. Monitoring and assessment procedures are in place, but need further development. Target setting is used effectively, particularly for GCSE and A level students, but less so in Years 7, 8 and 9. There is a detailed departmental marking policy. In Years 10 and 11 and the sixth form, marking is constructive and thorough. In Year 7, 8 and 9 it is not consistent. Present accommodation is not satisfactory. Conditions are such that the concentration of teachers, pupils and therefore of learning, is often disrupted.
140. Since the previous inspection, a successful policy to improve literacy has been introduced. The monitoring and evaluation of the work of the department has started. There is an increased use of ICT. The department has identified and is working to improve weaknesses, for example, raising the attainment of GCSE students who are likely to gain a D rather than a C grade. The introduction of more academic controversy, such as the consideration of disputes between professional historians could stimulate discussion and teach pupils how to deal with uncertainty.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

141. Teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 show that the attainment of pupils is below the standard expected nationally with only 40% of pupils achieving the national average in 2000. The 1999 teacher assessments do not accurately reflect the overall lack of achievement. There are no GCSE examinations in ICT at the end of Key Stage 4. Pupils' knowledge and skills in the subject are below average when compared to their attainment in most other subjects in the school. Students studying courses post 16 use their computer skills to good effect.
142. Pupils' attainment at the start of Key Stage 3 is below national expectations. By the end of Key Stage 3, attainment in ICT lessons is below the national expectation within a narrow range of activities and this is reflected in the below average teacher assessments in 2000. In lessons, pupils demonstrate skills in word processing, helping to improve their spelling and presentation of work. They are familiar with spreadsheets to organise information and they can combine text and graphics to produce posters and leaflets. Pupils' skills in all strands of the programmes of study are below those expected for pupils of a similar age, as they have insufficient opportunity to develop them. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils' attainment in ICT is below the expected standard for 16 year olds. Pupils are confident enough to work independently, using a range of software. In design and technology lessons they can design electronic circuits, testing the circuits on screen to ensure the selection of the correct components and then printing the template of the circuit for construction. They continue to develop their skills in the use of spreadsheets and the simple use of formulae to make calculations. Pupils have opportunities to create documents using desktop publishing, creating leaflets for house sales, using different styles of text and scanned images. All pupils know how to save, retrieve and print their work. However, they have few

opportunities to apply their skills to solve more complex problems particularly in handling information and data. The higher attaining pupils understand and use applications to organise, refine and present information for different purposes and produce results of good quality. In the sixth form, students' knowledge of ICT is at the expected standard, but within a limited range. Pupils can use the Internet to carry out research for projects and they contribute to the school web site. They are able to discuss their work with confidence, solve problems and come to reasonable conclusions when given a task to complete.

143. Overall progress is unsatisfactory. Nevertheless, in the work that is covered, pupils make good progress in their knowledge and application of a limited range of skills. This good progress is due to the quality of teaching and the knowledge and expertise of teachers. There are opportunities for pupils to use computers and practise these skills in their other subjects which helps their progress, but the range of opportunities to develop aspects of information handling and word processing is limited. Their progress in other strands specified in the National Curriculum programmes of study is unsatisfactory, as insufficient attention is paid to the aspects of control systems and computer aided drawing.
144. Pupils have good attitudes to the subject and behave very well in lessons. They treat equipment with care and work hard to master new skills. All lessons include much independent work, which pupils enjoy as their confidence grows. Pupils turn up promptly for lessons and are prepared to use their own time to complete work. They are co-operative and responsive, listen carefully to teachers' instructions, read the guidance material thoroughly and try to work accurately. They enjoy discussions about their work, set themselves suitable targets and try to meet them.
145. In specialist lessons, the quality of ICT teaching is good. There are also examples of good ICT teaching in mathematics, design and technology, science and English lessons, which contribute to pupils' acquisition of subject knowledge and skills. These lessons are planned to a high standard and are suitably challenging. The management of classes is good. There are shared teaching objectives and pupils know what they are expected to achieve by the end of each lesson. Work is carefully planned to motivate pupils and maintain their interest. This aspect has improved since the last inspection. Relationships are very good and the skilled support given to pupils in their work quickly builds their confidence.
146. The department has responded well to the last inspection and improvements include an increased challenge in work set for pupils and improvement in pupils' access to computers. Pupils' achievements across the curriculum are not assessed or fully recognised. Training has been provided for some staff so that they can use applications and access the network. Opportunities for the consistent application and development of ICT are not sufficiently planned or co-ordinated across the curriculum to achieve full coherence and progression. There are too few opportunities for pupils to use computers, but the experiences they do have are valuable in helping them develop their skills. Technical support is good. There are opportunities for pupils to use computers during the lunchtime and after school. The school is not fully meeting the requirements of the National Curriculum, because it does not fully cover the programmes of study and there is insufficient time available at present to use computer aided design, control systems, data base and desk top publishing. The suite of computer rooms is managed well. Much of the co-ordinator's time is taken up with hardware management and there is not enough time given to the cross curricular development of ICT and the monitoring of pupils' achievement. There are some good initiatives being developed and the department has worked hard to achieve the present position, but much work still needs to be done.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

### **French and German**

147. Standards in both French and German at Key Stage 3 are good. At Key Stage 4, they are good in German and satisfactory in French. Standards in both languages in the sixth form are good. In 1999, GCSE examination results in German improved and the proportion of pupils gaining A\*-C

grades was above the national average. Results in French were well below the national average. GCSE examination results in 2000 show an improvement in German and a small improvement in French. In 1999, the small number of students studying a language at A level achieved good grades and this is similar in 2000.

148. Pupils study French from Year 7 and able linguists also learn German from Year 8. Pupils respond confidently to questions, read well and the majority write interesting short letters and paragraphs on themselves, their area and school life. At 16, the majority continue to have good listening and reading skills. They sustain dialogues on prepared topics, but experience difficulty when speaking in unrehearsed situations. In both languages, higher attaining pupils write using a wide range of vocabulary and idiom. The majority of pupils' written answers in French are short and lack detail. At the age of 18 students understand radio programmes and read magazines and brochures in French or German. Comprehension of literary texts is good. They write well in a variety of styles and speak with increasing fluency, expressing opinions and taking part in discussions.
149. At Key Stage 3, pupils make good progress in both French and German. They master new structures quickly by practising language skills regularly through a variety of activities and use dictionaries effectively to enlarge their vocabulary. Pupils with special educational needs in Years 8 and 9 consolidate their learning in small groups and, in relation to their prior attainment, achieve good results. Pupils studying German progress rapidly through both key stages and this is reflected in the continued improvement in GCSE results. Higher attainers in French build on the sound progress in Key Stage 3 and write with increasing accuracy, but GCSE results in French are below average because the majority of pupils make slow progress in writing the more complex language required to achieve a high grade in course work. Appropriate strategies for the improvement of written French are in place. These, combined with standards in listening, speaking and reading skills attained in lessons observed, suggest that pupils are on target to achieve improved examination results. In the sixth form, students make a rapid transition from GCSE to A level. Progress in the use of ICT is limited because of restricted access to the computer rooms.
150. Teaching is at least satisfactory and, in the majority of lessons, good. This ensures a good quality of learning. All teachers are well qualified and fluent in the languages they teach. They speak the foreign language for the greater part of the lesson, but revert too readily to English for explanations and the majority of pupils are not sufficiently encouraged to use the language as the normal means of communication in the classroom. Lessons are planned thoroughly, using a range of resources: overhead slides, cassettes, colourful flashcards and well prepared worksheets provide pupils with opportunities to practise all the language skills. Pupils listen attentively and respond enthusiastically to language games, surveys and dialogues. They collaborate well in pairs and small groups to consolidate their skills. Written tasks which include interesting and colourful posters used in displays are undertaken willingly by pupils. In French, there are insufficient opportunities to write at length.
151. The department is committed to raising standards in language learning and has developed a thorough system of assessment. Teachers organise visits abroad which provide valuable social, cultural and language experiences for the pupils. A system for monitoring the work of the department is in place, but is not applied consistently.
152. There have been a number of improvements since the last inspection. Well qualified staff have been appointed to meet the requirements of the curriculum, standards have improved in German, an appropriate course for pupils of lower ability and those with special educational needs has been developed. Greater opportunities have also been provided in Key Stage 3 for reading and the fostering of a positive attitude to language learning

## **MUSIC**

153. In the 1999 GCSE results the proportion of pupils achieving grades A\* to C exceeded the national

average. Fifteen out of 20 pupils gained grades in the range A\*-C. Of these, two gained A\* grades. When compared with other subjects in the school, music candidates exceeded the overall average grade A\*-G by approximately 0.5 of a grade. Significantly fewer candidates took the examination in 2000. Therefore, it is inappropriate to comment on the most recent trend. Only one candidate took the A-level examination in 1999. In the latest year, 2000, there were four candidates who gained grades of an acceptable standard.

154. At the age of 14 the standards of attainment in work seen are in line with the national average. At this stage, pupils acquire a sound working knowledge of scales, chords, and rhythm patterns used in simple material, for example the 12-bar blues. They play short melodies on keyboards with confidence, although they mainly use white keys with letter names printed on them. Pupils are familiar with elementary staff notation; some understand both treble and bass clefs. Pupils have a reasonable background knowledge of musical elements, instruments and forms. For example, they recognise instrumentation and texture and identify particular phrases and patterns played in well-known works. In connection with their compositions, they learn how variations are produced by major composers such as Mahler, or by present day professional musicians such as the Philip Jones brass ensemble.
155. At the age of 16, pupils' attainment is in line with the national average. Not all pupils taking the GCSE course play individual instruments expertly; however, all learn to use keyboards with reasonable confidence in order to perform, compose, develop working aural skills and consolidate their knowledge of the rudiments. Pupils have a sound knowledge about the main historical periods, for example, about styles and instrumentation used in music of the Renaissance. They correctly use technical language which provides them with a good facility to analyse and discuss pieces they perform, hear or compose themselves. Present attainment at both Key Stage 3 and 4 represents a good overall improvement since the previous inspection.
156. Students' attainment at the age of 18 is in line with the national pattern. At this stage, the requirements of the A-level examination prescribe standards of performance and composition, and also depth of musical understanding. Work at this level is especially demanding in terms of musical analysis and aural perception. For example, students learn to attend closely to the detail of passages played by the strings in a typical Concerto Grosso. They also learn to notate melodies, understand and use harmony and simple counterpoint and write a critical analysis of a major work. At this stage, students are especially committed to their studies and devote sustained interest in, and concentration on, them. A-level students normally perform on an instrument or with the voice at a standard beyond Grade V level. Their studies are strongly supported both by regular individual teaching, instrumental practice and by their regular involvement in the many ensembles the department provides.
157. At both key stages and in the sixth form, teaching is good or better. In the lessons seen, three-quarters were good and one quarter very good. There was one excellent lesson. All teachers have good knowledge and expertise in music. Visiting part-time teachers offer pupils an especially high level of professional expertise. Class teachers are well equipped to deal effectively with advanced material at sixth-form level. Teachers have a good awareness of the need to teach pupils how to write English well and, especially, how to use the technical language of music with precision. Teachers work well as a team. They have complementary strengths and they use common teaching approaches which they find the most effective. For example, they often prepare pupils with information about the lesson content as they line up outside the classroom. Lessons always include recapitulation of previous work, clear explanations and demonstrations of new material and tasks in pairs and groups which enable pupils to try out, practise and consolidate the material. Lessons are planned effectively and are well prepared. The organisation of pupils' tasks is very good, discipline firm and fair, and all lessons proceed at a good pace. Teachers make good use of musical instruments and equipment, especially the electronic keyboards. Work is assessed well and the criteria for achievement of higher grades are made clear to pupils. Homework is set satisfactorily in Years 7-9 and well at the later stages. Where necessary, extra help is given to pupils with a special educational need. Most pupils with special educational needs take part in activities on equal terms with their peers. Overall, teaching is very well pitched to challenge pupils to work to the best of their capabilities. In many lessons, the teacher's enthusiasm for the subject

transfers well to the pupils.

158. The quality of learning in Key Stage 3 is good. Pupils enter the school with a wide range of musical experiences and skills; most have overall prior attainments which are below average. Pupils, however, respond well and rapidly to the focused teaching they receive. They acquire new knowledge relatively easily, although they do not retain it well. Because of this, teachers always carefully revise material at the start of lessons. Over the key stage, most pupils achieve well and make good progress in learning to read simple notation, to understand chords and harmonies and to locate notes on a music keyboard in order to play tunes.
159. In Key Stage 4, pupils also learn well. Lessons are always very practical. Early in Year 10, pupils are encouraged to play before their peers in order to build up their confidence. They develop a working understanding of scales, intervals, chords and harmonisation in appropriate detail. All pupils in Years 10 and 11 apply themselves well to learning their tasks and gain confidence in using their knowledge and creative energy. In all lessons, pupils show a genuine interest in the subject, take responsibility for their own learning and apply themselves well to the challenges of the coursework. In both Key Stages 3 and 4, pupils with special educational needs make progress which compares favourably with that of their peers. The quality of both teaching and learning has improved considerably since the previous inspection.
160. Students in Years 12 and 13 learn very well. By this stage, they have cultivated a mature approach to all their work and are accustomed to the kind of sharp criticism that helps them to improve. Learning is well reinforced, both by practical and theoretical study. Their good commitment to studies enables them to perform, compose and appreciate in depth the range and characteristics of instruments, transposition, musical form, interpretation and style, and above all to develop an overall enthusiasm for the subject.
161. Overall, in both key stages and in the sixth form, pupils' and students' attitudes to learning are very positive. They are interested not only in their class lessons, but also in improving their instrumental skills and, for a large number, in playing in the various extra-curricular music activities. They behave well in lessons and around the school and show good respect for property, equipment and teaching spaces. They are kind towards one another, particularly in activities where they are required to be critical of peer performances and compositions. As they move up the school, pupils and students demonstrate an increasing sense of responsibility for their own learning. By the time they end their studies, they are very well poised for entering the next phase of education.
162. The department is very well led. Over the past three years the head of music has opened up the subject to pupils with a wide range of musical talents and general capabilities. The music staff devote great energy both to their daily teaching and to extending the range and improving the quality of musical possibilities for pupils. The department provides an excellent range of extra-curricular activities, performances and concerts both in and out of school. The numerous ensembles provide good opportunities for pupils of almost every level of musical skill; highly skilled instrumentalists have especially good provision; for example they play for and encourage primary school pupils, or they play with the band during its tours abroad. Music makes a very good contribution to the social and cultural life of the school. Provision of and standards in music have improved well since the previous inspection. The accommodation has been extended and upgraded since the last inspection and, whilst acoustic insulation is still inadequate, good teaching and learning are not now significantly impaired by it.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

163. Overall levels of attainment in physical education are at least satisfactory, with a substantial majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, reaching the expected standards for their age. In Key Stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form, a significant minority of pupils are working at very high standards compared to those expected nationally. At Key Stage 4 standards are higher in the physical education examination course. The unconfirmed 2000 GCSE results with the first cohort of pupils are good and show that the school has done well. Compared

with their other subjects in the school, pupils have achieved good examination results.

164. At the end of Key Stage 3, most pupils attain appropriate standards, with a significant minority of pupils working beyond the levels that are expected nationally. Pupils generally achieve better standards in games. They are able to acquire and develop their skills, apply them in the game context appropriately with satisfactory precision and control. In most lessons, pupils use their knowledge and understanding to plan their own work. They can select tactics, skills and ideas and use them in group and team activities. They are able to analyse, comment and demonstrate their understanding of their own and others' strengths and weaknesses appropriate to the activity. Their analysis of their own and others' performance is, in the main, satisfactory. A significant number of pupils clearly demonstrate their ability to take the initiative to improve the quality and standard of performance of themselves and others. The application of evaluation to improve performance in all areas of activity, but particularly games, has improved since the last inspection. At Key Stage 3, teachers provide opportunities in a significant proportion of lessons for the development of independent learning. The pupils' understanding of how to prepare for and recover from specific activities was evident in most lessons. Pupils could explain how the body reacts during different types of exercise and through practical application, demonstrate the benefits of safe exercise. In games, most pupils understand rules and tactics, but lower attaining pupils are not as effective in the pressure of games. In gymnastics, rhythm and balance are satisfactory.
165. Standards towards the end of Year 11 in the core physical education programme are at nationally expected levels. Pupils understand and apply the rules appropriately and their knowledge of positional play is good. Pupils use their knowledge and understanding to prepare for activities ensuring application of health and fitness principles for specific purposes and develop safe practice in all programmes. A significant percentage of pupils in the core physical education lessons are unable to achieve high standards of performance, planning and evaluation within demanding activities. In the present GCSE group most pupils attain average standards, with a significant percentage achieving good standards in their practical and theoretical studies.
166. Students working towards A and A/S level examinations are on target to achieve good results. Students have a good knowledge of the physiological aspects of performance.
167. Overall, pupils' attitudes and behaviour in physical education are good. They work hard and are enthusiastic in all areas of activity. Pupils are polite and are committed to working collaboratively in partnership with the teaching staff to develop their performance. There are very few non-participants in lessons and there is a strong commitment to an ethos of mutual respect in the department.
168. Overall, the teaching is good. In over half the lessons the teaching is good: this is mainly in Years 7 to 9. In Key Stage 4, teaching, overall, is satisfactory. The small amount of teaching observed in the sixth form was good. Learning at Key Stage 3 is good and pupils achieve well in relation to prior attainment. At Key Stage 4, learning in the core programme is satisfactory and good in the examination work. Overall, pupils concentrate well, listen attentively and follow instructions. They are eager to answer questions and maintain good levels of physical activity. Pupils organise theory folders and personal handbooks sensibly. The care of physical education resources is good. In only one lesson, in Year 11, learning and behaviour were inappropriate. Teachers manage pupils well and maintain very good relationships with their classes. Their expectations are high, particularly in respect of performance and behaviour, so ensuring a positive ethos for all. The rate of progress in games is good, particularly in football. Overall, a significant proportion of pupils progress very well and they are supported by very good extra-curricular provision in sport. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and improvements in planning since the last inspection have supported learning across the strands of the attainment target in physical education. However, there is some inconsistency in the planning of assessment in lessons. Good teaching is exemplified by the use of a range of teaching and learning approaches linked to clear learning objectives, which are shared with pupils. Pupils achieve higher standards where teachers set tasks that are challenging. However, the setting of suitable learning challenges and the response to the different needs of pupils to overcome potential barriers to learning are not consistent.

169. The leadership and management of the department are good. Improvement since the last inspection is good. Improvements have been made in curriculum planning, assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress. The department has introduced GCSE, A and A/S level in physical education and sports studies. These initiatives have helped to raise the profile of the subject within the school and are clearly valued by the pupils. Assessment procedures are now satisfactory, overall, but there is inconsistency in their application. In the good teaching, pupils knew the criteria on which they were assessed and knew specifically what they need to do to improve. The curriculum meets statutory requirements, but the balance of time does not fully enable sufficient depth in what is to be achieved in all areas of physical education activities. Progress has been made in respect of team planning linked to the whole school plan. Monitoring and evaluation are developing, but there is a need to develop self-evaluation to link activities to clear criteria and indicators in relation to standards.
170. Accommodation is adequate and the condition and maintenance of indoor and outdoor spaces are satisfactory. A team of specialists teaches physical education. This supports good teaching in the subject. The department is involved in a good partnership with the leisure centre on site to enhance the curriculum. Staff development needs are considered carefully and deployment is satisfactory. To further raise standards, there is a need to conduct an audit of individual needs and to develop a more balanced approach to continuing professional development and sharing of key areas in physical education.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

171. In 1996, the school introduced GCSE religious studies as an option at Key Stage 4. The course was an immediate success and the results have been very good. In 1999, the proportion of A\*-C grades was significantly higher than the national average. The results were very good compared to other results in the school. The A level course, introduced two years later, has been similarly successful. Although the proportion of students awarded top grades in 2000 was low, it is higher than the average for other subjects in the school.
172. Observation of lessons, analysis of work and discussion with pupils show that the majority of pupils at the age of 14 are at the standard expected by the Agreed Syllabus. A significant minority of pupils reach a higher standard. All pupils know the principal beliefs and practices of Christianity and of the other religions studied. They use technical terms correctly and explain their meaning correctly. They explore religious ideas and relate them to their own experience. Pupils achieve higher standards than expected at Key Stage 3 when lessons focus on the difference that religion makes to a person's life and use is made of techniques derived from the GCSE approach.
173. At the age of 16, a significant minority of pupils are well above national expectations, but the majority are below. When taught by specialist teachers through the programme of personal and social education, pupils learn well in lessons. With the shortage of time, however, and the lack of continuity, pupils do not cover the content of the Locally Agreed Syllabus or reach the standard expected at the end of Key Stage 4. The exception is those pupils who follow the GCSE course. Their standard is well above the level expected nationally. Their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and Judaism are very good. They explain how these religions affect people's lives and evaluate issues about which there are differences of opinion.
174. At the age of 18 students who have followed the A level course attain above average standards. They show a good insight into religions, characteristic of candidates on their way to the highest grades. They know how Judaism and Islam developed historically and also how, within each, there are differences of thought and practice today. Other students in the sixth form receive religious education through an appropriate programme within the weekly key skills provision. There is not enough evidence on which to make a judgement about the attainment of these students.
175. At Key Stage 3, the majority of pupils make good progress and a significant minority, those who

are challenged and inspired to give the greatest intellectual and creative effort, make very good progress. The planning and methods ensure that pupils with special educational needs make good progress. At Key Stage 4, most pupils' progress is uneven and unsatisfactory, except pupils following the GCSE course. They have the necessary time and make very good progress. The progress of students at A level is very good.

176. Overall, the quality of teaching is good; it is often very good, particularly at Key Stage 3. Pupils in Key Stage 3 and those taking examination courses benefit greatly from the depth and detail of their teachers' knowledge. The planning of lessons is very good, learning objectives are clearly stated and intended outcomes are monitored both during and at the end of lessons. The presentation to the class is lively. Discussions and activities are very good and stimulate pupils to high levels of thinking, speaking and writing. Overall, the learning of pupils is very good. The specialist teaching turns pupils into keen, confident and successful learners. At Key Stage 4, lessons taught by non-specialist teachers with insufficient subject knowledge leads to pupils not putting in the required intellectual and creative effort that is seen in most other lessons. On the examination courses at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form teaching is very good. A wide repertoire of methods is used with sharp focus on the skills required.
177. The religious education department benefits from excellent leadership. There is a clear sense of direction and a firm commitment to the best possible teaching and the highest possible standards. The departmental strengths come from within, but there are weaknesses beyond its control. The success of the GCSE course contrasts sharply with the lack of provision and achievement for most pupils at Key Stage 4. The school needs to ensure that statutory requirements are fully met at Key Stage 4.
178. Since the last inspection, there have been very good improvements. At that time, religious education was a new department with a new head of department. The new Locally Agreed Syllabus has been introduced and implemented at Key Stage 3. A system of assessment has been developed and achievement is now recorded and reported to parents. The examination courses have been very successful. The contribution to pupils' personal development, especially in the spiritual and cultural aspects of their lives, is distinctive and powerful.