

INSPECTION REPORT

THE WOODLANDS SCHOOL

Coventry

LEA area: Coventry

Unique reference number: 103730

Headteacher: Mr. David Hebden

Reporting inspector: Anthony Shield
3569

Dates of inspection: 30 October – 3 November 2000

Inspection number: 223949

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: Boys

School address: Broad Lane
Coventry

Postcode: CV5 7FF

Telephone number: 02476 462634

Fax number: 02476 467190

Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr. Walter Dye

Date of previous inspection: February 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Anthony Shield 3569	Registered inspector		<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>The school's results and pupils' achievements</p> <p>How well are pupils taught?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
Michael Romano 8989	Lay inspector		<p>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p> <p>Accommodation</p>
Brian Dower 23393	Team Inspector	English	
Derek Jones 3643	Team inspector	Mathematics	
Ray Woodhouse 22691	Team inspector	Science	
Lorraine Small 22491	Team inspector	Design Technology Information and Communication Technology	
Timothy Wright 4411	Team inspector	Art	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
Ian Stuart 19298	Team Inspector	Geography Religious Education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Barbara Barnes 30982	Team Inspector	History Special educational needs	

		English as an additional language	
Roslyn Fox 4617	Team Inspector	Modern Foreign Languages	Staffing
Shirley Stanley 30128	Team Inspector	Music Equal Opportunities	Learning resources
Carolyn Rowe 20395	Team inspector	Physical Education	Assessment
Ron Cohen 18447	Team Inspector	Business Studies	

The inspection contractor was:

Quality Assurance Associates Ltd
Herringston Barn
Herringston
Dorchester
Dorset
DT2 9PU

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Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The Woodlands School, situated on the western edge of Coventry, is the only all boys comprehensive school in the city. It admits pupils from a wide area. There are 1166 boys on roll, including 118 in the sixth form. The school's pupils come from a range of socio-economic backgrounds, and the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals (18 per cent) is broadly in line with the national average. However, the proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below average at nearly 13 per cent; most are related to learning difficulties. Of these pupils, 9 have statements of special educational needs. Most pupils are from a white UK heritage, although there are significant minorities from minority ethnic groups. Sixty-one pupils have English as an additional language, but only two of these are at an early stage of language acquisition. On entry, most pupils' attainments are in line with the national average for boys.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an improving school which is providing a satisfactory education for most of its pupils. Most pupils achieve standards which are at least in line with their ability, although pockets of underachievement remain in some subjects, particularly during Years 7 to 9. Pupils have satisfactory attitudes to work and most behave well. Around the school, pupils behave responsibly and sensibly. However, some poor attitudes and behaviour are affecting progress in a minority of lessons. Almost all the teaching is at least satisfactory and much is good or better, particularly in the sixth form. As a result, most pupils make at least satisfactory progress and are learning well. The curriculum is satisfactory, but there are weaknesses in the learning opportunities in Years 10 and 11. The school's leadership and management are good, particularly the purposeful and insightful leadership shown by the headteacher, and are beginning to impact on some longstanding problems in the school. Overall, the school has made improvements since the last inspection but not consistently across all areas of its work. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher's very good leadership provides a strong focus for school improvement
- Hardworking and committed staff are determined to secure further improvement
- Pupils' standards and achievements in mathematics are good
- Standards in design technology, art and geography are good
- Good pastoral care and opportunities for moral and social development are provided through the effective house system
- The school provides very good opportunities for competitive sport in which impressive numbers of pupils participate

What could be improved

- More rigorous line management procedures and monitoring of teaching to ensure consistently high standards of teaching are achieved
- The achievement of pupils at Key Stage 3 in science
- The assessment, provision and progress of pupils with special educational needs
- The use of assessment data by subject departments to set targets and raise standards
- The curriculum at Key Stage 4, which lacks breadth and balance for some pupils
- The lack of planned opportunities for making pupils more spiritually aware
- The teaching of information and communication technology in all subjects where the statutory requirement is not being met

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the previous inspection in February 1996, the school has made satisfactory progress in raising standards and improving the quality of teaching and learning. An uncertain period immediately after the last inspection has been followed by more decisive leadership from the recently appointed headteacher. As a result, the school is now moving forward purposefully. More rigorous management systems are being put in place, and some issues from the last inspection on which there had been little progress are now being addressed, if they have not already been resolved. Inspectors judge that the school has a good capacity to continue its improvement.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools (boys and girls)			similar schools (mixed)
	1998	1999	2000	2000
GCSE examinations	D	D	D	D
A-levels/AS-levels	D	D	D	

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

Given their attainment on entry, most pupils achieve a satisfactory standard of work overall. In most subjects, standards are high enough, but there is underachievement in science, modern foreign languages and religious education. In these subjects, standards are too low but show signs of improvement. Pupils with special educational needs also underachieve in several subjects, but not in mathematics where their progress is good, or in English where achievement is satisfactory. In mathematics, art, geography, and design technology, pupils achieve well and progress is good.

In 2000, the school's Key Stage 3 test results in English and mathematics were close to the national average, while in science, results were below average. However, if the school's results are compared with boys' only results nationally, standards are higher. Taking the four years 1996 – 1999 together, while results in science were below average, the performance in English was average and in mathematics, above average. In comparison with similar schools, results in 2000 were average in English and mathematics but well below average in science. The school's results have been improving, broadly in line with the improving national trend.

At GCSE in 2000, the average total points score per pupil was below the national average for boys and girls, but in line with the results of boys nationally. In comparison with similar schools, the school's results were below average. Results have been improving, although not as fast as the national trend. Results dipped very slightly in 2000, when 39 per cent of pupils achieved five or more A*-C grades at GCSE. Pupils did particularly well in art, design technology, geography and mathematics, but less well in physical education, business studies, French and science. The school's targets for GCSE performance in 2000 were challenging, and not met, except in relation to the percentage achieving A* to G. Its targets for 2001, are also challenging, and sensibly based on a realistic assessment of the cohort's performance.

At A-level, the school's average points score in 2000 was 15.98, an improvement on the previous year, but still below average. Some good results were achieved in business studies, English, French and history. Some good results were also achieved in Business Studies GNVQ. Over the last five years, results have fluctuated, with no discernible trend up or down.

In work seen during the inspection, attainment overall is above national expectations in mathematics, art, geography and design technology. It is below expectations in science, modern foreign languages and religious education and in line in all other subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory. Most pupils are enthusiastic about coming to school and take an interest and involvement in school activities. However, in lessons, some boys' attitudes to learning are sometimes unsatisfactory.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory overall. Around the school, pupils behave responsibly and sensibly. The standard of behaviour observed in lessons varies, and some poor and insensitive behaviour was observed, particularly in Years 7 to 9.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are satisfactory overall, and many teachers have established trusting and productive relationships with pupils. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously.
Attendance	Satisfactory and broadly in line with the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching was judged to be at least satisfactory in over ninety-two per cent of lessons observed during the inspection. In over fifty-five per cent, it was good or better and in sixteen per cent it was very good or excellent. Teaching was unsatisfactory in just over seven per cent of lessons. The quality of teaching improves as pupils move through the school. There is less unsatisfactory teaching in Key Stage 4 than in Key Stage 3, and none at all in the sixth form.

The overall quality of teaching in mathematics is good, while in English and science it is satisfactory. Teaching in other subjects is particularly effective in art, geography, music and business studies, but there are weaknesses in the teaching of religious education. Strengths of the teaching include teachers' subject knowledge and understanding, thorough planning of lesson content, and regular, supportive marking. Weaknesses include the range and effectiveness of teaching methods used to interest and engage the pupils, particularly when the pupils' attitudes are unsatisfactory, and the use of assessment to set targets and plan the next learning step. Pupils' awareness of their own learning and what they should do to improve is not strong. Expectations of both behaviour and work rate and not always sufficiently high. The use of computers to support learning in subjects is unsatisfactory.

The teaching of literacy is satisfactory and that of numeracy good. Basic numeracy skills in particular are consolidated effectively in mathematics and some other subjects. Writing skills are well taught, but extended speaking and listening skills are not encouraged.

In general, teaching is planned satisfactorily to meet the needs of all pupils, but does not always fully meet the needs of the wide ability range in some classes, particularly in Years 7 to 9. There is currently no provision for the specialist teaching of pupils with special educational needs. There is insufficient evidence to judge the full extent of the teaching and progress of pupils with English as an additional language.

Pupils' learning overall in lessons is satisfactory and most pupils make at least satisfactory progress through both key stages and in the sixth form. In mathematics, geography and design technology, pupils make good progress. Learning is unsatisfactory in religious education. Progress overall is better during Years 10 and 11, when the curriculum is more focused on examination requirements.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall, although there are weaknesses particularly in Key Stage 4 where the balance for some pupils is unsatisfactory. The sixth form curriculum is good, with a particularly wide range of enrichment opportunities. Legal requirements to teach information and communication technology in all subjects in Key Stage 4 are not fully met.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Unsatisfactory. The assessment and identification of pupils is poor, and targets set in individual education plans are not sufficiently focused or widely used to ensure appropriate progress. The lack of specialist teaching impedes progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There are sound procedures for the assessment of pupils. Teachers are not fully informed about language levels so cannot fully ensure that pupils achieve as well as they should.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall. There are good opportunities for developing social and moral awareness, and taking responsibility. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory, but opportunities for a greater spiritual awareness are not always taken and are unsatisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school supports pupils well and the quality of care provided through the house system is good. Pupils' progress is monitored carefully but assessment data is not yet being used effectively in subjects to set targets and raise standards.

The school's partnership with parents is satisfactory overall, and parents have been consulted and involved in issues such as improving homework.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good leadership by the headteacher is giving the school clear direction and a common sense of purpose. Management at all levels is at least satisfactory in most subjects
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors ensure that most statutory requirements are met. They offer committed and hard working support to the school. Their confidence in accounting for the school's performance is growing, but there is a need to intervene and challenge more strongly when things are not going well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school has a good awareness of its strengths and weaknesses, but as yet monitoring and evaluation systems of classroom performance are not rigorous enough to ensure consistently high standards.
The strategic use of	Resources are satisfactorily used to support learning. Budgetary planning supports the objectives identified in the school development

resources	plan. The school is making good use of additional funding to secure improvements to the site and building. Best value principles are applied satisfactorily.
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There are adequate teaching and support staff to meet the school's needs. Resources are just satisfactory, although currently the library is not well stocked and is too small. There are insufficient computers in departments. The accommodation is satisfactory.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the school expects their children to work hard, achieve their best; they felt their children were making good progress • The school is approachable when they have problems • That the school encourages their children to become mature and responsible • That the school is improving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality and frequency of homework • Disruptive behaviour in class • Inadequate reporting on progress

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Overall inspectors agree with parents' views. Parents have been consulted by the school about homework, and, in general, inspectors found that well designed homework tasks are being set. Reports are adequate although some lack precision and detail in some subjects. Regular parents' evenings give parents good opportunities to discuss their child's progress with the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. On entry, most pupils' attainments are around average for boys, with a reasonable spread of pupils of all abilities. Standards overall match the national expectations for boys at the end of both key stages and in the sixth form, and most pupils achieve satisfactorily given their ability and attainment on entry. However, standards vary between subjects. In work seen during the inspection, attainment overall is above national expectations in mathematics, art, geography and design technology. In these subjects, pupils achieve well and progress through to Year 11 is good. However, in science, modern foreign languages and religious education attainment is below expectations, and there is some underachievement. In these subjects, standards are too low but show signs of improvement. In other subjects, standards are in line with expected levels nationally, and achievement is satisfactory, although in music standards are not high enough as a consequence of the lack of suitable staff during the last two years. In the sixth form, standards are below expected levels in mathematics, but above in science, art, design technology, ICT and modern foreign languages. In all other subjects, standards match expected levels.
2. In 2000, the school's Key Stage 3 test results in English and mathematics were close to the national average, while in science, results were below average. However, if the school's results are compared with boys' only results nationally, standards are higher. Taking the four years 1996 – 1999 together, while results in science were below average, the performance in English was average and in mathematics, above average. In comparison with similar schools, results in 2000 were average in English and mathematics but well below average in science. The school's results have been improving, broadly in line with the improving national trend.
3. At GCSE in 2000, the average total points score per pupil was below the national average for boys and girls, but in line with the results of boys' nationally. In comparison with schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, the school's results were below average. Results have been improving, although not as fast as the national trend. Results dipped very slightly in 2000, when 39 per cent of pupils achieved five or more A*-C grades at GCSE. Pupils did particularly well in art, design technology, geography and mathematics, but less well in physical education, business studies, French and science. The school's targets for GCSE performance in 2000 were challenging, and not met, except in relation to the percentage achieving A* to G. Its targets for 2001, are also challenging, and sensibly based on a realistic assessment of the cohort's performance.
4. At A-level, the school's average points score in 2000 was 15.98, an improvement on the previous year, but still below average. Some good results were achieved in business studies, English, French and history. Some good results were also achieved in business studies GNVQ. Over the last five years, results have fluctuated, with no discernible trend up or down.
5. Overall, pupils with special educational needs make unsatisfactory progress. They make good progress in mathematics, art and in design and technology, and unsatisfactory progress in science, modern languages, religious education, information technology, physical education at Key Stage 4, and in history at Key Stage 3. Progress in other subjects is satisfactory. Where progress is unsatisfactory, it is because there is as yet insufficient planning in most departments to address the needs of individual pupils with learning difficulties, and teachers do not have enough useful information or advice in order to plan effectively for them. Pupils who receive their English lessons in small groups benefit from the high level of help and attention from teachers, but they are not receiving the specialist teaching they need, and are not, as a result, making enough progress. Moreover, they miss out on lessons in other subjects so are not getting their full entitlement to the National Curriculum. The school does not know how much progress pupils with a statement of special educational needs make because the targets on their individual educational plans, known in the school as STARS, are not specific enough nor measurable, and focus too much on behaviour.

6. No judgement can be made about the attainment and progress of pupils for whom English is an additional language because there is insufficient evidence. The school does not monitor the attainment and progress of pupils by ethnicity as it should. Teachers do not know which pupils are bilingual because they have not been informed. Inspectors could not, as a result, evaluate the progress of these pupils in lessons.
7. The school does not specifically identify gifted and talented pupils in the school. However, progress for the more able pupils is satisfactory in most subjects. However, a failure to plan consistently well for the needs of the more able in English, mathematics and history, means that not all of these pupils make as good progress as they might. Despite very good results in art, some activities do not sufficiently challenge more able pupils to express themselves in a more personal and individual style. However, able pupils make good progress in geography.
8. Standards of attainment in English throughout the school are improving as a result of more consistently satisfactory and good teaching. Attainment meets national expectations, and pupils' achievements are satisfactory.
9. Standards of literacy are satisfactory, although listening skills are not well developed. Too many pupils find it difficult to listen to their teachers and other pupils with sustained concentration. Progress in writing is at least satisfactory with most pupils being able to write clearly and accurately in a variety of forms. Reading is well developed, and teachers make use of a wide range of texts in their lessons to deepen understanding. Many pupils read aloud fluently. In speaking, pupils answer questions willingly, but are less confident in asking questions and expressing themselves at length and in discussion.
10. Standards in mathematics are above expectations and pupils' achieve well, because good teaching promotes high standards. By the end of Key Stage 4 attainment is well above expectations and pupils' achievement is good. In the sixth form, attainment is below expectations; some pupils find the demands of the course too great for them. Numeracy standards are good overall, as a consequence of well-considered approaches across the curriculum.
11. In science, overall standards are below expectations at the end of both Key Stages 3 and 4. However, in the sixth form, standards are better than recent examination results suggest, and above expected levels. Most pupils are underachieving, particularly in Key Stage 3, where the lack of opportunity for practical and investigative work alongside poor listening skills leads to unsatisfactory progress. Learning is better in Years 10 and 11, but attainment remains below average. However, results are improving at both Key Stage 3 and in GCSE examinations.
12. Overall standards in art are above expectations at the end of Year 9 and well above by the time pupils reach 16 and 18 years; pupils' achievements are good. The high levels of achievement of most pupils are the consequence of effective and examination focused teaching.
13. Standards in design technology are above expectations overall and improving, although by the age of 14 years, pupils' standards and achievements are only satisfactory. However, progress through Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form is good, and pupils develop work of a very good quality, based on a wide range of investigation and design skills. In general, pupils have a good grasp of using and applying design processes.
14. In geography, standards are above average and improving; pupils are achieving well as a consequence of good teaching and positive attitudes to learning. Pupils acquire a good knowledge and understanding of geographical topics.
15. In history, standards meet expectations at the end of both key stages. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory, despite some underachievement amongst less able pupils in Key Stage 3. There is currently no sixth form history work. In general, pupils' achievements although satisfactory, could be higher if pupils engaged more positively in discussion and learnt to ask as well as answer questions.
16. In information and communication technology (ICT), pupils at the ages of 14 and 16 achieve levels in line with those expected nationally and this represents satisfactory progress. In the sixth

form standards are above average. Pupils use a range of software with confidence, and have reasonable competence in basic ICT skills. However, these are not being taught through the full range of subjects and, as a consequence, pupils have a less secure understanding of the applications of ICT.

17. Standards in modern foreign languages are below national averages and are not high enough. This is because of inconsistent teaching, unsatisfactory planning and inadequate procedures to support weaker and inexperienced teachers. Although pupils make satisfactory progress in lessons, their progress over time is not as good, resulting in underachievement in Years 10 and 11. This underachievement has been made worse by staffing difficulties.
18. Standards in music are below national expectations, and in Year 9 are not high enough. The school has been without qualified music staff for two years, and pupils have experienced insufficient music teaching. However, standards are now improving rapidly as a result of recent appointments. Standards for the relatively few pupils taking GCSE music are average.
19. Standards in the practical aspects of physical education (PE) meet national expectations overall at the end of both key stages and in the sixth form, and achievements are satisfactory for most pupils. Standards in examinations are well below average at GCSE, mainly because of shortcomings in pupils' theory work. Pupils reach high standards in competitive games, athletics and cross-country running, and school teams achieve notable successes locally.
20. Standards in religious education (RE) are below average at Key Stage 3, and pupils do not achieve as well as they should, a situation made worse by the lack of RE on the timetable in Year 9 this year. Standards are well below average at Key Stage 4, with unsatisfactory achievement and attitudes from pupils in many classes. No religious education is taught in the sixth form as most parents have said that they wish to withdraw their sons from the subject.
21. Standards and pupils' achievements in business studies are satisfactory at GCSE, GNVQ and A-levels. Standards are improving because of good teaching, good assessment procedures and strong leadership.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

22. Pupils' attitudes to their work are satisfactory overall. Most pupils are enthusiastic about coming to school, and particularly enjoy taking part in the wide range of activities offered outside lessons. In lessons, most show positive attitudes to learning and are keen to answer questions. A minority of boys have limited concentration and are easily distracted. Attitudes to learning, particularly amongst a few pupils in Years 7 to 9 and during the afternoon, can sometimes be unsatisfactory. This does affect learning and can disrupt other pupils.
23. Overall behaviour in lessons is satisfactory. Behaviour around the school, in transit and in the dining rooms is generally good. The school functions as an orderly community and most pupils are polite and sensitive to others. In lessons, while the overwhelming majority of pupils behave well, some isolated instances of poor and disrespectful behaviour were observed. This lack of application and concentration is not always checked by teachers. Pupils are confident in feeling able to report instances of harassment and bullying, and, in most cases, this is dealt with effectively. During the past year there have been six permanent exclusions and seventy-five fixed period exclusions, around average for schools of this size. The number of exclusions is reducing year-on-year, similar to national trends. Both parents and pupils reported that behaviour in the school had improved markedly recently and particularly since the appointment of the new headteacher.
24. Relationships within the school are satisfactory, and many teachers have established trusting and productive relationships with the pupils. Good relationships are fostered and encouraged through the house system, and house heads and tutors have a very good knowledge of all the pupils in their care. Most pupils have respect for their teachers and pastoral staff. Older pupils develop good relationships with younger pupils, particularly within the house, but also through the "buddy system", which enables older pupils to support younger pupils.

25. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory and many senior pupils act responsibly and with maturity. The school provides opportunities for younger and older pupils to work together, in for example, projects for the elderly, and various charities. Older pupils act as peer mentors and buddies to younger pupils, which contributes effectively to good relationships and their own personal development. Pupils' views are taken seriously through the school council, and pupils carry out a range of responsibilities conscientiously. In the canteens, and on reception, pupils contribute effectively to the smooth running of the school.
26. Attendance last year was satisfactory at 91.06% and unauthorised absence at 1.22%. These levels are broadly in line with those nationally. Pupils generally arrive in school and to lessons on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

27. Teaching was judged to be at least satisfactory in over ninety-two per cent of lessons observed during the inspection. In over fifty-five per cent of lessons, teaching was good or better, and in sixteen per cent it was very good or excellent. Teaching was unsatisfactory in just over seven per cent of lessons. The quality of teaching improves as pupils move through the school. There is less unsatisfactory teaching in Key Stage 4 than in Key Stage 3, and none at all in the sixth form. The quality of teaching in the sixth form is good in all subjects except English and mathematics where it is satisfactory.
28. The overall quality of teaching in mathematics is good, while in English and science it is satisfactory. Teaching in other subjects is particularly effective in art, geography, music and business studies, but there are weaknesses in the teaching of religious education.
29. The teaching of literacy is satisfactory and that of numeracy good. Basic numeracy skills in particular are consolidated effectively in mathematics and some other subjects. Writing skills are well taught, but extended speaking and listening skills are not consistently encouraged through ensuring pupils answer questions at length. Pupils do not always give their full attention and focus to the work; a failure to listen carefully, whether to the teacher or each other, often means progress is not as good as it might be.
30. Strengths of the teaching include teachers' subject knowledge and understanding, thorough planning of lesson content and activities and regular and supportive marking. Most teachers are secure in their subject knowledge and sufficiently confident to teach with interest and commitment. In a Year 9 geography lesson observed, for example, the teacher's deep and enthusiastic understanding of the subject of continental drift, challenged pupils' thinking and engaged their interest through a confidently presented introduction. Subsequent questioning and the use of challenging materials ensured good progress. In science, teachers ensure relevance and understanding through effective reference to the application of science in current news stories. Reference to the problem of the oxygen supply on a sunken Russian submarine in a Year 8 lesson, helped to focus the pupils' attention and interest.
31. Lesson planning is detailed, a measure of the commitment of teachers to careful preparation for lessons. In a Year 9 mathematics lesson on algebraic equations, very good planning ensured the lesson moved at a very good pace with plenty of variety of pupil response. This made a strong impact on pupils' learning, particularly in the acquisition of basic skills and their knowledge of how to solve equations. Pupils made good progress in a Year 11 geography lesson observed on reducing the risk of flooding, because the teacher had prepared simple but effective board diagrams, which provided the focus for the teacher's introduction and helped the pupils concentrate their thinking and learning. However, where learning is less effective, it is often because the teacher has given insufficient thought to the specific learning objectives. Overall progress in a Year 10 drama lesson observed for example, was satisfactory, but might have been improved if the lesson objectives, not just the tasks and activities, had been made clear to the pupils at the start.
32. In many subjects, marking is a strength. In English and mathematics in particular, marking is detailed, regular and encouraging. Some comments point to areas for improvement. In mathematics, homework is regularly marked and pupils are encouraged to learn from their

mistakes. However, National Curriculum levels are not used with the pupils to measure progress or to plan the next step. As a result, pupils are not as aware of their achievements as they might be, and more importantly what they need to do next to improve. Pupils' awareness of their own learning and what they should do to improve is not strong, except where, as in some subjects at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, the curriculum is more focused on examination requirements.

33. Weaknesses in teaching include the range and effectiveness of teaching methods used to interest and engage the pupils, particularly when the pupils' attitudes are unsatisfactory, as well as the use of assessment to set targets and plan the next learning step. Teaching methods are not always sufficiently varied to engage the full attention of pupils or to maximise learning, through involving the pupils more routinely. The opportunities to develop extended speaking and listening skills through discussion and debate are not fully taken. Computers are not being used sufficiently to support learning in different subjects. As a consequence pupils do not always take sufficient responsibility for organising their own learning. They expect to be told and to learn through absorbing knowledge rather than deepening their understanding through active participation. Only in the sixth form are pupils encouraged to take more responsibility for their own learning. In addition, teachers sometimes spend too long on particular activities, often with a tendency to talk for too long, with the result that the pace of learning drops. In a Year 8 RE lesson observed, the reading by the teacher of a textbook merely repeated information from the book, rather than reinforcing and deepening understanding through a range of different activities.
34. Expectations of both behaviour and work rate are not consistently high, particularly when pupils come to lessons with an unsatisfactory attitude. In an otherwise good Year 11 English lesson, the second half of the lesson drifted because the teacher did not insist on a quiet and productive working atmosphere, and the indifference of a few boys went unchallenged. Overall classroom management is satisfactory, and many teachers skilfully engage some reluctant learners in the lesson. However, some teachers, particularly with lower attaining sets in Years 7 to 9, concentrate on the negative aspects of the pupils' work and behaviour, and fail to give sufficient encouragement for them to make a more positive contribution.
35. In general, teaching is sufficiently well planned to meet the needs of all pupils, but does not always fully meet the needs of the wide ability range in some classes, particularly in Years 7 to 9. There are some good examples in English, mathematics, design technology, geography and business education of planning which effectively builds on pupils' prior attainment and ensures good progress. However, even in mathematics, high attainers in mixed ability classes in Year 7 often do the same work as others before they are given additional extension work. As a consequence their progress is not as good as it might be. This is partly a result of not using assessment with sufficient consistency to plan the next lesson.
36. This also affects the progress of low ability pupils. There is currently no specialist teaching for pupils with special educational needs. The provision of small groups in English is not intended to or equipped to address pupils' complex learning difficulties, and does not do so. Subject teachers are aware of which pupils are on the special needs register, are given adequate information about behaviour and organisation skills, but not about the nature of their learning difficulties. This is made more complicated by having a separate stage on the register for learning and for behaviour, which is unnecessary and unhelpful. Teachers are given no guidance on strategies, for example to help pupils with specific learning difficulties. The impact of the work of departmental link teachers, who liaise with the special educational needs co-ordinator, is not sufficiently effective because the focus of monitoring pupils' attainment and progress lies too heavily on pastoral systems. As a result, there is as yet insufficient development of teachers' skills in matching work in lessons to individual pupils' needs within and between subjects.
37. Support in lessons for pupils with special educational needs from education assistants is generally of good quality, although not always effectively deployed. Education assistants are not generally provided with advance materials and work schemes in order to prepare, and teachers do not, as a rule, meet with assistants at the start of a period of support to discuss strategies and to identify additional pupils for support or monitoring. Many teachers provide effective support for pupils with special educational needs as in technology and art. Pupils with special educational needs wanting help with work or a chat with special needs staff cannot go to a learning support base at breaks or lunchtime, because the room is too small; but newly adapted accommodation soon to be available will enable this to happen. The school cannot be sure that support is being

provided for all pupils who need it, as assessment is unsatisfactory. For example, the special educational needs co-ordinator is not aware of any pupil in the school who has a hearing impairment, and it is highly likely there are some. There is a similar lack of informed awareness in the learning support department about which pupils are eligible for special arrangements for examinations. As a consequence the school cannot be sure that pupils who need support are identified, let alone getting it.

38. There is insufficient evidence to judge the full extent of the teaching and progress of pupils with English as an additional language. Subject teachers and educational assistants do not know which pupils speak English as an additional language because they are not informed. Consequently, they cannot direct their planning and support effectively.
39. Pupils' learning overall in lessons is satisfactory and most pupils make at least satisfactory progress through both key stages and in the sixth form. In mathematics, geography and design technology, pupils make good progress. Learning is unsatisfactory in religious education. Pupils' learning improves as they move through the school. This is because the quality of teaching improves, partly as a consequence of more focused teaching in preparation for GCSE and A-level examinations, but also because pupils' attitudes improve. They try harder and are more prepared to work with concentration and independence in Years 10 to 13.
40. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. There is less unsatisfactory teaching. However, some of the weaknesses remain; the last report was critical of the lack of consistently good teaching across all subjects, of the narrow range of teaching and learning strategies used and of passive learning by pupils and these features still persist. The school now needs to adopt a more rigorous approach to monitoring and improving aspects of teaching if recent improvements are to be sustained.

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

41. The quality and range of learning opportunities are satisfactory overall, but unsatisfactory in Key Stage 4 and good in the sixth form. Statutory requirements are met, except with regard to RE in Year 9, and ICT in Key Stage 4 where there are few opportunities for pupils to apply ICT skills across the curriculum. As a consequence, not all pupils at Key Stage 4 cover the full range of ICT skills. Furthermore their progress in ICT is not reported to parents, in breach of legal requirements. Most of the issues identified at the time of the last inspection have been satisfactorily addressed, but there are some important areas where progress has been limited, notably in relation to the provision for pupils with special educational needs.
42. Overall, the curriculum is broad and balanced at Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form, but there are weaknesses in Key Stage 4. In Years 7 to 9, pupils study the full range of National Curriculum subjects, and in addition, drama and personal, social and health education (PSE). Although the number of periods in some subjects varies in each year, a reasonable balance is maintained. However, even in Key Stage 3 there are shortcomings. The twenty-five period week does not give sufficient flexibility to accommodate all the demands of the curriculum in the most appropriate way. For example, the re-introduction of a period of music into the Year 9 curriculum this year has led to religious education being dropped. This has required the re-organisation of religious education in Key Stage 3 in an unsatisfactory way. Similarly, music in Year 7 is only taught for half the year, sharing the time with drama; the result is that inadequate time is given to music. The amount of total teaching time has increased significantly, and is now somewhat more than the recommended minimum time.
43. Despite satisfactory breadth, the overall balance of the curriculum in Key Stage 4 is unsatisfactory because some pupils do not have a balanced timetable. Uneven distribution, and sometimes unsatisfactory amounts of time to individual subjects, are the result of the inflexible timetable. Some option blocks have three periods, others have two. To compensate for this, some pupils are given an extra period to study a foreign language; however, this is at the expense of physical education, so these pupils have only half the time that others have for physical education. Pupils taking science as a single subject in Year 11 have only 2 periods a week, which is well below the recommended amount, and some pupils taking one vocational course have only one period of

science. In addition, only thirty-five per cent of pupils in Year 10 are studying a modern foreign language. The school has carefully considered the choices available to pupils at Key Stage 4, and attempted to respond positively to pupils' choices. However, the consequence is an imbalanced curriculum for these pupils, and disapplication procedures have not been formally applied. There is a sound range of vocational subjects and opportunities at Key Stage 4. WISP (Woodlands' Industry School Project) provides a very valuable course for lower attaining pupils, giving, amongst many benefits, very strong links with local industry. Business education, combined with information and communications technology, is a very popular option at Key Stage 4, and there is some provision for GNVQ. However, the engineering course is not running in Year 10 this year because of lack of demand. Whilst GNVQ is available within the school, none of the courses is currently at foundation level, thereby excluding some pupils from this type of courses.

44. The sixth form curriculum is good. The range of A-level subjects is broad, and there is a very high level of co-operation with the neighbouring school to provide enhanced opportunities and choices, and provide good value for money. This co-operation is being extended next year with the full integration of the sixth forms into one joint sixth form. A reasonable range of GNVQ and other non A-level courses are run, but one of the real strengths of the sixth form is the number of high quality enrichment opportunities open to students. The general studies and 'critical thinking' courses are good and thorough. The Understanding Industry course is taken by many Year 12 students; sponsored by a major local company, and using many guests from local industry, this course is a valuable insight into modern industry and business. The Engineering Education scheme gives some students opportunities to work on major projects at a very high level; there is a driving education sailing course, and opportunities including exchanges, the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme and a sailing project. Overall, sixth form students have opportunities for a rich and varied curriculum.
45. Although curriculum links with primary schools are less strong than pastoral links, pupils are well prepared for their Key Stage 3 work with the induction programme. There is a good programme for personal and social education, which includes appropriate coverage of health and sex education, and alcohol and drug abuse. A strength of this programme is the large number of outside providers whose expertise enhances the topics taught. There are appropriate plans to include the new requirements for teaching citizenship.
46. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory. There is no specialist provision for pupils with significant learning difficulties, including those with a formal statement. This includes teaching and equipment, such as computers or special dictionaries for those with spelling difficulties. The work-related programme, known as WISP is well organised and effectively run for pupils taking fewer GCSE courses in Key Stage 4, and the school is well on its way to securing accreditation for this. However, only mathematics makes provision for alternative accreditation.
47. Pupils with a formal statement receive their entitlement of additional support from educational assistants, and have "STARS" target sheets, as do other pupils at stage 2 on the special needs register, but these are inadequate as individual educational plans. Pupils with difficulties in numeracy are well provided for in maths. Literacy support for pupils identified with the greatest need in literacy in Key Stage 3 provides useful help with their English programme of study, but does not address their complex learning difficulties. Moreover, many of these pupils are not getting full access to the National Curriculum as they are withdrawn from other subjects for whole lessons. There is currently no provision for reading support for other pupils who are behind with their reading skills, although preparation for a peer-mentoring scheme involving Year 11 pupils has been finalised. Other provision is also planned, such as homework support, but is not yet up and running, awaiting an imminent move to better accommodation.
48. There is satisfactory provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language. The programme of support is well informed by good assessment procedures. One pupil gained a good result in Urdu at GCSE.
49. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities. This is particularly strong in the area of sport where there is very good provision for team games. The strength of extra-curricular provision in the sixth form has already been noted, and there are other opportunities. For example, clubs such as drama and chess meet on a regular basis, and there are a number of

school visits and field courses. School productions involve large numbers of pupils, and pantomime rehearsals were just beginning at the time of the inspection. A joint production of *Grease* is planned with the neighbouring girls' school.

50. The school's good links with local employers and industry have already been noted. These, and the good work experience programme, are part of the good provision for work related education, as are the vocational courses. In addition, the careers programme and advice are of good quality, and are well regarded by pupils. The careers programme includes good links with higher education and other providers of post-16 education. There are also good and close links with local teacher training institutions.
51. The school makes satisfactory provision overall to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Many pupils benefit from the good opportunities for developing social and moral awareness. For example they willingly take responsibility as team captains and leaders of sporting, dramatic, and other activities open to them on a whole school basis and especially through the house system. They are encouraged to consider the needs of others and develop a sense of fairness and right and wrong through many lessons and the personal and social education formally provided in tutorial groups. The recently established peer-mentoring system is also effective in promoting pupils' understanding of social relationships and rights and responsibilities of individuals. Moral development is further promoted by teachers' high expectations of pupils' attitudes and behaviour seen in many lessons, year assemblies and house meetings.
52. Spiritual awareness is less well promoted and the unsatisfactory provision throughout the school remains as at the time of the last inspection. Year-group and house assemblies do not consistently provide a daily act of collective worship and therefore the statutory requirement is not met. In addition, the expected opportunities for spiritual development in religious education are often neglected and provision elsewhere in the curriculum is sparse.
53. The contribution of subjects such as geography, religious education, art, PE and English, along with a range of opportunities provided through house activities for cultural development is at least satisfactory. Pupils generally gain a satisfactory insight into their own and others cultural traditions although the richness of our multicultural society is not sufficiently explored or celebrated through the curriculum.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

54. The school's provision for pupils' pastoral care is good, and the high standards reported on in the last inspection have been maintained. The procedures for child protection are effective, with a highly committed head of house as the designated person. Awareness training is given to ensure all staff are alert to potential problems. Health and safety procedures are good, and suitable arrangements for fire, medicines, first aid and risk assessment are in place. Pupils are taught about safety within the curriculum, including the safe use of tools, electricity, chemicals and equipment, and sex education, health education, railway safety are well provided within personal and social education lessons.
55. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are satisfactory. The school has a well-structured system of rewards and sanctions, which is well known to pupils, and consistently applied by most teachers. Commendations and awards for effort are highly regarded by pupils, but these are sometimes de-valued by the lack of consistency from a few teachers.
56. Procedures for eliminating oppressive behaviour are good. Bullying is rare, and when it occurs, parents and pupils say it is effectively dealt with. Whilst there have been instances of pupils making racist remarks, the school has given priority to discussing the consequences of this within the PSE lessons and assemblies. In addition, pupils have been told that these incidents will not be tolerated and that perpetrators will be asked to account for their behaviour in front of their peers in the school council. Pupils report that this has been effective.
57. Procedures for monitoring attendance are good. Registration procedures are carefully carried out and meet statutory requirements. Overall attendance is well monitored by the full time education welfare officer who attends school every day. He makes home visits as needed, and his exceptional involvement in and knowledge of the pupils, their families and the community, means that he can take speedy and effective action when appropriate.
58. The caring ethos of the school is best exemplified by a number of initiatives now in place in which pupils are taught to care for each other. Year 8 pupils are pleased to act as "buddies" for new pupils in Year 7, and Year 11 pupils help younger pupils with reading. Year 10 pupils are trained as peer mentors to make Year 8 pupils aware of the dangers of alcohol. The school's imaginative and well-considered PSE programme plays an important part in reinforcing these core values of the school. These important initiatives are making a strong impact on the overall ethos for learning in the school. Parents comment that they have confidence in the school to care for their sons.
59. The monitoring of pupils' academic performance and personal development is satisfactory in most respects, and is beginning to make an impact on raising achievement. The recently appointed deputy headteacher, and an assistant headteacher oversee relevant practices and procedures. Heads of house undertake the personal development aspects successfully. Heads of department are responsible for monitoring pupils' development in subjects and ensuring that teachers keep accurate records of their work. All subjects adhere to the school's policy for marking and grading the pupils' attainment at foundation, intermediate and extended levels. Whilst pupils understand the system, insufficient reference is made to National Curriculum or other relevant national benchmarks to enable them or their parents to measure progress. The senior management team recognises the limitations of its established methods and intends to move the school forward in this area. Accordingly, it has recently installed a central, computerised system for recording individual pupils' academic performance across the curriculum. There are promising plans for a joint assessment system in the sixth form with the neighbouring girls' school.
60. The school has developed an appropriate policy which underpins its procedures and practices in assessment which, while satisfactory in the main, nevertheless include some significant weaknesses. Good procedures include the testing arrangements in Year 7 and the individual targets set for pupils in each subject which they study in Year 10. Effective practice is less widespread in other areas, and there are inconsistencies both within and between departments. The good strategies which exist in some subjects, for example mathematics, history, design technology and business studies, could usefully inform assessment methods elsewhere. Similarly, the detailed, regular marking in English, which gives pupils clear indications

about what they need to do to improve, provides a model of very good practice. The statutory end of key stage assessment procedures for 2000 are fulfilled with the exception of teacher assessment in music at Key Stage 3 and information technology at Key Stage 4.

61. To date, the use of assessment information to guide curricular planning is unsatisfactory. The school has been slow to respond to criticisms in the last report. It has yet to establish a culture of rigorous, systematic analysis of the available data to inform curriculum planning. Whilst senior managers undertake detailed reviews of pupils' results in national tests and examinations, the inconsistent response of middle managers indicates training is required to enable all teachers to understand what the statistical information means and how they can use it to raise standards at all levels. Significant staffing changes suggest that the school now has the capacity to forge ahead with robust strategies for improvement.
62. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory for pupils with special educational needs, and as a consequence, the use of assessment to direct provision is also unsatisfactory. There are satisfactory identification procedures for the current Year 7 pupils, who have been tested on a wider range of tests than other pupils in the school. Good diagnostic test materials have been developed recently by a governor and are beginning to be used. However, there is as yet inadequate assessment of pupils in Years 8 and above on the special needs register. Consequently monitoring and evaluation are not fully informed. Pastoral staff undertake the administration and co-ordination of pupils on stage 1 of the code of practice, and this is appropriate for this stage. But this is not appropriate for pupils at stage 2 and above, where diagnostic assessment is required in order to inform individual educational plans and set appropriate learning targets according to individual pupils' needs. This requires specialist advice. Procedures for annual reviews for pupils with a formal statement are properly followed, with parents informed and involved. Subject teachers contribute well to progress reports for these reviews. However, evaluation of progress is insufficiently rigorous because targets on pupils' target sheets are too general and often neglect pupils' learning difficulties. Records are as yet incomplete with the result that no evidence could be found of transition plans for pupils aged above 14 who have a statement.
63. There are sound procedures for the assessment of pupils for whom English is an additional language and efficient monitoring and recording of the support that some of them receive. Assessment is well used to target support provision. However, the co-ordination of information and provision is unsatisfactory. Teachers are not fully informed about language levels of developing bilingual pupils so cannot fully ensure these pupils achieve as well as they could and should.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

64. Parents are very supportive of the school. The vast majority of those responding to the questionnaire report that their son likes school, that they find the school approachable with problems or questions, and that the school expects their son to work hard and achieve his best. They also say that they have seen particular improvements in the school since the appointment of the headteacher.
65. The quality of information for parents is satisfactory overall. Annual reports meet legal requirements but the information given is only adequate, being mainly about what pupils have done, rather than what standard they have achieved. No targets are identified within subjects, nor are areas for improvement identified. Inspectors agree to some extent with the minority of parents who were concerned that insufficient detail was provided on their son's progress.
66. Information about events, developments and staff changes are publicised well in the regular newsletter. Parents are invited to induction evenings, open evenings, where they can see the work of the school, and some school productions. The school has given good information recently about sanctions for missing homework dates and for behaviour strategies. All parents have been asked to endorse these school policies through the Home/School agreement. The school prospectus is an impressive document giving a very wide range of useful information.

67. Parents' involvement in the work of the school is satisfactory overall. There is an active parent and teachers' association which organises social and fundraising events to provide resources. Parents' evenings and productions are very well attended. Parents find the pastoral staff are very supportive and communicative. The pupil's logbook is generally used well as a means of communication between home and school.
68. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are appropriately involved in their annual reviews. Pastoral staff maintain contact with the parents of most pupils on the special needs register. The special educational needs co-ordinator has had insufficient time in post to set up systematic procedures to fully involve parents of pupils at stage 2 and 3 of the special needs register.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

69. The headteacher is providing very good and purposeful leadership and giving the school with a clear sense of direction and a powerful model for improvement. His vision is clear, well communicated to and shared by the whole school community. Everyone connected with the school commented on the sense of change. He is very well supported by a relatively newly appointed deputy. Together they are working well to promote a shared sense of purpose and cohesive drive for improvement. The whole school community is committed to improvement. The headteacher has motivated and inspired staff and pupils to believe that the school can do better, after a long period of drift since the last inspection. The school's capacity for further improvement is good.
70. The senior management team has been restructured and is now providing a firm focus for the school's strategic planning. The quality of management at head of department level is satisfactory overall, but inconsistent. There have been some important new appointments in mathematics, science, and special educational needs in particular, but also in music and ICT. While some heads of department are helping to drive standards higher, through effective leadership and consistently high expectations, others, notably RE and modern foreign languages have allowed their departments to drift. A new line management system is in place, but does not provide sufficient rigour to ensure heads of department and heads of house are held accountable for standards and quality within their teams.
71. In particular, monitoring of classroom performance is not yet systematic or rigorous enough. While members of the senior management team have been involved in observing teaching and learning, not all heads of department are systematically monitoring the work of their teams, or involved in promoting higher standards. This has resulted in improvements to teaching in some subjects, but not others. The school's performance management policy is in place. This will provide a framework for more rigorous monitoring of classroom performance. Experienced heads of house provide a strong focus for pastoral care, but do not as yet get sufficiently involved in the academic monitoring of their pupils. This is a focus for school development in the future.
72. Improvement planning processes, criticised at the time of the last inspection, are now much improved.
73. The school has evaluated its work carefully and has a realistic and appropriate school development plan for addressing weaknesses. Action taken in many instances has been robust and effective. All staff were consulted. However, the link between the school development plan and priorities identified in departmental development plans is not sufficiently well drawn. For example the review of the homework policy is identified as a whole school target, but individual departmental plans do not include a specific review of how homework is to be used within their subject. Nor is it clear how governors will monitor progress on achieving the targets. Currently the budget plan is merely informed by the development plan, rather than being driven by it. This is because the timing of the writing of the development plan was dictated by the arrival of the new headteacher. There is an intention to bring the two plans into a closer relationship in the next financial year.
74. Governors have a much better knowledge of the school than at the time of the last inspection. They are committed, hardworking and involved. Their confidence in accounting for the school's

performance is growing, and the committee structure is now working much more effectively in offering a detailed scrutiny of the school's work. However, there is a need to intervene and challenge more strongly when things are not going well. Some statutory requirements are not met. These include the requirements to provide a daily act of collective worship and the provision of RE in Year 9, and ICT in Key Stage 4. Governors are well on the way to adopting a curriculum statement, but procedures to ensure the school meets all relevant health and safety legislation are not fully in place and staff appraisal procedures, now succeeded by performance management, have not been implemented.

75. Leadership and management of provision for pupils with special educational needs are unsatisfactory. The headteacher has taken decisive action to address weaknesses in the last inspection, recognising that far too little had been done to address serious weaknesses in provision and assessment highlighted in the last report. This is not yet sufficiently effective. The current special educational needs co-ordinator has been in post only since the beginning of the current term, is dynamic, and strongly committed to improvement. However, he is not qualified or experienced in special educational needs, and has as yet an insecure understanding of the Code of Practice in particular and of learning difficulties in general. The school has planned in-service training for teachers about matching work to individual pupil needs. The governing body includes a specialist in special educational needs and has played a crucial role in recent evaluation of previous practice and in strategic development. Good testing materials have been developed recently and are now starting to be used; governors now have weekly meetings with learning support staff to plan, share good practice and develop skills.
76. Leadership and management of English as an additional language are unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator has an insecure grasp of what is happening in the school and does not disseminate information sufficiently to subject teachers.
77. The school seeks to apply best value principles whenever possible. Governors have an effective overview of financial decisions and spending through regular meetings of the finance committee. Pupils themselves are consulted through the school council about some spending decisions, for example whether to tarmac the playground used for football. Parents have been involved in the decision to spend funds on curtains for the hall. Standards fund monies and money for special educational needs are used appropriately, although the lack of effective management of the programme for pupils with English as an additional language means that not all the money is being used consistently well. The school has made good use of capital grants to improve the buildings and facilities. Additional spending from the budget on improvements to the accommodation has meant that the budget this year is particularly tight. The last audit report of July 1999 reported that financial procedures are well controlled.
78. Just as at the time of the last inspection, there are some inefficiencies in the staffing structure. The staffing structure does not always match responsibilities and the salary points awarded. Not all managers have job descriptions. However, governors have now adopted a shadow staffing structure and the school is moving towards a more cost-effective structure.
79. There are sufficient staff to meet the needs of the curriculum and most are well matched to the subjects they teach. Strengths in staffing are in subjects such as music and geography, where a strong team of teachers with varied experience and responsibilities enhances the attainment of pupils.
80. Staffing is less strong in special educational needs where there is no specialist to lead the work of the department and in areas such as ICT, science and modern languages. In addition to these shortcomings, some teachers teach in several areas, which makes it difficult for teams to get together and discuss curriculum issues regularly. Long-term absence in English, and an inability to appoint teachers in subjects such as music has had a detrimental affect on standards in these areas.
81. There are good proposals for performance management, which have been agreed by governors, and current procedures for inducting newly qualified teachers and new staff are good. There are good links with a number of initial teacher training institutions.
82. Since the last inspection there has been some re-distribution of non-teaching time to give heads of department more time to support departmental staff and a re-structuring at senior

management level. There is a new administrative officer who has a good overview of financial management within the school. The staff development policy is satisfactory, but training depends on the identification of needs by heads of department and is therefore patchy. The recruitment of new staff continues to be well organised and appropriate attention is now paid to retention, motivation and reward.

83. Overall, the accommodation is satisfactory. Much attention has been given to improving the fabric and condition of the buildings, and most areas now present an attractive and welcoming learning environment. The buildings are very well maintained with almost no litter and no sign of graffiti. The grounds are tree-lined with many well cared for shrubs around the pathways. However, some problems remain. The drama hall has ceiling tiles in poor condition, and uneven pathways and roads around the site are still evident. The lack of a large sports hall and a dedicated PE classroom restricts the breadth and balance of physical education provision. The library is not sensibly located and is too small.

84. Learning resources overall are satisfactory. They are particularly good in design and technology. In information and communication technology lessons, support resources are good, but in most other subjects there are insufficient computers to support learning and meet needs. Currently the library is inadequate and does not provide the range of resources to support pupils' independent learning; however, the school has sensible and realistic plans for improvement. Resources in art are good, but there are insufficient textbooks in geography, mathematics and modern foreign languages for pupils to take home.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to raise standards and continue school improvement, governors, senior management and staff should:

- a) Ensure more consistently high standards of teaching and learning by:
- Implementing more rigorous procedures for line management, and in particular, the monitoring of teaching by both senior managers and heads of department (paragraphs 40,70 and 71);
 - Using assessment data in subjects to set individual pupil targets and plan the next learning step (paragraphs 32,33 and 61);
 - Planning lesson to meet the needs of all pupils more precisely, particularly those of high and low attainment, that learning objectives are made explicit and that learning outcomes are measured (paragraphs 31 and 35);
 - Increasing the range of teaching and learning strategies used and ensure that pupils themselves are more actively engaged, have a greater awareness of their progress, and take more responsibility for their learning (paragraphs 32 and 33);
 - Promote the development of speaking and listening skills in all subjects (paragraphs 33,89 and 90);
 - Use computers with more regularity to support learning in all subjects (paragraphs 33,41 and 150).
- b) Raise achievement in science, in particular that of average and below average pupils in Key Stage 3 (paragraphs 2,11 and 105, by:
- Improving the opportunities for practical and investigative work in Key Stage 3 (paragraph 109);
 - Ensuring more consistently challenging teaching and learning (paragraphs 111 and 112);
 - Monitoring more carefully the quality of teaching, pupils' work, marking and homework (paragraph 113).
- c) Improve the provision for pupils with special educational needs by:
- Improving the procedures for the assessment and identification of pupils with SEN (paragraphs 37 and 62);
 - Ensuring that specialist teaching is available when necessary (paragraphs 36 and 46);
 - Improving the quality of learning targets set on individual education plans, and the procedures for evaluating progress towards meeting them (paragraphs 47 and 62);
 - Providing training for all teachers on strategies for supporting pupils with specific learning needs (paragraph 36);
 - Improve subject planning to address the learning needs of individual pupils (paragraph 36).
- d) Improve the curriculum at Key Stage 4 through:
- Improving the balance to ensure it meets the needs of all pupils (paragraph 43);

- Reviewing the timetable structure to ensure a more equitable distribution of time between subjects (paragraphs 42 and 43);
 - Ensure the legal requirements for the teaching, assessment and reporting of ICT are met (paragraph 41).
- e) Increase the range of opportunities for the spiritual development of pupils (paragraph 52) by:
- Ensuring all subjects plan for this aspect of pupils' development in their schemes of work (paragraph 52);
 - Providing more opportunities for reflection in assemblies(paragraph 52);
 - Raising standards in religious education (paragraphs 1, 20,52 and 166).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	174
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	67

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2.3	13.8	39.7	36.8	6.3	1.1	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	1048	118
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	210	

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	9	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	147	0

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	61

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	32
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	57

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	91.1
National comparative data	91.0

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	1.2
National comparative data	1.1

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	224	0

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	129	143	114
	Girls	0	0	0
	Total	129	143	114
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	58 (52)	64 (65)	51 (40)
	National	63 (64)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	23 (13)	36 (42)	17 (9)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	125	133	111
	Girls	0	0	0
	Total	125	133	111
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	56 (59)	59 (71)	50 (34)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	20 (21)	34 (39)	22 (7)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (28)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	176	0

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	68	155	165
	Girls	0	0	0
	Total	68	155	165
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	39 (42)	88 (94)	94 (95)
	National	49 (46.6)	88.8 (90.9)	95.5 (95.8)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	32 (34)
	National	38.7 (38)

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	88	63.6
	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
		2000	48	0

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	18.0	0	18.0 (13.9)	6.2	0	6.2 (0)
National	n/a	n/a	18.5 (17.9)	n/a	n/a	n/a (2.8)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	7
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	46
Any other minority ethnic group	0

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	13	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	62	6
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	66.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	396

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	2894210
Total expenditure	2942331
Expenditure per pupil	2541
Balance brought forward from previous year	98559

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	72.6
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Balance carried forward to next year	50438
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y13

Key Stage 3	27.0
Key Stage 4	23.3

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1119
Number of questionnaires returned	167

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	35	54	7	2	1
My child is making good progress in school.	40	50	5	2	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	15	54	20	5	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	23	53	17	6	1
The teaching is good.	28	56	7	0	10
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	22	45	20	5	8
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	50	45	4	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	48	43	7	1	2
The school works closely with parents.	20	53	13	4	10
The school is well led and managed.	31	54	5	1	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	34	49	7	2	8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	30	44	13	3	10

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

ENGLISH

85. In work seen, standards in English at the end of both key stages and in the sixth form meet national expectations and are improving. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory. Teachers' subject knowledge and planning, their choice and deployment of resources, their knowledge of individual pupils' strengths and weaknesses and their marking of work have all contributed to this improvement. The department is committed to raising standards further.
86. Attainment in tests at the end of Key Stage 3 in 2000 was close to the national average. Compared with boys' only results standards are higher. These results represent an improvement since the last inspection when a significant number of pupils were underachieving. This is no longer the case.
87. Standards achieved at Key Stage 4 in 2000 in terms of the percentage of pupils achieving a grade A* to C in English language are now broadly in line with national averages; an improvement since the last inspection when results in the school were judged to be below average and drifting downwards. The improvements in English language standards have been marked since 1997. If performance is measured in comparison with boys only results in other schools then standards are significantly better. Results in English literature are good in terms of achievement at grades A* to C. Examination entry in this subject is restricted to boys of higher attainment. At post-sixteen level standards in advanced level English literature are satisfactory given the students' prior attainment at GCSE.
88. At the end of both key stages and the sixth form, standards of writing are at least satisfactory with most pupils being able to write clearly and accurately in a variety of forms. They understand that structure and style must take account of the readership and adapt their writing accordingly. Examples of this were seen in factual reports of social occasions, autobiographical pieces, writing designed to influence opinion and creative work which was stimulating and entertaining. Standards of writing were variable at the last inspection and although this is no longer the case, the limited range and quantity of writing undertaken remains a weakness. Many boys do not find this an easy or natural medium in which to work. Teachers are rightly concerned to improve written accuracy, but they need also to provide greater opportunities for extended writing in a range of forms for this group of pupils.
89. Reading is well developed throughout the school. Teachers make use of a wide range of texts in their lessons to challenge pupils' understanding and broaden their appreciation of the use of language. When they read aloud they do so fluently and with expression. Year 9 boys used intonation well to bring out the rhythm of a ballad. Year 11 boys understood the way culture influences style and vocabulary in their reading of contemporary prose and fiction. In speaking, pupils are able to respond appropriately to questioning which tests understanding but they are less skilled in expressing themselves fluently at length and in discussion. They are reluctant to venture their own explanations or views and prefer the teacher to take the lead. This is the case across Key Stages 3 and 4 but not in the sixth form where students are confidently articulate and relish debate. Listening skills were unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection and remain so. A noticeable minority of boys find it difficult to sustain their listening or respect the contribution others make in oral work.
90. Standards of literacy across the curriculum are satisfactory, and good practice exists across the school in the promotion of literacy skills. There is good use of quality textbooks to promote learning in science where pupils are encouraged to extend their reading of scientific works. In mathematics boys are encouraged to ask questions and articulate their answers clearly. Mathematical terminology such as 'evaluate' is always explained. In other subjects, attention is given to subject vocabulary. The dissemination of such good practice and the raising of standards

in speaking and listening now require a systematic approach driven by a whole school plan which takes account of the literacy gains made at Key Stage 2.

91. Improvements in standards have been made as a result of teaching which is at least satisfactory and sometimes good. Teachers' subject knowledge is good, planning thorough and schemes of work are detailed. Learning objectives are clearly established at the start of each lesson. Questions are effectively used to test and consolidate understanding. A variety of teaching techniques is used to good effect and in the best teaching, lively and challenging exposition by the teacher is followed by group or paired work which is purposeful and structured so that pupils have to attempt an evaluation of their progress. Boys in a Year 11 GCSE class observed had to work collaboratively in preparation for their reading of 'The Darkness Out There' by Penelope Lively and nearly all made critical contributions which showed insight into the relationships portrayed and an understanding of the author's narrative technique. The teacher's high expectations and insistence on rigorous textual analysis resulted in work of grade A or B standard.
92. Teachers are aware of the learning difficulties of boys with special educational needs, and some lessons are planned to meet their learning needs, but not all are. Part of the problem is that the staff have not been provided with information about the nature of the boys' learning difficulties and the way to address them. Overall, pupils with special educational needs make unsatisfactory progress because individual education plans are not in place to guide the work of teachers. Similarly, high attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged in the work they do.
93. In all the lessons observed, teachers made an appropriate choice of texts augmented by material developed by themselves. This variety, together with the excellent display material in classrooms, stimulated interest. Teachers' marking was very good, being detailed and encouraging and often with comments on how to improve. Homework was used to consolidate and take forward the work done in class.
94. Learning is satisfactory at all key stages, but a minority of pupils do not always get fully involved, even when the work is presented by the teacher in a stimulating way. These boys are not disruptive but they are passive and reluctant learners and they need to be challenged and brought on board. The introduction to a Year 11 lesson on the poetry of Simon Armitage was delivered with panache and elicited a lively response, except from a few boys who were determined to maintain a studied indifference. Because it did not affect the progress of the majority, this indifference went unchallenged.
95. The curriculum strikes an appropriate balance between speaking and listening and reading and writing and conforms with the requirements of the National Curriculum. The department has a policy for the use of ICT as a means of ensuring that pupils can make full use of different presentational devices, and as a result of easier access to improved computer facilities, staff are now in a position to implement this policy systematically.
96. Leadership and management of the department are sound at a time when particular pressure has been put on its senior colleagues through the long term absence of key staff. The head of department and his second-in-charge have worked to minimise the negative effect of such absence and the improvements in standards reported above are testimony to their efforts. There is a willingness to embrace change to bring about further improvements in standards as seen in the more effective use of comparative performance data to monitor and evaluate pupil progress. This now needs to become embedded in departmental routines and used to inform planning. The staff handbook and the schemes of work are well thought out and detailed and the policies and action plans guide the work of the department. Professional relationships are good and there is a sense of unity and common purpose. Teachers new to the department speak well of the support they have received. Their teaching has been monitored but the department must now develop a more systematic approach to monitoring.

Drama

97. Drama as a discrete subject at Key Stage 3 and an optional subject in Year 10 is managed by the English department. Good use is made of the limited facilities and opportunities are available for extra-curricular work but progress is hampered by a lack of resources and equipment. This is recognised by senior management and is a priority for development. The teaching of the subject is satisfactory. However there needs to be a tighter learning focus to lessons and the parameters for improvised work should be made explicit to ensure pupils are aware of what is expected in terms of dialogue, movement and delivery. A Year 9 lesson exploring the nature of sin through improvisation became a parody of television courtroom drama because the brief they had been given was open ended. The boys were imaginative and lively but had not the creative discipline to make their work sharp and focused. The teacher must provide this creative discipline when pupils are so inexperienced in the subject.

MATHEMATICS

98. In work seen during the inspection, standards in mathematics are above average overall and pupils' achieve well, largely as a consequence of effective teaching throughout. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is well above average and pupils' achievements are good. Achievement in the sixth form is satisfactory. However, students complete the A-level course with standards below the national average because a few find the demands of the course too great for them.
99. The average points score in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 over the last three years has been above the national average. Standards are close to the national average for pupils achieving National Curriculum level 5 or higher, and above the national average for those achieving National Curriculum level 6 or higher. At the end of Key Stage 4 the number of pupils achieving grades A* to C in GCSE is well above the national average for all maintained schools, and also above the national average for the boys in all maintained schools. Given the attainment of boys on entry to the school, overall achievement is good. Boys perform well in mathematics when compared to other subjects in the school. All who are entered for the GCSE achieve a grade, which is good. The lower attainers also complete the Certificate of Achievement course. However, the number of students achieving higher grades at A-level is below the national average.
100. Numeracy standards are good overall, as a consequence of well-considered approaches across the curriculum. In dealing with the everyday demands of numeracy the level of competence of boys is good by the end of Key Stage 4 in design and technology, geography, mathematics and science. It is satisfactory in art, business studies, information technology - mainly in relation to spreadsheets - history and physical education. Boys handle number and measurement, mentally, orally and in writing well in design and technology and mathematics, and satisfactorily in business studies, information technology, geography, history and science. Calculators are used accurately and appropriately. There is evidence of good spatial awareness in most projects in art at Key Stage 4. Boys make good sense of information presented numerically and graphically in business studies, design and technology, mathematics and science. They handle statistical information in everyday contexts well in mathematics. Sixth formers have the basic skills for their A-level courses and demonstrate very good skills in design and technology and physics.
101. Overall attitudes to learning are good, and in some lessons boys show very good or excellent attitudes. Boys are not always willing learners but in a majority of lessons there is a good working ethos. Behaviour is good. Instances of unsatisfactory behaviour are restricted to silliness and extraneous chatter, corrected through the teaching. Relationships are good.
102. Teaching overall is good, particularly in Key Stages 3, and 4. In the sixth form, teaching is only satisfactory. There is a small element of unsatisfactory teaching. The teaching of basic skills is good. Moreover the various skills are revised sufficiently well to achieve good standards of numeracy in the school by the end of Key Stage 4. For some boys this is over emphasised. The higher attainers in a Year 7 mixed ability class, for example, have to do the same simple work as other boys before they are eventually given work matched to their prior attainment. This lack of planning for a wide range of needs is common in a number of lessons. As a consequence, higher

attainers are not making as good progress as they might. When the range of attainment of boys in the class is relatively narrow, as in a Year 11 class studying inequalities, learning is maximised as everyone takes part in the lesson, answering questions and joining in the discussion. Good lesson planning, firm management of pupils, together with good assessment techniques and good homework practices, are major factors in the good progress of boys through Key Stages 3 and 4. Homework is marked well with comments to help boys learn from their mistakes. Boys with special educational needs also make good progress through both key stages. Their progress is good through the support they receive from their teachers and learning assistants. However, by the end of Key Stage 4, a number of these boys have still not reached satisfactory levels of numeracy. They have difficulty with simple percentages such as finding twenty percent of a number. They use calculators accurately and receive appropriate help with their reading.

103. Most pupils try hard and have satisfactory skills in problem solving, but these are not sufficiently well developed for the higher attainers, and relatively few boys achieve the highest grade at GCSE. This may be seen in the teaching of equations. Although this topic is taught well throughout the school, the higher attainers do not know alternative strategies for solving equations, and they are less well equipped to become independent learners and cope with unfamiliar problems. The same is true in the sixth form, where pupils are too dependent on the teacher for their success and need more opportunities for discussion and mental work in lessons. Some students start the A-level course from a low base of prior attainment. These factors account for the below average results in the sixth form.
104. The leadership of the department is good, and undergoing a period of change following the appointment of a new head of department. Since the last inspection attainment at the end of both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 has improved, although standards have fallen slightly at A-level. Teaching and learning continue to be sound or better. There is a commitment to high standards, and improvement since the last inspection has been good. However, the support of senior management is required to solve timetabling problems such as split classes, double periods of sixth form mathematics and teachers working for more than one department. The formal monitoring and evaluation of teaching is underdeveloped. The department has yet to integrate computers effectively in the teaching programme. Documentation is good and provides a firm foundation for further improvement. The department is a strength of the school.

SCIENCE

105. Standards in science are broadly average on entry to the school. Higher attaining pupils make satisfactory and often good progress in Key Stage 3, but a significant proportion of average and below average pupils underachieve. Overall standards at the end of Key Stage 3 are therefore below the national average. Though pupils make more solid progress during Key Stage 4, they do not make up the leeway, and overall standards are still below the national average at GCSE. In the sixth form, results in all three science subjects are in general below national averages, though a number of individual pupils obtain creditable results.
106. In national tests at the end of Key Stage 3 in 2000, the proportion of pupils attaining level 5 or better was below the national average, and also below the national average for boys. However, the proportion gaining level 6 or better was broadly in line with the national average, and also with that for boys. The average points score for the whole year group was also below the national average, and well below average when compared with pupils in similar schools. Overall, these results were a distinct improvement on those obtained in 1999. However, one third of pupils in the year group, mainly those of average and below average attainment, did not improve their National Curriculum level between the end of Key Stage 2 and the end of Key Stage 3. Overall results for the year group are below those which pupils obtained in English and mathematics.
107. Because of the number of pupils opting for single and double science, the proportions gaining results in the range A* to C in each of these subjects in the 2000 GCSE examinations were above national averages. However, the proportion of pupils across the whole year group gaining a grade in the range A* to C was below the national average, though broadly in line with boys' attainment nationally. The proportion gaining a grade in the range A* to G was also in line with the national average. The overall improvement shown by the whole year group since their results at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with expectations, but pupils' results in science are below those which they

obtain in most of their other subjects. However, results in each of the last three years have shown an improvement on previous years.

108. In the sixth form, the total numbers of boys entered in each of the last three years for A-level biology has been low and statistical comparisons are therefore difficult. While the overall pass rate has improved, the proportion gaining the higher grades has generally been low, so that average points scores have been below national averages. Results in chemistry have also improved since the last inspection, with a 100 per cent pass rate in three of the last four years, but again the number of entries has been low. The number of entries for A-level physics is usually higher, but the quality of results has declined marginally since the last inspection, with the average points score below national figures, and only a small proportion of students gaining the higher grades. The number of students taking each of the science subjects is on the increase.
109. In work seen during the inspection, overall standards are below expectations at the end of both Key Stages 3 and 4, and reflect the attainment of pupils in national tests and examinations. However, in the sixth form, standards are better than recent examination results suggest, particularly in physics. Pupils' exercise books are mostly in satisfactory order, and often good, though a significant minority in all year groups have a rather casual attitude to presentation. In Year 7, pupils are taught in mixed ability classes containing a wide range of attainment. In a class considering the differences between solids, liquids and gases, pupils understood their basic characteristics, and entered into lively discussions about classifying materials such as sand and flour. In this lesson, there was differentiated work available for pupils with special educational needs so that they also made satisfactory progress. However, their progress in other lessons is often unsatisfactory as too little attention is paid to preparing work related to the targets in their individual education plans. In general, lessons in Key Stage 3 contain insufficient practical work and other activities in which pupils can use their initiative, and thereby progress at their own rate. The result is that when pupils are given the opportunity to undertake practical activities, they are often over-excited and lacking in self-discipline. As a consequence, observations are rushed and the important points often missed.
110. Teachers provide a better range of learning opportunities in Key Stage 4. Pupils in a Year 10 group were able to undertake the dissection of pigs' hearts, and reinforced the work covered in a theory lesson by observing the different chambers, the valves, and the connections to the lungs. In a Year 11 class, pupils followed up a practical lesson on the stretching of a spring by drawing graphs, and were able to discuss what these graphs show; they then observed what happens when a spring is overloaded, and considered the scientific meaning of elastic, direct proportion, and plastic. In the sixth form, students tackle practical assignments with enthusiasm. In biology they planned an investigation into the digestion of fats, and discussed how to set up control experiments. In physics, they showed good organisational skills in taking readings of gamma radiation and testing the inverse square law. They also showed interest and enthusiasm, and made positive suggestions when setting up the equipment; students in another A-level physics class were less forthcoming in a lesson on the refraction of waves, but appeared to understand the basic principles involved. A large Year 12 chemistry group is often divided into two halves so that practical work can be undertaken in small groups. While half the class obtained good results from a challenging organic practical, those students whose turn it was to complete their theory work have yet to learn the value of working quietly, and did not make full use of their time.
111. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory in both Key Stages 3 and 4, but there is a higher proportion of good teaching in Key Stage 4. Teaching in the sixth form is good overall. Teachers mostly have a good knowledge and understanding of their subject, including background information, and often make effective reference to events in the news. However, in a lesson on elements and compounds, learning was restricted because of the teacher's lack of confidence with the practical demonstration and with the topic. The teaching of basic skills is satisfactory, but with some shortcomings. In particular, the integration of ICT into the curriculum is under-developed, with little evidence of its use in books and folders. While numeracy skills are satisfactory, and the use and analysis of graphs in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form is good, there is insufficient number work in Key Stage 3. Literacy is also satisfactory, with many teachers beginning to stress key words, but there is too much copying from the board or textbook. This even includes sixth form classes. There is a resulting lack of challenge, with insufficient opportunity for pupils to use their own words to express their ideas. The planning of lessons is thorough, but teachers concentrate more on subject content, and less on devising exciting and

challenging teaching methods, in order to capture pupils' interest. Even when teachers have interesting practical work for pupils to undertake, it is sometimes given insufficient priority in the lesson by the teacher talking for too long. The result is that the practical is not completed, or there is often a lack of time to discuss fully pupils' observations and their implications. In a Year 9 lesson on photosynthesis and how leaves are designed to carry out this process, there was a sense of enjoyment, with teacher and pupils discovering and learning together; on other occasions, teachers fail to show their enthusiasm for their subject, and they do not get pupils to appreciate the 'wonder' of the process they are observing or discussing. In consequence, it becomes difficult to maintain pupils' concentration to the end of the lesson. The management of pupils is generally satisfactory, but in classes containing lower attaining pupils, teachers do not use praise sufficiently in order to encourage them to make a positive contribution to the lesson. They tend to concentrate instead on negative aspects of their work and behaviour, and this has a detrimental effect on the learning atmosphere in the classroom. The marking of pupils' work is mostly thorough, and encouraging, and complies with school policy, but a number of teachers do not include attainable targets by which pupils could improve their work. In the sixth form, folders are checked regularly in biology to ensure that they are maintained in good order, but there is less rigour in the marking of chemistry and physics. Homework is set, but is often routine rather than interesting, and rarely challenges pupils to undertake research, for example by reference to web sites.

112. Although teaching overall is satisfactory in Key Stage 3, pupils' achievements are often unsatisfactory because they do not always listen and concentrate in order to take advantage of the opportunities provided. Learning overall is therefore unsatisfactory in Key Stage 3. In a Year 7 lesson on plant cells, not all pupils were listening to the teacher when he addressed the class, and when they were given a task to complete a significant number waited for the answers to appear on the board rather than using their initiative to search for the answers. Learning is satisfactory in Key Stage 4, though a significant minority of pupils still shows a casual attitude to studying. In lessons in Year 10 on electrical circuits, and on testing surfaces to ascertain the best radiator, teachers had to work very hard to maintain pupils' concentration, meaning that they spent less time in explaining scientific principles. In the sixth form, students mostly work well, but a minority relies too heavily on their peers. In all year groups, pupils respond well in question and answer sessions, but they do not ask sufficient questions, and are not always provided with the opportunity to do so.
113. The department has experienced difficulty during the past year because of the long-term absence of senior members of the teaching staff. Now that this situation is resolved, and with the appointment of a new head of department who brings energy and enthusiasm to the post, and high expectations, leadership and management are good. There is much to do to make up for a period of uncertainty. The head of department has quickly identified priorities for the department, and a necessary review of the whole curriculum and schemes of work is already underway. The department development plan lists a number of priorities, too many for immediate action, and there is no clear indication of who is leading each initiative, its likely cost, or the timescale. Furthermore, these priorities are not clearly linked to the school development plan. The monitoring of marking, pupils' work, and in particular teaching, is unsatisfactory; there has been no opportunity for peer observations of lessons, in order to build on the strengths which exist within the department. The department has access to individual pupil records, but does not as yet measure annually and then compare how much pupils improve in each key stage, or of the value added during their time in the sixth form.
114. Since the last inspection, schemes of work have not been sufficiently developed, including the integration of ICT. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is still unsatisfactory, and pupils are not given sufficient opportunity to undertake scientific investigations. Furthermore, the restless behaviour mentioned in the last report is still evident. However, many of the recommendations have been carried out. Results at the end of Key Stages 3 and 4 have both improved significantly in recent years, though both are still below national averages. Most of all, there is a realisation within the department of what needs to be done in order to improve still further. Overall, therefore, the department has made satisfactory progress.

ART

115. Standards in art and design are very good and pupils achieve well at Key Stage 3 and very well at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. The high levels of achievement of most pupils are a direct result of teaching that focuses on many of the specific requirements of the GCSE and A-level examinations.
116. In 2000 standards achieved in GCSE were well above the national average, and above the average of boys for grades A* to C. The percentage achieving grades A* to G were above average. Results have been similar over recent years. Pupils have regularly performed much better in art than in their other GCSE subjects. At A-level, examination results for 2000 were above the national average although no students achieved grade A. This was unusual compared to recent years.
117. Standards in lessons observed during the inspection in both Key Stages 3 and 4 are above the national expectation for 14 and 16 year-olds. Teaching in the subject is at least good and often very good and has a very positive effect on the high standards achieved at all stages. For example, as a result of carefully focused teaching at Key Stage 3, pupils develop good practical skills in a range of media and their mastery of painting and colour theory is often very good. The tasks set by teachers enable them to develop competence when using and applying the formal elements of line, tone, and form. However, teaching often fails to provide opportunities to work from direct observation in the classroom, although this is not so common in the sixth form. Some activities therefore do not sufficiently challenge the more able pupils and their work lacks the personal and individual quality normally expected from such pupils. For example, in many lessons the teacher will successfully demonstrate new and important practical techniques; however, because pupils go on to work from traced or copied images their work lacks originality and fails to develop other important areas of analysis, discrimination and creative thinking. Examples of this approach were seen in both Key Stages 3 & 4 but especially in the Year 10 and 11 lessons on the themes of interiors and buildings. The work, based on traced photographs, is invariably well executed and shows a high level of practical ability and very good use of colour. The reliance on photographs left the work lacking the unique quality of individual exploration and analysis. Most pupils have a sound understanding of the process through which their projects develop. Although highly structured, the simple process provides a secure framework for the less able whose practical work, at all stages, is often more advanced than expected.
118. Teaching about the methods and styles of other artists is also variable in quality across key Stage 3, but has improved since the last inspection. Some good work reflecting an understanding of style and cultural influences was seen in Years 7 and 8, for example, surface design relating to the study of Art Nouveau style in a Year 8 project and the Year 7 project on 'Aboriginal' patterns. In another notable Year 7 lesson responses to the original, large scale, works of the teacher showed especially good knowledge and understanding of pictorial composition.
119. Teaching therefore is invariably successful in promoting high levels of practical skill and 'finish' but does not yet sufficiently promote the equally important skills of thinking, development of ideas, independent learning and problem solving. The clear emphasis on the care of pupils and the achievement of successful outcomes is a particular strength of teaching throughout the subject. Teachers also have significant strengths in classroom management and their high expectations of the attitudes and behaviour of their pupils.
120. Assessment based upon clear criteria does not feature in teaching and therefore most pupils are unclear about the direction their work should take, their strengths and weaknesses and what they should do to improve. Teacher's knowledge and skills are effectively used to demonstrate technique and the varied teaching method constantly supports all pupils. In the majority of lessons teaching promotes at least satisfactory rates of learning. The tasks may not always provide appropriate challenge to all pupils, but teachers' methods usually address the range of abilities within groups, and pupils with special educational needs make equally good progress. Teachers use their knowledge of the subject to enhance learning through demonstrations and the interaction with individuals. However the balance between success in practical terms and the need to develop a breadth of knowledge, skills, originality and independence should be addressed.
121. The subject has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection with regard to opportunities to study the work of artists and designers, and other cultures and influences on art

beyond school. The use of ICT in the development of learning in the subject remains an issue for development.

122. The subject is well managed on a day-to-day basis and the head of department provides strong leadership for the subject. The ethos created and maintained by him is supportive and encouraging to staff and pupils alike. There is a tangible focus on success and the leadership of the subject reflects the importance of the development of staff and pupils. Subject documentation is informative and useful to support teaching in the short term. However, planning lacks some detail in the content of the curriculum and the way in which curriculum objectives are to be met. Subsequently the coverage of the National Curriculum, progression and continuity in learning are at risk. The head of department makes frequent visits to other teachers' lessons but there is no formal system of monitoring to ensure the continued improvement of teaching and learning. The head of department should consider the appropriateness of project plans, the balance of opportunities for structured and open-ended learning and the match of current activities to the objectives in the National Curriculum and examination courses.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

123. In 2000, the proportion of students achieving GCSE grades A* to C was well above the national average. Results show a marked improvement in the overall design and technology A* to C grades since 1997. Students achieve better results in design and technology to those in the other subjects that they study. Results at A-level were below the national average in 2000.

124. In work seen during the inspection, attainment at the age of 14 is in line with the standard expected of pupils nationally for the end of Key Stage 3 and this represents a satisfactory level of achievement when compared to their attainment on entry to the school. Pupils show an ability to analyse and draw conclusions using existing products. They gain a wide range of basic skills in designing and making products of good quality in food, graphics and resistant materials. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress and are well supported to achieve satisfactory standards despite the fact that individual education plans lack clear information for improvement. All pupils make satisfactory progress in both their practical tasks and their design work. In food technology, pupils are well supported in planning their work using structured worksheets. They generate and use numerical data in the form of charts, graphs and food calculations to produce products of good quality. In graphics, pupils work at a particularly high level throughout Key Stage 3. They are taught a suitable range of two and three-dimensional drawing skills as well as developing suitable packaging through the use of nets for products they make. All pupils extend their skills and techniques considerably and have opportunities to develop computer aided design skills using a specialist draw program. This was seen in a Year 8 lesson where pupils were gaining experience of using the specialist draw software to construct a variety of designs using gridlines as a guide. Higher attaining pupils were able to apply well-developed computing skills to produce accurate, professional work showing an ability to scale drawing up and down in size. Lower attaining pupils with the support of the teacher were able to apply all the basic skills to produce a similar standard and quality of work.

125. In the work seen during the inspection, attainment at the age of 16 is above the level expected nationally and reflects the continuation in the trend of improving standards over recent years and this represents good achievement overall. All pupils use a wide range of investigation and research skills, and evaluate strengths and weaknesses effectively as they progress with their design ideas. They develop work of very good quality, including a range of making skills that also take account of large-scale manufacturing processes. For example, in a Year 11 graphics lesson observed, pupils designed fast food packaging, and with the help of computers achieved a more realistic and professional finish. Higher attaining pupils are able to produce good quality products that include advanced graphics and construction skills. Their designs were supported with accurate, development drawing. All the work reflects a high degree of research to gain such a broad range of ideas and include a variety of construction techniques. Higher attaining pupils are also able to apply accuracy and depth to the development of their designs in all material areas. Lower attaining pupils are able to design products well suited to the courses and are supported by

their teachers to complete work of good quality. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 3, and good progress in Key Stage 4.

126. The work seen of students currently on the A-level course is at the standard expected nationally and they are achieving satisfactory standards. In general, students have a good grasp of using and applying the design process. They have well-developed graphic skills which they combine successfully with a range of modelling techniques to explore and test the feasibility of their initial ideas.
127. The quality of teaching and learning at both Key Stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form is good. In a Year 7 lesson where pupils were making a trinket box, the planning and methods used by the teacher resulted in pupils at all levels of attainment producing high quality work. They developed a range of cutting skills using both hand and power tools to gain experience in the different methods of cutting and finishing wood. Higher attaining pupils worked confidently and accurately to achieve good quality products. Lower attaining pupils were guided by the structure that the teacher provided in the lesson to achieve work of similar quality and learning overall was very good. Teachers usually plan their lessons well and have high expectation of their pupils. Those with special educational needs make good progress because of the extra support that they receive. Some teachers succeed in extending pupils of all levels of attainment, but this is not consistent across the department. All teachers place a good emphasis on developing technical vocabulary when pupils record their findings; this is having a positive effect on the development of the pupils' literacy skills. Teachers have a good knowledge of their specialist subjects and structure the work effectively to enable the pupils to use the design process as well as develop literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils form good relationships with their teachers and work hard for them. The pace of lessons is appropriate, and teachers provide an interesting and stimulating environment for pupils to work in. The department has established good industrial links to enable examination pupils to increase their experience and knowledge of industrial practices.
128. The management of the department is good and benefits from a strong team approach. There is an effective system in place to monitor and record the attainment of pupils, and this is beginning to have a positive effect on standards. However, the information gathered from this is still underused and the department does not yet involve pupils of all year groups in target setting to raise standards further. GNVQ is currently only offered at Intermediate level, and lower attaining pupils do not have any opportunity to gain accreditation within a course at Foundation level. The department will also need to consider ways of increasing the opportunities for the GCSE food technology pupils to increase the number of practical activities they do.
129. Good progress has been made since the previous inspection. Achievement is now in line with the national average at Key Stage 3 and above the national average at Key Stage 4. The quality of teaching and learning are both good and pupils are showing better attitudes to the subject and basic skills are improving. The school has invested in increasing the information technology resources in the department and work relating to computer aided design, computer aided manufacture and systems and control are now being taught within the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

130. Standards in geography are above average and pupils are achieving well; results have improved and pupils of all abilities tend to do better in geography than they do in several of their other subjects. The main reasons for this are the quality of teaching which is usually good and never less than satisfactory, together with the good attitudes of pupils, who respond well to the experiences they receive in the subject.
131. The teachers' own assessments of standards in geography at the end of Key Stage 3 in 2000 show results which are very high compared with the national average. Although these results are probably generous when compared with current work, nonetheless results at GCSE in 1999 were above the national average for all pupils and well above average for boys. In 2000, they are in line with the national average for all pupils, and above for boys. The results are part of a rising trend in the last three years; notably, pupils, in both 1999 and 2000, have tended to do significantly better in geography compared with their other subjects. An analysis of each pupil's grade in 2000 shows that, at all levels of attainment, most achieved at least as well, and, in many cases better, than

would be expected when compared with their achievement at the end of Key Stage 3. Results at A-level are in line with national averages in terms of A-level passes; the number of high grades has fluctuated considerably in recent years.

132. At the end of Key Stages 3 and 4, standards in work seen are above national expectations; at A-level, standards are in line with the expected level. Overall, achievement is good, although progress of some lower attainers, and those with special educational needs, is satisfactory, rather than good. At Key Stage 3, higher attainers in Year 9 are developing their understanding of a wide range of geographical topics from environmental issues to earth movements and evidence for continental drift. In one lesson of mainly low attaining pupils, most appreciated why volcanoes are not randomly distributed across the world. Most Year 7 pupils are competent in basic mapping skills, though a few, especially those with special educational needs, struggle to distinguish between different map symbols. Use of numeracy skills for map and graph work is generally sound. Whilst pupils successfully use a range of literacy skills, including, for example, writing eye-witness newspaper articles about volcanic eruptions or designing T-shirt logos to make a point about conservation, the range of literacy skills used by pupils is generally narrower than is often seen. Little use is made of computers to support learning. At Key Stage 4, most pupils in the highest ability set in Year 11 are achieving at high levels, with well above average attainment. Recent work on rivers shows very good and sensitive understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of the Aswan dam on the Nile. Better coursework links conclusions with research, with good interpretation of graphs and relating principles of eco-systems with what actually happens at a local nature reserve; weaker coursework tends to lack coherence and presents fairly random pieces of information. At A-level, Year 12 students are achieving well for this stage in the course. Individual studies use a good range of techniques, including statistical methods. The best have well chosen graphs and annotated photographs, and put individual research within general concepts.
133. Teaching is good at Key Stages 3 and 4; none is less than satisfactory. Teaching is good at A-level. Good teacher knowledge is a feature of all lessons. This was well illustrated in one Key Stage 3 lesson about earth movements where the teacher's enthusiasm and love of the subject, together with a deep knowledge, interested the pupils, challenged their thinking and took their learning forward rapidly. High expectations of work and behaviour are other characteristics that lead to good learning, and challenge high attaining pupils. For example, in another Key Stage 3 lesson, pupils were required to re-write key points in their own words and use key words, such as infrastructure; there was good quality questioning, insisting on full answers, with supplementary questions building on the original ones. In a further lesson, good management of pupils created a very calm atmosphere; this allowed the teacher to circulate around the room to help some pupils and to extend the work of others, so allowing very good learning of pupils of different abilities. Sometimes, however, teachers spend too long on particular activities with a tendency to talk too much, and there is a need, at times, for more carefully graded questions and more use of the board to help pupils of all abilities. In these cases, the pace of learning drops and the rate of learning is different for different groups. At Key Stage 4, challenging issues are being addressed in high attaining sets, with much encouragement and help to individuals by good quality questioning; this is leading to good learning and high achievement. In one lesson of low attaining pupils, simple but effective board diagrams provided a focus for the teacher's explanations and class discussion on reducing flood risks; this was very effective as all pupils appreciated the absolute basics, yet there was scope for others to go into more detail. With the lesson moving on at just the right moments, the pace of learning was good. In some lessons, however, whilst the most able were being extended, others could have been pushed more. In one lesson, the impact on learning of a very high quality presentation by the teacher on change and redevelopment in London's docklands was reduced by the poor quality of photocopied resources. At A-level, confident teacher knowledge means that examples are clear and relevant, and progression is logical; this helps learning, and sets the scene for students to carry their own learning forward in their own research work. High standards are encouraged with good quality resources and examples of high quality work.
134. Leadership of the subject is good and purposeful. The open style of management from the head of subject has encouraged the full commitment and participation of all the teachers, who are a close knit team with many strengths. They have worked together to produce the comprehensive scheme of work, which covers all requirements, except for the integration of the use of computers. Whilst it is thorough, planning of work tends to concentrate on content and tasks

pupils should do, rather than how they should learn. Therefore, at times, the needs of different groups of pupils are not sufficiently addressed. Opportunities for fieldwork at A-level are good, but they are still not well developed elsewhere, so pupils are not able to develop some important geographical skills at first hand. Marking is generally thorough, and a variety of assessments are used to track pupils' progress. However, there is much scope for the more systematic use of assessment information to help monitor progress, to set targets and to analyse how successful teaching has been in order to raise standards and expectations still further.

135. Standards dropped for a period after the previous inspection, but they have been rising in recent years, and, overall, improvement has been good. Pupils are achieving well, and their standards are high; geography is a popular option at Key Stage 4 and at A-level. Standards of teaching and management are consistent, and are good. Whilst progress is being made, there is still more to be done in developing resources and teaching methods appropriate for all abilities, and in refining the use of assessments. The insufficient use of computers remains a major weakness, and, apart from A-level, fieldwork opportunities remain very limited. However, geography is strong and successful in the school, and has the potential to improve still further in the future.

HISTORY

136. Standards based on teachers' own assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 in 2000 are below national expectations for all pupils, but they are in line with expectations for all boys. Only sixteen boys were entered for history at GCSE in 2000, too small a number for valid comparisons to be made. However, results did improve on those in 1999, which were broadly in line with national averages. Pupils did not do as well in history as in other subjects. While the trend in results since the last inspection is of rising standards, the numbers of boys taking GCSE history has fallen, dramatically so over the past two years. Current class numbers are, however, much improved. Students taking A-level in 2000 achieved good grades. This resulted in the highest average point score over recent years, and a good improvement from 1999. There are no students taking history in the sixth form currently.
137. At the end of Key Stages 3 and 4, standards in work seen during the inspection are in line with nationally expected levels. Most pupils achieve satisfactorily across both key stages, although there is some underachievement. Pupils in lower sets in Years 8 and 9, including those with special educational needs, are not making satisfactory progress, partly because of weaknesses in writing skills, but also because of some unsatisfactory, even poor, behaviour and attitudes. This reduces the progress of other pupils. Higher attaining pupils in Year 9 could achieve more if they were more actively involved in lessons. Similarly, most pupils at Key Stage 4 are content to listen and to answer questions. Only in one Year 7 lesson was any lively discussion observed.
138. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils' range and depth of historical knowledge are developing well as are their skills in interpretation and historical enquiry. Pupils in Year 7 have a secure grasp of King Harold's dispute with Harold Hardrada and of events prior to the battle of Hastings. Many can give substantiated opinions, orally, about the usefulness of the Bayeux Tapestry as evidence. Higher attaining pupils in Year 8 can link their previous knowledge of industrial change to their analysis of population growth in 18th century Britain. Lower attainers, and some middle attaining pupils, struggle with writing skills, many recording only the bare minimum required. This gap between the good writing skills of higher attaining pupils and the much weaker skills of the rest was particularly noticeable in the work sample in history, where much average and below work was unfinished and under-developed.
139. In Key Stage 4 too, pupils display good knowledge and understanding. They also evaluate sources with competence, many with insight. Pupils in Year 10 have satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the effectiveness of the League of Nations and most can give a few examples of its strengths and weaknesses. Higher attainers are able to call on many more examples as evidence, because this topic, as with most others, is covered in considerable detail. This focus on detail, where teaching is effective, benefits other pupils too, because it maintains their interest. When combined with clever methodology, this was seen to be particularly effective. Pupils in a Year 10 lesson could recount, with understanding, an astonishing amount of accurate information about the terms and outcomes of the Treaty of Versailles. The highly effective learning strategies included a naughty mnemonic and a visualisation technique based on pupils' relatively good

geographical skills and their, or perhaps their teacher's, enthusiasm for rock music! Many Year 11 pupils struggle to grasp the complexities of the Arab-Israeli conflict, but they are able to see the double-sided effects of acts of terrorism. A healthy scepticism is a key feature of pupils' source analysis, evident in coursework about whether the public were misled about conditions in the trenches in the First World War. The department is to be commended for their strong focus on using and questioning evidence as this contributes effectively to pupils' personal development as well as to their history skills.

140. History contributes well in some respects to developing pupils' literacy skills, especially their understanding of vocabulary, not just historical terms. Teachers demand neat and unrushed work, and attend to basics like full stops and capital letters. However, in only one lesson observed did the teacher encourage wider reading. Many history books in the library are unattractive and date-stamps reveal low take-up. Pupils are encouraged to word process some of their work, but there is very little use of computers in lessons. The department contributes well to pupils' mathematical skills.
141. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory at both key stages, but ranges from unsatisfactory to very good lessons. In most lessons, teachers set and share clear objectives so pupils understand what they are studying and how it fits into previous and subsequent work. Homework is also set regularly, is useful and chased up. Teachers' subject knowledge is at least satisfactory and is often very good. This enables them to spice information with detail, which fascinates pupils, as well as to provide clear explanation, including illustration, to help their understanding. This worked well in one lesson on the causes of the First World War where the teacher focused wisely and effectively on the difference between an alliance and an entente. Most teachers pace pupils, giving advance warning of how long they have to complete a task so pupils usually get down to work smartly. Pupil management skills are more secure for some teachers than for others as are their skills of asking open-ended questions. Even teachers whose discipline and skills are secure do not involve pupils enough. The exception was in a Year 7 lesson where the teacher insisted on developing pupils' responses. As a result, pupils not only enjoyed some lively discussion about how King Harold might have died, they developed ideas by formulating them aloud themselves rather than by just listening to the teacher. Teachers do not always plan a sufficient variety of activities in lessons, and only in a few lessons, did they use the board to full effect. There is generally too little visual learning for pupils, especially to develop language skills; there is good attention to mapwork to develop their understanding. Pupils' awareness of their own learning is better at Key Stage 4 with more focus on strategies, but it is not as strong as it could be, and it is weak at Key Stage 3. This is because teachers tend to do too much for their pupils.
142. The curriculum is satisfactory overall with good breadth and balance in well-organised schemes of work. However, skills progression needs to include planned ways of developing recording skills combined with more formal planning to match work to individual pupil needs. There are also currently no trips or visits for pupils. Some pupils do not have equality of access, as one class in Year 10 receives more lessons each week than do others. Assessment procedures are good but the use of assessment is not sufficiently developed. Target-setting is confined to grades, and pupils are not sufficiently informed about what specific history skills they need to improve from one work unit to another. This is needed, also, to increase pupils' awareness of their own learning.
143. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The head of department, who is also head of the humanities faculty, is efficient and well organised. There are effective systems for monitoring pupils' attainment and progress, and for syllabus and homework coverage. However, the impact of monitoring is not as yet fully effective. Assessment could be better used to inform targeting and much more support is needed to help less experienced teachers, including addressing their disparate workloads and providing opportunities to observe good practice. This is needed to bring about greater consistency in teaching and in pupils' learning.
144. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection, taking into account considerable difficulties within the humanities faculty owing to a long-term vacancy. Standards have risen at GCSE and there is once again a satisfactory number of pupils taking history at Key Stage 4. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with some very good teaching, as at the last inspection, but there is still too much inconsistency. There is also still some underachievement, some

teacher dependency, and insufficient match of work to individual pupils' needs. There has been very little development in the use of computers, partly owing to difficulties relating to access.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

145. In work seen during the inspection, pupils at the age of 14 achieve levels in line with those expected nationally and this represents satisfactory progress given their level of attainment on joining the school. They are able to use a range of skills and a variety of software packages, including word processing programs, desktop publishing software, spreadsheets, and databases. Aspects of computer aided design, computer aided manufacture and control technology are well covered within design and technology lessons. Pupils can search for information using both CD-ROM as well as the Internet. Pupils at all levels of attainment achieve basic competence in the skills covered in specific information technology lessons with higher attaining pupils being able to show greater depth in their understanding. An example of this is in the use of spreadsheets where all pupils in a Year 9 lesson are able to set up a spreadsheet, enter data and use a formula to calculate results. Higher attaining pupils are able to explore the results of their calculations further by varying the data they are given. About one third of the group is able to explain how the variables they use in their data affect the end result of their calculations. Pupils at this stage are not yet required to produce their own data and this is adversely affecting their wider knowledge in the application of spreadsheets and their opportunities to work more independently. Lower attaining pupils manage to cover the basic processes and gain some limited understanding of using spreadsheets. They have difficulty in using formulae.
146. In work seen during the inspection, pupils at the age of 16 achieve in line with the levels expected nationally and this represents satisfactory progress. Pupils apply a range of skills and demonstrate greater depth in their understanding of both the tasks and the software they use. An example of this was seen when pupils were using databases: they were able to edit and modify the information being used showing good understanding of what the task required and good applications knowledge of the software. They are able to evaluate and comment on their progress and overall achievement as well as identify ways of improving further.
147. Results at A-level in 2000, were above the level expected of candidates nationally. The school no longer enters boys for a GCSE full course in Information Technology at Key Stage 4. In work seen in the sixth form during the inspection, attainment is just in line with the level expected nationally. This is because students in the group have not completed an ICT GCSE course, and some students lack basic skills such as analysis and knowledge of information systems. Pupils doing the GNVQ Key Skills cover a good range of basic skills and are able to talk confidently about their work.
148. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at Key Stages 3 and 4 and good in the sixth form. This leads to satisfactory learning, for most pupils, including those with special educational needs. However, progress could be better because there is insufficient use of computers in other subjects to ensure that pupils can consolidate their skills through regular practice. Teachers show a good level of planning and preparation to underpin the learning, and are well organised. In most lessons clear objectives are set. Teachers explain the technical language of the subject and encourage pupils to use it correctly. This is particularly important where there are pupils with lower than average reading skills who benefit from this opportunity to extend their vocabulary in the subject. Worksheets are produced which are helpful in moving the pupils' learning forward. Teachers use a good range of learning resources. For example, during a Year 10 lesson on the use of databases, the teacher effectively compared the database with a normal filing cabinet, enabling pupils to understand more effectively how information can be stored and retrieved. The lesson was well supported with guidance sheets and learning materials to help pupils use both the software and construct the basic outline of a letter that they had to write themselves. This letter was then used to 'mail merge' with the database information that had been prepared. Teachers demonstrate good knowledge of their subject and in the main use questions and answers effectively to assess how much the pupils learn and understand.
149. However, the limited range of teaching methods used and the sometimes unsatisfactory planning to meet the needs of all abilities inhibit progress. As a consequence, pupils lose concentration. Marking is inconsistent and in some cases unsatisfactory when comments do not recognise good features of pupil's work or contain guidance on how to improve. The monitoring of teaching is

unsatisfactory and teachers would benefit from sharing good practice in order to develop teaching methods and classroom management skills further. The pace of learning is often slowed down by too many pupils sharing computers and gaps in basic knowledge which often goes undetected by the teacher.

150. The use of computers in other subjects is unsatisfactory. This is mainly due to a lack of planning within different subjects and the high demand on computers which has meant that computers have not always been available for subject teachers to use. Good use, however was seen in design and technology where teachers have embedded the use of information technology into their schemes of work. Further good examples were observed in business studies, but use is limited elsewhere. The school has recently invested in more computer resources and this should provide greater access.
151. Leadership and management are satisfactory, and improving since the recent appointment of a new head of department. Shortcomings in the range of opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in subjects, particularly in Key Stage 4 have been recognised, and the school now has plans to address this issue. In addition, progress is not reported to parents, in breach of statutory requirements. There is now a stronger team spirit amongst the specialist staff and a shared commitment to improve standards. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

152. Standards in modern foreign languages are below national averages and are not high enough. Many pupils are underachieving. This is because of inconsistencies in teaching, insufficient acknowledgement of the National Curriculum programmes of study and inadequate schemes of work and policies to support fully the work of weaker and inexperienced teachers. Although pupils learn satisfactorily in lessons, their progress over time is not as good, resulting in underachievement in Years 10 and 11. This underachievement has been exacerbated by previous staffing difficulties.
153. The results of the Year 9 teacher assessments were in line with those reported nationally, but inspection evidence indicates that these results over estimated what pupils achieved. Most pupils now in Year 9 perform below national expectations. The exception to this is higher attaining pupils who use perfect and imperfect tenses well and enhance their work with phrases such as *en plus*; their standards are above national expectations. GCSE results in French were similar to those reported for the last inspection although numbers entered for the examination have increased with most pupils entered for the examination in 2000. The percentage of pupils gaining A* to C grades was well below the national average and below the average for boys' schools. Pupils do not achieve as well in French as in most other subjects. There were no GCSE entries for German. Current Year 11 pupils attain standards that are well below national expectations. In high attaining sets in Year 11, pupils identify key points from passages of several sentences on lost property and in Year 10, where standards are higher overall, they write adverts for pen friends using previously learnt material. Standards are not as good in many middle and lower sets where pupils lack a sound base of knowledge on which to pin new work. Listening and speaking skills are less well developed than reading and writing because pupils are not given enough opportunities to hear and speak the language across the key stages. Standards in German are also below national expectations but this is because pupils do not have enough teaching time over the two key stages to cover all aspects of the course. A-level results were higher than national averages with similar standards in the current Year 13. Numbers entered are very small.
154. The teaching observed ranged from excellent to unsatisfactory but was satisfactory overall, leading to satisfactory learning for most pupils. Teaching and learning are good in the sixth form. Teaching was most effective in lessons such as the lower attaining Year 11 group observed where the teacher's clear aims, high expectations and supportive manner, encouraged pupils to recall vocabulary and structures covered earlier and enabled them to learn new work well. Teaching was least effective in average and lower attaining groups in Years 8 and 9, where a lack of pace and challenge and the failure of teachers to identify key learning points from the textbook, meant that pupils completed exercises for the sake of it and became restless and bored. Overall, progress for pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory. In some lessons teachers used English too much and there was little development of dictionary skills or reading for pleasure. ICT skills are not developed and the department is not meeting its statutory obligations

in this area. Resources, such as the television are insufficiently used, an issue identified in the last inspection report. Teaching in German is good. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour vary depending on the teaching but pupils are mainly positive.

155. Since the last inspection teaching has improved. Schemes of work and a number of policies have been produced. Teachers are not using the schemes of work to support their work however and key policies, such as how and when to use the foreign language are missing. Teachers rely on the textbook too heavily and do not always ensure that what is being taught meets the needs of pupils. No provision has been made for alternative courses to GCSE, such as the Certificate of Achievement, to meet the needs of lower attaining pupils. Languages were offered as an option in Year 10, contrary to disapplication guidelines. Over two thirds of the cohort decided not to continue with a language this year. Timetabling issues, such as the allowance for German in Key Stage 3, have not been adequately addressed. The head of department provides clear educational direction and leads by example, but there is not enough support and guidance for staff, particularly with regard to aspects of reading for pleasure and using computers. Features of good practice, such as the excellent work being done by one teacher in assessing and targeting pupils, or the outstanding classroom management seen in one lesson, have yet to be disseminated to all teachers. Although there has been informal monitoring of teaching, it lacks rigour and teachers have attended little in-service training on teaching and learning styles in recent years. There are too few textbooks in Key Stage 3 in French or German and there are no foreign languages assistants to help improve speaking standards. As a result of these issues and the failure to respond to issues identified in the previous inspection report, improvement since the last inspection and the overall management of the department is judged to be unsatisfactory.

MUSIC

156. Standards in music are below national expectations at the end of Key Stage 3 because pupils in Years 8 and 9 have not received their full entitlement of curriculum time. As a consequence, achievement in Key Stage 3 is not high enough. The school has been without qualified music staff for two years. Last year, teachers from the Coventry Centre for Performing Arts taught a small GCSE group, who are being entered in 2001. Evidence of end of year results and in lessons seen, shows that standards amongst these pupils meet expectations. Achievement by these pupils is satisfactory with one third of pupils working beyond expectations in practical and composition work. Uptake for GCSE has declined since the previous inspection, and there are no GCSE pupils in Year 10 at present. Numbers are too small for results to be compared nationally.
157. The quality of teaching in both key stages is good and a strength of the department. As a result, pupils, including those with special educational needs, are now making good progress and learning in lessons is good. Teachers are well qualified, able to demonstrate skills and provide good role models for pupils. The content of lessons and activities is chosen carefully to ensure pupils respond positively. For example, Year 11 pupils play jazz and popular style music, with guitar and trumpet players improvising effectively on a given chord sequence. Percussionists are also developing some good improvising skills. Pupils are also being given the opportunity to set up equipment for mixing and recording sound, and learning to use technical vocabulary used in recording. Guitarists are able to describe the various techniques used in playing jazz. Key Stage 3 pupils are also exposed to a variety of styles. For example, in one Year 7 lesson where the teaching was excellent, pupils played percussion instruments from Africa, India and South America. They practised clapping a complex rhythm, composed their own rhythm and rehearsed and played in groups, using the instruments. They then added a simple African style chant to the rhythms. All pupils were engaged and made excellent progress in this lesson. Although all pupils in Key Stage 3 are being given the opportunity to listen to recordings, good demonstrations by staff and each others' compositions, listening skills overall are weak. A large minority of pupils in Year 9 lacks the experience of listening in music lessons. Key Stage 3 schemes of work are new and as yet are not fully adapted to meet the needs of all pupils. For example, in one Year 9 lesson, pupils' learning was unsatisfactory because only one third of pupils was able to understand and read enough of the notation and musical symbols to be fully engaged in the lesson. Pupils' keyboard skills in Key Stage 3 are weak. However, the recent arrival of new keyboards is giving pupils good opportunities to improve. In one Year 9 lesson, one third of pupils was able to read notation, find the notes on the keyboard in the treble clef and play the tune with some degree of accuracy. Staff are skilled in information technology. New computers and software have arrived in the department and plans are in place to offer music technology in Key

Stage 4. The department has been successful in developing singing in the classroom and in extra curricular activities. Songs contribute to the content of lessons and most pupils are enthusiastic singers.

158. There is growing enthusiasm for music in the school from both pupils and parents. At the beginning of term over one hundred pupils and parents attended an open evening for those pupils who are interested in playing musical instruments. As a result, seventy-eight pupils now receive lessons on a wide variety of instruments. Numbers are set to increase as more instruments become available. Extra-curricular activities now being offered are popular. The school is joining together with a local school for a production of 'Grease'. During the inspection week, many pupils made enquiries about the forthcoming auditions for this musical.

159. The department has made unsatisfactory progress since the previous report because of lack of qualified staff and music lessons were not timetabled for two years. Good leadership from the new director of music, together with strong support from the senior management team, have led to rapid progress being made during the past eight weeks. The music department is poised to develop strongly and make a valuable contribution to the life of the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

160. Standards in the practical aspects of physical education meet national expectations overall, and achievements are satisfactory for most pupils. However, cramped indoor accommodation adversely affects the pupils' attainment in badminton in Year 8 and hockey in Year 10. At Key Stage 3, standards are average in gymnastics, health-related exercise and most games. At Key Stage 4, standards are average in basketball and soccer. Pupils in a top band display very good levels of knowledge, skill and understanding in rugby. Standards in examinations are well below average at the end of the key stage, mainly because of shortcomings in pupils' theory work. In the sixth form, standards in examinations are average; there is no general sixth form physical education course in the school. Pupils reach high standards in competitive games, athletics and cross country running. School teams achieve notable success at district level; approximately thirty pupils represent the county each year; a few individuals compete at national level.
161. In 2000, the teachers' own assessments of attainments at the end of Key Stage 3 indicate that the proportion of pupils exceeding the standard expected for their age is well above both the national average and the average for boys. Work seen during the inspection indicates that pupils' planning and evaluation skills are more modest than the data would suggest. The proportion of pupils attaining A* to C grades in GCSE examinations has declined since the last inspection, when results were slightly above national averages. The 1999 and 2000 results are well below the national average compared with all schools and boys' schools. Two percent of pupils gained higher grade passes in 1999, but none does in 2000, again well below the national average. The proportion gaining A* to G grades is also below average. Pupils' results tend to be below those which they achieve in other subjects, despite a change to a more appropriate games syllabus for the most recent cohort. A-level results fluctuate from year to year. A pass rate of one hundred percent in 1998 is followed by a marked dip in 1999, rising again to ninety percent in 2000. There are no higher grade passes.
162. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, although good in the sixth form. This leads to satisfactory progress, although pupils with special educational needs make unsatisfactory progress in Key Stage 4. Teachers have a secure grasp of the subject and discipline is usually good. Their clear explanations, useful demonstrations and relevant questions ensure most pupils respond well and co-operate sensibly to improve their work. Most lessons begin briskly with relevant warm up activities which set an appropriate tone and pace for learning; conclusions are less effective. The organisation of tasks for the minority of pupils not participating is not yet consistent across the department. At Key Stage 3, the teaching of gymnastics is good. In an introductory lesson in Year 7, the teacher's high expectations ensured that pupils of all abilities made good progress in devising, practising or performing sequences on mats. The teaching of games and health related exercise is satisfactory, although pupils' chatter is not always quelled promptly and thus the rate of learning is reduced. Teaching at Key Stage 4 ranges in quality from very good to unsatisfactory. The most effective teaching builds successfully upon the sporting prowess of well-motivated pupils in the top bands. For example, in a very good rugby lesson in Year 10, the teacher provided a variety of challenging tasks which led to pupils developing their observation and analysis skills to a high standard. Good teaching encourages pupils to evaluate their own performance and that of their peers. Accordingly, improved attacking and defensive tactics evolve in basketball and rugby. Despite satisfactory teaching of soccer and indoor hockey, some pupils in Year 10 make less progress than they might. This is because interest and energy wanes when core PE lessons follow on consecutively from GCSE practical work, and as a result of timetabling arrangements which reduce the amount of time for physical education. In Year 11, introducing a competitive element into health related exercises enables the teacher to promote sustained, vigorous activity amongst top band pupils. Teachers enjoy a good rapport with their pupils who are keen to improve individual skills and teamwork in GCSE games lessons. Here, effective integration of the theoretical and practical aspects helps them to grasp important links. Classroom theory lessons are no more than satisfactory and work seen indicates below average standards by the end of the key stage. In Year 10, pupils are slow to settle down after the lunch break and teaching is unsatisfactory because course expectations are not firmly established. Confident A-level teaching rises above the inadequacies of accommodation; a calm approach and pertinent questioning ensures students consolidate and extend their knowledge of physiology in Year 13.

163. This hard working department shows great commitment to extra curricular sport in which impressive numbers of pupils participate, many reaching very high standards. However, the department's over emphasis on games continues to limit the breadth and balance of the curriculum, particularly at Key Stage 4. In addition, the different strands of the attainment target and relevant technical terms are not always sufficiently embedded in lessons to prepare pupils adequately for the demands of examination work. GCSE results have slumped over recent years, and A-level results remain below the national average for higher grades. The marking of pupils' written work is inconsistent, and the use of assessment information to measure pupils' progress is limited. Since the last inspection, there have been improvements in the teaching of gymnastics at Key Stage 3 and the time allocated to outdoor education. Leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory because of the decline in examination results, the lack of rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning and unsatisfactory improvement overall.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

164. Standards in religious education are below average at Key Stage 3; pupils do not achieve as well as they should, a situation made worse by the temporary absence of religious education from the timetable in Year 9. Standards are well below average at Key Stage 4, with unsatisfactory achievement and attitudes from pupils in many classes. No religious education is taught in the sixth form because most parents have said that they wish to withdraw their sons from the subject.

165. No external examinations have been taken in recent years, though pupils in Key Stage 4 are now working towards the GCSE short course examination in religious education. At the end of Key Stage 3, standards in work seen are below average; pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory overall. Higher achievers and some others do have a neat record of work done. In Year 7, some pupils are able to explain sacrifice, and are able to add their own ideas about the role and nature of Hindu gods. Across the ability range, there is some thoughtful personal expression in diagrams reflecting pupils' own characteristics. However, overall, achievement is very variable. Work from some pupils shows little or nothing that is original, with little evidence of developing thinking about religious or spiritual matters. The quality of work of lower attainers, and those with special educational needs, tends to be less consistent than others. Overall, progress of pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory, poor in Key Stage 4. In some classes, opportunities for debate are limited, so pupils' speaking skills are less well developed than would be expected. At the end of Key Stage 4, standards in work seen are well below average. There are occasional glimpses of good achievement. For example, one boy's book discussed intelligently how the problem of evil in the world cast doubt on the existence of God, and, in one lesson, pupils gained some knowledge of sacramental and charismatic worship. However, many books contain very little; what is there is almost entirely definitions of terms, or notes directly from the teacher or textbook; as a result, achievement is limited. Often when work is copied by lower attaining pupils, they do not understand what they have written, as the textbook is not suitable for their needs.

166. Teaching at Key Stage 3 is satisfactory; on occasions, it is excellent with very good learning. Teaching at Key Stage 4 is unsatisfactory. Key Stage 3 lessons are broken up into manageable units, and, as timing is sound, the pace of learning is usually satisfactory. In a lesson where teaching was excellent, there were high expectations of work and behaviour, and, during the lesson, each pupil was given personal feedback on their earlier work to help them improve their learning in the future. The teacher instilled confidence in each pupil with comments of encouragement. There was excellent classroom management, with all pupils listening in rapt silence when appropriate and with great enthusiasm to answer questions when appropriate. Questioning encouraged pupils to reflect and think when they were discussing the development of Hinduism. All these features of the lesson helped pupils' understanding and their learning moved forward very rapidly. In another lesson, however, reading of the textbook by the teacher merely repeated the book, rather than developing a different approach to reinforce the book. At other times, copying a diagram to show divisions in Christianity was a passive exercise, which did not use the information to take thinking forward. Similarly, drawing a graph to show church membership in 1987, missed opportunities for a topical discussion of changes since then, and did not advance pupils' thinking beyond some out of date statistics. In some classes, insecure control reduces the impact of teaching and learning. At Key Stage 4, some lessons are well organised; one used a video to make explicit the contrasts between Catholic and Pentecostal worship, and

so helped learning. Some of the best learning occurs during conversations between the teacher and individuals, or, in one lesson, between a support assistant and a pupil with a statement of special educational needs. There are, however, weaknesses in much of the teaching seen at Key Stage 4. The lack of a sharp focus on learning objectives reduced the rate of progress in one lesson. The objective 'look at sacraments and charismatic worship' did not challenge a group of above average pupils to think beyond a mundane level. Whilst learning was satisfactory, the teacher failed to inspire and excite pupils about issues such as revelation. It was routine, mechanical teaching aimed only at examination requirements; the pupils' good attitudes and experiences were not exploited, and so the development of learning did not occur. In another lesson, the teacher talked too much; questioning did not encourage depth of thought, and there was a lack of challenge. There were not enough opportunities or encouragement for pupils to speak, and little interest was generated. The boys saw little relevance to them of the issues of abortion, and did not explore their choices as men. As a consequence, there were missed opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. Similarly, in a class with pupils from several cultural backgrounds, opportunities were also missed to consider the issues from different cultural perspectives. Learning was also restricted in some classes by poor classroom management.

167. The scheme of work is seriously constrained this year by the absence of religious education in Year 9. This has meant the compression of the Agreed Syllabus at Key Stage 3 into two years, which is unsatisfactory. It has also given negative messages to some pupils at Key Stage 4 who question why they have to study the subject. Partly because of the constraints of time, but partly because of the range and quality of learning experiences in some classes, religious education is not making a sufficient contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, nor to other aspects of their personal development. Religious education is led by a committed head of subject. In two years at the school, he has worked hard to develop the scheme of work, to improve the resources and books in the subject, and to support the other teachers, all non-specialists, who also teach some religious education. However, leadership and management are unsatisfactory because standards are lower than they should be, and there are significant weaknesses in the curriculum and the teaching. Sharing the best practice does not occur, so a valuable tool for improvement is not used.
168. Since the previous inspection, the subject has had some difficult periods, including nearly a year without a specialist teacher to lead the subject. This has hindered development, and adversely affected pupils' perceptions of the value of the subject, a view still persisting with many of them. As at the time of the previous inspection, standards remain below average with underachievement and a lack of deeper understanding by pupils. Despite some excellent teaching, there are similar weaknesses in teaching as were identified in the last report; with notable exceptions, there is a limited range of teaching strategies and insufficient exploration of ideas. Although there is now adequate time at Key Stage 4, there is now inadequate time for the full exploitation of the subject at Key Stage 3; there is still no provision in the sixth form. Overall, therefore, improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory.

BUSINESS STUDIES

169. This is an improving department with many strong features, including, in particular, good teaching, good assessment procedures and strong leadership, all of which make effective contributions to the overall satisfactory standards of attainment in both the vocational and academic strands of the department's provision.
170. Standards of attainment in public examinations at A-level, where half of students gained A or B grades, are in line with those achieved by pupils in schools throughout the country and are slightly above the results achieved by boys nationally. At GCSE, results in 2000 were disappointing and were below national norms. Long term staff absences and the inability to replace staff with appropriate subject specialists were major factors in only thirty-six per cent of pupils achieving A* to C. These figures go against the general upward trend of figures for the department, where standards at GCSE over the previous three years had gone up markedly from 24.5 per cent A* to C in 1997 to 48.1 per cent in 1999. At GNVQ, at both the advanced level and at the intermediate (part one) level, standards are on a par with those achieved by boys in other schools across the country.
171. At both A-level and GCSE, standards in lessons seen were in line with national expectations. At A-level, pupils have appropriate levels of skills and confidence when discussing concepts involved in their work. For example, Year 13 pupils speak confidently about supply and demand and can effectively translate their understanding of the concepts into appropriate graphic representation. Similarly, Year 10 pupils are at ease with concepts such as "automation" and "mechanisation" and can debate with effect the socio-economic costs of their implementation. At the advanced level of GNVQ, students have good skills in ICT and have a good understanding of their use in business. Pupils cover the key skills adequately both in discrete lessons and through integrated elements of their course of study. Pupils are now developing the art of writing evaluations. The standard of pupils' portfolios is good. Most are well organised, well structured and well presented. At the Intermediate level of GNVQ pupils engage in well-designed assignments which provide good opportunities to cover evidence indicators.
172. Teaching is good, and in no lesson seen was teaching less than satisfactory. Teachers are secure in their knowledge of the subjects they teach, and they plan their lessons effectively. They use time and other resources effectively and set clear targets. In the most effective lessons teachers are less didactic, but are sufficiently adept at intervening with additional supportive teaching points whilst allowing and encouraging pupils to learn independently. This good teaching leads to good learning, particularly but not exclusively at A-level, and pupils develop their analytical thinking well. For example, in a Year 13 class, studying supply and demand, pupils were encouraged, by the teacher, to extend the analysis of the supply-demand relationship to include the application of the theory to a real situation; the sale of football tickets for two games at Coventry City for the visit, firstly of Manchester United and secondly of Leyton Orient. In this lesson, pupils' learning was deepened within a context which was both stimulating and relevant by good facilitative rather than didactic teaching.
173. At the intermediate level of Part One GNVQ, progress in lessons and through modules and projects is good overall, although some weaker pupils are struggling to maintain these standards. Pupils' progress is especially good where they are actively involved in learning which encourages them to explore themes and make decisions for themselves. For example, Year 11 pupils comparing different types of management structures in British Industry use their own research skills, via the Internet, to ascertain the management structures at companies such as Jaguar and are able not only to extract and use the data to compare it to the management structure at Woodlands School but they are also able to offer their own ideas about how they would construct management both for Jaguar and the school.
174. In both the academic and vocational provision, the use of well-planned materials allows pupils with special educational needs to make satisfactory progress.
175. With the exception of a small but significant minority whose challenging attitudes sometimes lead to unacceptable standards of behaviour, the vast majority of pupils' attitudes towards their work are good. Pupils are mainly attentive, respond well to questions, remain on task, maintain concentration and take pride in their finished work. Sometimes students listen passively rather than take an active

part in lessons and this restricts progress a little. However, their good attitudes, particularly those which underpin their careful presentation of work for their portfolios, is an important contributory element to their improving standards of attainment.

176. The department has clear marking and assessment policies. Teachers use assessment well to inform future planning and teaching. The department uses its own internal system effectively and the good assessor feedback, which is extensive and focussed, forms an effective basis for pupils' self-assessment and target setting. Assessment is a strength of the department and contributes very effectively to good learning and improving standards.
177. The curriculum is mostly broad, balanced and relevant at both Key Stages 4 and in the sixth form and provides equal access and opportunities for pupils. Planning is good and provides effective continuity between the key stages. The department uses computers effectively to promote pupils' learning.
178. The department is efficiently and effectively managed by the head of department who is committed to raising standards. He has established effective relationships with external companies and education agencies, which are making a strong contribution to standards. However, monitoring of teaching and learning through regular classroom observations is inadequate. No reference to the work of the department was made in the last inspection report, and no judgement regarding improvement since then can be made.