

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST GEORGE'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND
SCHOOL**

Gravesend

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118876

Headteacher: Mr R Slade

Reporting inspector: Mr M G Michell
3670

Dates of inspection: 4 – 8 December 2000

Inspection number: 223996

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 11 - 18

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Meadow Road
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Kent

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Rev Joseph S King

Date of previous inspection: November 1995

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr M G Michell	Registered inspector	Equal opportunities Sixth Form	What sort of school it is; the school's results and achievements; how well pupils are taught; what the school should do to improve further
Ms S Goddard	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; how well the school works in partnership with parents
Mrs M Roger	Team inspector	English as an additional language	How good the curricular and other opportunities are; how well the school cares for its pupils,
Mrs E Trickett	Team inspector	Special educational needs	How well the school is led and managed
Mr R White	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
Mrs A Bradshaw-Coates	Team inspector	English	
Mr J Ling	Team inspector	Mathematics	
Mr R Bibby	Team inspector	Science	
Mr K Whiddon	Team inspector	Geography Information and communication technology	
Mr C Whitfield	Team inspector	Design & technology	
Ms I Randall	Team inspector	History	
Ms G Watkins	Team inspector	Physical education	
Ms L Pearson	Team inspector	Music	
Ms D Close	Team inspector	Art & design	
Mr C Parsons	Team inspector	Business studies	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St. George's is a large comprehensive school of 1394 pupils aged 11-18, with 205 students in the sixth form. It has Language College status. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school at age 11 is below average overall as many local pupils attend grammar schools. About a quarter of the school, 364 pupils, have special educational needs, a proportion which is above the national average. About thirteen per cent of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and one hundred and twenty pupils have English as an additional language. Both these figures are above national averages. One hundred and seven pupils are entitled to free school meals, about the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a school with many strengths but also a number of significant weaknesses. It offers improving standards of achievement and it cares for its pupils well. Improvement since its last inspection has been barely satisfactory but there has already been clear improvement since the current management team has been in place. The ethos is very strong, pupils behave very well in lessons and are enthusiastic learners. Teaching is satisfactory overall. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- It manages pupils' behaviour in classrooms well; there are positive relationships between pupils and teachers.
- It has good links with its family of partner schools and programmes of induction for new pupils, their parents and new staff.
- There is some very good teaching in geography, physical education, drama, music, psychology and of the General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ). The teaching of all three of English, mathematics and science is good overall.
- It gives very good support for, commitment to and provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- There is a corporate commitment to improvement including a determination by the present management to resolve acknowledged weaknesses.
- It has good multi-agency links, good provision for child protection and good programmes for pastoral, careers and personal & social education.
- The school is very good at maximising meagre resources and making the very best of poor accommodation and the current year's poor timetable provision.

What could be improved

- Standards in design and technology and information & communication technology, including a failure to meet statutory requirements.
- Deficits in the current timetable are affecting standards.
- Sub-standard accommodation and resources in a number of areas.
- The rigour with which curriculum leaders monitor teaching and learning to ensure greater consistency across the school and better sharing of good practice.
- Reviewing the current admissions policy to consider whether standards would rise faster if the crowded nature of the site were to be reduced
- The use of homework more effectively and consistently to support pupils' learning.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was inspected previously in November 1995, since when there has been improvement which is just satisfactory. National Curriculum requirements are now met for all pupils in art, music and physical education. The quantity and range of library books has improved though the number of books per pupils is still below the national average. All pupils who need them now have individual education plans of good quality and there has been an increase in the range of courses available in the sixth form. There is still, however, a failure to use homework effectively and consistently to support pupils' learning. Teaching provision and practice at Key Stages 3 and 4 are variable with a considerable amount of excellent, good and very good teaching but too much unsatisfactory teaching.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
GCSE examinations	C	C	C	C
A-levels/AS-levels	D	E	E	

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

Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is below national averages as many local pupils attend grammar schools. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 in comparison with similar schools indicates that pupils make good progress across the key stage. There is an upward trend in results over time which is repeated at the end of Key Stage 4. The results for boys are above the national average whereas those for girls are below the national average. However the attainment of girls on entry to the school is lower than that of boys. The school just achieved its target for GCSE in 2000 and has set an appropriately challenging target for 2001, which would represent further improvement. Post 16 attainment is below national averages.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are glad to be at the school and value being students. Most generally show interest in their work and a willingness to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is satisfactory or better during lessons and most pupils are able to work independently, in pairs or small groups without strong supervision. Behaviour during lesson or room changes and during breaks is very boisterous and can lead inadvertently to safety issues.
Personal development and relationships	The quality of relationships is good between pupils and staff and other adults as well as with each other. Pupils mix well between genders and there is no evidence of racial discord. Most pupils are respectful of each other within their peer group
Attendance	Satisfactory.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The teaching was satisfactory or better in just over 90% of the lessons observed. In 34% of lessons there was good teaching and teaching was judged to be very good in 18% and excellent in 5% of lessons. The teaching of English, mathematics and science is good in both Key Stages 3 and 4. Teaching is strong overall in art, geography and drama and in physical education at Key Stage 3. It is weak in design and technology and especially in information and communication technology. There are also weaknesses in subjects such as history when teachers whose qualification is not in history are asked to teach the subject. Teaching is currently reduced in quality overall because the timetable is poor and includes many split classes, teachers teaching outside their areas of expertise and poor spread of lessons over the fortnightly cycle. Except where they are teaching outside their subject expertise, teachers' subject knowledge is strong. They use time well and generally have satisfactory expectations of their pupils, whom they manage well. Even satisfactory or good teaching is reduced in effectiveness by unsatisfactory use of homework and teachers' failure to use assessment of what their pupils know understand and can do to inform the planning of future lessons. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught to a satisfactory level overall though there are weaknesses at Key Stage 3. The school satisfactorily meets the needs of all its pupils and meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs very well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Curriculum provision is good in English, mathematics, science, drama, modern foreign languages and personal and social education. It is very good in careers education and guidance. Opportunities for pupils to participate in extra-curricular activities are also good. However, overall arrangements are unsatisfactory because of significant weaknesses in information and communication technology, design and technology, in curriculum design and timetabling.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. These pupils are well catered for and make very good progress whilst they are in the school.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The pupils concerned are happy and well integrated into school life.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is satisfactory. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares well for its pupils but there are some areas of health and safety which require attention. Overall provision is satisfactory with some good aspects, such as the monitoring of personal development and

	attendance. There is very good individual support and help for pupils with special educational needs.
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Overall parents have confidence in the school and are strongly supportive of its efforts. The majority of parents feel that their children like the school, that it offers good teaching, achieves high standards, and that it has a positive effect on their children.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	There have been a number of recent, significant changes in the leadership of the school. Among these has been the arrival of a new headteacher at the start of the current term. In a very short time this has brought about a renewed clarity and vision to the direction that the school must take to secure improvements.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil most of their statutory duties and are very well informed about the progress pupils make from the wealth of available data. Governors address some of the principles of best value.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The current management team has an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This understanding has not yet penetrated with complete effectiveness to all areas of the school.
The strategic use of resources	The strategic plan, set before the current headteacher was in post, has poor success criteria and does not link clear budget decisions to the priorities. This creates a lack of clarity, consistency and sense of direction for the development of subject areas.

Although there are some very effective teaching and support staff in the school there are too many staff teaching in areas where they are either inexperienced or not confident. The accommodation does not allow the curriculum to be taught effectively. Rooms are of an inappropriate size for the groups taught in them and many are substandard, neglected and in urgent need of refurbishment. The fabric of the school is generally in poor condition. Corridors become seriously overcrowded when lessons end and there is considerable litter. The presence of graffiti is also an issue, especially on desks and in toilets. The resources available for learning are unsatisfactory, overall. The large expansion of the school population which began in 1995 unsupported by a major building programme has led to a number of issues which now need urgently to be addressed.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The progress their children make at school. The leadership of the headteacher. The expectations the school has of their children that they will work hard and do their best. The care the school shows for individuals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The consistency with which staff deal with concerns. The quality and use of homework. Behaviour in the school. To be better informed about how their children are getting on.

The inspection team agrees with the aspects that please parents and broadly with what they would like to see improved. Behaviour in the school is good overall in lessons though outside lessons there are concerns over horseplay and inappropriate behaviour caused by the crowded site.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is overall slightly below average. Though the pupils' abilities cover a wide range, the existence of local grammar schools means that the proportion of high attaining pupils in the school is below the national average for comprehensive schools.
2. At the end of Key Stage 3 in 2000, the proportion of pupils gaining the expected level 5 in the National Curriculum tests was above the national average in English and science and close to the national average in mathematics. For those pupils gaining the higher level 6 or above the school's performance was close to the national average in all three subjects. The trend in the school's performance at Key Stage 3 over the past four years has been broadly in line with the national trend, showing a slight improvement. The performance of both boys and girls is close to the national average.
3. Attainment in Key Stage 3 lessons and in work seen during the inspection was close to the national average in most subjects, above it in science and drama but below it in design and technology and information and communication technology.
4. Pupils' progress across Key Stage 3 is satisfactory overall though good in English, mathematics, science, art and physical education.
5. At Key Stage 4 in 2000, 42 per cent of pupils obtained five or more GCSE A*-C grades, compared with the national average of 47 per cent. The school's average points score per pupil, at 39.4, was above the national average of 38.4. In the core subjects, pupils' points scores in English and science were marginally above the national average whilst that for mathematics was marginally below the national average. Taking the three core subjects together, both boys' and girls' performance exceeded the national average. Over the past three years boys' results have been above the national average and girls' results close to it though the upward trend in GCSE points scores has been below the national trend. The percentages of pupils attaining 5 or more A*-G grades in 2000 was, however, above the national average and the percentage gaining one or more A*-G grades was well above the national average.
6. When the attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 is compared with pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 3, the school's performance was close to the average for similar schools in terms of the percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades but well above it in terms of pupils attaining 5 or more A*-G grades and 1 or more A*-G grades. Thus the progress the pupils make across Key Stage 4 from the end of Key Stage 3 is well above average compared to similar schools. This is also the case when the school's performance is compared to other schools containing similar numbers of pupils entitled to free school meals. The school met its sufficiently challenging target in 2000 for the percentage of pupils gaining five or more A* to C grades, but did not reach its target of 100% for the percentage of pupils expected to gain one or more A* to G grades. It met its target for average GCSE points score per pupil.
7. Pupils' attainment in Key Stage 4 as judged by lesson observation and scrutiny of their work during the inspection is average overall though marginally above average in science and below average in design and technology and information and communication technology. Compared to schools with similar performance at the end of Key Stage 3 the

school does well; it was close to the average in terms of pupils gaining five or more GCSE A* to C grades and well above average in terms of average GCSE points score and pupils gaining one or more A* to G GCSE grades.

8. Pupils' progress at Key Stage 4 is satisfactory overall but good in science and physical education though there is scope for lessons to be planned with a greater level of challenge for higher attaining pupils. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress and pupils with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress.
9. At GCE A level the average points score of students in 2000 was well below the national average, though compared to the students' GCSE performance the points scores meet expectations overall. The trend in A level performance has been that it has been below the national average, though not consistently so.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils are glad to be at the school and value being students. They are willing to take on responsibility when given the opportunity as demonstrated by the year group council, school council and prefect system. However there is scope for pupils to take on additional proactive roles of responsibility in and outside of class lessons as a development aspect for the school. The quality of relationships is good between pupils and staff and other adults as well as with each other. Pupils mix well between genders and there is no evidence of racial discord. Most pupils are respectful of each other within their peer group.
11. Most pupils generally show interest in their work and a willingness to learn. Behaviour is good during lessons and most pupils are able to work independently, in pairs or small groups without strong supervision. Overall pupils stay focused on the task with some variation depending on the teaching strategy, interest and challenge of the work. Several pupils need more frequent attention or direct supervision including those with special needs and who receive formal assistance in the classroom. Some pupils have a history of being disruptive and many have identified behavioural and/or emotional difficulties. The impact on others' learning by disruptive pupils is generally minimised using a range of whole school behaviour management strategies as well as tailored strategies within some faculties and very good teaching practice amongst some teachers.
12. The school promotes a positive ethos and pupils generally know what is expected of them. There is a positive yet firm orientation to improving behaviour and pupils are aware of the range of rewards for good work and good behaviour and the hierarchy of sanctions for unacceptable behaviour. The behaviour policy and guidelines on classroom management, acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, are currently under review using a process of pupil consultation as well as amongst staff.
13. Behaviour during lesson or room changes and during breaks can be very boisterous and can lead inadvertently to safety issues. Aspects of the acceptable behaviour code were rarely demonstrated, particularly outside formal class tuition when overt supervision is far less. Overall there is no obvious vandalism or defacement of property although there is substantial littering and graffiti in the toilet areas.
14. There have been six permanent exclusions since the start of term either due to violent behaviour or the breakdown of devised pastoral strategies. The school monitors exclusions by gender and ethnicity. The school acknowledges the occurrence of bullying

and has clear strategies for dealing with incidents promptly. Pastoral staff follow up specific situations sensitively and this includes social skills awareness for both the victim and perpetrator to facilitate mutual understanding of events and the impact of behaviour on the outcome.

15. Attendance is satisfactory at over 90%. Registers are taken at 8.50 a.m. prior to assembly and 1.55 p.m. Legal requirements for recording and reporting attendance are rigorously met. There is a clear procedure for form tutors for recording and monitoring lateness and non-attendance and this is applied effectively. Punctuality to lessons is sometimes affected due to weak timetabling or the crowded nature of the site.
16. Absences are promptly followed up by telephone and letters to parents and carers. The school works closely in mutual partnership with the Education Welfare Officer(EWO) who makes regular visits. Calculation of weekly register statistics and ongoing statistics on absence are well monitored. The school continues to identify and implement measures to improve attendance and manage unauthorised absence where this is an issue and has recently received twelve months' funding enabling it to develop its proactive approaches. These include 'first day calling', pagers to parents/carers without telephones, workshops for parents and greater involvement of the EWO and counsellors.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

17. Overall the quality of teaching is just satisfactory. Across the school, 90.5 per cent of teaching is satisfactory or better with 34 per cent of this teaching good, 18 per cent very good and 5 per cent excellent. This represents approximately the same judgement overall as was given in the previous inspection report. Where there are strengths in the quality of teaching this has clear, positive effects on pupils' learning. The converse is also the case and weak teaching adversely affects learning. Across the school pupils with special educational needs make very good gains in their learning and the progress of pupils with English as an additional language is satisfactory.
18. At Key Stage 3 teaching is satisfactory or better in 89 per cent of lessons, good in 29 per cent, very good in 15 per cent and excellent in 4 per cent. This profile is poorer than that for teaching at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form though it represents an improvement on the previous inspection when about one-third of the teaching was unsatisfactory at this key stage. There are, however, variations across the school; the teaching of English, mathematics and science is good overall at Key Stage 3 whereas the teaching of information and communication technology is unsatisfactory. There is also good teaching in drama, geography and physical education.
19. At Key Stage 4 teaching is excellent in 4 per cent of lessons, very good in 30 per cent, good in 31 per cent and satisfactory in 25 per cent. It is unsatisfactory in about 10 per cent of lessons. It should be noted, however, that no Year 11 teaching was observed during the inspection as these pupils were engaged in their trial GCSE examinations during the inspection week. Teaching quality is very similar to that reported in Key Stage 4 during the last inspection. Teaching is good overall in English, mathematics, science, geography, modern foreign languages and very good in drama. It is unsatisfactory in design and technology and information and communications technology. Teaching in the sixth form is satisfactory or better in 96 per cent of lessons, good in 26 per cent, very good in 16 per cent and excellent in 5 per cent of lessons. This is an improvement over the previous inspection. Again, teaching was good in English, mathematics, science subjects, politics, media studies, geography and physical education. It is very good in drama, French, business studies and psychology and excellent in music.

20. The teaching of basic skills shows strengths and weaknesses, but is satisfactory overall. The teaching of literacy in subjects other than English is varied, though there is some good practice evident in science, geography and physical education. Across the curriculum there is too little explicit teaching of basic skills, such as the use of dictionaries and thesauruses and how to take effective notes. Speaking and listening skills are fostered across the curriculum and reading skills are generally adequate to access lessons in most subjects. Writing skills are weakest. There is inconsistency in the way in which teachers in different subject areas address such issues as spelling, other language errors or poor presentation. The teaching of numeracy skills in subjects other than mathematics is a weakness.
21. The strengths of the teaching across the school are in teachers' management of pupils and the standards of discipline they achieve, their use of time and resources and their knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach, except in some instances where teachers are teaching outside their areas of subject expertise. The weaknesses are in the consistency of use of homework and in their use of assessment of pupils' work to inform the next stage of teaching and learning. Teachers' planning is satisfactory and good in the sixth form and their expectations of pupils are satisfactory overall. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good and they make very good gains in learning as a result of this. Pupils with English as an additional language make satisfactory gains in learning. Across the school pupils make satisfactory gains in knowledge, skills and understanding and work with appropriate pace and effort. Their interest and concentration are good overall and they can work well independently when required to do so.
22. Across the school assessment procedures are satisfactory and teachers make accurate judgements about pupils' progress. However, the use of such assessment to inform future planning or to select the best strategy to maximise consequent learning is a weakness. The setting and use of homework are also weaknesses. There are inconsistencies in its setting, examples of non-adherence to the school's published homework timetable and too few examples of homework being used effectively to reinforce learning, to engage pupils further in tasks or to extend higher attaining pupils.

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

23. Curriculum provision is good in English, mathematics, music, geography, drama, and personal and social education. It is very good in modern foreign languages and careers education and guidance. Opportunities for pupils to participate in extra-curricular activities are also good. However, overall arrangements are unsatisfactory because of significant weaknesses in information and communication technology, design and technology, in curriculum design and timetabling. The last two aspects lead to a large number of pupils having an unsatisfactory experience because their lessons sometimes lack continuity. This has a detrimental effect on pupils' progress. Classes split between two teachers also add to this difficulty, for example in science and music.
24. Statutory requirements are met in the majority of subjects, with the exception of the element of information and communication technology (ICT) which is now required. They are not met in ICT and design and technology at Key Stage 4, where provision is unsatisfactory and poor in certain aspects. Some subjects, for example, English, mathematics, geography, music, drama and personal and social education make good contributions to literacy and numeracy. The range of learning opportunities at Key Stage

4 is satisfactory and is of a better quality than in Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form. Whilst there is an appropriate curriculum in the sixth form with some good practice in both A level and GNVQ classes, the small size of a number of groups still constrains students' experiences. This remains an issue from the last inspection.

25. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and within some subject areas, notably mathematics, music, geography and drama, the strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy and oral skills are good.
26. At Key Stage 3 all subjects of the National Curriculum are studied, though there are weaknesses in music, technology and ICT. Learning opportunities are enhanced by the range of modern foreign languages and the provision of drama and personal and social education.
27. At Key Stage 4 pupils follow a core curriculum of English, mathematics, science and a modern foreign language to examination level. They also study religious education, ICT, careers, personal and social education and physical education. They then have an appropriate range of subjects they can then choose to study. Languages provision is particularly distinctive, reflecting the school's specialist status. Pupils can study French, German, Spanish, Japanese and Punjabi and some of this provision is offered outside the school day.
28. For those who require learning support there is an additional study option at Key Stage 4. Throughout the school the curricular provision and planned support for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Pupils for whom English is not their first language have an opportunity to take GCSE in their heritage language.
29. Within the sixth form there is an appropriate range of advanced and supplementary courses and opportunities to study the General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) in intermediate and advanced level business studies. Students have opportunities to participate in physical, recreational and sporting activities. Religious education is provided on a number of off timetable days with a set theme. Increasingly attention is being paid to the development of key skills: particularly good work was seen in GNVQ and drama. In the latter performance and evaluation skills are strong and levels of student collaboration very good. In GNVQ, media studies, drama and personal and social education there is an appropriate emphasis on pupils' learning and social skills.
30. The programmes of personal, social and health education are carefully planned and of good quality. Pupils feel well supported by the informative and reassuring approaches taken in sex education and the use of outside speakers on the misuse of drugs and alcohol. They frequently value the provision. The school makes good use of the school nurse and external speakers, who make beneficial contributions that effectively impact on pupils' knowledge and understanding. Attention to the work related curriculum and careers education and guidance is good. Pupils and students benefit from the advice of the specialist careers service and within the sixth form advice on applying for university or college is supportive. There are periods of work experience in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. These allow useful insights into the world of work and care is taken in matching the needs of pupils and students to their placement. Pupils with special educational needs are supported by structured interviews at fourteen plus and by carefully selected work experience. Whilst there is some provision for preparing pupils and students for adult life, with such activities as the school councils, study skills, mentoring and sixth formers running activities, there is scope for developing a greater breadth of opportunities.
31. Across the curriculum provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development are

satisfactory and opportunities for cultural development are good. The school promotes principles which distinguish right from wrong and, through the programme of assemblies in particular provides pupils with knowledge and insights into values and beliefs. A broad range of aesthetic and sporting activities are provided within the curriculum through such subjects as music, drama, media studies, dance and physical education. Drama and dance especially enable pupils and students to build their confidence and develop a repertoire of personal and performance skills.

32. Extra curricular provision is good with pupils having regular opportunities to participate in a range of sport, Christian union, instrumental lessons, jazz band and pop group, dance and drama productions, such as the highly successful 'Animal Farm' and 'The Boy Friend'. Pupils also benefit from extra curricular classes in French, German Punjabi and Spanish. They enjoy an extensive range of visits. Recent ones have been made to art galleries, museums, Chatham dockyard and to the local church to undertake a study. Year 9 made a visit to the World War I trenches to undertake work in several subject areas. All years have visited the theatre with younger pupils seeing 'Macbeth' and 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' and older pupils and students enjoying: 'An Inspector Calls', 'Everything Must Go', 'Man of Mode' and a production of 'Dracula'. All pupils receive a National Record of Achievement which records their academic attainment and participation in extra curricular activities. These are highly valued by pupils as a reflection of their all round achievements.
33. Pupils participate regularly in charity work and these activities make a valuable addition to pupils' social and moral development. Pupils appreciate their own cultural traditions and an appreciation of European culture is fostered. There are also opportunities for pupils to appreciate and develop an understanding of non-European cultures. They have the chance to study Japanese and Punjabi and in history to consider units of work on India and South Africa. In dance pupils participated in Dance 2000, a festival of Indian Dance run by professional dancers and sixth formers. In other subjects, such as music, geography, religious education and art, there are planned opportunities to foster an understanding of the diversity of society and reflect on the circumstances of others. The school's links with the community are satisfactory. These include partnerships with the careers service, health promotion, local colleges and with the West Kent Business Partnership, for careers education and special projects. Relationships with partner feeder schools and the local diocese are good.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34. The school cares well for its pupils but there are some areas of health and safety which require attention. Overall provision is satisfactory with some good aspects, such as the monitoring of personal development and attendance. There is very good individual support and help for pupils with special educational needs.
35. The procedures for dealing with daily routines, accidents, fire drills and emergencies are well established. However, the health and safety policy is outdated and there are weaknesses in science, art and design and technology. Careful records must be kept of all evacuations of the buildings.
36. Behaviour in classes is satisfactory and relationships are good. However, the overall management and monitoring of pupils' behaviour is unsatisfactory because there is inadequate supervision of corridors and public areas at break and lunchtimes when these areas are often overcrowded. There is an appropriate range of rewards and sanctions but rewards work better for pupils at Key Stage 3 and need reviewing for their value to older pupils. There is a suitably staged approach to incidents of misbehaviour and members of staff, especially the heads of school, seek positive responsible solutions rather than being punitive. If bullying occurs it is dealt with promptly, sensitively and effectively. Pupils speak highly of the support given by teachers and pastoral staff. Whilst some good tutoring occurs the use of the afternoon tutor time is inconsistent.
37. Pupil attendance is taken very seriously and there are good strategies for monitoring and improving attendance by the heads of school, lead tutors and the education welfare officer (EWO), who identifies patterns of absence and works on preventative and alternative strategies when difficulties arise. Provision is greatly enhanced by the EWO's presence in school for one day each week under a special Home Office project. This provision allows contact on the first day of absence for identified pupils or persistent absentees. The school monitors lateness to lessons but increased vigilance is necessary, especially with sixth formers, in order to ensure a prompt start to lessons and avoid loss of curriculum time.
38. Arrangements for child protection are good. They reflect the requirements to involve appropriate specialist and caring agencies. Links are good and have a beneficial effect. An experienced member of staff has received appropriate training and is the designated child protection officer. The school has the required policy and guidance is given to all staff in their handbook.
39. Procedures for the assessment and monitoring of pupils' academic work are satisfactory at Key Stage 4 good in the sixth form and very good for GNVQ business studies. They are unsatisfactory at Key Stage 3 where marking is inconsistent in quality and regularity. In certain subjects assessment has some good features. These include physical education, art and English where National Curriculum levels are well judged and mathematics where purpose built tests give high levels of consistency and accuracy. The mentoring schemes and Easter revision classes also give good support to students.
40. National Curriculum arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment are in place in all subjects with the exception of information and communication technology. The use of assessment to inform curriculum planning is under-developed and whilst there is regular target setting many pupils' targets lack a clear focus and specificity. The use of data is good within the senior management team but is not yet embedded in the culture of the school. Reporting arrangements to parents comply with legal requirements. Whilst they have clarity the computer generated reports lack individuality, though the tutor reports and

pupil pages ameliorate this to some extent.

41. Procedures for the identification and monitoring of pupils with special educational needs are very good. Statutory requirements regarding annual review and transition plans are met and pupils' individual education plans are good. Here, pupil targets are specific and helpful. Since the last inspection very good progress has been made within the special educational needs department and there are significant improvements in individual education plans.
42. The monitoring and support of pupils' personal development are good. The programmes of personal and social education provide valuable information and guidance. They encourage a responsible attitude and provide pupils with opportunities to discuss and reflect on moral and personal issues. In other areas of the curriculum, pupils need greater opportunities to exercise independence, choice and initiative. The school nurse and outside agencies make valuable contributions to programmes of personal, social and health education.
43. Pupils and students are well known to staff and there are good induction programmes when pupils enter the school. Careers education and guidance are also of a high quality. The setting and monitoring of homework remain inconsistent. Tutorial time is the main vehicle for monitoring homework and greater consistency is needed to ensure effective follow-up in cases where homework has not been done.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

44. There are satisfactory channels of communication between the school and parents via the prospectus, weekly newsletters, supplementary letters, pupils' planners and 'partnership' evenings to explain the curriculum. Records of achievement are good. Annual reports to parents are explained and discussed at private parent-form tutor meetings although report content, length of meeting as well as the timing for some pupils can limit their effectiveness. There is good liaison between the parents of identified vulnerable pupils and the special educational needs coordinator, and the Education Welfare Officer when appropriate. The school has access to interpreters and signers to facilitate communication with parents from the Sikh community and with hearing impaired parents.
45. Two parents currently perform active governor roles, a third has recently retired from the position and their replacement is being sought. The small but highly committed parent-teacher association effectively fulfils a mostly social role to raise funds for the school. Parental involvement in aspects of daily school life is limited, for example to display work and to hear pupils with special educational needs read. Extension of learning into the home is encouraged via the pupil planner and its use by parents is monitored half-termly. There is a home-school agreement in place and its use is effective when the need requires.
46. Overall parents have confidence in the school and are supportive of its efforts. The majority of parents feel that their children like the school, that it offers good teaching, expects their children to work hard and achieve their best and that it is well led and managed. The majority of parents also feel the school is approachable with regard to problems or questions and that it facilitates a sense of maturity and responsibility in their children. A substantial minority of parents expresses concern about homework, feeling informed about how their child is getting on. To a lesser extent parents also question behaviour within the school and whether the school works closely with parents. The

inspection team agrees with the aspects that please parents and broadly with what they would like to see improved. Behaviour in the school is good overall in lessons though outside lessons there are concerns over horseplay and inappropriate behaviour caused by the crowded site.

47. The transfer procedure from feeder schools is effective and emphasises familiarisation between Saint George's pastoral and tutor staff and staff and pupils from a very large number of feeder schools. This includes liaison between staff from both schools, parent and pupil evenings as well as pupil visits to the school. The potential trauma of transition is softened by a two day 'induction' for forthcoming Year 7 pupils, which is highly attended and valued. Overall the school links effectively with its parents.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

48. There have been a number of recent, significant changes in the leadership of the school. Among these has been the arrival of a new headteacher at the start of the current term. In a very short time this has brought about a renewed clarity and vision to the direction that the school must take to make improvements. . The headteacher has established revised roles for the senior management of the school. These are clear and well defined in order to promote higher standards.
49. The school has a set of visions and values and there is a shared commitment across the school to ensure that these are met. Coupled with this commitment is a capacity from within the strengthened management team to succeed.
50. There is rigorous data collection in the school to judge pupils' performance and from this appropriate targets are set. However, there is inconsistent monitoring, review and evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning, within faculties and across the school. Insufficient use is made of the very good practices observed, in order to establish agreed standards in lessons and around the school.
51. The plans made for establishing performance management within the school are satisfactory and build upon a previous effective appraisal and professional development system, which takes account of the school's priorities and targets. The school has been awarded the Investors in People standard and staff have sufficient opportunities for continuous professional development.
52. The management of the school sets appropriate priorities. Faculties and departments establish action plans in line with these priorities. The strategic plan, set before the current headteacher was in post, has poor success criteria and does not link clear budget decisions to the priorities. This creates a lack of clarity, consistency and sense of direction for the development of faculty and subject areas.
53. The governors fulfil most of their statutory duties but do not provide a full curriculum. They are very well informed about the progress pupils make from the wealth of available data. There are linked governors to literacy, numeracy and learning support. Governors are very committed to the school and are ready to take on their role within performance management. The chairman of governors visits the school regularly but other governors have less first hand experience of the strengths, weaknesses and challenges faced by the school.
54. There is poor use of information and communication technology across the school to support and enrich learning. The resources are available but often the timetable and

availability of rooms does not allow access to the new technologies. An example of this is the use of Success Maker to support pupils who have literacy or numeracy difficulties. This programme is available on computers in a mathematics classroom. Mathematics teachers have to use it within their lessons, although they may not be teaching that particular topic, which is unsatisfactory. The recommended number of sessions is four per week. The room is only available once each week for seven groups and once a fortnight for the eighth group for those pupils who have literacy difficulties. This severely limits the gains which could be made from the programme and is not making the best value out of an expensive item of technology.

55. The school has a number of specific grants of which it is making variable use. The school has language college status and it is working hard to establish a whole school international ethos, for example through the international week which has provided a suitable foundation on which future whole school work can build. Year 8 will be a focus for international work from September 2001. The school has also used the New Opportunities Fund for training in information and communication technology but there is still poor use made of new technologies across the school. The Home Office grant is very well managed. It has been used to establish an attendance policy and a centre for pupils who find the whole school day in class difficult. This is developing into a very good example of social inclusion. The Healthy Schools' initiative is well established across the school. Overall the pastoral management of the school is very good.
56. Although there are some very effective teaching and support staff in the school there are too many staff teaching in areas where they are either inexperienced or not confident. The learning support department is very well led and managed and their staff are most effective but they are short staffed and therefore unable to provide the coverage required given the number of pupils with special educational needs in the school.
57. The accommodation does not allow the curriculum to be taught effectively. Rooms are often the wrong size and some are substandard, untidy and in need of refurbishment. The fabric of the school is generally in poor condition. Corridors become overcrowded when lessons end and there is considerable litter and graffiti. Departments are sometimes spread around the school rather than being together in a suite. The accommodation has unsatisfactory, or poor, features in science, English, design and technology, geography, history, art, music, some physical education and cramped in business education. The library has improved since the last inspection. The stock has improved although there are still books, which are out of date and insufficient numbers of books for the numbers of pupils in the school. The accommodation that has been extended is well maintained by the staff who set up topical displays often using pupils' work. Overall there has been insufficient evaluation of the admissions policy to consider whether standards would rise faster if the crowded nature of the site were to be reduced.
58. The resources available for learning are unsatisfactory, overall. This is particularly so in English, design and technology and history, where there is no access to computing facilities. There are insufficient text books to 'own' in the languages faculty, insufficient technology and art and few resources for the sixth form courses in business education. Overall the school is very good at maximising meagre resources and making the very best of poor accommodation and the current year's poor timetable provision.
59. The induction of all new staff to the school is thorough. They are able to take advantage of a series of sessions to inform them about the processes and policies in the school. Newly qualified teachers have mentors and an appropriate timetable. Records maintained on newly qualified teachers are good.

60. Governors address some of the principles of best value. They challenge costs and monitor spending. They compare themselves to other schools but there is insufficient consultation on curriculum impact from spending decisions. They lack first hand experience of some of the challenges facing the school from the problems of overcrowded sub-standard accommodation coupled with insufficient learning resources in some faculties.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to improve standards and quality the school should:

1. raise standards in information and communication technology and design and technology by:
 - (i) ensuring that programmes of study are fully covered and all statutory requirements met;
 - (ii) raising the quality of teaching by more rigorous monitoring and consequent programmes of in-service training;
 - (iii) restructuring curricula to ensure better continuity and progression for pupils;
 - (iv) having higher expectations of what pupils can achieve.

(paragraphs 3, 18, 19, 23, 24, 26, 54, 58, 110-117, 135-141)
2. remove the deficits of the current timetable, including:
 - (i) reducing the number of split classes;
 - (ii) locating individual classes as far as possible in the same room;
 - (iii) spreading lessons in a subject more evenly across the fortnightly cycle;
 - (iv) reducing the amount of teacher movement;

(paragraphs 23, 54, 81, 82, 102, 110, 111, 123, 134, 139, 155, 171)
3. put in place strategies to improve substandard accommodation, especially in English, science, art, design and technology, drama, music, physical education and the main hall;

(paragraphs 13, 36, 54, 57, 76, 78, 82, 101, 109, 115, 116, 158, 166, 171)
4. ensure greater consistency across the school and better sharing of good practice by:
 - (i) increasing the rigour with which curriculum leaders monitor teaching;
 - (ii) expecting curriculum leaders to monitor pupils' progress with consistency;
 - (iii) including these expectations in a programme of training;

(paragraphs 20, 30, 50, 52, 56, 77, 79, 80, 102, 109, 113, 124, 140, 171)
5. review the current admissions policy to consider whether standards would rise faster if the crowded nature of the site were to be reduced;

(paragraphs 13, 23, 35, 36, 46, 54, 57, 60, 78, 82, 101, 102, 109, 123, 134, 166, 171)
6. use homework more effectively and consistently to support pupils' learning, by
 - (i) ensuring that staff abide by the agreed programme;
 - (ii) developing the use of homework to support work in class more effectively;
 - (iii) improving the feedback that pupils receive on their work.

(paragraphs 22, 46, 72, 76, 100, 107, 113, 131, 139, 146, 158, 170)

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

The Sixth Form

61. Attainment for students entered for two or more A level subjects has been well below the national average for the past two years. However, analysis of the performance of students at A level compared with their performance in their GCSE examinations two years earlier shows that they make good progress in most subjects during their two years in the sixth form. Attainment in lessons during the inspection was average or above in 78 per cent of lessons and below average in 22 per cent. It was above average in 28 per cent.
62. The quality of teaching in the sixth form is satisfactory or better in 96 per cent of lessons, good in 26 per cent; very good in 16 per cent and excellent in 5 per cent. This is an improvement over the previous inspection. There is good teaching in English, French, mathematics, science subjects, politics, media studies, sociology, geography and physical education and some very good teaching in drama and psychology and excellent teaching in music. The best teaching develops students' capacity to analyse, interpret and critically evaluate learning materials and their own learning. It promotes original thinking and challenges high attaining students at the same time as enabling all students to make gains in knowledge and understanding. The best teaching also enables students to understand the nature and pace of the work they are to undertake by sharing planned work with them, for example in the very effective psychology teaching. Most students in the sixth form show good or very good attitudes to their work though there are occasional cases where unmotivated individuals slow their own learning and that of some others. Learning is good or better in about 60 per cent of the lessons, satisfactory in 35 per cent and unsatisfactory in only 5 per cent. Relationships between students and their peers and students and their teachers are always satisfactory and are good or better in over 80 per cent of lessons. Students work well in the library and in supervised private study.
63. A head of sixth form leads a team of sixth form tutors and students are appreciative of the individual and collective support and guidance they receive. Within the sixth form there is an appropriate range of advanced and supplementary courses and opportunities to study the General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) in Intermediate and Advanced level business studies. Students have appropriate opportunities to participate in physical, recreational and sporting activities. Increasingly attention is being paid to the development of pupils' key skills and in GNVQ, media studies, psychology, drama and personal and social education there is an appropriate emphasis on pupils' learning and social skills. Religious education is provided for all pupils in the sixth form.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	214
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	29

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5	18	34	33	9	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	1189	205
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	107	

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	25	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	350	14

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	120

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	25
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	22

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	7.7
National comparative data	7.7

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.6
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	132	106	238

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	89	87	86
	Girls	85	63	63
	Total	174	150	149
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	73 (78)	63 (64)	63 (64)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	27 (44)	38 (29)	30 (20)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	79	97	74
	Girls	89	71	64
	Total	168	168	138
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	72 (76)	72 (73)	59 (59)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	37 (43)	47 (34)	21 (18)
	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	131	107	238

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	52	126	129
	Girls	47	99	105
	Total	99	225	234
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	42 (43)	95 (97)	98 (98)
	National	47.4 (46.6)	90.6 (90.9)	95.6 (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	39.0 (39.0)
	National	38.4 (38.0)

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	0	N/A
	National	N/A	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	28	56	84

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	10.3	13.2	12.2	0	2.5	2.0
National	17.7	18.6	18.2	2.6	2.9	2.7

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	3
Black – African heritage	4
Black – other	31
Indian	71
Pakistani	6
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	1
White	1207
Any other minority ethnic group	69

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian	2	
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	74	3
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	78.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	305

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	74.9
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	28.0
Key Stage 4	21.5

Financial information

Financial year	2000
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	£
Total income	4161126
Total expenditure	4134803
Expenditure per pupil	2966
Balance brought forward from previous year	251437
Balance carried forward to next year	277760

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1394
Number of questionnaires returned	171

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	32	54	10	3	1
My child is making good progress in school.	31	55	8	1	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	12	53	23	6	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	15	48	27	9	1
The teaching is good.	19	62	11	2	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	16	50	25	7	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	34	47	15	1	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	39	50	8	2	2
The school works closely with parents.	22	45	22	5	6
The school is well led and managed.	25	48	8	2	17
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	28	53	12	2	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	18	50	15	1	15

Other issues raised by parents

None

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

ENGLISH

64. Pupils' attainment in English over the last two years in Key Stage 3 National Curriculum tests has improved considerably and is now well above the national average. In 2000, the percentage of pupils reaching level 5 or above was 74 per cent, 11 per cent above the national average of 63 per cent. In this school, attainment in English at Key Stage 3 is higher than mathematics or science. Taking the last 4 years 1996-1999 and examining trends over time, attainment is close to the national average. Considering attainment on entry, pupils make good progress by the end of Year 9.
65. Attainment in lessons is in line with or above national averages in 9 of the 14 lessons inspected. Pupils generally achieve well in relation to their abilities and the achievement of lower attaining pupils, pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is good. In 2000, the percentage of higher attaining pupils reaching level 6 or above in the national tests was 27 per cent, 3 per cent above the national average at 24 per cent. Although English test results for higher attaining pupils in this school fell by 17 per cent in 2000 compared with 1999 figures, attainment at the higher levels compared with other schools nationally is still above average.
66. Considering attainment of lower attaining pupils in 2000, boys dominate the lower levels but by the end of Key Stage 3 only 10 per cent of pupils are still at or below level 4. This represents good value-added in Key Stage 3 and helps relieve pressure on Key Stage 4 as 90 per cent of pupils enter Key Stage 4 with at least level 4. Attainment overall at Key Stage 3 is judged to be in line with national averages in lessons and above in the tests.
67. Pupils' attainment in English Language at Key Stage 4 over the last two years has improved and is slightly above the national average. In 2000, attainment for English Language at GCSE is 63 per cent A*-C, 4 per cent above the national average of 59 per cent. This represents a significant 12 per cent increase for English Language on the 1999 A*-C pass rate of 51 per cent. Focussed English Easter revision classes, detailed study booklets and materials support this improvement. Attainment at the higher levels is lower than average with only 14 per cent of pupils reaching grades A & B in English Language in 2000. However, considering prior attainment this is in line with expectations. No pupils reached A* in English Language in 2000 or 1999. As in Key Stage 3, there are gender differences with 14 per cent more girls than boys attaining A*-C in English Language GCSE in 2000.
68. In English Literature, A*-C results fell slightly by 4 per cent, from 60 per cent in 1999 to 56 per cent in 2000 which is 7 per cent below the 63 per cent national average. One girl reached A* in English Literature in 2000; there were no A* grades in 1999. However, all boys entered in 2000 and 1999 achieved a pass grade in both subjects. Furthermore, nearly all pupils are entered for both subjects. Lower attaining pupils, those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language perform well in relation to their abilities in GCSE English. A*-G pass rates are better than national averages proving the effectiveness of the department's inclusion policy and support systems. Overall attainment in English at Key Stage 4 is in line with national averages and improving, although there are issues regarding the attainment of boys, the slightly lower attainment in English Literature compared with English Language and the low numbers of higher grades in both subjects.

69. Attainment at English post 16 is close to national averages with 20 of the 30 pupils entered reaching at least a D/C grade or better in 2000. At the highest grades, A and B, performance is below national averages in 2000 and 1999 but again considering prior attainment, this is as expected. The pass rates of 83 per cent in 2000 and 87 per cent in 1999 are below national averages. This raises issues over entry policies to post 16 courses in English.
70. Speaking and listening skills are good. Almost all pupils listen attentively and many are able to sustain contributions to discussions. The majority of pupils use Standard English when necessary.
71. Reading is fluent but sometimes lacking in expression. Some pupils find it difficult to locate extracts from texts, especially media or other visual texts, to support their arguments. Pupils are encouraged to read independently and some lessons start with private reading. Most Key Stage 3 pupils take advantage of the opportunities to read in English and in tutor time. Private reading is less well developed at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form compared with Key Stage 3, where most pupils carry reading books with them. Most pupils have the necessary reading skills to access the curriculum. Strategies, for example the PACT scheme, enlist parents' help to develop good reading skills and habits.
72. Standards of writing, an issue raised in the last report, have been improved but still need attention at all key stages. Pupils write in a range of forms and often express themselves imaginatively, especially through poetry. However, technical accuracy is a problem for many pupils who struggle to spell correctly or to write at the length and sophistication required for the higher grades in examinations. Spelling and vocabulary are not always systematically developed. To support pupils with structuring extended essays, drafting is encouraged and writing frames like the AQE (answer, quotation, explanation) approach are used very successfully. The presentation of written work remains variable. Many pupils show little pride in their work, taking insufficient care over layout and presentation. Some pupils are confident users of word processing packages and use information and communication technology (ICT) to enhance their work in English. Most of this has to be done outside English lessons because of restricted access to computer facilities in English.
73. Grades and levels are judged accurately. There are agreed assessment and marking policies but some inconsistency of practice across the department. Both written and oral feedback on work does not always make clear what to pupils what they must do to improve or set out clear targets for the next piece of work.
74. Learning is satisfactory or better at all key stages and at Key Stage 3 it is judged good or very good in 70 per cent of lessons seen. Learning is sometimes affected in lessons where there is a lack of variety in teaching and learning styles, where the teacher tends to dominate or where learning is less active. Drama techniques central to National Curriculum 2000, for example the teacher in role or hot-seating, are occasionally used effectively to help pupils of all abilities to develop empathy with characters and deepen their understanding of key issues in texts. Lack of ICT to enhance learning in English, raised as a key issue in the last inspection, is still a weakness. Opportunities to use ICT more comprehensively and creatively to enhance the quality of pupils' work, for example in producing extended essays at A-level, are not being exploited.
75. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good and frequently very good in English. Pupils show interest in their work and behave sensibly in lessons, arriving on time, with appropriate

books and materials, expecting to work. Pupils are courteous. They respect each other, their teachers and the environment. Relationships are good. Pupils usually sit with others of the same sex but benefit greatly in classes where teachers are consciously mixing the sexes, for example in discussions. When required to do so, pupils collaborate well in groups but too few opportunities are offered, especially at Key Stage 3, for pupils to use initiative, take responsibility for their own learning, exercise choice or negotiate tasks. In the sixth form, students show commitment, enthusiasm and maturity. Pupils studying English, drama and media studies to A level show the confidence to transfer knowledge and skills across subject disciplines to good effect.

76. Teachers are well qualified, committed and professional. Teaching is judged to be good and often very good at all key stages. Thus the unevenness raised in the last report has been fully addressed. A third of teaching at Key Stage 3 is judged to be very good, rising to over half at Key Stage 4 and half at post 16. Teachers are good role models in terms of vocabulary and Standard English expression. They expect good behaviour and there is evidence of considerable progress since the last inspection with regard to positive behaviour management. Teachers prepare diligently creating attractive and engaging teaching resources. Support is provided for lower attaining pupils but sometimes, pupils, particularly the higher attaining, are not fully challenged. Teachers sometimes dominate lessons or speak for too long, thereby encouraging passivity and limiting pupils' opportunities to think and respond. Pupils are not always offered the chance to work in mixed sex groups or with different pupils. In the best lessons, teachers ask challenging questions, then allow pupils time to prepare responses thus requiring a deeper engagement. Little explicit assessment is observed to take place in lessons with many opportunities being missed and the use of assessment to inform planning is underdeveloped. Assessment at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form is more structured, often explicitly and helpfully linked to the examination success criteria. Written comments are not always focused on the steps needed to secure progress. A department portfolio of pupils' work exemplifies agreed standards and helps to draw together this large team but requires further refinement to be more effective. There is no input to it from the special needs team, illustrating that stronger links with the special needs department need to be developed along with links to other areas for example drama, art and history. In lessons, positive oral feedback on pupils' work is offered and praise is often well used to motivate pupils and promote learning. Despite this, some pupils remain unclear about what they need to do to improve. Homework is not always being used creatively to support and extend pupils' learning. It is sometimes not recorded properly by pupils and many pupils do not appreciate the purpose of work in lessons or homework set. Teachers use resources well, many of which are skilfully chosen to interest pupils and to support learning. Resources, although well managed, are generally insufficient and sometimes inaccessible as teachers struggle to cope with poor accommodation. Resource issues are affecting the quality of the English curriculum, for example pupils do not have access to dictionaries or thesauruses in all lessons, some examination texts are not allowed home and access to computers is restricted. The subject struggles to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum with respect to ICT provision in English.
77. The quality of leadership and management is very high. The head of faculty is an extremely able, energetic and effective leader, who works very hard to develop the team and to create a vision for the subject. The English team has a strong ethos and takes responsibility for raising standards and for professional development. The head of faculty and other responsibility point holders would benefit from more time to monitor and evaluate teaching, learning, homework, assessment and marking in the department. There is a need to prepare more fully for the National Literacy Strategy at Key Stage 3 and to research the National Literacy Strategy at Key Stage 2 in primary schools.

78. Accommodation for English is poor and this affects learning. Many rooms are cramped and badly lit. Resources are inadequate and the choice of Key Stage 3 texts, drama, non-fiction and texts from other cultures and traditions is limited. Teachers have insufficient access to video and ICT facilities in the department and there are related training issues. Displays are good and support learning well. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well managed in English. Pupils at all key stages engage in discussions about attitudes and values and how these have changed over time. Pupils are required to reflect on changes in language use and to read and analyse texts from other centuries, cultures and traditions. The work of the English department adds to the rich experience of the school. Extra-curricular events, for example a cross curricular trip to the battlefields in France and Belgium, trips to theatres and a host of other activities, contribute to the range of opportunities offered. Led by the head of faculty, pupils are currently developing an exciting web site to celebrate pupils' work and model good practice.

Literacy across the curriculum

79. A highly committed, whole school literacy co-ordinator has been appointed and a committee of representatives from all subject areas meets to discuss issues. Following inservice training, a whole school literacy policy was introduced, which includes developing the library to offer more support for reading, information and communication technology (ICT) and study skills. Much important work has already been started which needs time to develop. In practice, the development of literacy in subjects other than English is still varied, although good practice is already evident in some, for example a range of writing approaches in geography or speaking and listening skills and key words in physical education. Notwithstanding, pupils would benefit from having access to their own copies of dictionaries and thesauruses throughout the day and from being taught explicitly how to use them. More explicit teaching of basic and key skills within all subjects, for example how to take effective notes, is also needed.

80. Speaking and listening skills are fostered throughout the curriculum and the resulting standard is higher than standards in reading and writing. Despite this, opportunities to move from passive listening into active response through discussion are underdeveloped. In drama, art and physical education, pupils are being challenged to discuss and evaluate. Reading skills are generally sufficient to allow access to the curriculum but few opportunities are offered for sustained reading or writing in subjects other than English. When reading aloud, pupils are sometimes hesitant and lacking in expression. Some departments use helpful writing frames to support learning. Nevertheless, writing skills are weakest with many pupils finding it hard to present work neatly or accurately. Poor presentation is frequently not addressed and there is still inconsistency across subject areas in the teaching of key words and marking of spelling or other language errors. However, there is strong commitment to improve whole school literacy and a valuable policy is already in place.

Drama

81. A confident, talented, specialist head of drama leads the subject. Drama is taught separately from English by a team of 6 teachers, with an interest and often experience in drama but not always with specialist subject qualifications. Ensuring quality across such a large team is problematic. Nevertheless, attainment at all key stages is above expectations. Though the percentage of pupils gaining A* to C GCSE grades is below the national average, pupils do better in drama than in the other subjects for which they are entered.
82. Attainment was above average in 4 out of 5 drama lessons inspected. At Key Stage 4, GCSE drama is offered as an option and the take up is good. In lessons across all key stages, teaching is overall very good and sometimes excellent. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Some useful documentation has been produced to support the teaching of drama. One area for development is assessment in drama and aspects of speaking and listening for English. Drama needs to operate in closer partnership with other subject areas, for example, English, history and physical education to enrich the pupils' experience and enhance provision. A wide range of extra-curricular activities is offered to pupils and drama contributes greatly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the exploration of such topics as "Bullying". There are regular full-scale productions and events for example the annual carol service in St. George's church. However, staff deployment and accommodation are poor and these are detrimental to progress. Information communication technology (ICT) and technical facilities, for example the lighting box and sound systems need to be updated in order to secure curriculum provision, especially at A-level for the teaching of production and directing skills. Poor sound proofing between the department and the Hall means that drama activities need to be curtailed at examination times. This situation affects learning. Despite these problems, drama is currently a strength of the school.

Media studies in the sixth form

83. Attainment is above national averages at post 16. In 2000, the 2 pupils entered for AS in media studies passed with D grades, 9 candidates entered modules in Print and Film and all achieved pass grades ranging from A-E. Students show particular enjoyment and enthusiasm for the subject. Year 13 students are highly committed, demonstrating good ICT and practical skills and the confidence to transfer them into other subject areas i.e. English A-level and drama. Teaching is good overall, ranging from satisfactory to very good, with teachers displaying very good subject knowledge, especially with use of subject terminology. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on issues and participate in challenging and interesting practical work.

MATHEMATICS

84. Attainment at Key Stage 3 improved in 2000, with a significant increase in the number of pupils achieving National Curriculum level 6. Overall attainment is at the national average; this is above expectation given the intake. Boys performed above and girls below the respective national averages.
85. Attainment at Key Stage 4 also improved in 2000, with a significant increase in the number of pupils achieving GCSE grades A and B. Overall attainment is a little below the national average, but represents good achievement given the intake; in the case of girls it is significantly below average. Attainment by students retaking GCSE, as measured by improvement in grades, increased significantly in 2000.
86. Attainment at A and AS level is affected by students leaving to join selective school sixth

forms after GCSE and by students transferring from A to AS courses, and the number of entries is relatively small. Overall, attainment is below the national average.

87. In Key Stage 3, almost all teaching is satisfactory or better and the majority is either good or very good. In Key Stage 4, all teaching is good or better. In the sixth form (A/AS level and GCSE), teaching is satisfactory or better, the majority being good.
88. Strengths in teaching include good oral work with careful questioning to help pupils clarify their ideas. For example, pupils in a top set in Year 10 made a good start in understanding the elimination process for solving simultaneous equations through open-style questioning, carefully distributed around the class, which helped pupils to focus on the essential underlying idea.
89. Lessons are well-structured, with a starter, main focus and summarising final part. Good use is made of informal assessment to reveal pupils' misunderstandings and address them. For example, in a lower set in Year 7 the teacher realised during the lesson that some pupils had a basic misunderstanding about parallel lines and through careful questioning ensured that this misunderstanding was addressed. Students having difficulties in A level classes are helped by structured questioning rather than demonstration to come to an understanding of their errors.
90. Teachers' expectations could sometimes be higher in Year 7, so that when pupils have demonstrated a good basic understanding of a topic they can move on to more challenging tasks. More importance should be attached, and more encouragement given, to the accurate use of mathematical language. The teaching of numeracy skills in subjects other than mathematics is a weakness.
91. The quality of learning is satisfactory or better in almost all lessons and good or very good in about half. Pupils make progress in lessons or consolidate previous learning as a consequence of the positive features of the teaching already described. For example, in a Year 8 lesson on algebra, pupils were encouraged to express their difficulties and these were opened up to the whole class in order to ensure that all pupils had understood the explanation.
92. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons are good. They respond readily to questions, work conscientiously and stay on task. The structuring of the lessons into different parts helps to maintain concentration. At the previous inspection it was noticed that pupils showed reluctance to use mental calculations during lessons. This is still apparent among older pupils, but younger pupils do not resort so readily to calculators and more is done by teachers to develop mental calculation in lessons.
93. The department is well-led and significant action has been taken recently to improve teaching and learning. New textbooks have been bought and new schemes of work based on them are being written, and provide a clear course structure which is being followed by staff. A system of regular end-of-unit tests has been introduced and is used along with other test data to monitor pupils' progress. Accommodation has been refurbished to a good standard.

SCIENCE

94. Attainment in national tests for science at Key Stage 3 is above the national average; however no pupils achieved the highest levels. Observation of pupils' current work shows rising standards. Key Stage 3 pupils know and understand about chemical

reactions and electricity at above the levels expected for their age. Understanding and attainment in scientific investigation is variable but overall satisfactory. Literacy is starting to be promoted through the use of key words, particularly in relation to the published scheme used in the school. Speaking skills are developed through class work. Year 9 work on voltage and current was good and of a very high standard for some pupils who were able to predict appropriate values using an ICT simulation package and on questioning explain their methodology.

95. Attainment at Key Stage 4 in combined science has continued to be above the national average. In the 2000 GCSE examinations, 59.2 per cent of pupils gained grade A*-C passes at GCSE. By the end of Key Stage 4 the work seen shows standards above those expected for combined science. Pupils' work in Year 10 develops experimental skills, and shows an improvement in the basic knowledge in all three areas of the science curriculum. Numeracy skills are developed through graphical and other quantitative analysis, simple manipulation of equations and use of scientific instrumentation. Higher attaining pupils are sometimes not challenged to apply their knowledge and skills to demanding questions. Pupils with special educational needs, have a level of understanding and knowledge in line with other pupils. In a Year 10 revision lesson on involuntary reactions of the human body pupils able to classify behaviours and offer appropriate explanations to their answers.
96. The percentage of students achieving A-E grade passes at A level is below national expectations with too many pupils leaving with grades below E even though they started with appropriate GCSE grades. Since the last inspection standards of attainment overall have not significantly improved
97. Since pupils enter the school with below average attainment in both scientific knowledge and investigative skills, the progress made through Key Stage 3 has been good. The most able pupils make satisfactory progress as do pupils with special educational needs given their prior attainment. The department has started, in conjunction with special needs staff to develop support material to improve the use of scientific language. At Key Stage 4 progress is satisfactory for the more able, and good for most other pupils. A small proportion of lower ability pupils have difficulty in organising and communicating their understanding of science in writing. Boys make better progress than girls do at the end of both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4.
98. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in science are good and in most lessons very good. They are enthusiastic and many exhibit a genuine enthusiasm for the subject. Pupils show a positive attitude to science. They enjoy the practical work, are careful with equipment and have respect for safety precautions. Behaviour is good. Personal development is good, for example, in the approach to sharing ideas and collaborating on experiments. Some pupils lack confidence readily to ask questions to clarify or extend their understanding. Learning at Key Stage 3 overall is satisfactory with interest and commitment shown by the majority of pupils to enable them to acquire sufficient basic knowledge and understanding of the subject. Pupils in a Year 7 class worked well together and were able to discuss the design of an investigation about the energy efficiency of mechanical toys. The learning of Year 10 pupils often has important strengths. For example, several pupils were intrigued by ideas about how elements were classified. The intellectual effort they made helped them understand these ideas at a much better level than is usually found. In another Year 10 lesson on the structure of the circulatory system pupils enjoyed working together in pairs and responded eagerly when asked questions by their teacher. The quality of learning overall has improved since the last inspection.

99. Two thirds of teaching is good and often it is very good. This is characterised by subject specialists having a secure command and knowledge of their subject. Such teachers successfully adopt a wide range of teaching and learning strategies and use an interesting range of resources and materials to meet the full range of pupil ability. The use of writing frames for some investigations and the structuring of written work have proved very successful. The majority of lessons seen were well planned with homework being set regularly. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and foster positive relationships in their classes which has a positive effect on pupils' motivation and learning. Teaching in the sixth form is good and students are encouraged to think independently. During an A level physics lesson in which students were studying standing waves, there was a good balance between imparting information and challenging students to evaluate critically different experimental designs. Where teaching was unsatisfactory or poor, planning did not match the needs of pupils, classroom management was ineffective and the range of teaching strategies chosen was limited. In most cases there was an over reliance on the use of a textbook.
100. The department at present has two acting heads of science sharing the role, this will continue for the rest of the academic year. Schemes of work are in place. The Key Stage 3 scheme has been identified for revision in line with recent curriculum developments. The present scheme places an over reliance on the use of a published scheme. Scientific enquiry is at present not given sufficient emphasis, with the incoherent development of experimental and investigative skills. Schemes for Key Stage 4 and A level are in line with curriculum and syllabus requirements. Resources for science are adequate with an ongoing review of their use. Marking is regular for most classes but does not identify specific targets for pupils to achieve. Assessment is carried out routinely, using published tests, and an increasing use is being made of the data collected to evaluate the progress of pupils both individually and as a group. At Key Stage 3 National Curriculum teacher assessments are under-estimated. No present scheme of work contains sufficient emphasis on the development of scientific language. One laboratory has been equipped for using ICT with activities now being built into schemes of work.
101. The quality of science accommodation poses a serious problem for the department. Of the school's 10 laboratories 6 are of a very poor standard having a negative impact on attainment and teaching. This issue was identified in the previous inspection with only one laboratory having received partial refurbishment since then. Lessons take place in a variety of locations requiring transportation of chemicals and equipment. This leads to potentially hazardous situations and wastage of time by non-teaching personnel. The department's team of technicians make a significant contribution to the delivery of science in the school.
102. A lack of stability in staffing, the use of non specialist teachers, a department that is split across the site and the present timetable arrangements have had a significant negative impact on attainment and teaching within the department. A Year 7 class has three lessons of science in one day half its fortnightly timetabled time. In particular the lack of a consistent management presence on part of the site makes it difficult to monitor and improve the unsatisfactory teaching observed during the inspection. Teaching is not monitored, and opportunities for sharing expertise are not exploited. There is no development plan, although regular formal and informal meetings are arranged to discuss issues. A rigorous approach to establishing development priorities is not in place
103. The strengths of the department are the quality of teaching of the established staff in particular teacher subject knowledge, planning, the variety of teaching and learning

techniques and the use of a range of resources in lessons. The management team of the department has a clear view of the challenges that the department faces and are in the process of developing a series of strategies to move forward.

ART AND DESIGN

104. At Key Stage 3 pupils are working at and achieving levels at the national expectation. In 1999 and 2000 GCSE results were roughly in line with national levels of attainment, though the 2000 results were slightly higher overall. There are three art subjects taken at GCSE level: painting and drawing, textiles and 3D studies (ceramics); results in all of these areas improved from 1999 to 2000 and from work seen in Year 10 and 11 this trend seems set to continue. Results at A level were below average in 2000. Standards in Year 13 are lower than would be expected, but in Year 12 pupils' work is already improving on these levels. Pupils with special educational needs work beyond expectations at all stages.
105. Pupils at the beginning of Year 7 explore ideas in a variety of media and produce a quantity of work. Their evaluative skills are limited and most have little understanding of the context in which they work, although a few pupils recognise and comment upon the work of famous artists. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils work industriously, discussing work with enthusiasm and understanding, for example, in a Year 9 lesson each pupil was keen to talk about the way he or she had developed designs for 3D masks. Most pupils following GCSE courses make progress in lessons and over time and produce final pieces well supported by evidence of research and development. In Years 12 and 13 almost all pupils are able to work independently and to present work of an appropriate standard.
106. Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and teachers, are good and this promotes positive attitudes. Behaviour in class is generally very good. Pupils praise each other's work, take a pride in their own, and respect equipment and resources. At the end of a Key Stage 3 lesson using papier-mâché all pupils willingly clean surfaces, handling delicate work with care. They progress through the school working with increasing independence. Pupils from Year 11 and Year 13 work in preparation for mock exams, without direction, in the back of other classes.
107. Teaching is mostly satisfactory or above at all key stages with some very good and occasionally some unsatisfactory teaching; where this occurs it is largely due to poor behaviour management. Good teaching is characterised by a high level of knowledge and expertise shared skilfully through demonstrations, clear helpful expositions to lessons, and supportive prompts and assistance. This is clearly respected by pupils who watch, listen and respond with enthusiasm. For example, in a Year 9 lesson pupils revise or remodel original ideas as a result of an excellent demonstration on clay decoration. Progress is aided by satisfactory planning, with aims and objectives shared with pupils in lessons and for the completion of units of work. There are useful displays of key words in some rooms. Assessment criteria are also displayed and, on the whole, used regularly and consistently. In most lessons behaviour management is a particular strength with many examples of subtle and non-threatening strategies and a confident use of humour and redirection. Most lessons are well paced and pupils are challenged at levels appropriate to their current needs. Homework is effectively set and recorded in diaries, and the use of sketch books is being developed at all stages.
108. The department is well led and there are many examples of strong mutual support and teamwork amongst the staff. Their commitment includes working on individual projects

with pupils outside lesson time and organising visits to galleries to widen pupils' experience and knowledge.

109. Since the last inspection the time allocation has improved and statutory requirements are being met at Key Stage 3. Resources are still limited, with an adverse effect on teaching and learning. There is a particular need for a TV, video and digital camera; most of the books in classrooms belong to individual teachers; library provision for this subject is unsatisfactory. Training is needed so that the computers, recently given to the department by a friend of the school, can be used more effectively. The kiln, as noted in the last inspection, is insufficiently caged and still presents a potential safety risk. Accommodation is poor with inadequate natural light, but flamboyant displays that celebrate pupils' work and support their learning create exciting and pleasing environments. Areas such as the corridors at the front of the school would benefit from this attention.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

110. At the end of Key Stage 3 attainment is below national expectations and at times below pupils' abilities. In some areas, achievement is satisfactory but often there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to design for a real purpose. Too often the outcome is already prescribed and therefore pupils' designing skills are limited to shaping or to adding a surface embellishment. Where there is evidence of designing, it is often not well presented or communicated. On some occasions, for example when making a small gift to be sold in a shop, pupils are given insufficient support and guidance. This particularly affects the achievement of the low ability groups who would benefit from a more structured approach. Pupils in Year 7 learning basic skills in resistant materials, textiles and in food technology enjoyed their work and made good progress. Unfortunately for some pupils it could be more than a year before they are presented with an opportunity to use these skills in more challenging design and make tasks. There is little connection between the various units of work at this key stage. This seriously affects continuity and progression. Some aspects of the programmes of study are not being fully covered either because of a lack of the appropriate resources or the lack of suitably qualified teachers. The management of the Key Stage 3 curriculum should be reviewed to meet the needs of the new national curriculum orders, including its assessment, and to provide pupils with a more holistic experience. End of Key Stage 3 teacher assessment in 2000 was higher than the pupils' achievements warranted.

111. At Key Stage 4 attainment is broadly in line with and sometimes above national expectations for those pupils following long courses in design and technology. However when the results for short courses are included, the overall attainment for design and technology is below the school and national averages. Attainment in the short course in graphic products was particularly weak. At present the school does not comply with the National Curriculum requirements. Approximately half of the pupils in Key Stage 4 do not follow the programmes of study for design and technology. Year 10 and Year 11 pupils follow a core course that includes one period of 'technology' in which they work with resistant materials or graphics. There is no rigour to this course and no sense of achievement by the pupils. In all these lessons there is little evidence of work appropriate to design and technology and no evidence of the skills and knowledge required in the programmes of study being taught. In contrast a small Year 10 GCSE course in electronic products had completed an alarm activated by a reed switch. Some practical work is of a very high standard as is work from another parallel group. In food technology pupils prepare to make a vegetarian meal and they mostly work with interest and with a positive attitude.

112. In the majority of lessons at both key stages teaching is at least satisfactory and often good. However the timetable constraints and the need to use non-specialist teachers lead to some unsatisfactory teaching. Most teachers plan their lessons well and the management of pupils is good. In the best lessons a range of teaching strategies is used to motivate and encourage pupils. In these lessons pupils work with enthusiasm and are usually well behaved. Relationships between pupils and staff are good. In the minority of lessons the pace of work is slow and insufficiently challenging. This is most often the case at key stage 4 in the core element where achievement is limited and behaviour and concentration unsatisfactory.
113. Throughout the department the teaching of presentation skills, including sketching is not given sufficient emphasis. Pupils are encouraged in many lessons to work independently. In a year 7 food technology lesson pupils make a pasta salad and in a textiles lesson they make a cushion. In both lessons they work with interest and are able to use tools and equipment with confidence. There is little evidence of pupils using ICT to enhance learning or to aid their presentations. The use of CAD and CAM is very limited mainly due to the lack of equipment. A unit of work focusing on control technology has recently been introduced.
114. Assessment is not used effectively to inform planning or to guide pupils' progress. Often pupils do not know why they achieved a particular grade or how to improve the standard of their work. Assessment is not always linked to the aims and objectives of individual units of work at Key Stage 3.
115. The accommodation for design and technology is poor and shows signs of neglect. The workshops are shabby and the food technology room is poorly designed with cookers badly sited. Facilities for electronics and graphic products are inadequate. Capitation is below the national average making it difficult to fund new equipment or to replace tools. The design and technology accommodation is in need of refurbishment to provide suitable environments for the effective teaching of design and technology. Most staff work hard to keep these rooms up to an acceptable standard. Display is limited and rarely used to celebrate pupils' successes or to motivate them.
116. Dust levels are unacceptably high in most workshops because of ineffective extraction on disc sanders. Two bandsaws require key switches to prevent them being switched on by pupils. The materials preparation area containing the circular saw and planer should not be left open when not in use. The area between the three workshops is untidy and contains equipment that should not be left unattended.
117. There has been no progress since the last inspection report in 1995. Standards have declined in design and technology. Issues of continuity and progression and display raised in the last report have not been successfully addressed. There are issues relating to the management of the department that need urgent attention. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory

GEOGRAPHY

118. Geography has improved considerably since the last inspection. Attainment at Key Stage 3 is close to national expectations and standards are rising. Pupils of all abilities have an understanding of a range of geographical concepts and their vocabulary and knowledge are good. For example, Year 9 pupils can describe the effects of the Kobe earthquake and explain the processes of plate tectonics with confidence.

119. Standards at Key Stage 4 have improved steadily over the last three years. Attainment is close to the national average and comparable with schools of a similar type. In their local urban study, pupils are able to ask geographical questions and present evidence on a variety of maps and diagrams.
120. Post 16 geography is a strength of the school, with 92% of pupils achieving grades A-C this year. Students use a range of graphical and statistical methods to analyse information and are able to present their findings with confidence.
121. The majority of teaching is good or better. Both pupils and teachers clearly enjoy the subject. Much of the teaching is relevant and matched to the needs of the pupils. When learning about the issues of urban deprivation, Year 10 pupils read and discuss newspaper articles about the recent murder in Peckham and the introduction of a youth curfew. They also listen to recordings of “pop” songs to stimulate empathy and understanding of the impact of social change. Teachers expect all pupils to work hard and lessons provide suitable challenge for all abilities. The quality of both written and map work has significantly improved since the last inspection. For example, Year 8 pupils have produced extended writing based on their fieldtrip to The Channel Tunnel.
122. The scheme of work at Key Stage 3 is good, offering a range of strategies to match the varied needs of the pupils, including writing frames and different versions of worksheets. Fieldwork is a strength, with well planned activities at all key stages. Some opportunities for the use of information and communication technology are provided, for example the use of the Internet for research and the graphing of world data. This is an area identified for further development. The department has produced excellent study guides at Key Stage 4 and post 16. The reduction of time in Year 8 causes a lack of continuity and makes organising and monitoring pupil work more difficult.
123. The department has recently moved to two specialist classrooms and while these are not of the highest standard, the teachers have made the most of this accommodation, with good displays of work and well-organised resources. However, there is still a significant amount of teaching in non-specialist rooms, requiring teachers to carry all resources with them, often resulting in lateness.
124. This is a well-led department and the specialist teachers work together as a cohesive team, eager to share good practice and provide support for one another. For example, a code of conduct has been jointly created to target the behaviour management of certain Year 9 classes. Formal procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and assessment remain under-developed however. For example, the excellent pupil action-planning forms are not used consistently and the quality of marking varies across the department. Some degree of tension exists between belonging to the humanities faculty and being an autonomous department.

HISTORY

125. Attainment at A level is well below the national average, but the history department has investigated and is addressing the problems. GCSE results are below national average for A* - C, although the 1999 results almost reached national average. The percentage of entrants graded at A-G is near to the national average. Results are therefore similar to those at the last inspection at GCSE, but have declined at A level.

126. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is below the national expectation, whereas at the last inspection it was above. Pupils can select information relevant to an argument and identify different kinds of causes, but they do not express links between historical causes. They report information from historical sources, but do not evaluate sources in their context, then compare and synthesise information from them to draw historical conclusions. Lower ability pupils often copy rather than drawing their own conclusions. There is a high level of incomplete work in books across the ability range. Pupils value presentation above quality of thinking.
127. No Year 11 classes could be observed during the inspection. Work seen on Chatham Dockyard, at national expectation, shows ability to demonstrate reasons for its position, growth and decline, with a range of levels of relevant supporting evidence. Year 10 work shows that pupils are developing their skills in determining causes of circumstances and events, but their work on analysis and use of historical sources is still below national expectation.
128. At A level the work of the small group of Year 13 students covers most of the range of expected grades. Their essays show that the majority of them can make and support valid points, but they show low levels of awareness of the range of historical interpretations. Their notes are usually well organised, and the oral responses of about half of the group demonstrate a good level of basic recall.
129. Teaching was satisfactory in most lessons seen, as at the time of the last inspection, but there are now fewer good lessons. In almost all lessons, teachers have good relationships with pupils. At Key Stages 3 and 4, specialist teachers have good knowledge of content of the study units. They give clear instructions to pupils, allowing them to know the objective of the lesson and the means by which it is to be achieved. They show how the lesson contributes to knowledge and understanding of the topic being studied. Teachers ask probing oral questions drawing out a good range of ideas and challenging facile perceptions. They develop historical language to enable pupils to understand and communicate. In weaker lessons there are errors in teachers' subject knowledge, especially in the areas of the historical process as defined in the national curriculum. Although resources are at suitable levels for most pupils in the majority of lessons, the most able pupils are insufficiently directed into higher levels of thinking. Less able pupils are helped by being given extra guidelines, but too often are allowed merely to copy them out.
130. Pupils are usually attentive and involved, especially in discussion. When set an interesting problem, for example choosing the site of a castle, they work well in co-operation with each other and concentrate on finding the best possible answer. When on the other hand the work set is too undemanding, poorly structured or consists of gathering information with no perceived purpose, some pupils are inattentive and disruptive.
131. All pupils' work is marked up to date, using a system of grades and marks that allows pupils to know the standard of their work. Whereas there is a high level of comment on work, only a few teachers indicate the means of raising standards in terms of history.
132. Teaching at A level is very supportive, dealing with the reasons for low standards in the past, thus enhancing ability to know and argue about relevant issues. The department is developing source evaluation skills in response to the new A level, but Year 12 students are having to improve on initially low levels of perception carried over from GCSE.

133. The Key Stage 3 curriculum is still in transition to enable it to meet the needs of Curriculum 2000. At present there is unsatisfactory planning for development of skills and understanding over the key stages, especially extended argument and source evaluation skills. The department has been unable to continue its previous practice using information and communication technology to teach history, as classes have almost no access to suitable equipment. History makes a good contribution to cultural experience through a variety of visits to historic sites and museums, but a disproportionately low proportion of time is devoted to the only non-European unit of work at Key Stage 3. The department teaches literacy through the development of subject-specific vocabulary, but has a narrow range of strategies for teaching extended historical argument.
134. Although the main history classrooms are now together, standards are adversely affected by poor punctuality to lessons when non-specialist teachers have to teach in rooms all across the school. There are too few textbooks to provide one for every pupil, with a particular lack of appropriate materials to support the new A level course. The department has worked hard to provide a range of materials to match the abilities of the range of pupils, but they are not being used effectively to develop historical thinking at all levels or to extend the most able.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

135. Attainment in information and communication technology at Key Stage 3 is significantly below national expectations. Although most pupils are able to use a word processor, database and spreadsheet competently, the emphasis is on the acquisition of skills more appropriate to Key Stage 2. Pupils have few opportunities to apply these skills and to consider purpose or audience. They show little initiative and are not encouraged to evaluate or make judgements about their use of ICT.
136. At Key Stage 4 attainment is below national expectations. Approximately half of the pupils are entered for short course GCSE, where results are broadly comparable to schools of a similar type. This achievement is to be commended, as pupils enter the key stage with low levels of ICT capability. Those not entered for GCSE follow the RSA CLAIT course, ensuring that the majority of pupils receive some form of certification in ICT.
137. Standards at A level have declined since 1998, with only 7% of pupils achieving grades A-C this year. With such limited teaching time for ICT in the lower school, a course of this nature is not appropriate to the needs of most students.
138. The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory overall and satisfactory at best, as lessons stress skills at the expense of knowledge and understanding. For example, when Year 7 pupils create a publication to advertise the sale of a house, no consideration is given to audience or purpose. While Year 10 pupils can follow instructions to perform simple and complex searches in a database, they are offered no opportunities to show initiative or creativity by creating their own database. Pupils are eager to learn and acquire new skills with ease, but are not taught to review or evaluate their use of ICT.
139. The school is not meeting statutory requirements at Key Stage 3. Pupils are taught ICT as part of a "carousel" arrangement within the technology faculty. This means that pupils only receive six weeks taught ICT in each year. This is insufficient to enable the National Curriculum to be delivered, especially as few opportunities are provided for pupils to apply their ICT skills in other subjects. The procedure for assessment at the

end of Key Stage 3 is a weakness. This does not take into account any work done by other subjects and the school have inaccurately judged all pupils to be at the same standard, regardless of ability. At Key Stage 4, the school is only able to offer short course GCSE by teaching some lessons outside the normal school day. The curriculum offered to the remaining pupils does not fully meet National Curriculum requirements.

140. The strategic development of ICT is a weakness in that the emphasis is on the provision of equipment rather than on how ICT might raise standards. Thus improvement since the last inspection has been poor. All teachers in the school have undertaken New Opportunities Fund training for the use of ICT to support teaching and learning. This has yet to have an impact and the ICT department plays little part in encouraging or co-ordinating the development of ICT in other subjects. Several non-specialist teachers teach ICT, yet there are no formal procedures for monitoring standards of teaching or assessment.
141. The facilities for the teaching and learning of ICT have improved significantly since the last inspection, although access to the wider curriculum is limited due to the number of discrete ICT lessons. The ratio of pupils to computers is in line with the national average and the range of software applications is good. The Internet is accessible on the network, although its use is restricted, despite the excellent policy of acceptable Internet use. Given the frequency of teacher demonstrations, a large screen monitor or projector would significantly improve class teaching.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

142. Teacher judgements of attainment at age 14 in 2000 were in line with national expectations, and broadly very similar to attainment in previous years. Attainment at age 16 in French was in line with national averages. Significantly more pupils gained an A*-C grade at GCSE in 2000 than in previous years. In German, attainment at age 16 was a little above the national average, but the number of pupils taking GCSE and achieving an A*-C grade has decreased since 1998. More pupils will come forward to take GCSE German in future. In 2000, girls outperformed boys in French by a margin of approximately 16%, which is greater than is typical nationally. Three times as many girls as boys gained an A*-C grade in German. At age 18 the percentage of students entered who gained an A-E grade at A level in French was in line with national averages. Only one student gained better than a C. Only girls were entered for A level in French.
143. Attainment by younger pupils in the lessons observed, although never above national expectations, generally met those expectations. Most pupils were able to imitate the pronunciation of the teacher, to pick out familiar details from a recorded dialogue and copy single words or short phrases accurately, but some needed much support and the retention of previously learned language was often poor. There was little evidence of pupils being able to take part in short conversations, read short paragraphs with understanding, or write familiar words and phrases accurately from memory. Older pupils' attainment in lessons was often below expectations. A significant proportion of pupils have not developed the skill to say sentences out loud about familiar topics, and their writing needs support. There is little evidence of mastery of basic verb structures. Exercise books showed that the range and quantity of pupils' writing is too small to enable them to develop their skills in line with their ability.

144. Pupils with special educational needs receive regular support from learning support assistants who have satisfactory foreign language skills themselves and work assiduously with identified pupils. They make satisfactory progress because of this support, but there is too little other differentiation in teachers' planning to address their individual learning needs.
145. Sixth form students in their first term still have basic deficiencies in their grammatical knowledge. In the second year they have gained more fluency and confidence in dealing with longer, more demanding texts, but most still lack confidence and accuracy in speaking and writing independently.
146. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall at Key Stage 3. Teachers usually have precise objectives that they explain to the pupils, and they present new language clearly, using appropriate visual aids. In the best lessons brisk pace and energy in eliciting their responses challenge pupils well. They are given clear objectives to strive for, for example how many details they should try to pick out of a recording about daily routines, or that they should try to beat previous best scores during a computer game. However, teachers often use only a limited range of practice activities to help pupils imitate and then produce independently new words and phrases. Although a variety of methods is sometimes used, for example flashcards and the overhead projector, language is often repeated without any increase in challenge during the lesson. Pupils are required too rarely to respond with more than a one word answer. They are almost never helped to use new words and phrases without the support of the teacher or of a written prompt. In the quarter of lessons where teaching was unsatisfactory, there was weak planning or classroom management, tasks were not well explained or the use made of ICT was unhelpful to language learning.
147. The quality of teaching is better in Key Stage 4, where it was nearly always at least satisfactory and good or very good in half the lessons observed. Some teachers have high expectations, even of lower attaining pupils, and boost pupils' confidence by affirming and encouraging their contributions in the foreign language. In the lesson where teaching was unsatisfactory the too brief sequence of practice activities did not help pupils to understand a grammatical point that needed much more detailed presentation and practice.
148. In sixth form lessons there was a contrast between the teaching styles observed in German and French. In the former, students in their first term were expected to deal already with lengthy, challenging texts, for example about asylum seekers. In French, a more focused series of structured exercises was used to address students' grammatical uncertainties. The quality of teaching using the first approach was still satisfactory, but the second had more obvious, rapid, beneficial effect on students' skills in the first year of A level study.
149. The quality of pupils' learning is satisfactory or better in three-quarters of lessons in both Key Stages 3 and 4. Pupils concentrate well. They are usually keen to respond to the teacher by saying words and phrases aloud, and accept requests for better efforts at pronunciation with good humour. If asked to work with a partner they do so sensibly and remain on task, if this is well prepared. In ICT based lessons in particular pupils sustain their efforts for considerable periods using a variety of games, for example about pastimes or clock times. The occasions on which they are challenged to deduce for themselves simple grammatical rules such as the uses of 'du' and 'de la' are helpful to them. The skills of using simple reference materials, such as a textbook glossary are underdeveloped.

150. During the first year of the school's status as a Language College the head of department was hindered in developing the subject by uncertainties about the allocation and availability of the associated funding. This situation has improved and the management of the department's day to day delivery of modern foreign languages is satisfactory. Assessment of pupils' progress is more consistent than at the last inspection as a result of the regular use of end of unit tests related to National Curriculum levels. These levels are insufficiently used, however, in assessing classwork to inform future planning.
151. Textbooks for use in class are good, but the fact that pupils do not have a book of their own to take home restricts somewhat the range of homework available. The re-organisation and refurbishment of classrooms have created a pleasant languages area. The well designed and equipped ICT room is a valuable resource that will, with imaginative use, continue to motivate pupils and promote good standards.
152. As a Language College, the school has established effective links with its family of primary schools to promote and co-ordinate the learning of French in them. The simple but clear scheme of work agreed provides a good foundation for language learning in the secondary school. Opportunities to study Punjabi up to GCSE and A-level as an extra-curricular activity are valued and well used.
153. Other Language College targets remain challenging. As yet, action planning is insufficiently detailed to achieve the required increase in take up of languages for GCSE, the necessary improvement in the performance of boys or the impact of Language College status across the whole curriculum, for example through the establishment of curriculum projects with schools in other countries.

MUSIC

154. By the end of Year 9, the standard achieved by the majority of pupils is at or just below the national expectation. Pupils' achievement can be described as ranging from satisfactory for the majority of pupils to very good for a few. For example, the majority of pupils are able to read basic musical notation and can recognise stylistic features of the structure of pop music. At Key Stage 4 only a small cohort of pupils has followed the course offered. In 2000, 7 pupils were entered for the GCSE examination with 71% gaining A* to C grades which is almost at the national average. However, there has been a steady rise in pupils gaining these grades since 1997 when attainment was at its lowest and they are now almost at the level achieved at the last inspection. There are 8 pupils in Year 11 and 19 in Year 10 and expectations for these pupils to achieve excellent grades, particularly in year 10, are very high. Pupils are able to compose music such as pop ballads with great effect and an understanding of the stylistic features and instrumental techniques associated with this and some outstanding composition work was observed. It is interesting to note that boys tend to achieve better results than girls at this level and the number of girls following the course is small compared with the boys. This trend has not altered since 1998. Attainment at A level is difficult to assess as there were no entries in 2000 and the next entries will be in 2001. There are three pupils presently following the course and the attainment can be described as ranging from poor to good. Pupils demonstrated that they can recognise stylistic features of music well and have reasonable to good practical musicianship skills.
155. The last inspection report commented upon the limited amount of curriculum time being allocated to music in Years 8 and 9. This has been addressed and they now receive 5% curriculum time allocation. However, unsatisfactory issues remain, for example, pupils in

these year groups receive three lessons over two weeks, two lessons taught by one specialist music teacher in a music room and the third being taught by a specialist music in a drama room. As well as this, it is not uncommon for a group to receive lessons on three consecutive days which affects continuity and progression as they then do not receive another lesson for 11 days. It is also not uncommon for pupils to receive two of the three lessons on one day which does not allow pupils time to reflect or research issued arising from the lesson. Vocal work was also identified as an area requiring more study. This has been addressed in that the Schemes of Work outline where singing should occur but singing was only observed in one lesson in Year 8 and it was clear from pupils' efforts that this was not a regular activity. Pupils continue to be motivated to do practical work as observed in Year 7 to 9 inclusive. Pupils work sensibly on electronic keyboards and were able to play simple melodies and produce arpeggio bass accompaniments against a rhythmic background. There are well planned schemes of work but teacher planning is inconsistent and differentiation of tasks and pupil target setting is limited and thus some pupils are underachieving, particularly those with special educational needs (SEN), low abilities or more able pupils.

156. Teaching in the music department ranges from unsatisfactory to satisfactory in 55% of all lessons observed and good to excellent in 45% of these. All teachers of music are well qualified and have an excellent command of the subject. Some very enjoyable and stimulating lessons were observed. The best lessons include a variety of teaching strategies and tasks that are differentiated as in an A level lesson where a variety of tasks were used to teach cadential progressions with individual targets being set for pupils. Similarly, a Year 9 lesson employed four contrasting pieces of music in a listening exercise to explain the 32 bar song structure. Lessons that are satisfactory tended not to differentiate or set appropriate pupil targets. Pupils with SEN and with low abilities are not given and extra support or encouragement and thus progress in learning ranged from unsatisfactory for many pupils to very good for few. There is a good balance between whole class activities and group work though group work is often limited to paired work on the keyboards. Pupils have limited access to the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in music other than the use of keyboards though this is often in an uncreative manner and the potential for using keyboards as a music technology tool is not exploited. Pupils' behaviour in the classroom ranged from satisfactory to excellent and teachers are firm and fair and command respect from pupils which results in satisfactory progress being made and a productive working atmosphere being maintained.
157. There are many strengths in the department such as the teachers' qualifications and their enthusiasm for the subject. Schemes of work are comprehensive and progressive, for example, module 1 develops skills learned in the primary school and module 6 (Year 7) draws together everything studied in Year 7. However, some aspects of the National Curriculum are not being met fully, particularly with regard to the inclusion of ICT and music of the British Isles and the Western Classical Tradition. Key skills (other than ICT) are developed well, particularly language development (not writing), problem solving skills and group work. Pupils are encouraged to consider the plight of the planet though appropriate teaching modules such as 'Animals under Threat'. There is a large number of visiting instrumental staff though only a small number of pupils take advantage of these. Some excellent teaching by visiting instrumental staff was seen. There is a thriving extra-curricular ethos in the department. Recently pupils were involved in the production of 'Animal Farm' and they are working towards a production of 'A little shop of horrors'.
158. The main weaknesses of the department are that of assessment, accommodation and resourcing. Assessment was raised in the last inspection report as an issue and other

than guidance in the faculty handbook, which is not followed, there is little evidence of assessing, marking or recording pupil work taking place. Accommodation is inadequate and resources are in need of replacement or repair and all pupils have limited access to ICT equipment. However, despite these weaknesses, the department is developing well after a period of inadequate staffing that has now been resolved.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION(PE)

159. At Key Stage 3, pupils are generally attaining in line with national expectations. In relation to their abilities they are achieving higher in the majority of lessons. At Key Stage 4 attainment is either in line with or just below national expectations. The proportion of pupils achieving A*-C grades at GCSE is below national averages but most pupils achieve results in keeping with their ability. It is a similar picture at A level.
160. At Key Stage 3, in rugby and netball the pupils can perform the basic skills, which they are developing in the competitive game. Most understand the positions and the relevant rules. In basketball, the boys transfer well their dribbling and shooting skills into a 5-a-side game; the girls shoot well but have more difficulty in travelling with the ball. In a Year 8 gymnastics lesson, based on symmetrical and asymmetrical movements and balances, many pupils can create sequences which show imagination and good body management. In other gymnastics and trampoline lessons the standards are more varied with pupils still developing body management skills. In dance both boys and girls plan dance phrases that are rhythmical and show the characteristics of the different styles of dance e.g. street dancing, African dance. However, standards of performance are adversely affected by the restricted space in the dance studio. At Key Stage 4 in most lessons, pupils build on their skills and knowledge. For example, in a health related fitness lesson the majority of pupils are able to plan an individual fitness programme, which they carry out independently. However, in volleyball and rugby many pupils are still reacting to the situations within the game rather than anticipating and controlling the play. The analysis skills of A level students are good.
161. Across all key stages pupils' learning, including that of pupils with special educational needs, is at least satisfactory and often good. Pupils are acquiring, consolidating and refining their knowledge and skills. In some lessons non-participants are constructively involved, by umpiring, refereeing or scoring, but too frequently they merely accompany the group to the lesson or at best observe. In these lessons their progress is unsatisfactory. The support teacher when available makes a very effective contribution to pupils' learning.
162. The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory in all lessons at Key Stage 4 and good at Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form. Occasionally, the task is not well matched to the pupils' ability. Lessons are well organised, most have a good pace and contain an appropriate level of physical activity. Teachers usually adapt the groups or the tasks to enable all pupils to succeed. They make good use of assessment during the lesson, giving feedback to help the pupils improve their skills. A variety of teaching approaches is used within some lessons but in games lessons, in particular, pupils have too few opportunities to take the initiative, develop their own ideas or evaluate their own work or that of others. Learning objectives are identified for each lesson and are usually shared with pupils. In most lessons these identify specific skills or knowledge but make little reference to the development of other aspects of pupils' abilities such as selecting skills, tactics or ideas, evaluating and improving performance or working with others.

163. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good and often very good, particularly at Key Stage 3. Most pupils participate willingly, concentrate and try hard to improve, even when not under the direct supervision of the teacher. Their relationship with the teachers is good, as is their behaviour in specialist environments and using specialist equipment. For example, in gymnastics, dance and trampoline lessons, pupils are able to handle equipment and space sensibly and safely. Pupils work well together in both co-operative and competitive situations, for example, in a Year 9 dance lesson creating group sequences.
164. A range of extra-curricular activities, internal and external competitions, supports the curriculum. Both individuals and teams have been successful at local and district levels.
165. There is sound management of the subject. The staff work well together as a team and show a strong commitment to their work despite several teachers having additional whole school responsibilities. A departmental handbook containing a number of departmental policies offers guidance and support to teachers in the delivery of the subject. Informal monitoring of the curriculum is effective but there is insufficient formal monitoring of teaching and learning to ensure greater consistence of practice. There have been some improvements since the last inspection. Most of the issues over which the department has control have been addressed. For example, the balance of time for gymnastics at Key Stage 3; the long and medium term planning for Key Stage 3; a review of the Key Stage 4 curriculum to increase participation. A new assessment, recording and reporting policy has been introduced to meet requirements of the new National Curriculum; however, it makes insufficient reference to the development of pupils' evaluative skills.
166. In other areas there has been no improvement. With regard to the accommodation for PE, the situation has not changed since the last inspection. The facilities for PE are potentially good but poor maintenance, poor surfacing in the sports hall and netball courts, cramped changing rooms, no showers and unserviceable toilets, particularly for the boys, adversely affect standards, as does the time allocation for core PE at Key Stage 4, which is minimal.

BUSINESS STUDIES

167. All lessons observed and students interviewed were in the sixth form.
168. Standards of attainment have been consistently satisfactory for the last three years and are in line with national expectations for students following General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) courses at Intermediate and Advanced levels. Standards of present Year 13 students on the GNVQ Advanced course are good and their work shows a consistent improvement throughout the fourteen months of their study. Year 12 Advanced students have also made a good start and are achieving well. However, there is evidence that many one-year GNVQ Intermediate students will not reach the level expected because of poor attendance, lateness and failure to meet deadlines for handing in work. Standards of those who seem committed to the course are satisfactory.
169. The quality of learning is variable but in many lessons it is good. Students often take a reflective approach and there is some very effective independent learning. Year 13 students are well motivated, are keen to engage in group discussion and build well upon effective assessment of their work, benefiting greatly from their GNVQ learning style. Where learning is less effective it is because poor motivation and attendance lead to a

lack of urgency and lack of self-responsibility or because students find it difficult to follow expository teaching which does not regularly check their understanding. Pupils with learning difficulties or with English as an additional language are treated with sensitivity and effective arrangements are made to support their learning. For example, a Year 12 student with visual impairment was given an expanded photocopy of the group case study as a matter of course and without fuss.

170. The quality of teaching is also variable, sometimes good or very good but, on one occasion each, satisfactory or unsatisfactory. All lessons followed very effective GNVQ long and medium term planning. Lessons are consistently well planned and most identify clear learning objectives. In the best lessons teachers work hard to support individual pupils and groups, make clear the need to meet deadlines and promote independent learning. These lessons have good pace and a good variety of approaches. Less good lessons need learning objectives to be sharper in order to identify clearly what students are expected to learn during the lesson and what progress they are expected to make. In one lesson the whole approach of the teacher was expository and there was no activity expected of students. The teacher also failed to understand the learning needs of the students who were confused and disengaged, apart from taking detailed notes of what was said.
171. The department is very well led and managed but it is difficult to co-ordinate the work of eight teachers – some who teach business studies for a very small part of their time. There is no formal monitoring of departmental teaching and the lack of initial training in business education of most of these teachers presents a particular challenge. There is a small amount of internal subject training but poor attendance on external subject courses. There is a need to rationalise the structure of teaching and to introduce another trained business education teacher, especially if subject provision is to be expanded. Accommodation and learning resources are unsatisfactory. There is no identified subject area, cramped and disparate teaching rooms, inadequate access to up to date information technology and poor availability of textbook and periodical resources.
172. The department has very good documentation and a very effective departmental handbook, set clearly within the structure required by GNVQ. Assessment of student assignments and other work is very good, clearly explained in detail to students and used very effectively to inform future planning.