

INSPECTION REPORT

EASTBROOK COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

Dagenham Essex

LEA area: Barking

Unique reference number: 101243

Headteacher: Mr Ken Drury

Reporting inspector: Ms J Allcorn
[1068]

Dates of inspection: 18th – 21st September 2000

Inspection number: 223997

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 to 18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J R Fryer
Date of previous inspection:	29 th March 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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J Allcorn (1068)	Registered inspector	Equal opportunities English as an Additional Language	The school's results and achievements How well are pupils or students taught How well the school is led and managed
P Dannheisser (1165)	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils How well does the school work in partnership with parents
L Booth (4028)	Team inspector	English	
R Perkins (6044)	Team inspector	Mathematics	
R Billingsley (5847)	Team inspector	Science	
G Dinan (30695)	Team inspector	Art	
B Munden (2495)	Team inspector	Design and Technology Sixth Form	
J Flinn (20649)	Team inspector	Geography	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupil or students
E Barthaud (30317)	Team inspector	History Religious Education	
D Riddle (12721)	Team inspector	Information and communications technology Vocational education	
D Hewett (1813)	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
R Evans (20692)	Team inspector	Music Modern foreign languages	
R Battey (2866)	Team inspector	Physical Education Special educational needs	
J Haslam (7084)	Team inspector		The school's results and achievements (support) How well are pupils or students taught (support) How well the school cares for pupils (support)

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Eastbrook School is a large mixed comprehensive school for 1562 boys and girls aged 11-18 years. Most of the pupils come from the surrounding housing estates, which include both private and public housing. Many of their parents attended the school. Traditionally young people in the area have not stayed into the sixth form, because jobs in local industry and the City are easily available. This pattern is now changing but the sixth form is still relatively small. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is in line with the national average, but families' earnings are not high. Very few pupils come from ethnic minority groups or have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is lower than the national average, although for the number of pupils with statements it is in line with the national average. Until the last two years the attainment of pupils on entry to the school has been considerably below average. It is now close to national averages although few pupils are at the highest levels.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a well run school where the performance of pupils at GCSE over the last few years has been better than expected when compared with their low standards on entry to the school. It is better than that of similar schools. Teaching is good overall. However difficulties in appointing suitably qualified staff in science and mathematics over the last two years have lowered standards in these subjects throughout the school. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons are good but there is a small number of difficult pupils who can be disruptive. The school has good practices to deal with these pupils' needs and very good procedures for supporting pupils with learning difficulties. Governors are well informed of the school's work and its priorities and are supportive. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The high proportion of pupils who gain 5 or more GCSE passes compared with similar schools.
- Particularly good standards in art and in physical education at Key Stage 3
- Good achievement in vocational subjects: GNVQ, accounts and office applications
- Good teaching in English, art, drama, music, physical education and modern foreign languages, in religious education at Key Stage 3 and in design and technology and history at Key Stage 4
- Good information and guidance for pupils on how well they are doing
- Very good provision and support for pupils with special educational needs
- A good range of subjects and teaching in the sixth form
- Good management of pupils' behaviour

What could be improved

- Standards in mathematics and science at Key Stage 4 and in information and communication technology at Key Stages 3 and 4
- Strategies to raise pupils' numeracy skills
- Pupils' performance in national tests at Key Stage 3
- Systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school
- Opportunities for pupils' spiritual development
- Involvement of parents and pupils in the work of the school

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in Spring 1996. Since that time results at GCSE have improved at a faster rate than nationally, although there is no significant improvement in results at Key Stage 3. In 1998 Ofsted identified the school as one of the top 50 improved schools at GCSE. Student numbers and standards have also improved in the sixth form. At the time of the last inspection there were six key issues for action. All have been addressed, although the school still does not meet in full statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship and for the teaching of religious education to 14-18 year olds. Attendance has been raised to the national average and the improvement in teaching has been good. For pupils with special educational needs good learning opportunities have

further improved to be very good. Appropriate actions have also been taken to improve marking and feedback to pupils, the achievement of boys, pupils' reading, writing and speaking skills and the range of teaching methods used by teachers. The success of these actions is satisfactory overall although there is still room for improvement. Where the school has not made sufficient progress is in monitoring and evaluating the impact of these actions. There is as yet no whole school numeracy policy. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

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
	1997	1998	1999	1999
GCSE examinations	D	C	D	B
A-levels/AS-levels	E	D	E	

Key	
Well above average	A
Above average	B
Average	C
Below average	D
Well below average	E

Key Stage 3 National Curriculum test results in 1999 were well below national averages in all three subjects (English, mathematics and science) and overall well below those for similar schools. Given their low attainment on entry to the school pupils achieved satisfactorily. The rate of improvement in results over the last three years has been in line with that nationally. Provisional results for summer 2000 show an improvement on 1999 although still below national averages.

At GCSE in 1999, despite overall results being below those nationally, pupils achieved well in relation to their previous low performance at Key Stage 3. The proportion of pupils gaining 5 or more GCSE passes was in line with that nationally, and although the proportion gaining 5 or more A*-C passes, the highest grades, was well below the national figure it was in line with that for similar schools. Pupils did best in English, accounts, office applications, art and physical education. They did worst in mathematics, science, history and modern foreign languages. Improvement over the last three years has been greater than that nationally with preliminary figures for 2000 indicating better performance than in 1999.

A-level results, although well below national averages, are in line with students' performance at GCSE. In 1999 particularly good results were obtained in accounts and computing.

Overall standards observed during the inspection were below average by the end of Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. This is because standards in mathematics, science and information and communication technology are below average. Attainment in English is average. Standards are above average in art in both key stages and at Key Stage 3 in physical education. Pupils are achieving satisfactorily and often better in relation to their below average standards on entry to the school. Sixth formers are making good progress, achieving at expected levels in the courses they are taking. Fourteen to eighteen year olds do well in vocational subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are happy and apply themselves well to their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in the classroom is good and is generally satisfactory around the school. The narrow corridors cause some jostling, although unpleasantness is rare. The school addresses any bullying seriously when it is brought to their attention.
Personal development and relationships	Sound. Pupils generally get on well with each other. However opportunities for pupils below the sixth form to undertake responsibilities or express their views are limited.
Attendance	In line with that nationally. The school has good systems in place to ensure this. There is some lateness to lessons.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is good overall. In English it is good and in mathematics satisfactory. Although unsatisfactory overall in science it ranged from very good to unsatisfactory. In other subjects teaching is particularly good in art, accounts and office applications, in religious education and physical education at Key Stage 3 and in design and technology and history at Key Stage 4. Support for pupils with special educational needs is well planned and very effective. Setting provides appropriately for pupils of different abilities, including the most able. Literacy skills are satisfactorily taught, both within English and across the curriculum. Not enough attention is given to the teaching of pupils' numeracy skills, in particular their mental calculation skills.

The strengths of the most effective teaching are well-planned lessons with a range of activities to involve and interest pupils, and good classroom management. Pupils make progress in learning and achieve well when stimulated by the content of lessons and kept busy. Poor planning and management of pupils' behaviour are the main weaknesses in unsatisfactory lessons.

Ninety-two per cent of lessons observed during the inspection were satisfactory or better. Of these 44 per cent were good and 20 per cent very good or excellent. Eight per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory or poor.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall but with several statutory requirements missing. Older pupils can choose from a good range of vocational subjects, which are popular with pupils and in which they achieve well. The sixth form curriculum is particularly good as is the range of extra-curricular activities available.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good because of the good knowledge, understanding and management skills of the special educational needs co-ordinator. Pupils receive good support in lessons.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school has few pupils with English as an additional language. Appropriate support is arranged. Opportunities are provided for pupils to take GCSE in their first language.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall satisfactory. Moral development is good. The school is very clear about what is right and wrong. Social development is satisfactory and is well developed by activities in physical education, music, English and art but with few opportunities in other curriculum areas. Opportunities for pupils' cultural development are good. Spiritual development is unsatisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils are well supported in knowing how well they are doing and when they have problems.

Statutory requirements are not met for 14-18 year olds in religious education and at Key Stage 4 for information and communication technology and modern foreign languages.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good – The headteacher provides clear support for staff, whilst having high expectations for their work. Responsibilities are well delegated to senior staff and heads of year and most heads of department lead their teams of teachers well. Communications although often informal are generally good. There is a shared commitment to raising pupils' achievement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The chairman of governors works hard for the school and governors undertake their responsibilities seriously. A number of statutory requirements are not met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has identified its priorities well. However a systematic programme to monitor the effectiveness of all its work, in particular teaching, is not in place.
The strategic use of resources	Good – except in information and communication technology where the number of computers per pupil is lower than that nationally. Financial administration is particularly good.

The school applies the principles of good value well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are happy • Children make good progress • The school's high expectations • Good range of activities outside lessons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response to concerns and phone calls • More consistency in the setting of homework • Involvement of parents in the work of the school • Harder work for the most able pupils

Very few parents (15) attended the parents' meeting and only one in 10 of parents responded to the questionnaire. Hence the views above reflect the comments of a comparatively small number of parents. Inspectors found communication with parents to be good and considered that the school responds appropriately to parents' concerns. However, one or two instances were brought to inspectors' attention where the level of communication was not as the parents or the school would have liked. Some procedures are to be reviewed. Homework was observed to be set consistently during the inspection and since the first week of term. Inspectors had insufficient evidence to make a judgement on consistency over a longer period of time because of the timing of the inspection. Work for more able pupils was generally hard enough, although a few instances were observed where extra, more challenging work could have been set. Good information is provided on their child's progress. Otherwise inspectors found evidence that agreed with parents' views.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

Key Stage 3

1. Performance in national tests at the end of Key Stage 3 (Year 9) in 1999 was well below the national average and that of similar schools. However, given their low standards on entry to the school this represents satisfactory achievement. Results have improved in summer 2000, but are still not high enough. In 1999 in English, mathematics and science performance was well below average although only below average in English and science when compared with similar schools. Girls do better than boys in English, with the difference being greater than that nationally. Results in the Key Stage 3 tests have fluctuated from year to year since the last inspection, but there has been no real improvement.
2. For other subjects the 1999 National Curriculum Key Stage 3 assessments were in line with national averages in design and technology and geography, but below in information and communication technology, history, and modern foreign languages.
3. First hand inspection evidence shows the standards of pupils currently in Year 9 are below average overall because pupils' attainment in the core subjects of mathematics and science and in information and communication technology is below average. Standards are average in English. For other subjects they are above national expectations in art and physical education and in line with national expectations in French, history, geography, music and religious education. They are just below national expectations in design and technology. The good achievement in art and physical education is directly related to the lively and varied teaching approaches used which involve pupils thoroughly in their learning and make good progress possible.
4. Despite their low standards Year 9 pupils have made satisfactory progress to reach their current levels of achievement given their below average attainment on entry to the school. Standards are better for Years 7 and 8 where attainment on entry to the school was close to national averages however, few pupils are reaching the highest levels of attainment for their age. Progress for these pupils is satisfactory. Achievement is unsatisfactory in science because of the school's difficulties in appointing staff, and in information and communication technology because not all the National Curriculum areas of study are sufficiently covered. Over the last two years standards in mathematics have suffered due to constant changes in staff – a concern expressed by parents.

Key Stage 4

5. Since the last inspection GCSE results have improved considerably and over the last few years the improvement has been at a greater rate than that nationally. In 1999 the overall performance was below that nationally but better than that for similar schools. Results were not as good as those in 1998 when performance was in line with that nationally. In particular results in mathematics and science at the higher A*-C grades were much better as they were close to national averages. Provisional results for 2000 indicate overall performance has improved and is close to that in 1998. The strength of the school at GCSE is the proportion of pupils who gain 5 or more GCSE passes which, in 1999, was equivalent to that nationally and well-above that for similar schools. Although the proportion of pupils gaining 5 or more GCSE grades at A*-C was well below the national average, it was in line with that for similar

schools and better than that expected given standards at the end of Key Stage 3. The improvement at GCSE is due to the high priority the school has given to raising the pupils' achievement. This has been through the monitoring of pupils' performance against individual targets throughout Years 10 and 11 and identifying and supporting those pupils who should be doing better.

6. In English, mathematics and science the proportions of pupils gaining A*-C grades in 1999 were below those nationally and were particularly low in science and mathematics. However compared with their results in Key Stage 3 tests two years previously pupils did better than expected in English, as expected in mathematics, but below expectation in science. The proportion of pupils gaining at least a pass in mathematics was considerably below that nationally reflecting difficulties within the department at this time. Results for 2000 indicate gradual improvements in mathematics and science. In other subjects, results in 1999 were in line with national averages for those gaining grades A*-C in office applications, accounts, physical education and information and communication technology, but below for other subjects. However A*-G grades are in line with national averages. Compared with their results in other subjects pupils did best in English, art, physical education, accounts and office applications. They did worst in history, French, mathematics and science.
7. Inspection findings show that overall standards for the oldest Key Stage 4 pupils are below those expected nationally. Nevertheless pupils are achieving in line with their abilities in most subjects and better in others such as art and music. In English pupils are on course for results at nationally expected levels at GCSE in summer 2001 which represents good progress. In mathematics and science attainment is still below that expected nationally. Pupils' progress in mathematics, although currently satisfactory, has suffered from past staffing difficulties. In science pupils are not achieving well enough due to shortages of staff and a lack of curriculum time. Attainment is above average in art and average in geography, music, history and physical education. Although below the level expected in modern foreign languages pupils are making good progress given their previous low attainments. In design and technology standards vary from average to below average across different aspects of the subject, but are below average overall. Low standards in information and communication technology are because of the lack of sufficient opportunities for all pupils to gain the required skills. The small proportion of pupils taking GCSE information and communication technology are making sound progress.

Sixth form

8. Performance at GCE Advanced Level (A-level) has steadily improved since the last inspection. Performance in 1999 was still well below that nationally, but improved this year. Students have achieved well given their below average attainment on entry to the sixth form. In most subjects entries are too small to make national comparisons and a small but significant number of pupils take subjects at other schools in the consortium¹. However in 1999 results in accounts and computing were excellent with most pupils gaining the highest A-B grades. In mathematics results ranged from A to fail, with only a 50 percent pass rate.
9. Results from General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQ) courses are good. In 1999 business studies students all gained an accreditation with most achieving a merit. All pupils obtained passes in health and social care. Results are above national averages.

¹ The consortium includes Eastbrook School and other schools locally. They work together to ensure that all sixth form students can choose from a wider range of courses than any one school can offer,

10. The standards of work seen for those students in their final year of A-level study are for most pupils at expected levels for the courses being taken. Students make good progress and are on course to do well. This reflects good subject knowledge and teaching by staff and positive attitudes towards learning by students. Standards are good in art. Standards are not as good as they could be in information and communication technology.

Literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology

11. Pupils' literacy skills are just in line with expected levels because work based on the National Literacy Strategy is having a positive impact in English lessons. In religious education and physical education well-planned opportunities enable pupils to develop a variety of speaking and listening skills. In these subjects pupils show confidence in answering questions and are able to do so clearly. In general pupils listen well. Reading skills are sound but even the most able pupils sometimes read aloud with a lack of expression and fluency. Much clear and accurate writing is to be found in all subjects, but only in some are pupils provided with regular opportunities to improve the quality of their work through drafting and redrafting. The development of pupils' literacy and oracy skills was an area for improvement at the time of the last inspection. A number of initiatives have been put in place, in particular a requirement for departments to focus on the use of appropriate technical language. This has been well developed in design and technology and in art although pupils in science still make a number of basic mistakes.
12. Pupils' numeracy skills are below average. In mathematics too few opportunities are presented for pupils to improve their mental calculation skills. The quick recall of times tables is not secure even for some of the brightest Key Stage 3 pupils. Across the curriculum the lack of a whole school numeracy policy affects adversely the range of opportunities and awareness of staff in promoting and improving pupils' numeracy skills. In art many good examples of the use of numeracy skills were seen such as scale in a Year 11 lesson. However many older pupils make errors in their mental, oral and written calculations. For example, in a Year 11 science lesson pupils had difficulties in calculating the number of neutrons from atomic mass.

Performance of different groups of pupils

13. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. They are not excluded from public examinations and do well when they are entered. In 1999 statemented pupils did particularly well. This is due to the good support provided for these pupils and the excellent management of this by the special educational needs co-ordinator. The most able pupils make satisfactory progress particularly where there is setting by ability and extension activities provided.
14. Boys do less well than girls up to the age of sixteen years as is the pattern nationally. In 1999, although the gap was wider than that nationally in Key Stage 3 tests, it was equal to it at GCSE. Here the performance of girls and boys varied across the different GCSE subjects. Boys did better than girls in mathematics and science, against the national trend, but less well in English, design and technology and vocational subjects such as accounts and office practice. The better performance of boys at Key Stage 4 reflects the work of the school in identifying and addressing pupils' underachievement at this key stage. Boys do well in the sixth form where pressure from other students 'not to be a boffin' no longer exists. After the last inspection a working party was set up to address the underachievement of boys. The outcome was a useful document that highlighted ways to improve the attitudes and standards of boys. For example, in English and art, where teaching approaches and content have been developed to interest and motivate boys, the difference between

girls and boys results is narrowing. However the school is not sufficiently monitoring variations in girls' and boys' performance to improve further the performance of both girls and boys.

Summary

15. Whole school targets for GCSE results were achieved in 1999 and 2000 and at A-level in 1999. Key Stage 3 targets have not been reached by a significant margin. The school has ambitious targets overall, but does not yet ensure they reflect sufficiently the previous attainment of the year group. Information on previous performance in national tests at Key Stage 2 is not yet used well enough to set Key Stage 3 targets.
16. The school recognises that it needs to improve standards in the core subjects at Key Stage 3, especially with the attainment of current Year 7 and Year 8 pupils being close to the national average on entry to the school. Currently the monitoring and evaluation of pupils' progress at Key Stage 3 does not have the same rigour that it does at Key Stage 4, especially in identifying individual pupil's targets and where there is underachievement. The school has prioritised this as an area for development.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

17. Pupils enjoy coming to school. Pupils state that they like their teachers and feel that if they have any problems the staff will help them sort these out.
18. Overall attendance figures have improved since the last inspection and are now broadly in line with the national average. This is in spite of the average attendance levels of sixteen-year-olds in their last year of compulsory education being relatively low. The figures are significantly affected by a small number of Year 11 pupils whose attendance is poor. Most pupils arrive at school in good time and their prompt attendance is encouraged by the school's electronic registration recording system.
19. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons are good. Pupils' attitudes towards their work and consequently behaviour are best when lessons capture their interest. This was particularly obvious in lessons where they were actively involved in activities such as physical education and music or using computers in office applications. Equally in art lessons teachers show considerable respect towards all pupils, value their work and display it effectively often using it as examples of good practice. In English pupils respond well to good questioning and varied and pacy activities that keep them interested and involved. This encourages pupils to achieve well and produce their best possible work. Older pupils show considerable maturity in class discussions, listening well and asking for guidance when necessary.
20. In most lessons pupils are attentive. However they do not always show the same level of enthusiasm for work even though they are well-behaved and undertake the tasks set. In these instances their learning, although satisfactory, could be better. This can occur when the lesson is so tightly structured and controlled by the teacher that there are few opportunities for pupils to offer views or undertake practical work. Behaviour deteriorates in a few classes, particularly those of less experienced teachers or those new to the school when faced with more challenging behaviour early in the school year. Where a teacher is unable to curb the troublesome behaviour of a few the situation can escalate and have a poor effect on the learning of the majority. However, teachers are well supported by senior staff and by the procedures to discipline and support those pupils whose behaviour disturbs others.

21. Behaviour around the school is satisfactory. The school site presents those moving around it with many doors, exposed walkways, narrow corridors and blind corners. Inevitably there is a degree of jostling as pupils move from lesson to lesson and to and from breaks. This can be difficult for the youngest pupils although there is very little deliberate unpleasantness. When bullying happens pupils feel able to discuss incidents with staff. They make use of the 'bully' message boxes provided when they find reporting incidents difficult. Most are confident that staff will treat incidents seriously if they are given all the facts. Commendably there have been very few exclusions. Vandalism is low although some of the lockers in more open areas show signs of mistreatment. Litter is a problem and the school caretaking staff spend considerable time clearing this up.
22. Pupils generally get on well together. The school day with its brief breaks fully occupies the pupils and ensures that most remain motivated and busy. Most pupils and staff see this action-packed day as a good thing, although it leaves limited time for pupils to socialise with each other between classes or during breaks. The development of pupils' social skills relies mainly on the classroom experiences of pupils working in groups, exploring ideas and working creatively together and when given the opportunity to do so they develop satisfactory working relationships. This happens in subjects such as art, drama, English, music and physical education but less so in other subjects.
23. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive. Those pupils who stay on after school are offered a wide range of activities by the staff and have ample opportunity to develop good working relationships with staff and with each other. However, for most pupils other than sixth form students there are few opportunities to take on responsibility. Little progress has been made in this aspect of school life since the last inspection when it was raised as an issue for development

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

24. The quality of teaching is good overall. During the inspection it was satisfactory or better in just over nine out of 10 of the lessons observed and better than satisfactory in well over half of the lessons observed. One in five lessons were very good and sometimes excellent. Teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 3 and good in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. Since the last inspection the quality of teaching in the school has improved considerably. At that time the proportion of unsatisfactory lessons was at too high a level.
25. Teaching is generally good in English, drama, art, music, modern foreign languages, physical education and vocational subjects. In religious education at Key Stage 3 and in design and technology and history at Key Stage 4 teaching is also good. In the sixth form it is very good in history, art and music. Elsewhere it is satisfactory except in science where it is unsatisfactory even though some very good teaching was seen. The most senior members of the department have good teaching skills, but some of the newer and inexperienced teachers are having difficulties in managing their classes. In mathematics, after a particularly difficult period over the last two years due to staff shortages which badly affected the consistency and quality of learning in some classes, the teaching observed at Key Stages 3 and 4 was at least satisfactory and in the sixth form good.
26. Where teaching is best pupils achieve well in public examinations. This is because teachers plan well and make lessons exciting and interesting through a lively approach that captures pupils' attention. This is important as pupils, although usually appropriately behaved, do not always value education sufficiently or have high

expectations for their own achievement. Activities encourage pupils to participate fully and hence achieve well. In a Year 8 art lesson the teacher's confident and dynamic style, supported by very good subject knowledge and expectations held pupils enthralled during an introduction to art deco style. This plus the well-focused homework research activity motivated pupils to make very purposeful step-by-step drawings of complicated art deco shapes. All pupils produced their best possible work. In subjects such as accounts and office applications pupils make good progress in learning. The teaching is good but pupils also see value in these subjects for future job choices.

27. The best lessons also move at a good pace, usually with a wide range of activities that keep pupils fully occupied on their tasks. Pupils are clear about what they have to do; work is matched to their learning needs and learning is clearly reinforced by a good recap at the end of each lesson. A lively Year 9 English class was very well managed and as a result made sound progress in learning from a quickly focussed literacy starter activity through paired working, class discussion and individual preparation for a writing task.
28. Both at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, teachers' good subject knowledge and understanding of the skills that need to be taught make a positive and significant contribution to pupils' and students' quality of learning. The teachers are able to respond to pupils' questions easily and provide that extra level of input which provokes interest and deepens understanding. In a Year 10 electronics lesson excellent demonstrations by the teacher ensured pupils had a good understanding of how to use a multi-meter to read resistor values. They then showed initiative in the task set by undertaking more difficult activities. Numeracy skills were also well reinforced. When the teacher's knowledge is less secure it is most often due to a lack of depth in subject knowledge. For example, in science where the department is in the main staffed by biologists there are instances of a lack of depth in knowledge of the physical sciences.
29. The school has a small but significant number of pupils whose attitudes and behaviour can be unsatisfactory, particularly when teachers' skills in managing pupils' behaviour are not secure. Time is wasted in lessons and pupils do not cover enough work. This was a major factor in most of the unsatisfactory lessons observed during the inspection. The school provides strong support for staff in the classroom when discipline problems occur. This is especially helpful for new and younger members of staff in helping to improve their teaching skills and hence pupils' learning. Another major cause of unsatisfactory teaching is ineffective planning. This was evident in science where practical work or demonstrations are sometimes not well organised causing time to be wasted. Pupils are unsure what to do and they become restless. This was especially so when equipment had problems and demonstrations took too long or could not easily be seen by all pupils. In such situations learning was slowed.
30. There is evidence from lessons and the scrutiny of work that teachers' concern to ensure all pupils behave well can limit the range of learning opportunities available to pupils: there was a tendency, for example, to use less group work, independent research or practical and investigative work. In a significant number of lessons pupils' learning would have been better than satisfactory with more discussion and contributions from them to the learning process.
31. Most subjects now emphasise the correct use of subject specific terminology, although opportunities to develop pupils' writing skills are more varied. Design and technology and science provide regular opportunities for pupils to draft and redraft their work. Speaking and listening skills are well developed where there are

opportunities for pupils to express their views, for example, in art and physical education. Numeracy and spatial skills are well developed in art and in design and technology, but this is incidental rather than a planned provision. Apart from specific information and communication technology lessons there was hardly any evidence of teachers using computers to support learning. The exception is music, where very good use was observed of the very modern and up-to-date facilities, for example, the music composition program for work on pitch, duration, timbre and harmony.

32. The support provided for pupils with learning difficulties is particularly good. With good and sometimes very good assistance from support staff, teachers effectively modify teaching methods and resources to meet these pupils' learning needs. The support assistants provide well-focussed support in classes through programmes of work carefully planned with teachers. Pupils also have good opportunities for individual and small group work with support staff to improve their reading, writing, spelling and number skills. What they learn is appropriately linked to what they do in class. The school has yet to identify the gifted and talented pupils, but this is to be addressed through the 'Excellence in Cities' project in which the school is now involved. In most lessons the needs of the most able are met. In some lessons planning includes extension work for the most able, for example, design and technology at Key Stage 4. In others, such as information and communication technology able pupils' needs are not met when all pupils in the class are required to work at the same level and pace.
33. The quality of marking and feedback to pupils on their work is satisfactory, although it varies across subjects and teachers ranging from helpful to insufficient. This was an issue at the time of the last inspection and the school developed an appropriate policy that made clear its expectations of staff. There is good practice in art, design and technology, modern foreign languages and physical education where feedback during lessons and on homework enables pupils to take action to improve their work. There was little evidence of the assessment of pupils' work informing teachers' planning, although in the lessons observed work was generally pitched at an appropriate level.
34. During the inspection homework was set on a regular basis and written by pupils into their planners. The best practice showed that the homework set made significant contributions to pupils' learning. For example, in art and in design and technology homework was checked and recapped at the beginning of a lesson and used as a starting point for new learning. Parents who responded to the questionnaire were mostly satisfied with the amount of homework that their children received, although a quarter disagreed. The very small number of parents that attended the parents' meeting expressed concern at the often inadequate checking of pupils' planners by staff indicating that some form tutors were more conscientious than others. They also stated that too often teachers did not keep to the homework timetable resulting in pupils having too much on one night. The timing of the inspection at the beginning of the school year provided no substantial evidence to support or refute these statements.
35. The considerable improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection is a direct result of the high priority the school has placed on identifying those factors that make a good lesson and putting them into practice. Some subject heads of department, for example, English and art, have been supporting this through classroom observation and feedback to teachers. Teaching approaches have been incorporated into schemes of work. However this has not been consistent across all subjects. The narrow range of teaching methods used was particularly identified as an area for development, but some subjects still have not fully addressed this. Teaching needs to be more systematically monitored by the senior management to

identify the most effective practice in promoting the best learning.

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

36. The school provides a satisfactory range of learning opportunities at both Key Stages 3 and 4. The sixth form curriculum is good. However there are several significant statutory requirements that are not met. In science and design and technology the time allocation has recently been reduced to below recommended levels in order to cope with staffing problems, however there has been no in-depth review to ensure that all pupils receive an appropriate broad and balanced curriculum. All subjects have developed and enhanced their schemes of work since the last inspection and the most effective practice has helped to improve standards. English has a well-planned programme of activities with involvement in national literacy initiatives contributing to improved standards. Whole school literacy and oracy strategies have been put in place, but there is no co-ordinated monitoring of activities or the dissemination of good practice currently taking place. A key issue for action to put in place a whole school numeracy policy has not been completed. Mathematics has participated in several national numeracy initiatives, but a significant number of pupils still have weak mental calculation skills.

Key Stage 3

37. The Key Stage 3 curriculum is satisfactory and provides the full range of National Curriculum courses with improvement in a number of areas since the last inspection. A religious education course has been put in place which meets the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Physical education now has a sound curriculum that clearly promotes the development of skills and performance. Food technology is separate from the design and technology curriculum. There is no procedure to identify its contribution to the teaching of National Curriculum requirements for design and technology, particularly important this year with the reduced time for design and technology.

Key Stage 4

38. Curriculum provision is broadly satisfactory even though not all statutory requirements are met. All pupils follow courses in English, mathematics, science, physical education and design and technology. In addition, pupils are able to choose from a wide range of other subjects. Courses such as media studies, drama, child development, accounts and office applications widen the range of practical and vocational courses available. They are popular and enable pupils to select courses matched to their interests and abilities. Statutory requirements are not met for information and communication technology, religious education and modern foreign languages. Not all pupils have sufficient opportunities to develop the required information and communication technology skills because the provision for the majority of pupils, particularly those who do not take the subject at GCSE, is very limited across all subject areas. Religious education, currently taught through the personal and social development programme, does not provide pupils with a satisfactory course of study. Not all pupils study a modern foreign language. Additionally the time provision for science, an issue at the time of the last inspection, is well below the recommended level, more so because of difficulties in appointing staff than anything else. This contributes to the unsatisfactory standards in science.

Sixth form

39. Sixth form curriculum provision is good. A wide range of subjects leading to A-level or GNVQ qualifications is available both within the school and at partnership schools in

the local consortium. The individual courses are supported by a well-planned course of general studies for all students and a core skills course, which includes opportunities for pupils to develop their information and communication technology skills. However there is insufficient provision for religious education.

40. Pupils throughout the school and in the sixth form have good opportunities to undertake further study. After school subject clubs, for example, in art, design and technology, science, French and geography provide facilities for pupils to prepare effectively for examinations and to support the completion of homework tasks. The learning resource centre staff provide good support for pupils working after school.

Pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

41. A comprehensive programme of personal and social development is provided for 11-16 year olds that satisfactorily addresses sex and health education and drugs abuse. It is enhanced by input from a range of local organisations such as the health service. The programme is doing much to raise pupils' awareness of issues such as racial discrimination and the local environment through their involvement in paired and group discussions. However evidence from the inspection together with talking to pupils indicates that the time available, the first period in the day, can often be reduced because assembly time overruns. Careers education is introduced in Year 7 and the appropriate programme of activities is well supported by the local careers service which makes a significant input in Years 10 and 11. Work experience is provided for all pupils in Key Stage 4 and is well supported by local employers.
42. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is satisfactory, even though the school does not have a school policy nor do subjects identify clearly where it is taught. There has been a small improvement in its provision since the last inspection. However, a lack of consistency in planning and poor monitoring means that the picture is a very similar one to that found in the last inspection. The exception is the sixth form where the general studies course provides very good opportunities for students to acquire knowledge and understanding of a wide range of social and moral issues through discussion.
43. The weakness of provision for spiritual development remains throughout the school and it is unsatisfactory. It is mainly promoted through assemblies and religious education although some opportunities do occur in English, art and music. Religious education lessons occur only at Key Stage 3, but provide many appropriate opportunities for pupils to reflect on the difference between faith and belief. Assembly provision is however inadequate. Since the last inspection the school has developed a range of themes for the twice a week assembly for each year group and for teachers to discuss with their form groups at other times during the week. These have a Christian focus and provide the basis for an act of collective worship. They have the potential to provide good opportunities for pupils to reflect upon beliefs and values as well as a wide range of social and moral issues such as their relationships with each other. However the delivery of these themes is not sufficiently effective with a lack of sufficient time for reflection or any significant reference to spiritual matters. In assemblies an appropriate atmosphere is not created and most class sessions observed were very brief with evidence that very often they did not occur. The school does not meet the requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.
44. The provision for pupils' moral development is good and is supported by high expectations of good behaviour linked to a system of rewards and sanctions. Positive behaviour is recognised and celebrated in assemblies. Pupils are encouraged to treat other pupils' views and ideas sensibly in class discussion activities. This gives all

pupils the confidence to express opinions. The personal and social development programme reinforces the development of moral values and provides many opportunities for pupils to present their own views. Teachers provide good role models in their own relationships with pupils. When moving around the school pupils are constantly reminded of the need to show respect and tolerance for others by the code of conduct. Several subjects include units of work that enable pupils to consider their own response to contemporary ethical and moral issues, for example, English and sixth form general studies.

45. Opportunities for pupils' social development are satisfactory. They are best in the good range of extra-curricular activities available where there are many occasions when pupils can work together. This is seen particularly in activities linked to drama, physical education and music. These subjects also provide good opportunities for pupils to work together in lessons, for example in pairs and groups, and to share and discuss ideas. In physical education the promotion of fair play and teamwork is particularly effective in developing all pupils' social skills. In some subjects activities where pupils work together and share ideas are more limited, for example, geography and mathematics. Pupils also take part in activities such as fund raising for charity, Christmas concerts and environmental projects.
46. However, there is limited evidence of opportunities across the subjects of the curriculum for pupils to get a wider understanding of the world in which they live in relation to their own community. Pupils have few chances to develop their own social skills through taking on responsibilities. The sixth form and prefects have more opportunities such as working in primary schools through the sports leadership scheme and organising their end of year ball last summer. There has also been some effective paired reading with older students working with younger ones. However pupils and students have very few occasions that allow them to express their views on aspects of school life and influence decisions. For example, there is no school council or formal opportunities for pupils to show initiative and to help in the organisation and running of the school. There is a prefect system that the school has plans to expand.
47. The provision for cultural development is good. Several subjects seek to extend pupils' understanding of their own and other cultures through a programme of visits and classroom activities. An excellent project where pupils talked to their grandparents and parents about growing up in Dagenham resulted in a book that gives a very clear picture of life in Dagenham since the First World War. Modern foreign languages give pupils an insight into French life and customs and the department organises trips to other European countries. The school choir has visited Poland, Germany and Belgium. Visits to theatres and art galleries reinforce this provision. The school also makes provision for art and drama workshops using visiting experts. Pupils are prepared for life in a multicultural society through work in the personal and social development programme, art, music, drama, English and modern foreign languages. In religious education pupils examine all the major religions that are represented in our society. Work done in art has a particularly strong multicultural element.

Equality of opportunity

48. Equality of access and opportunity is good with a clear commitment to all pupils achieving well through the school's aims, ethos and subject curriculum policies. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good across the school and the school meets the requirements of the Code of Practice². Correct care is taken to

² Code of Practice – this gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities and tasks

ensure pupils with special educational needs have full access to the curriculum. Any occasional withdrawal from class is very well used to support their reading, spelling and written competencies, as well as helping them with their emotional and behavioural needs. Their needs are suitably defined in individual education plans with clear targets for improvements. These targets are suitably matched to the termly reviews. The school has not yet identified its gifted and talented pupils completely but setting in many subjects is supporting the provision of in-class support for more able pupils. However a very small number of parents were concerned that work was not always hard enough for their children.

Curriculum links with the community

49. There are good links with the local business community which not only supports the provision of work experience but also makes an input into parts of the personal and social development programme and occasionally provides sponsorship. Sports facilities are made available to local community organisations. Many pupils support the annual sponsored walk, which provides large numbers of parcels of groceries for local elderly people. Pupils taking the health and social care course have placements in the community. The annual bonfire night at the school is a popular event.
50. The school has good relationships with other educational establishments. Strategies to prepare pupils for transfer from the primary schools are well organised. Summer schools provide support for pupils with low literacy and numeracy skills and for those who need to improve their personal skills in order to settle happily into their new and much larger school. Few subject links exist with the three main feeder primary schools, but music, art and information and communication technology have all developed links with some primary schools. Relationships with the three other partners in the sixth form consortium are positive and have supported the introduction and continuing development of an effective curriculum for sixth form students.

Summary

51. Since the last inspection the school has made sound provision in improving the curriculum, although statutory requirements for religious education and for collective worship are still not being met. Work needs to continue to address strategies for improving pupils' literacy skills, particularly writing across the curriculum and a numeracy policy needs to be in place. The school's senior management team needs to monitor the curriculum much more frequently and effectively.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

52. Arrangements for pupils' welfare and guidance are good. The creation of a caring ethos in which the personal needs of the pupils are met is a priority of the staff and governing body. Crucial to this is the role of the heads of year and their deputies who monitor on a regular basis the academic progress, social well-being and behaviour of all pupils and liaise closely with the form tutors. Form tutors work with their pupils at the beginning of each term to discuss progress and to set targets as part of the personal and social development programme. Pupils report that they feel secure and that any concerns brought to teachers are listened to seriously and addressed with care. There is a positive atmosphere and both teaching and non-teaching staff know the pupils well. The youngest pupils say that they have enjoyed their first few days in the school, have a good understanding of the system and look forward to their time in the school. The transition from their previous schools is successfully managed.

to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the 1993 Education Act.

53. Procedures for promoting good behaviour and attendance are good. The school has successfully implemented a 'positive behaviour' policy, further developing its good provision noted in the previous inspection. The achievements of the considerable proportion of pupils (a third last year) who succeed in keeping all their good conduct points throughout the previous year is celebrated and acknowledged by the staff and the governors. However, a small number of parents indicate that their children do not always want to be seen as receiving certificates for achievement and behaviour, especially boys, because it is not 'cool' and can lead to unpleasant comments. The behaviour policy has a well-structured range of sanctions for pupils who consistently misbehave, with constructive systems for supporting improvement. The positive behaviour policy has resulted in a lower than average rate of exclusions. The new on-site unit for pupils who constantly disturb the life of the school is a positive development. There is a clear anti-bullying policy which is written in pupils' planners. Inspection evidence indicates that reported incidences of bullying are appropriately addressed but, there is also evidence from a small number of parents and pupils that pupils are sometimes reluctant to inform on other pupils for fear of the consequences.
54. The school's electronic system is particularly effective at monitoring pupil attendance. There is a quick follow-up of unexplained absences with good liaison with the educational social worker who spends much of her week working with the school. This has helped the school to improve overall attendance since the last inspection to close to the national average. The average figures are adversely affected by the poor attendance of a few sixteen-year-olds. Both the school and the local education authority recognise this and have started a scheme whereby some of these pupils are offered a college environment for their last year of compulsory education. During the inspection many pupils were not using their swipe cards correctly. It was therefore difficult to ensure that all pupils were attending all their designated lessons, although staff do take registers and check against the daily list of non-attenders posted. Punctuality is generally good and the school is able to track the few who are regularly late. Pupils who persistently arrive late have to register in a special class and this appears to be having a positive impact on improving punctuality.
55. Good systems are in place to monitor pupils' academic progress and attainment. Systems are particularly effective in Key Stage 4 where GCSE results have considerably improved over the last three years as a result. Pupils are given predicted GCSE grades and underachieving and potential A* -C grade pupils identified and then supported to ensure they reach expected standards. Subject tutors as well as form tutors check pupils' progress each term and parents are contacted when pupils are not doing as well as they should. After-school subject/revision clubs have a positive impact in supporting pupils' achievements.
56. Assessment procedures and systems in most departments are satisfactory. There are weaknesses at Key Stage 3 in design and technology and insufficient procedures in place to monitor and assess pupils' capabilities in information and communication technology, making end of Key Stage 3 assessments unreliable.
57. Most departments are making good use of their assessment information. Pupils are beginning to be more aware of their own learning and become more responsible for their progress. Individual target-setting is well developed for Key Stage 4 pupils and has significantly helped to improve standards. However, it is not yet well developed at Key Stage 3 where standards have not improved since the last inspection. Currently, the use of assessment information to help pupils to know how to improve their work and to guide curriculum planning is underdeveloped.

58. Support and guidance for pupils with special educational needs is particularly good. Pupils are regularly assessed in English and mathematics and for their social, emotional and behavioural needs. Provision for these pupils has further improved on the good provision noted at the time of the last inspection. The school regularly reviews targets in the pupils' individual education plans and statements of special educational need, fully meeting the statutory requirements. It very successfully involves parents, teachers and support staff in all its reviews at all stages of the Code of Practice. The information is well used to plan further provision. The school has appropriately identified the need to make individual education plans more detailed regarding the specific skills matched to the National Curriculum attainment levels that pupils are working towards. Few pupils in the school have English as an additional language and arrangements are made with the local support service as necessary for specific support. A new boy during the inspection week was 'buddied' with a pupil who could speak his language. The school also supports pupils with English as their second language in taking GCSE or A-level in their first language, many obtaining the highest grades.
59. The school provides a safe and reasonably clean environment for pupils and staff, although litter can be a problem. The school is very well aware of child protection procedures and named staff work closely with educational welfare, police and social services when necessary. There has been a lack of regular updated training of all staff in child protection issues and this should be addressed. Only three members of staff are qualified in first aid. This is too low for the size of school, especially as the first-aid staff are not easily accessible across the school site. The staff duty system ensures that there is a continuing presence of teachers throughout the school day, although the large site means that some parts are not always as well patrolled as they should be.
60. Regular checks of first aid, physical education and fire prevention equipment are undertaken, but there has been no check of portable electrical equipment for some time. The current procedures for risk assessment are not effective enough, as not all areas of the school are inspected sufficiently often by staff and governors.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

61. The 144 parents who responded to the questionnaire and the 15 parents who attended the meeting for parents were positive overall about the work of the school and the information they receive. Parents were least satisfied with how the school involves them in its work. Most concerns expressed related to the sometimes slow response to phone calls or letters. This problem was reported by a small number of parents.
62. Generally parents' impact on the work of the school is low in relation to the large number of parents whose children attend the school and who live nearby. Parents readily attend meetings about the work and progress of their children, but rarely other events. Opportunities to comment on the work of the school through questionnaires have been few. Some parents do help on school trips. The school is currently reviving the 'Friends of Eastbrook Association' and is working hard to get it off the ground although this continues to be difficult. There have been some events attracting parental involvement, for example, a fireworks night and a quiz event. Very few parents attend the annual governors' meetings for parents.
63. The school provides good information for parents on their children's progress through termly progress reports and regular parents' evenings. The main annual report of their children's progress is detailed and informative. The pupil planners not only

provide parents with a record of homework set, but also attendance figures and good conduct information. There are inconsistencies in the marking of pupils' work and teachers' comments do not always help both pupils and their parents assess their progress. A few parents commented that planners are not always properly checked by teachers, but it was too early in the school year for inspectors to find supporting evidence. A small number of parents stated they were not satisfied with the information they receive on their children's work and progress but inspectors found it to be good.

64. The school keeps in close touch with the parents of children with special educational needs. It sends a suitable letter home to parents informing them when their child is first registered as having special educational needs and the implications of this assessment. There is also good verbal contact. Parents are well informed of their child's progress and how he/she is meeting the targets in their individual education plans. Letters appropriately inform the parents of the date of the review of the special needs of their child, inviting them to be present or to send their comments.
65. Most parents who expressed a view feel they are made welcome and that the school communicates well with them. This is mostly through the form tutors and year heads who make themselves available before, during and after the school day. Most issues are appropriately and satisfactorily dealt with. It is clear that year heads take their responsibilities in this area seriously. A very small number of parents stated that the school does not always respond quickly enough to their telephone calls or appreciate fully their anxieties about their children's welfare or progress. However, the very quick response some parents would like is not always possible due to the teaching commitments of the member of staff contacted, the short breaks in the school day, and the high number of calls that can be received in any one day. Inspectors had evidence of one or two instances where communications with parents had not been effective or as helpful as they and the school would wish. The school intends to review its procedures to bring about improvements for all.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

Leadership and management

66. The school has a clear focus on its strategic aim: "the provision of effective teaching and learning to maximise the potential of all in an orderly, secure and positive environment". Since the last inspection it has successfully improved the quality of teaching in lessons and raised pupils' achievement at GCSE. Sixth form numbers have increased and good courses and teaching have resulted in higher standards. This is during a period of increasing school numbers and an extensive building programme. The school has been less successful in raising standards at Key Stage 3. There is a clear and commonly understood commitment from staff to continue to raise standards. However, the school is in an area where education beyond the age of sixteen has not been seen as necessary, because skilled work in industry and clerical jobs in the City are easy to obtain. This attitude is changing and the school is working hard to encourage pupils to achieve well, stay on into the sixth form and progress into further and higher education. It is beginning to be successful in this.
67. Leadership and management in the school are good. The headteacher and deputies provide strong leadership which ensures an orderly school with good behaviour in most lessons in spite of a significant number of pupils with behavioural difficulties. Staff are well supported, but there are also high expectations of their work in the classroom. Newly qualified staff and teachers new to the school are particularly well supported through a good programme of induction. There is good delegation of tasks

to senior managers who use their individual skills effectively to develop the work of the school. The headteacher has sound oversight of the work of his senior managers, seeing his main task as providing an orderly and efficient school environment in which staff can undertake their tasks as effectively as possible. This is evident in his high-profile presence around the school throughout the day and through the regular formal and informal meetings that take place with senior managers.

68. Management of their areas by most subject heads of department is good. In art, English, performing arts and religious education leadership is particularly good, as shown by the heads of departments' own good practice and pupils' often good achievement. Recent appointments have resolved difficulties in departmental leadership. These newly-appointed staff show every indication of having a positive influence on improving departmental work, in particular in mathematics and science. The management of information and communication technology is unsatisfactory across the school as a whole. Heads of year are effective and the care and support they provide for pupils both academically and personally is good. This has been particularly effective in helping to raise achievement at Key Stage 4. The work of the sixth form staff is a particular strength of the school.
69. The school has a number of appropriate processes by which it reviews its work, but not all are sufficiently systematic for senior management to be secure in their knowledge that everything is well. One of the strengths is the annual reports of subject and year heads which comment on standards of achievement, attendance and behaviour. The annual reports form the basis for a yearly interview with the headteacher and relevant deputy heads and provide good opportunities for reflection on past performance and the identification of future needs.
70. Good information is kept on pupils' performance and progress throughout the year and very useful analyses are undertaken of examination results that highlight both individual pupil and subject underachievement. However, strategies for analysing examination performance and setting examination targets on a whole-school and subject basis are not sufficiently refined to take account of pupils' previous attainments. This is particularly the case at Key Stage 3 where targets for examination results have not been reached. The school has not yet clearly identified for itself whether these pupils are underachieving or whether the targets are unrealistic.
71. The role of senior management in working with heads of department is supportive, but not rigorous enough. There is insufficient checking throughout the year that appropriate action is being taken concerning agreed developments. For example, whilst the school is clear about its priorities which are appropriately based on local authority priorities, their achievement relies on the quality of development planning by heads of department. Strong heads of department achieve their aims, in spite of written plans sometimes lacking detail on how this is to be done. Others are not so successful, for example, in information and communication technology where the use of computers across the curriculum has made insufficient progress. Monitoring of teaching and learning is mainly undertaken by heads of department and is variable in nature and quality and not systematic enough. The best practice, such as in English, involves a clear programme in which teachers are observed and receive feedback. In other departments monitoring does not happen on a sufficiently regular basis. There is no process that informs the senior management of those strategies that are most effective in improving pupils' learning or to identify where skills need to be improved.
72. Governors have a high commitment to the school and to the improvement of its work. Most of them have a personal connection through having attended the school

themselves or through members of their family or their children attending the school. Governors are well informed of the work of the school through an appropriate range of strategies which keep governors' meetings down to a realistic and practical number. The chairman of governors is in regular contact with the school and other governors. This, together with the annual reports from senior staff and heads of department to the in-service training co-ordinator informs the governors' contributions to the school development plan and their programme for the annual governors' day in the Spring Term. This day usually includes visits to classrooms and meetings with staff, but also discussions with staff on issues such as special educational needs and changes in curriculum requirements. Governors also meet with poor attenders and, if possible, their parents to stress the importance of pupils attending regularly if they wish to do well.

73. The governing body does not fully ensure statutory requirements are met. There are deficiencies in the teaching of National Curriculum requirements for information and communication technology and modern foreign languages. There are also deficiencies in the teaching of religious education in respect of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. There is no daily act of collective worship and in the last annual governors' report to parents there were no reports on special educational needs or the progress of the Ofsted action plan from the last inspection. Annual targets for the headteacher and deputy headteachers are set each year and regularly reviewed. They are appropriately related to the school's performance.
74. The school has a clear commitment to equal opportunities for all members of its community, but whilst there are many strengths there are also areas where practice should be reviewed. A particular strength is the commitment to keep the most difficult pupils within school rather than to exclude, as shown by the recent initiative to set up a unit on site for its most difficult pupils. There is also very good provision for pupils with special educational needs. All this is reflected in the above average proportion of pupils entering for GCSE examinations and gaining 5 or more A*-G GCSE passes. The school is aware of the need for more women in senior positions, particularly to raise the aspirations of girls in an area where the traditional role of women staying at home to look after the children is still quite strong. The school has not yet achieved this balance, mainly due to the stability of the school's senior management which is very predominately male. Although girls achieve better than boys up to the age of sixteen, boys in 1999 performed significantly better than girls at A-level and achieved better results at GCSE in mathematics and science. This is against the national trend. Pupils have few opportunities to express their views on the work of the school, because there is no formal procedure in place such as a school council.

The adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources and their use

75. Staffing, accommodation and resources are adequate to meet the school's needs and allow the curriculum to be effectively delivered. The previous report found that the management of the school's resources and quality of financial control were good. These high standards have been well maintained. Funds allocated to cost centres such as special educational needs, the standards fund and development projects are properly and efficiently spent. The governors' finance committee and the full governing body are all appropriately involved in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of the budget. The recommendations of the most recent audit report have been fully addressed.
76. Staff are deployed as efficiently as recruitment allows. A particular strength of the school is the work of the special educational needs staff. However there are some important weaknesses. Whilst there is a satisfactory match of staffing to the needs of the National Curriculum, the school has had considerable difficulty in appointing

suitably qualified and experienced staff for science, design and technology and mathematics in the last few years. This has not helped to improve standards.

77. The professional development of staff is well-planned and linked appropriately with whole school and department priorities. The school is on course to put in place a performance management policy by December 2000, although after the last inspection the appraisal of staff was not fully implemented. However, a weakness lies in the large senior management team of ten in not giving themselves sufficient time to develop further their skills and strategies in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school.
78. Recent building work has provided good specialist subject accommodation throughout the school that effectively supports the curriculum for the performing arts, design and technology, physical education and the sixth form. However, classrooms in the new humanities block and some science laboratories are rather cramped, hindering practical work. Food technology rooms need refurbishment as do some science laboratories to ensure the effective delivery of the curriculum. Given that the inspection took place at the beginning of the school year there was nonetheless a shortage of imaginative and colourful displays of pupils' work or posters in most subject areas which would have provided a more stimulating learning environment. Most of the more exciting displays are contributions from the art department. The learning resources centre is much improved since the last inspection and it is well used by pupils for research and study.
79. Although the number of computers has increased over the last two years, it is still below that nationally for the size of the school. This limits access to the use of information and communication technology for most subject areas and contributes to the below average information and communication technology skills of pupils by the age of sixteen years. Even within design and technology, business studies and accounts access to computer facilities is limited. Many subjects are not yet able to fully meet the new National Curriculum requirements.
80. The day-to-day running of the school is good, with sound use of new technology to support administrative procedures. The school strives hard to ensure that the principles of best value are observed. Purchases are made at the best possible price and the caretaking staff efficiently carry out maintenance tasks which would otherwise require outside contractors. The school earns interest on its funding arrangements with the local authority.
81. Taking into consideration the school's below average social and economic context, the improvement in standards at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form since the last inspection, the good financial management, the low unit cost per pupil and overall sound use of resources, the school provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

82. The governors, headteacher and staff in order to improve further educational provision and the standards achieved by pupils must now:
 - 1 Improve standards in mathematics, science and information and communications technology
for mathematics by

- developing further the current sound programmes of work, including the national Key Stage 3 pilot project, which are helping pupils to make satisfactory progress
- developing a wider range of teaching strategies
- continuing its efforts to appoint suitably qualified staff
(*paragraphs 1,3,4,6,7,8,98-106*)

for science by

- ensuring schemes of work provide clear guidance on teaching approaches for staff
- providing opportunities for staff to share the very good classroom practice of the senior members of the department
- developing clear criteria for planning lessons
- improving the level of expertise in staffing across all aspects of the subject
- improving curriculum time and laboratory facilities;
(*paragraphs 1,3,5,6,7,29,37,78,107-120*)

for information and communication technology to ensure all pupils achieve the required skills at sixteen years of age by

- having an effective whole-school management of information and communication technology across all subjects of the curriculum
- making sure all aspects of the National Curriculum programmes of study are covered at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 for all pupils
- identifying for all staff their curriculum and training needs and, for pupils, ensuring sufficient access to computers;
(*paragraphs 3,4,7,38,79,97,106,120,129,137,144,152-162,180,109*)

- 2 Improve pupils' performance in national tests at Key Stage 3 by
 - putting in place equivalent procedures to those at Key Stage 4 to monitor and support underachieving pupils, particularly boys
 - setting realistic targets based on pupils' attainment on entry to the school
(*paragraphs 1,3,4,12,15,16,70,83,85*)
- 3 Improve pupils' numeracy skills across the curriculum by
 - devising and implementing a whole school numeracy strategy
(*paragraph 12,98-106*)
- 4 Ensure the work of the school is effectively monitored and evaluated by
 - putting in place systematic procedures for reviewing the quality of teaching and learning
 - making the line management of heads of department more rigorous
 - requiring heads of department to write clear action plans to achieve their identified priorities
 - developing the use of value added procedures for assessing how well pupils have achieved and for setting future targets
 - identifying and making provision for the training needs of staff, including senior management
 - putting in place procedures for reviewing the work of local initiatives such as the Key Stage 3 project and planned Excellence in Cities project
(*paragraphs 36,70,71,107,117,143,151,152,162*)
- 5 Make better provision for pupils' spiritual development through
 - ensuring a daily act of worship
 - ensuring sufficient time for whole school assemblies to be a worthwhile experience, with time for reflection

- meeting statutory requirements for teaching religious education at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form
- using the strengths of the head of religious education to develop a whole-school approach to pupils' spiritual education
(*paragraphs 39,40,41-43,202*)

6 Reviewing procedures to consult with and involve parents and their children with the work of the school by

- addressing concerns about communications with the school including reviewing the effectiveness of procedures
- using questionnaires to sample parent and pupil views
- raising the profile of the parent and school association 'Friends of Eastbrook School'
- asking parents to be involved in working groups
- setting up a school council for pupils/students
(*paragraphs 23,45,48,61-65,75,83*)

Other issues the school needs to address are

- not meeting statutory requirements concerning the annual report to parents and the teaching of modern foreign languages at Key Stage 4
(*paragraphs 73,170*)
- inadequate risk assessment procedures for the checking of equipment and accommodation
(*paragraphs 60,119,136*)
- variations in the performance of girls and boys in different subjects and key stages
(*paragraphs 1,14,83,84,108,121,130,139*)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

202

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

83

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0.5	19	44	29	7	0.5	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	1429	133
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	328	

Special educational needs

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	40	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	234	1

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	32

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	22
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	23

Attendance (1998/99)

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.3
National comparative data	7.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.4
National comparative data	1.1

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	146	138	284

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	49	66	57
	Girls	91	61	52
	Total	140	127	109
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	50 (66)	45 (51)	38 (48)
	National	63 (65)	62 (60)	55 (56)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	18 (34)	17 (25)	12 (20)
	National	28 (35)	38 (36)	23 (27)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	61	68	76
	Girls	102	63	75
	Total	163	131	151
at NC level 5 or above	School	58 (56)	47 (48)	54(46)
	National	64(62)	64 (64)	60 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	24 (18)	18 (24)	22 (16)
	National	31 (31)	37 (37)	28 (31)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	117	91	208

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	29	104	108
	Girls	32	89	90
	Total	61	193	198
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	29 (38)	93 (91)	95 (93)
	National	47 (45)	91 (90)	96 (95)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	33 (36)
	National	38 (37)

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
	1999	33	28	61

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	13.8	9.8	12.2 (13.3)	0.8	1.2	1.0 (4.7)
National	17.7	18.1	17.9 (17.6)	2.7	2.8	2.8 (2.8)

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number in their final year of studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	8	100
	National	n/a	72.9

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	7
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	8
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	3
White	1457
Any other minority ethnic group	22

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	1	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	15	1
Other minority ethnic groups	16	1

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7– Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	95
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	239

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	79.9
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y13

Key Stage 3	23.7
Key Stage 4	20.4

Financial information

Financial year	1999/00
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	£
Total income	4 031 589
Total expenditure	4125 578
Expenditure per pupil	2754
Balance brought forward from previous year	139336
Balance carried forward to next year	45347

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1489
Number of questionnaires returned	144

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	34	52	10	4	0
My child is making good progress in school.	46	47	6	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	29	47	9	4	11
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	46	19	6	3
The teaching is good.	29	55	9	2	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	45	14	8	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	35	48	5	8	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	58	36	4	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	20	48	16	10	6
The school is well led and managed.	27	49	7	8	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	28	51	11	5	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	41	37	10	1	11

Other issues raised by parents

Parents expressed concerns that able pupils were not being provided with enough work. A few at the meeting for parents commented that their children, especially boys, did not always want to appear to do well because they would be teased as a 'boffin'. Concern was also expressed about the shortness of the second break allowing all pupils to get something to eat.

A few parents also felt that bullying was more prevalent than reported.

Only 15 parents attended the meeting for parents.

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

ENGLISH

83. The performance of pupils in the 1999 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 was well below the national average for all schools and it was below the average for similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels was in line with the average for similar schools. In the tests boys did less well than girls and this is similar to the national picture. However, in the school's results the gap was a little greater than the national difference. Given their low standards at eleven years of age, pupils achieve satisfactorily at the end of the key stage.
84. At GCSE in 1999 the proportion of pupils achieving a pass grade of A*-G was close to the national average, although the percentage of pupils achieving grades A*-C was below the national average. Given their well below average standards two years previously, these results represent good progress for all pupils including those with special educational needs. Results in English compare very favourably with other subjects within the school. This overall pattern of achievement is very similar for English Literature. In both subjects girls outperformed boys in the examinations. However, in English language the margin was less than that nationally. This reflects the department's work on teaching approaches and content of lessons designed to support higher achievement from the boys. Performance in the A-level English Literature examination in 1999 was lower than the national average, but represents at least satisfactory progress since GCSE.
85. The attainment of pupils currently in Year 9 is in line with the national expectation. This shows satisfactory progress through the key stage. The progress made by pupils in Years 7 and 8 in lessons and over time is also satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. In speaking and listening many pupils very willingly answer questions and express opinions clearly in front of the whole class. However, a small number lack confidence and have difficulty in expressing their ideas. Pupils often contribute well to small group discussions. Many give personal views and make constructive comments. However, while most pupils listen attentively and respond sensibly to what others have to say, comparatively few can sustain an interesting account or justify a point of view in any detail.
86. Many Year 9 pupils read aloud with some fluency and expression. However, even by this age significant numbers continue to find difficulty in reading accurately. Pupils enjoy reading in class. They are usually willing to read aloud in front of others when asked and study texts closely and with interest. Many show an understanding of the main themes, characters and the use of language to express feelings and opinions. This was seen in one lesson where pupils understood and explained the rhetorical devices and emotive language used in Old Major's speech in 'Animal Farm'. Most pupils support opinions by reference to the text.
87. By the end of Key Stage 3 the vast majority of pupils produce appropriate pieces of extended writing plus some engaging poetry and drama scripts. Many use the more formal styles and approaches needed, for instance, in discussions and explanations. However, the writing of lower attaining pupils does not use a range of styles. It is limited in vocabulary and in some cases has basic errors in spelling and punctuation. Most written work is well presented. Even though the lowest attaining pupils do not consistently use joined-up handwriting their work is usually legible and tidy.

88. In Year 11 the attainment of the pupils is broadly in keeping with national expectations although relatively few currently reach standards to indicate achievement of the highest GCSE grades next summer. However, taking pupils' previous standards into account this represents good progress over the key stage. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress. Most pupils have developed greater confidence in speaking publicly although some, even when pressed, provide only short responses. In smaller groups most show the ability to discuss issues constructively and to listen attentively to what others have to say. In reading pupils give increasingly considered personal responses which at their best show genuine insight. Having encountered a wider range of fiction, non-fiction and media texts, many pupils have developed a sound knowledge of presentational techniques and analyse texts in a variety of ways. The majority of pupils write in a variety of forms for a range of purposes. The quality of their work benefits from increased opportunities to draft and redraft. In particular, higher attaining pupils show ability to adapt their style of writing to its purpose. At best written work shows genuine commitment, as in a piece produced by one Year 11 pupil describing with engaging openness and honesty the development of her personal faith. However, the difficulties encountered by some pupils in varying style and in spelling and punctuating accurately continue to the end of the key stage.
89. In Year 13 pupils' attainment in the A-level English literature course is in line with expected standards, most achieving middle pass grades. Progress in lessons and over time is good. Higher attaining pupils show a sound knowledge of literary themes and techniques. They make some perceptive observations in discussion as well as in clear, appropriately structured, committed writing. However, some pupils find the greater demands of A-level work more challenging. They need a good deal of support to develop their understanding of the more sophisticated literary approaches and features found in the texts studied.
90. At all key stages standards of work in lessons are better than results in the 1999 national tests and examinations indicate. Achievement matches national expectations. The strategies developed by the department and used effectively in many lessons have produced to a significant extent this comparative improvement in standards. These strategies include well structured opportunities for group discussion. These lead to some improvement not only of pupils' speaking and listening skills, but also of their knowledge and understanding of the issues discussed. Teachers highlight key words to aid the development of pupils' vocabulary and spelling. There is well-structured support for writing and techniques to guide pupils in their close reading of texts. The school's results for the national tests and examinations in the year 2000 show an improvement in achievement at Key Stage 3 and a significant improvement at Key Stage 4 compared with its results last year.
91. The development of pupils' literacy skills in subjects other than English is satisfactory overall although it varies in quality across subjects. In some subjects teachers encourage pupils and help them to use language effectively in a range of contexts. In others the opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills are underdeveloped. In religious education and physical education teachers provide well-planned opportunities for pupils to participate in a variety of speaking and listening activities. Pupils use a range of reading resources to support learning in history and religious education and for research in design and technology. However, such opportunities, including the use of the Internet to support independent learning, are in general not well developed. There is much clear and accurate writing in all subjects, but only in some, such as design technology, do teachers provide pupils with regular opportunities to improve the quality of their work through drafting and redrafting. In a number of subjects, the range of writing opportunities is narrow. There is insufficient

monitoring of the impact of the school's appropriate literacy and oracy strategies to ensure consistent practice across the curriculum.

92. The overall quality of teaching is good. It is good in GCSE and A-level lessons and satisfactory at Key Stage 3. Teaching is rarely less than satisfactory and is occasionally very good. The overall quality of lesson planning is good although in a small number of lessons, especially at Key Stage 3, planning does not sufficiently take into account the different learning needs of pupils within the group. Teachers generally have high expectations of work and behaviour and usually very good classroom management and control. These features have a direct bearing on the very constructive classroom atmosphere established in many lessons, the positive attitudes that pupils show and the good response to work set. The specialist knowledge of the teachers, their clear explanations and in some cases skilled questioning are also important factors in the often good progress made by many pupils, especially at Key Stage 4. These features, combined with particularly lively and engaging teaching, were ably demonstrated in one Key Stage 4 lesson. Pupils compared two poems providing ironic perspectives on the theme of love. The result was a very enjoyable lesson in which pupils made very good progress in their understanding of theme, form, language and tone.
93. In some lessons teachers share clear objectives with the class. In these instances pupils are helped to understand the reasons for the work they are to do and have a clear sense of purpose in going about it. However, in other lessons teachers allow a significant numbers of pupils to remain quiet during whole class discussions. This does not help to develop pupils' confidence in speaking or their ability to talk through ideas in a sustained way. In some lessons teachers give too much direction when opportunities for more independent work would challenge a greater number of pupils and support their learning more effectively. Support for pupils with special educational needs is good overall, but in some lessons teachers could use the additional support teacher more productively.
94. Teachers often provide real situations for writing, a practice that helps pupils in their development of a range of forms and styles. An excellent publication of autobiographical accounts and imaginative writing entitled, 'A Dagenham Childhood' is a particularly good example. This, in common with 'Words of Our World', published a few years previously, has not only been sold within the local community, but is also used as a learning resource within the department. Marking is usually thoughtful, methodical and constructive. At best it is very well focused and supportive of further learning, for example, through the setting of targets for improvement. However, the quality of marking is not consistent throughout the department and some of it is superficial.
95. The department is well led and managed. It demonstrates a commitment to raising standards and improving the quality of teaching. The department sets targets for raising attainment and annually reviews progress towards achieving them. The subject handbook helps teachers to plan their work effectively. The head of department systematically monitors the quality of the department's work through regular scrutiny of pupils' exercise books and frequent observations of teaching.
96. Since the last inspection the department has implemented a range of strategies to address the issues raised in that report and has made sound progress in several respects. In particular there is now a greater range of personal and imaginative writing of quality at both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. However, it has not yet fully resolved some of the issues. Pupils' speaking and listening skills have improved but, despite the provision of many opportunities for pupils to discuss ideas in pairs and

small groups, the speaking skills of some pupils remain under-developed. These pupils contribute little in lessons. Opportunities to use information and communication technology, though better than they were at the time of the previous inspection, remain limited.

97. The department is aware of a need now to focus on raising standards by developing pupils' speaking and listening skills and by providing a wider range of opportunities for independent learning. It is also aware of the need to create greater access by pupils to information and communication technology.

MATHEMATICS

98. Pupils' attainment in the 1999 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 is well below the national average. Results in 2000 are much improved, but are still below average. In comparison with pupils in similar schools in 1999 attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is below average. The percentage of pupils attaining GCSE grades A*-C in 1999 is well below the national average. Results improved in 2000, but remain well below average. Boys attained better results than girls in both 1999 and 2000 in contrast to their broadly equal attainment in GCSE mathematics nationally. The school enters a small number of candidates each year for A-level. There is a wide spread of attainment. Although two students out of fourteen attained a grade A in 1999, too many others did not attain a pass grade.
99. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils' overall attainment in lessons and other work is below the national expectation for the course, although this represents satisfactory progress for most pupils. Higher attaining pupils can solve simultaneous equations and they can find interior and exterior angles of polygons. Middle set pupils use brackets in algebra appropriately, determine angles in an obtuse-angled triangle and use tree diagrams effectively in work on probability. While lower set pupils understand some basic geometrical concepts, such as area, they lack confidence in their work on number. Too many pupils cannot recall number facts such as 4×12 and have very limited mental skills generally.
100. Pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 4 is also below expected standards. Although pupils are currently making sound progress achievement is not as high as it could be for some pupils because of previous staffing difficulties in the department. Many higher attaining pupils have secure algebraic skills enabling them to change the subject of a formula successfully, a skill required for pupils to gain the highest GCSE grades, but a few are less confident. These higher attaining pupils use and apply mathematics effectively in their GCSE coursework tasks. Middle set pupils can use their knowledge that the total probability of outcomes of an experiment is 1. They draw appropriate conclusions from scatter diagrams in a car sales investigation. Some pupils successfully calculate quantities using the idea of ratio in practical examples, but many others are either unable to interpret the questions, or make basic errors in both written and mental calculations. This lowers the standards achieved. Most lower set pupils use a protractor with reasonable accuracy in completing a pie chart, but others are unsure how it should be used to measure an angle. Although pupils understand that the sectors of the circle should be in proportion to the quantities represented they are unable to calculate the angles required.
101. The small group of Year 13 students studying A-level mathematics is of an average standard overall. The students mostly have sound knowledge and understanding of their work on the exponential function and can solve A-level problems using statistical techniques.

102. Many pupils have a positive attitude to learning mathematics, but some are not as well motivated. In most cases their behaviour in lessons is good and it is always at least satisfactory. Pupils listen to the teacher attentively and to other pupils when they are responding to a question. When given the opportunity pupils contribute thoughtfully in whole-class discussions, but can be unresponsive when they lack confidence in their answers, or are unsure about the teacher's reaction. They settle well to class-work tasks and take trouble to present their work in exercise books neatly. However, their numeracy skills in mathematics and across the curriculum are not as good as they should be. In particular, older pupils lack confidence in mental calculations. Some good examples of the use of numeracy skills were observed in art and in design and technology, but the lack of a whole school numeracy policy affects the development of pupils' numeracy skills across the curriculum.
103. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It was good or very good in half of mathematics lessons observed and satisfactory in nearly all others. There were more good lessons seen in Key Stage 4 than in Key Stage 3. Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of mathematics enabling pupils to make steady progress in their knowledge and understanding of the subject. A few teachers incorporate literacy and numeracy skills routinely so that pupils tackle associated aspects of mathematics with more confidence and success. For example, in a well taught Year 11 lesson on probability the teacher took trouble to ensure that all pupils understood the meaning of words such as 'prime' and could cope with factors and equivalent fractions. This enabled pupils to embark on a series of GCSE questions on probability with greater assurance. Other teachers miss opportunities to develop these skills so that many pupils struggle to understand problems or else make errors in basic calculations if they do embark on an appropriate method. There is too little time set aside for pupils to enhance and extend their mental skills.
104. In most cases teachers plan lessons satisfactorily, encouraging pupils to work consistently at an appropriate level. In the best lessons teachers explain clearly, probe pupils' knowledge and understanding by well-directed questions and use resources effectively to illustrate key points. For example, Year 7 pupils significantly improved their understanding of number sequences when the teacher used a metre rule marked with coloured, self-adhesive stickers, to represent a number line including positive and negative numbers.
105. On some occasions teachers dominate the lesson too much providing pupils with too few opportunities to contribute so that the pupils lose interest and make slower progress. Most teachers manage pupils effectively and insist on high standards of behaviour. This works best where the teacher has developed a rapport with the class and supports and encourages the pupils rather than continually admonishing them. For example, in a very good lesson on pie charts the teacher held the attention of a potentially difficult Year 11 lower set by showing sensitivity to pupils' strengths and weaknesses. A pupil came to the front of the class to show his answers on the white-board and the teacher used these effectively to bring out pitfalls and difficulties without undermining the volunteer. There is helpful support for pupils with special educational needs so that they make good progress. In one instance the co-operation between the class teacher and support teacher created a very good Year 8 lesson when each took turns to lead the session and involved all pupils in appropriate tasks. There are too few opportunities for pupils to use information and control technology in their work in mathematics. Teachers set and mark homework regularly.

106. During the school year 1999/2000 there was an excessively high turnover of teaching staff in the mathematics department and the school found it difficult to replace key staff; even now one vacancy still remains. Many pupils experienced an unsatisfactory lack of continuity in their mathematics education, affecting standards. The new leadership is at an early stage in overcoming this, but has made a satisfactory start in improving pupils' learning and raising standards. The department works well as a team and all members are keen to make progress. Although there has been no significant improvement so far in Key Stage 3 test and GCSE results since the 1996 OFSTED report, evidence from the inspection suggests higher levels of attainment in the pipeline. The department has yet to introduce in a sustained way: procedures for monitoring, evaluating and developing teaching; the co-ordination of numeracy across the curriculum and opportunities for all pupils to use information and communication technology.

SCIENCE

107. Results in National Curriculum tests for pupils aged 14 years have declined since the last inspection. In 2000 there was an improvement compared with 1999 although results are still below national averages. Performance in 1999 was well below both the national average and that of similar schools, although the proportion of pupils achieving the highest levels was not significantly different. In 1998 the results, although below national averages, were generally in line with those for similar schools. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys or girls.
108. Overall performance at GCSE has declined since the last inspection. At the age of 16 years all the pupils take the more demanding double balanced science examination. Although in 1999 the A*-G pass rate was in line with that nationally, results at the highest A*-C grades were well below the national average and those for similar schools. In 1998 the results were close to the national average. Provisional results for A*-C grades in 2000 indicate some improvement from the previous year. In 1999 boys' attainment was better than girls which is against the national trend, but the reasons for this are unclear.
109. The school, over the past two years, has offered biology at A-level and a pass rate of 100 percent was achieved both in 2000 and in 1999. However, few students achieve the highest grades. A small number of students from the school studied A-level chemistry and physics at other institutions with results appropriate for their abilities.
110. Standards for pupils currently in Years 9 and 11 are below average. There are wide variations in the progress the pupils make during lessons and across the years. The better progress is directly related to good teaching. There is unsatisfactory progress being made by pupils in investigative skills particularly in Key Stage 3. In a Year 9 class pupils experienced difficulties in making a prediction. The range of approaches to ensuring a fair test was narrow and there was no understanding of variables. Pupils' progress is further reduced because they find it difficult to remember information. Both upper and lower ability pupils found it difficult to retain knowledge of atomic structure from Year 9 to Year 10. Sixth form students, however, are achieving at expected levels for the course.
111. Pupils' literacy skills are variable across all abilities and are generally unsatisfactory. Pupils frequently experience difficulties regarding key scientific language. In a Year 11 class pupils did not understand the term 'raw materials' when studying photosynthesis. In Year 9 and 10 classes pupils were confused regarding the word 'charge' when related to the electrical charge on atomic particles. Pupils were

frequently very willing to read aloud to the class and most were accurate, although there was hesitancy in delivery.

112. Pupils' presentational skills and associated handwriting are variable and frequently unsatisfactory in Key Stage 3 with some improvement as they move into Key Stage 4. Pupils respond positively when they have the chance to record in their own words, but when they do their spelling is frequently poor. Pupils' numeracy skills are generally sound and they can apply their computational number skills in a variety of settings. For example, average ability pupils were able to mentally calculate the difference between the number of neutrons and protons in the nucleus of various atoms. In Year 7 all but the least able were able to construct a line graph accurately from recorded data. There was no evidence of pupils using computers within science lessons, although some pupils in Key Stage 4 make good use of information and communication technology for the production of their coursework.
113. Gifted and talented pupils have not been identified. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory and is good when support is available. Insufficient use is made of pupils' individual education plans to inform teachers' planning.
114. The quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory overall. Teaching ranged from very good to unsatisfactory, but there was too much unsatisfactory teaching and under half was good or very good. There was little difference in the quality of teaching across Key Stages 3 and 4 and all teaching in the sixth form was at least satisfactory.
115. Very good and good teaching is the result of creative teacher planning with clear and precise learning objectives that give detailed consideration to the learning needs of pupils. This planning includes the provision of interesting and appropriate resources which motivate and stimulated pupils to learn. A good example was seen in a Year 11 lesson where pupils were testing the difference between exhaled and inhaled air. Pupils made good progress in their understanding of the scientific terminology associated with respiration as a direct result of the activity. Some lessons start promptly and take place at a good pace which ensures pupils are fully occupied throughout the lesson, their thinking is challenged and they work consistently. In a Year 9 class pupils were challenged to think about the nature of matter through the creation of heating and cooling curves. The teacher demonstrated the effect of cooling on liquids very well with the use of the overhead projector and using table tennis balls as an analogy for particles. This not only interested the pupils, but also helped them to progress in their understanding.
116. High expectations of pupils' achievement are a feature of good teaching. In a Year 10 class pupils were constantly provided with challenging questions and a firm, but insistent approach ensured that pupils responded with the answers. Pupils gained confidence in themselves and their ability to answer accurately and their understanding and knowledge of atomic structure progressed rapidly. Pupils were set appropriate homework tasks and good monitoring ensured that pupils realised the importance of this work.
117. Unsatisfactory teaching is a result of poor planning, an over teacher-directed approach and a lack of a range of activities within the lesson. Pupils' interest and engagement with the lesson are lowered with the result that pupils do not make enough progress and their behaviour is poor. Another feature of unsatisfactory teaching is that pupils do not have the chance to work in a variety groupings and be involved in practical activities in order to develop their personal initiative. Because the

monitoring of pupils' work in these lessons is unsatisfactory the quality of presentation is not raised nor are wrong answers corrected. Some teachers are less confident when teaching outside their own subject specialism, especially in the physical sciences. This can hinder older Key Stage 4 pupils' progress and learning. Since the last inspection there has been a decline in the overall quality of teaching.

118. The new head of department has a clear vision for the future and is very well supported by the second in department. The science team has a good commitment to improve standards. Very good monitoring of pupils' progress and attainment at Key Stage 4 has resulted in the identification of pupils to receive extra support in order to raise standards. However, there is not enough monitoring of teaching. There has been insufficient progress in developing the curriculum since the last inspection. The department relies too heavily on a published resource at Key Stage 3 with no clear scheme of work in place that consistently meets the needs of pupils. There is not enough curriculum time at Key Stage 4 in both Years 10 and 11 in order to deliver the double balanced science course. Spiritual and cultural aspects of the curriculum are insufficiently promoted. The use and development of pupils' information and communication technology skills are unsatisfactory. All this lowers pupil achievement.
119. There are not enough science staff and a too few staff with qualifications in physical science. Accommodation is not good enough with a lack of sufficiency of services in laboratories. Some laboratories are in need of refurbishment. All this also impacts adversely on standards achieved by pupils.
120. Overall the department has made unsatisfactory progress since the last inspection. Attainment at Key Stages 3 and 4 has not improved sufficiently and the quality of teaching has got worse. There is still not enough curriculum time at Key Stage 4 and no scheme of work at Key Stage 3. Pupils' investigative skills particularly at Key Stage 3 remain underdeveloped and the provision, use and availability of new technology have not improved.

ART

121. In the 1999 GCSE examinations the proportion of pupils gaining A*-C grades was below the national average, but had improved since the previous year with many pupils doing better in art than in their other subjects. In the year 2000 there was further improvement. Girls gain more A grades than boys, but teachers now encourage boys to strive harder to redress the imbalance. These improvements clearly indicate effective teaching strategies as well as positive attitudes from pupils.
122. For current Year 9 pupils approaching the end of Key Stage 3 the standards observed during the inspection exceed national expectations and show good improvement since the last inspection. This is notable given that many pupils enter the school with low capability in art. By Year 9 pupils have acquired a useful repertoire of drawing, painting and modelling skills and achieve well. This is a direct result of teachers' high expectations for their pupils, their own expertise in art and very good levels of specialist subject knowledge. For example, all teachers in the department teach all of the skills of two- and three-dimensional image making. Teachers plan step-by-step approaches to improve pupils' capabilities, building on pupils' previous knowledge and skills. This is particularly evident in sketchbooks used regularly in class and for homework. This sequential approach contributes greatly to the pupils' understanding of their own development. Teachers regularly write helpful comments in pupils' sketchbooks and often make explanatory drawings to help them to understand more difficult concepts.

123. Pupils have good opportunities in art to develop literacy and numeracy skills. They use correct vocabulary when discussing their work and know about symbolism and abstraction. Pupils represent three-dimensional objects convincingly on a two-dimensional picture surface. They combine skills in mathematics and art to create the illusion of space and depth when learning how to use one and two point perspective. Pupils make accurate calculations, measurements and guidelines to depict buildings, objects and figures. One group of pupils brought in books from home to support their understanding of the Art Deco period. The teacher's own obvious enthusiasm for the style had prompted some pupils to undertake further research in their free time and this contributed to their interest, motivation and enjoyment of the subject.
124. By the end of Key Stage 4 standards are above average and this represents very good improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils begin to make more individual choices. They select the most suitable materials and techniques when pursuing more personal interests. For example, pupils in Year 11 researched preferred artists to support their work when making self-portraits. Choices included Picasso, Botticelli, Stanley Spencer and Van Gogh. Pupils employed similar brush strokes, colours, shapes and styles to those used by these artists. They made comparisons between their own work and their chosen artists. Pupils' work is lively, well informed and carefully executed. Teachers show that they value pupils' work by giving useful oral feedback during lessons and by encouraging pupils' own critical appreciation at the end of projects. Teachers sensibly augment their own expertise by inviting other specialists to work with pupils. In Year 10 a one-day workshop was the starting point for some admirable work investigating the cultural and spiritual elements of Aboriginal art forms. Pupils learned the conventions, ideas and beliefs underlying the non-figurative works. The resultant paintings were vibrant, thoughtful attempts to recreate faithfully Aboriginal imagery, showing clear understanding of the technical processes involved.
125. Standards at A-level have improved significantly since 1998. In 1999 and in 2000 all students entered gained A-D grades. A greater number of students have opted to study A-level art in the current academic year. Standards for current A-level students are at least consistent with the requirements for the course and sometimes better. This is a significant improvement and due to the very good teaching throughout the art department.
126. Teachers share high expectations of the students who in return show commitment and perseverance when undertaking extended study using the cumulative skills gained over the key stages of development. Last year's work, produced by the current Year 13, is evidence of extensive research and investigation into the projects and themes studied. Students work meticulously, exploring a wide range of materials and ideas and produce good quality imagery.
127. The quality of teaching is very good. A strength of the whole department is the high quality of relationships fostered by teachers at all key stages of pupils' development. The teachers set regular homework. The good use of sketchbooks keeps pupils focussed on improving skills and recognising possibilities which otherwise they might lose. There is an 'open-door' approach in the department with teachers providing opportunities for pupils to return after school to complete work or to do some form of personal study in art. A very good feature is the inclusive attitude and sensitivity which teachers show to pupils of low academic ability and those with special educational needs. It ensures they make good progress. The brisk and purposeful pace of lessons, systematic skills teaching and insistence on high levels of behaviour ensure pupils give of their best. This approach helps to raise pupils' confidence.

Pupils take pride in their work and show appreciation and respect for the work of each other.

128. The head of department has a very clear vision for the development of the subject and leads by example. Management is good. The 'open-door' approach for pupils is extended to teachers with planning undertaken on a co-operative basis. Teachers generously share ideas and expertise with colleagues. They model lessons for each other to improve practice and refine skills.
129. The department is an attractive learning environment. A wealth of stimulating display materials that include pupils' work, reproductions of the work of other cultures and contemporary art forms supports pupils' work. There are new personal computers and colour printers in the department. These were not seen in use during the inspection. At present, opportunities are lost for pupils to research projects or to generate imagery using new technology. No free standing sculptural forms or mobile work were seen. There are some good examples of three-dimensional modelling work, but it is usually low or high relief with a flat base.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

130. For the last three years teachers' assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 show standards in line with the national average. GCSE results for the higher A*-C grades are below the national average, but have improved. Food technology results are consistently well below the national average, although attainment on entry to this course is low. Results for textile technology, graphics products, electronics and resistant materials fluctuated considerably over the last three years from well below to in line with the national average. Results, in terms of A*-G grades, are much closer to the national average and pupils achieve consistently 100 per cent A*-G grades in some design and technology subjects. In 1999 girls gained a significantly higher percentage of A*-C grades than boys, but both boys and girls achieved A* and A grades. Only a small number of students took the design technology A-level course in the sixth form and most achieved passes at the lower grades.
131. Overall, standards for pupils currently in Year 9 are slightly below national expectations. In most design and technology subjects pupils develop suitable levels of understanding and skills in both designing and making. However, some pupils in food technology do not like the learning activities offered and consequently make unsatisfactory progress. The quality of research, the development of design ideas and the presentation of work in folders are satisfactory. The work of higher ability pupils is often good. For example, the work of one pupil working on an electrical project involving circuit making was good. For another pupil at Key Stage 3 calculations and designs for practical work in plastic were of a particularly high standard. Pupils experience a good balance of activities to develop knowledge and skills but only remember a small amount of what they learn. Pupils make very little use of computers to support design and technology work. They develop satisfactorily their practical skills through set tasks and more individually designed items. Pupils of all levels of ability cut, shape and join materials satisfactorily as, for example, when assembling an electronic circuit board or making their individually designed wooden spice racks.
132. By the age of 16, pupils make significant progress in the production of good, in many cases very good, course work folders, but attainment overall is below the national average. Content is well researched and presented to a very high standard in all design technology subjects. The structured approach used to address the design process enables all students to organise their work, carry out research, develop their

ideas and produce solutions to identified problems. Knowledge is often developed through this research process, but again pupils do not remember it easily which has a significant effect on their overall performance. The quality of work varies with ability, but many students with special educational needs achieve good outcomes. The graphical presentation of work is very good, but there is insufficient evidence of the use of computers in pupils' work. Pupils demonstrate satisfactory practical skills, but do not have sufficient depth in their knowledge about materials and the techniques required to use them.

133. Teaching is overall satisfactory. In Key Stage 4 most teaching is good and a quarter is very good or excellent. In Key Stage 3 most of the teaching is satisfactory or better with a small amount of good and very good teaching. However, in approximately one third of the lessons seen the quality of teaching was unsatisfactory. Most teachers demonstrate good technical knowledge, but there were some technical errors in one lesson during discussion about materials and the use of tools. Planning is generally good, but in weaker food technology lessons planned activities do not have sufficient focus and this results in poor behaviour and ineffective learning. In most lessons teachers have suitably high expectations of behaviour and performance and pupils respond positively by showing interest in their work and good levels of concentration. The introduction of technical language in oral work, word reinforcement on the board, use of calculations and the recording of results of surveys in table and graphical form are developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. However, there is a need to extend this good practice through the development of speaking, reading and number skills in more lessons.
134. In the best lessons, for example, in Year 10 electronics, teachers manage the pupils and resources very effectively with well prepared teaching materials and well structured practical work. This enables pupils to develop their knowledge by carrying out experimental work in pairs and then comparing, recording and evaluating results. Assessment procedures are good with good individual support and discussion about pupils' work. Marking is carried out regularly with some good use of written comments. The careful structuring of learning objectives in Key Stage 4 enables students of all abilities, including those with special needs, to address the tasks set. This, together with the regular assessment of pupils' work with extended written comments, is very effective in enabling pupils to improve their work. Most students work at a sound pace and respond very positively when set timed tasks. When teachers do not plan lessons well pupils quickly become disaffected, time is wasted and little learning takes place.
135. Design and technology courses in the past have provided the full range of learning opportunities required by the National Curriculum. However, the very recent reduction in the time available for design and technology in Key Stage 3 means that there has not been time for new schemes of work to be put in place for the current academic year to ensure that statutory requirements are met. The time available for design and technology is used well, but the 50 minute lessons restrict the practical work that is taking place, particularly in food technology.
136. Despite considerable staffing changes and difficulties in recruitment, leadership and management are good and the department is improving. There is a very positive approach to the development and improvement of the subject. The department makes effective use of current staffing, accommodation and learning resources. Accommodation for resistant materials is very good, but food technology rooms are in poor condition. Resources are generally good, but the use of computers is under developed. Risk assessments need to be carried out and followed through more vigorously.

137. Although GCSE grades are below the national average course work is of a good standard. There is a well-structured approach to the teaching of designing and making in Key Stage 4 which is helping to improve standards. However, more needs to be done to extend and retain pupils' knowledge. New schemes of work need to be developed in Key Stage 3 to use the reduced time properly and include the contribution which food technology makes to the delivery of National Curriculum requirements. There is some development in pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, but this and the use of computers should be extended further.

GEOGRAPHY

138. Teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999 show that standards are in line with national expectations although few pupils achieve the highest grades. More girls than boys were awarded the higher grades. In more recent testing the school has maintained these standards with a slightly increased number of boys awarded the higher grades. Pupils, including those pupils with special educational needs, achieve well given their below average attainment on entry to the school.
139. In 1999 at GCSE most pupils entered gained an A*-G pass. However, A* - C grade results were well below those achieved by all schools nationally. This represents a decline from the upward trend shown at the time of the last inspection. The overall level of attainment of boys is similar to that of girls. Pupils who have received learning support attain better than expected results. The most recent results for summer 2000 show a significant improvement in the number of A* - C grades and, whilst still below national standards, these results reflect positively upon the efforts made by teachers to develop good learning activities.
140. Attainment for pupils currently at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with that expected. Pupils develop a sound knowledge of a variety of contrasting environments and their natural and human features. From Year 7 pupils start to record information clearly and accurately on maps and diagrams. Many pupils show good standards of presentation. They soon acquire the confidence to use Ordnance Survey maps, but there are not enough locally-based practical activities to help pupils to make use of their mapping and recording skills. In Year 9 pupils begin to recognise the impact that people have on the environment by studying National Parks and creating a simple brochure to record key facts and information. By the end of the key stage most pupils use a range of geographical terms accurately because of the department's positive efforts to improve literacy standards. Some opportunities for in-depth written work exist, but the department has yet to identify strategies for developing writing standards in order to improve levels of attainment, especially those of the more able students.
141. At Key Stage 4 overall attainment has improved, but remains below the level expected nationally for pupils as they approach the end of this key stage. Throughout the key stage pupils make sound gains in knowledge across the ability range. Teachers suitably encourage pupils to use information and techniques acquired during Key Stage 3. Pupils gain a wide range of geographical knowledge as a result of all teachers' attempts to promote understanding through whole class activities. Pupils recognise the causes and effects of changes in different environments with, for example, Year 11 pupils linking the changes in rain forest areas to both natural and human influences. When they have the chance pupils show a good ability to extract and record information from a variety of sources, such as in Year 10 where pupils are interested and fully involved in identifying the features of the earth's internal structure. The department has made some attempt to widen the range of activities provided to support greater learning and understanding. The limited range of textbooks available

for pupils' use hinders further development. The recent focus on improving the standards of course-work has made a significant contribution to better levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 4. Many pupils across the ability range now produce a quality report using a variety of techniques acquired during the whole geography course. In recent work about a local town's transport problems pupils investigated a problem and used graphs, bar charts, maps and photographs to produce a report. However, there are insufficient opportunities across the curriculum for practical, investigative approaches to enable fuller involvement of pupils in their learning and to raise attainment further.

142. The recently introduced A-level course is well planned. The positive relationship developing between staff and students encourages students to discuss ideas confidently within small groups and for individuals to make presentations to the whole group. As this is a new course it is too early to assess levels of attainment.
143. Teaching is satisfactory at both Key Stages 3 and 4. Good teaching occurs when pupils have tasks matched to their ability and covering a range of learning activities. The teaching in sixth form lessons is good. All teachers show appropriate subject knowledge for the lessons they teach. Most pupils enjoy geography and are keen to answer questions about the topic studied, but too much depends on the recall of information rather than in-class research or the results of using a homework task. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support in lessons and are fully involved in all lesson activities with good teacher support in discussion. Pupils are made clearly aware of expectations in terms of behaviour and the positive use of praise to reward good work and ideas supports a good learning environment in most lessons.
144. Whole-class teaching is good with clearly defined lesson aims explained to pupils at the start of most lessons. This promotes good understanding and, together with the wide spread use of time targets, enables pupils of all abilities to meet the learning targets set in most lessons. Too many lessons have a similar format and currently there are few innovative teaching strategies to enable pupils to expand their knowledge and understanding through a wide range of learning activities. However, in a Year 7 lesson pupils became very involved in developing their own symbols to represent everyday information as an introduction to work on using an Ordnance Survey map. Subsequently this helped pupils to identify successfully ordnance survey symbols on a map. Pupils work sensibly in pairs to collect information and check ideas, but the use of group work to investigate a topic and provide a report is insufficient. In most lessons the whole class completes the same tasks with few additional activities for pupils of different levels of ability. This does not help pupils of different abilities to achieve the best possible standards. This lack of challenge has a significant impact on the most able pupils who could achieve more.
145. The department is in a period of transition with a new head of department. Over the last few months the work of the acting head of department has ensured the smooth running of the department. The support of all other staff has enabled National Curriculum assessment and the development of the new A-level course to be completed on time. The department has shown that it can work well as a team. It must continue to do so to develop the Key Stage 3 curriculum that currently lacks the detail necessary to provide a fully planned teaching programme. Resources are appropriate to deliver the existing curriculum, but the range of textbooks and worksheets is insufficient to support individual and group tasks. Work is regularly marked, but the lack of written comment on key pieces of work makes it difficult for pupils to identify what is good about their work or how to improve. Little use is made of information and communication technology to support learning and understanding.

The department must address this issue in order to provide all pupils with the full range of appropriate learning experiences.

146. There have been a number of improvements since the last inspection with higher standards of attainment at the end of Key Stages 3 and 4 across the ability range, although not for the highest GCSE grades. The standard of presentation has improved and this links with the clear improvement in coursework at the end of Year 11.

HISTORY

147. Pupils' performance at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999 was just below national expectations for this subject. Pupils currently in Year 9 are on target to achieve in line with national expectations at the end of this academic year. Inspection evidence shows that attainment levels for pupils currently in Years 7 and 8 are improving. There is no significant difference between the performance of girls and boys.
148. Teaching across Key Stage 3 is satisfactory and in one lesson observed was very good. Where teaching is very good pupils are asked questions which make them think around the subject being studied and respond in detail. In one Year 9 lesson which explored some of the causes of the First World War the pupils were actively engaged in a variety of activities throughout the lesson. These were, for example, discussion work, reading from the text, extracting information from graphs and recording information in written form. As a direct result all pupils made good progress in this lesson. Conversely, in a Year 8 lessons where pupils were asked questions that only required a one-word response and where the teacher was concentrating solely on imparting knowledge progress made by pupils in the lesson was only just satisfactory.
149. GCSE performance in the summer of 1999 was below the national average. Since the last inspection the public examination results in history at the end of Key Stage 4 have declined both in relation to the proportion of pupils gaining grade C and above and grade G and above. Pupils are not doing as well in history as in other subjects.
150. However, during the inspection there was evidence that pupils currently in Years 10 and 11 are making more consistent progress in relation to their age and ability with standards for the oldest pupils at the level expected for their age. Teaching across Years 10 and 11 was good overall and in both Year 11 lessons very good. In the lessons where teaching was very good high standards of written work were demanded by the teacher; regular question and answer sessions took place to check what the pupils had learned and the lesson objectives were made clear to the pupils at the beginning of the lesson. The pupils made good progress. By contrast, in one Year 10 lesson where teaching was unsatisfactory the task the pupils were required to undertake was not sufficiently explained in detail by the teacher and as a result pupils became confused, they lost interest and their behaviour was poor.
151. Because the number of pupils entered for the A-level examination in the summer of 1999 was small, meaningful comparisons with national results are not possible. However, most passed although there were few at the highest grades. The number of pupils currently studying history at A-level has increased. From the one Year 12 lesson observed pupils are currently on target to achieve in line with their age and ability in the summer of 2002. The teaching seen at this level was particularly good.

152. There has been no significant improvement in standards across Key Stages 3 and 4 since the last inspection. This is mainly due to a lack of formal monitoring procedures across the department both in relation to the quality of teaching and the quality of learning. At present there are inconsistencies with regard to the way in which pupils' work is marked and how their progress is assessed. Opportunities need to be created to enable teachers to observe each other to extend the range of teaching strategies used across the department as a whole. This would help to raise the overall satisfactory quality of teaching observed to the level of the best teaching seen at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. Management needs to be more effective with clear leadership setting out future developments.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

153. End of Key Stage 3 assessments in summer 1999 were below the national average. In 2000 all pupils achieved the expected level, but evidence to support assessments is thin. Standards observed during the inspection suggest these results are too high. For pupils currently at the end of Key Stage 3 attainment is overall below that expected nationally. It is in line with expectations in handling and communication of information. For example, pupils are able to use information downloaded from the Internet appropriately when carrying out research. They are familiar with the need for security when using computers and in this respect all have their own password to access the school network. Pupils know how to use various features such as text boxes and are familiar with the use of menus. However, there is a lack of hardware and software necessary for pupils to be taught how to use information and communication technology for controlling devices or for the collection of data, such as monitoring temperature changes. Insufficient work is carried out using computer systems to model situations, for example, by changing variables in a computer model. Hence pupils do not have the opportunity to acquire all the required capabilities.
154. In 1999 GCSE results were close to national averages, but fell in 2000. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils' attainment overall is well below expected levels. This is because pupils, other than those taking GCSE in the subject or related courses such as business studies, have few opportunities to gain the required skills. Pupils taking examination courses have a basic understanding of computer systems and can describe them in terms of input, process and output. They can analyse and formulate general proposals for solving problems involving information and communication technology, but do not understand how to use this information to test and evaluate their solutions. There is no timetabled provision for pupils who do not take optional examination courses.
155. A-level results show a rise from 1998 and all pupils obtained pass grades 1999. In 2000 standards were broadly in line with national averages. In the current Year 12 standards are below average for those doing the A-level course. Pupils are able to use a programming language to produce a program to sort numbers into sequence, but their general note-taking lacks the level of organisation required at this stage.
156. Throughout Key Stages 3 and 4 school pupils do not achieve highly enough. However, current Year 8 pupils are making better progress than the current Year 9. They are learning how to collect data relating to weather and present this in a form suitable for particular audiences. In Key Stage 4 pupils taking the examination course made unsatisfactory progress in Year 10 last year. At the beginning of Year 11 these pupils are now making satisfactory progress, but levels of attainment are still below expectations. Progress with the use of spreadsheets is slow through both key stages.

157. Teaching is satisfactory in specific information and communication technology lessons. In a third of the lessons observed it was good. Only one unsatisfactory lesson was observed, although there were less effective elements in a number of the lessons judged to be satisfactory. Successful elements of teaching include teachers' good knowledge of the subject which is used to good effect in question and answer sessions. Where this is combined with the giving of information pupils' understanding is consolidated and extended. Pupils have good attitudes to learning in lessons when presented with opportunities to develop research skills. This enables them to work at a good pace. This was not a feature of all lessons. Teachers do not use assessment enough to help lesson planning which often leads to all pupils working at the same level. Written materials presented to pupils, for example, in Year 10, do not take account of their different reading abilities and this leads to some pupils making limited progress with their learning. Where lessons are presented on a step by step basis pupils' levels of interest are adversely affected and their rate of learning declines. Pupils following the A-level course are well motivated in class, but there is insufficient use of homework to consolidate learning.
158. An appropriate curriculum is in place for Key Stage 3, but one aspect, the control of devices, cannot yet be fully implemented. Therefore it is unsatisfactory. The curriculum at Key Stage 4 is unsatisfactory as there is very limited access to computers for pupils other than those following GCSE information and communication technology and vocational courses such as office applications. Statutory requirements are not met at Key Stage 4. The 'A' level course follows syllabus requirements.
159. Information and communication technology is well used to support work in music where pupils can use a computer program to investigate pitch, duration, timbre and harmony. Pupils make good use of computers in office applications, but there is no evidence of the timetabled use of computers in any other area of the curriculum, including business studies and accounts. This issue was raised in the previous inspection report and continues to be unsatisfactory.
160. The system for assessing pupils' work in Key Stage 3 is unsatisfactory. It does not inform pupils of the levels at which they are working or how they might improve them. Assessment is not used to take account of pupils' different levels of attainment when planning lessons. Teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 are insufficiently broadly based across all of the required elements of the course. Assessment in Key Stage 4 follows only examination course requirements. Where pupils' work has been marked some of the comments are overgenerous. In the A-level course pupils are given good feedback on their work in lessons, but there is an insufficiently rigorous approach to the assessment of their general work.
161. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Teaching staff are aware of these pupils' needs and give appropriate support, enabling pupils to make progress similar to other class members. Where there is additional support in class it helps pupils to make good progress. There are too few opportunities for higher attaining pupils to work at their own levels as lesson planning does not take their learning needs into account.
162. Whole school and subject management of information and communication technology are unsatisfactory. The school is successfully carrying out improvements to the school network which will lead to all pupils having access to the Internet and e-mail facilities. However, the department development plan lacks the necessary detail for it to be a useful planning tool. No formal monitoring of teaching takes place and there is insufficient rigour in overseeing the work of other members of department to ensure,

for example, that delegated responsibilities are being met. A lack of clear leadership has meant that the information and communication technology planning group has not been effective in implementing cross-curricular aspects. Staffing is adequate to cover the current courses, but the level of staff expertise to deliver all of the elements of the National Curriculum in other departments is inadequate. The school has been slow to provide appropriate training although this is planned for the coming school year.

163. The facilities in the three computer rooms are generally well used. Those in the learning resource centre are very well used by pupils out of school time providing a means for them to develop research skills. They are under utilised during the day. The number of computers available is lower than the national average for the size of school and contributes to the low level of skills of most of the pupils.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

164. Standards in French at the end of Key Stage 3 are broadly in line with national expectations. Teacher assessments in 2000 show an improvement in attainment of 10 per cent on the previous year. Standards in lessons observed were in line with national expectations for the end of Year 9. This represents good achievement given pupils' below average attainment on entry to the school.
165. The percentage of GCSE A*-C grades in 1998 and 1999 for the whole year group in French increased, but was still well below the national average. At the end of Key Stage 4 in 2000, the results in the GCSE examinations for A*-C grades are above the national average for French, although this is based for the first time on a smaller number of pupils taking the examination course as an option. This is not the national picture where most pupils take GCSE French as required. GCSE results for small groups of pupils learning Spanish are broadly in line with national averages. However, standards for current Year 11 pupils taking French are below average although some good examples of listening skills and pieces of extended writing in French were seen in Year 10 and 11 classes respectively.
166. Very few students take A-level French and although pupils obtain passes it is not possible to equate these with national figures. However, Year 12 students opting to take the GCSE short course in German achieve well. In 1999 eight out of 11 entries gained the higher A*-C grades.
167. At both Key Stages 3 and 4 pupils achieve well and they make good progress compared with their own prior attainment. They build on and develop their knowledge and understanding of the language being learnt and consolidate the skills required to communicate. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress and are well supported in class by both teachers and learning support assistants.
168. The quality of pupils' learning is linked directly to the quality of the teaching which is good overall and never less than satisfactory. Teachers' own good knowledge of the language provides pupils with a good model to imitate. The clear learning objectives, crisp pace and focussed activities built into lesson planning give pupils a secure framework in which they can progress. There is a good balance in lessons between speaking and writing practice. In a Year 10 second set pupils successfully practised pronunciation of key words based on family relationships in a structured and focussed way. The teacher was aware of the range of ability in the class and helped all pupils to participate. She used simple resources to good effect and the pupils responded well. Pronunciation practice is a priority for pupils at the school. In a Year 9 class pupils learning how to talk about the past in French were motivated to participate and

practise the structure by completing a noughts and crosses board with examples to be adapted in each square. In Year 11 pupils talked about a typical day in French and built on and improved their descriptions with the help of the teacher using the overhead projector in an imaginative way.

169. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and well and the constructive comments which they make give pupils advice on how to improve. Teachers also give homework regularly which follows on from work done in class and helps pupils consolidate their knowledge and understanding. An effective assessment system enables teachers to monitor pupils' progress and adjust their planning when necessary.
170. The languages department is well managed and led. This results in a positive and supportive ethos amongst staff, which in turn affects pupils' learning positively. Systems and policies are in place, including thorough schemes of work, which enable teachers to plan lessons effectively. Monitoring of classroom practice is carried out within the department and marking and recording is also checked.
171. There have been a number of improvements since the last inspection. Pupils now have more opportunities to write at length, behaviour has improved and the less able are now given the chance to carry out meaningful tasks. Staffing is stable, the quality of teaching more consistent and modern languages now enjoy higher status in the eyes of pupils and parents. Standards are improving, but the move to make languages optional at Key Stage 4 is in breach of statutory requirements.

PERFORMING ARTS

Music

172. Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stages 3 and 4 is at nationally expected levels. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous report. In last year's GCSE examinations all of the ten candidates achieved a pass within the range A*-G and four achieved a grade B or C.
173. Pupils achieve well in relation to their standards on entry to the school. In Key Stage 3 Year 9 pupils listen carefully to music very skilfully played by their teachers on keyboard or guitar. The pupils' objectives are to note where changes of tempo or volume occur and to match these using the correct Italian terms. They also write down their reactions to the music. The 'live' performances of music, well chosen for the purpose, enhance the pupils' learning. Most correctly complete the task and their written work is satisfactorily neat. The work links well with previous learning about how music can describe events and ideas and release emotions. The activity also provides pupils with the stimulus and structure to create their own music in subsequent lessons. Pupils make good progress in this work.
174. Younger pupils in the key stage also progress well in lessons due to the good choice of activities to develop rhythmic performance skills. They quickly learn the component parts of the drum-kit and individually have opportunities to learn and practise the basic skills of rhythm and beat. Their success in this gives them obvious feelings of satisfaction and fulfilment. Other pupils confidently use the computers to choose programmed percussion tracks and describe what kinds of rhythms they are hearing. The teachers also plan for continuity in this as the pupils will go on to create their own rhythmic tracks.
175. Pupils in Year 11 are making good progress towards their GCSE examination. Several have already recorded compositions that show originality and imagination.

Their pieces have well-contrasted sections showing a good grasp of major and minor tonality. The melodies are musically shaped and extended and the pieces written well for woodwind, keyboard and voice. The standard of these pupils' compositions and their performance of them are well in line with examination expectations and represent good achievement.

176. Teachers' planning of the lessons builds well on pupils' previous learning. For example, in an earlier lesson pupils had listened to and analysed descriptive pieces such as "Danse Macabre". They studied how composers achieve musical effects. In the lesson observed pupils thoughtfully planned their own composition of a piece of descriptive music. They chose the stimulus of a story or event and decided what sections the piece would have and the kind of music they wanted to write. They experimented by inputting sounds from their keyboard to the computer, showing a good knowledge of the computer's possibilities as an aid to composition.
177. Year 10 pupils use the computer's 'click track' to establish a clear pulse over which they successfully improvise rhythmic patterns using the keyboard drum-kit facility. The opportunity to use these resources motivates pupils to work hard. Most are anxious to succeed. A pupil with a statement of special educational needs successfully devised, recorded and played back his own rhythms. All pupils with special educational needs participate fully in lessons. They often make individual contributions to the work and their progress is good.
178. Older pupils are well encouraged to undertake musical studies. A group of pupils in Year 12 have chosen to do a music course in which they have the option of pursuing an examination award. During their first lesson, which took place during the inspection, pupils opted for instruction on keyboard, guitar, drum-kit and voice. Two pupils already had some instrumental experience, but others had little. Under the teacher's expert guidance the pupils made very good progress within the double period and at the end played a blues sequence with enjoyment and some success.
179. Pupils appreciate the high quality of music provision both in teaching and resources. They enjoy the good variety of activities on offer and are anxious to develop their skills. When asked they work well together and appreciate others' success. For example, one pupil's successful performance on the drum-kit drew spontaneous applause. A very small number of pupils sometimes become overexcited and fail to make a proper contribution to the lesson. Mostly, however, there is a good atmosphere of enthusiasm and interest.
180. Teaching overall is good and a third of lessons seen were very good. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. This represents a considerable improvement since the last report. The teaching has some particular strengths. Good planning builds on pupils' prior learning and looks ahead to further development of knowledge, understanding and skills. This is well supported by: good management of lessons which are well-balanced in teaching and pupils' activity; use of assessment to plan future lessons; very good use of resources and supportive relationships with pupils. Occasional lapses of pupils' concentration and behaviour are firmly, but constructively managed. The teachers' good subject knowledge and expert performing skills greatly enhance pupils' learning and enjoyment. Their expertise in the use of information and communication technology in music is a strength and contributes significantly to pupils' progress in the subject. The department offers a range of extra-curricular activities, which include a choir, keyboard club and jazz band. Individual instrumental tuition is available on a variety of instruments and in singing. The school presents regular concerts and shows.

181. The recently appointed head of performing arts also carries responsibility for music and her strong leadership qualities are already raising pupils' levels of attainment and commitment as well as the department's standards of teaching and learning. She has good ideas for further integration of music and drama in the curriculum and extra-curricular activities. In music good management has already made a significant impact through the production of a comprehensive scheme of work which is fully relevant to the school's needs. It details well a programme of skill development and acquisition of knowledge over the key stages and features good policies for assessment procedures, planning and equal opportunities for all pupils to learn and make progress.
182. The school's provision of very high quality of accommodation and resources is an important factor in furthering the development of the subject and improved standards.

Drama

183. Drama is taught within the Performing Arts Department. Pupils follow a programme of drama lessons throughout Key Stage 3 and it is taken by a number of pupils at GCSE. In 1999 GCSE results in this subject compared very favourably with national averages, but the examination entry was too small for valid comparisons to be made. A small number of pupils took A-level drama in 1999, the numbers being too small for fair comparison with national averages.
184. By the end of Key Stage 3 standards are at expected levels with many pupils being able to use a knowledge of dramatic techniques to convey character and mood as well as to explore ideas and issues. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils taking GCSE drama are achieving standards which are broadly in keeping with those expected for this course. For example, they plan effectively in groups and participate in improvisations with concentration and commitment. These skills were demonstrated in one Year 11 lesson where pupils worked in pairs to develop an improvisation based on the visual stimulus of a painting. The levels of involvement and belief shown by all of the pupils in the group were very high.
185. The overall quality of teaching in drama is good and in some lessons it is very good. Strengths demonstrated in a number of lessons include well focussed planning, the modelling of high standards and very good classroom management and control. In response to good teaching many pupils demonstrate very positive attitudes to drama and involve themselves in the work with enthusiasm. Although in a few lessons some pupils are unresponsive, most concentrate well and show a determination to produce work of good quality. This was shown in one Year 7 lesson focussing on the development of pupils' understanding of different physical levels in performance work. Pupils worked in pairs to construct a short presentation based on a sequence of jumps. Behaviour in this lesson was excellent and the pupils co-operated very effectively to produce imaginative, varied sequences, which were presented to the whole class towards the end of the lesson, watched attentively by everyone.
186. The subject is well managed. There is a clear vision for the development of drama within the school, the subject handbook contains a range of very well thought through policy statements to support the implementation of that vision and a detailed scheme of work guides the delivery of a broad and balanced curriculum. Procedures for assessing pupils' progress, which include opportunities for pupils' self-assessment, are good. Provision of extra-curricular activity is very good. Specialist accommodation provided for drama is of very high quality. No issues for improvement were raised in the last inspection.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

187. Pupils currently at the end of Key Stage 3 are attaining above the national expectations for their age. They achieve well across a wide and relevant range of activities. In dance Year 7 girls used their previous experiences from their primary schools well to interpret the music. They very successfully linked their movements with accuracy, demonstrating increasing precision, control and fluency. In a Year 8 lesson for basketball, girls effectively developed their skills of throwing, catching and bouncing balls at different speeds, when standing still and travelling. They showed good degrees of ball control and management. Boys in a Year 9 badminton lesson showed a good understanding of the different uses of a short and long serve and a cover serve. They position themselves well on the court and control the racket and shuttlecock with high degrees of accuracy. In another Year 9 class the boys showed good football skills, heading and controlling the ball with their feet with precision and control and displaying good awareness of positional play.
188. Attainment for pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 is in line with the national expectations for both boys and girls. Examples of higher attainment are also seen. For example, in a Year 10 boys' basketball lesson boys showed good technique and precision in ball control, using their developed skills well in a game with a good awareness of positional play. In a Year 11 girls' short tennis lesson, below average levels of attainment were seen. This was due to the pupils having no previous experience of the activity. Here, due to good teaching, the girls made good progress with their racket control and forehand play. They combined and applied skills and techniques with increasing accuracy, control and precision.
189. The school has successfully introduced GCSE physical education for pupils in Years 10 and 11. Pupils achieve satisfactory standards overall with an appropriate understanding of what is associated with a healthy life-style, and knowing working definitions of health, fitness, performance and exercise. The scrutiny of pupils' GCSE work and results in Years 10 and 11 shows good progress across the last four years. In 1999 the proportion of pupils gaining A*-C grades was in line with that nationally, but this has dropped to below average in summer 2000. Examination of pupils' present work, for example, in a Year 11 lesson, showed pupils making good progress in understanding the impact of drugs on health and physical performance. The physical education department is well placed to improve on this year's percentages, bringing them back more towards the average levels.
190. Too few lessons were seen in the sixth form to judge standards. Students are entered for a nationally recognised Community Sports Leadership certificate. All the pupils that have entered the examination for the award in the past have successfully passed. In a Year 12 lesson, where students were learning about the importance of communication, the students showed very good attitudes and are clearly making good progress. The previous 100 per cent success rate for all students entering the examination is likely to be maintained.
191. There have been many improvements at both Key Stages 3 and 4 since the last inspection. The boys and girls are now achieving above the national expectation for all activities, except for gymnastics, where they are achieving at the expected level for their age. Achievement is good overall, although better at Key Stage 3 than Key Stage 4. The subject now provides good learning opportunities for pupils with pupils having a wide range of relevant activities to study.

192. The quality of teaching at both key stages is good. There is no unsatisfactory teaching and this has improved since the last inspection. At Key Stage 3 teaching was very good in over half of the lessons seen. At Key Stage 4 two-thirds of teaching is good. At both key stages teachers have high expectations, manage classes well and teach skills effectively. Teaching in the sixth form is also good. There is no ineffective teaching. During lessons pupils learn to develop progressive sequences of skills successfully, increasing their competencies as the lesson progresses. Teachers present, evaluate and support these skills well, with both personal and student demonstration. Older pupils successfully applied this to further develop their own skills. Pupils work hard at their lessons, enhancing a wide range of competencies as improving their performance. They work at a good pace and show high levels of concentration, enthusiasm and interest. Pupils with special educational needs work well alongside their fellow pupils, achieving equal standards. The quality of teaching promotes good standards of learning ensuring that all pupils make good progress, with a significant number making very good progress, particularly at Key Stage 3.
193. The subject is well managed. All areas of study are appropriately and thoroughly documented. The school mainly teaches its physical education in single sex classes for boys and girls. Occasionally there are mixed groups particularly for extra curricular activities. This supports the development of the high standards and maintenance of good progress. There is a very good team approach with teachers very successfully monitoring and evaluating lessons as well as improving their own performances. The physical education staff are well-qualified and have good levels of motivation and enthusiasm for their work as well as high levels of skill and expertise in the areas that they teach. All this and the leadership which ensures a very good team spirit are doing much to improve standards.
194. The department now offers a very good range of extra curricular activities. They are well supported by all the teachers in the department and other teachers from the school and pupils attend well. These activities provide opportunities for all pupils. There are activities for girls and boys and mixed activities. The range for both girls and boys includes football, basketball, trampolining, dance, badminton, table tennis and weight training.
195. Pupils are very successful in the very wide range of extra curricular competitive sports they are offered. Recent successes include a national pentathlon challenge event last year when the school reached the semi-finals and in 1997-98 when the school won the plate competition. At football they have been winners of the London Cup and were in the national five-a-side semi-final played at the Aston Villa football club. At netball girls in Years 9 and 11 have won the borough cup and boys in Year 11 last year reached the Essex rugby final. Pupils have represented the borough at cross-country in county competitions.
196. The school has a very good and well kept range of inside and outside accommodation. These include extensive fields, a very good sports hall and gymnasium and an excellent weight training room. Changing facilities are very good. Resources are also very good in very good condition, well stored and arranged and support well the high standards pupils achieve.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

197. The attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 in Year 9 is in line with the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus in relation to pupils' age and ability in this subject, as it was in summer 2000. From the evidence available, in particular pupils' work from last year, no significance difference in the performance of girls and boys

was noted. No judgement can be made on the standards of pupils in Key Stage 4 and students in the sixth form because so few elements of the agreed syllabus are delivered.

198. In Years 7, 8 and 9 pupils are taught in mixed ability classes and both teachers and pupils all displayed a very positive attitude to this area of the curriculum. Teaching is very good. In one well-planned lesson Year 7 pupils were discussing the difference between faith and belief. As a direct result of the teacher's enthusiasm for the subject all pupils made a significant oral contribution to the discussion and used examples from their own personal experience as a means of illustrating their understanding of the difference between having a faith or a belief.
199. Teachers use a variety of teaching techniques to ensure that pupils' interest is maintained throughout the lesson. In a Year 8 lesson pupils were initially given the opportunity to reflect on an event that had significantly changed their lives. This was followed by a lively question and answer session that naturally led to the teacher telling a story that formed the basis for the final activity which was the writing of a letter. Pupils make good progress in religious education as a direct result of thoroughly planned lessons and enthusiastic teaching.
200. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good within this department. There are many opportunities provided in lessons for these pupils to contribute positively orally, to read aloud from text material and to work in pairs or small groups. As a result these pupils make good progress.
201. A well-qualified and charismatic teacher of religious education leads the department well. He is fully committed to providing all pupils with the opportunity to study religious education both as part of the compulsory curriculum and as an examination subject. In September 1998 pupils in Year 10 were given the opportunity of studying for a short GCSE course in religious education in their own time at the end of the school day. Impressively this group of pupils all achieved a grade at GCSE in August 2000. This and provision at Key Stage 3 are well managed.
202. The head of department has a clear view of how the department could contribute more effectively to both a whole school spiritual, moral, social and cultural programme and to the personal development programme in Years 10 to 13. At present religious education is not time-tabled as a separate subject in either Key Stage 4 or post-16 and as a result the pupils are not given the opportunity to build on the skills and knowledge gained in this subject area across Key Stage 3. Although elements are incorporated into the personal development programme at Key Stage 4 and general studies in the sixth form they are not enough to provide the breadth of experience required by the agreed syllabus.
203. There have been many important and positive developments within the religious education department since the last inspection. Pupils' skills in relation to the areas of discussion, evaluation and research are developing and the Agreed Syllabus for religious education has been implemented in Key Stage 3. The team of teachers delivering religious education lessons is now smaller allowing for the resources available to the department to be more effectively used to benefit the pupils. However, the school continues to fail to meet the statutory requirements for the delivery of religious education both at Key Stages 4 and in the sixth form.

VOCATIONAL COURSES

204. The school provides a range of courses with a vocational slant. These are popular with pupils and results in these areas are often better than in other areas of the curriculum.
205. Business Studies GCSE examination results are well below national averages, but are consistent from 1999 to 2000. A-level business studies has shown an upward overall trend since 1998 with current results, although still below national averages, appropriate for pupils' previous achievements. Office applications and accounts continue to be successful courses with many pupils gaining their best GCSE grades in these subjects. A-level accounts has had consistently good results over the last three years with most pupils achieving pass grades. In 1999 results were outstanding with the majority of students attaining the highest A-B grades. Last summer all 74 pupils entered for the RSA text processing examination at the end of Year 10 were awarded distinctions.
206. In 1999 overall results in the General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQ) courses in the sixth form were above national averages. All business studies pupils gained accreditation with about half being awarded merits. In the GNVQ health and social care course all pupils obtained passes. In media studies all received accreditation, but this course is no longer running.
207. Teaching within all these courses is good. Where time is very well used pupils make good progress with the quantity of work to be covered. For example, in business studies a range of teaching strategies is employed, such as a mix of teacher led and group activities. Pupils respond very well and consolidate and extend their learning. Where lessons are successful good lesson planning and good interaction between teacher and pupils leads to pupils making good progress with their learning. Where teaching is occasionally unsatisfactory work does not engage pupils' interests and pupils' poor behaviour inhibits the progress of the class. All teaching of office applications is good. Good individual teaching techniques are used to help pupils improve their skills, for example, when using a keyboard, and in understanding how to interpret instructions.
208. There is good leadership and management within these areas of the curriculum. Pupils are generally well motivated and respond well to the individual nature of some of the tasks. Where they are given opportunities to carry out group and paired activities they adopt a mature approach and co-operate well. However there is insufficient access to computers in business studies and accounts which slows pupils' progress in some aspects of their work.