

INSPECTION REPORT

HARROW WAY COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Andover

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116431

Headteacher: Mr C J Overton

Reporting inspector: Hugh Betterton
17478

Dates of inspection: 18th – 21st February 2002

Inspection number: 225631

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 - 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Harrow Way Andover Hampshire
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Rebecca Burbidge
Date of previous inspection:	20 th March 2000

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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9563	Jeanette Reid	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?
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12125	Mike Slaughter	Team inspector	Science	
21954	Terry Chipp	Team inspector	Art	
27058	Kathleen Cannon	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
15163	Eric Deeson	Team inspector	Design and technology	Staffing
27085	Colin Adams	Team inspector	Geography	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
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19532	Elizabeth Charlesworth	Team inspector	Music	
12179	Laurence Moscrop	Team inspector	Religious education	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Harrow Way is a comprehensive school, situated in Andover, for boys and girls aged 11 - 16. It is smaller than other comprehensives nationally, with 724 on roll. There are similar numbers of boys and girls. Almost all pupils are white, coming from very mixed socio-economic backgrounds ranging from fairly affluent to significant deprivation. About a fifth come from the town's poorest ward, with adult literacy levels amongst the lowest nationally. However only nine per cent are entitled to free school meals, yet this figure masks other significant social needs. Hardly any pupils speak English as an additional language. The pupils' overall levels of attainment are below national averages when they enter the school and this trend has increased in recent years; levels of literacy are well below average. The school has identified 43 per cent of its pupils as having special educational needs, double the national average; these needs are mostly in literacy and learning and some pupils have emotional and behavioural difficulties. Statements of special educational need are below those recorded nationally. Just less than two-thirds of 16 year olds move into further education. Over half of the teaching staff has changed in the last two years.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Harrow Way is an improving school that provides an appropriate education for its pupils. Pupils make steady progress in Years 7 to 9 and good progress in most subjects during Years 10 and 11. Standards of attainment are just below average by the time pupils reach the end of their last year at school. However, they are better than when pupils started in Year 7. Pupils with special educational needs do well. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and good at Key Stage 4. Good strategies are now being implemented to improve the quality of teaching and learning, which are designed to promote higher standards. However a particular hindrance to pupils' achievements is the low level of literacy amongst many of them when they arrive at the school. Procedures for promoting and monitoring pupils' personal and social development are good. Funding is above average. The school provides satisfactory value for money. Overall, the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

What the school does well

- The shared commitment to improvement across the school.
- Overall strategic planning, including the critical support of the governing body.
- Good teaching overall in English, science, history, Spanish, physical education, art and drama.
- The personal development of pupils that forges good relationships between pupils and pupils and adults.
- Provision for drama.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Most older pupils knowing what to do to succeed.

What could be improved

- Standards of attainment overall.
- The effective sharing of high quality teaching approaches throughout the school.
- The range of learning opportunities to match the needs of all pupils.
- The cultural awareness of pupils and their place in today's diverse society.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good improvement since the last inspection when it was judged to have serious weaknesses in aspects of its provision. The senior management team and governors now pursue a more rigorous strategy for overall improvement. Staffing structures are more effective, as clearer roles and responsibilities have been established, underpinned by a clearer long-term vision for the school. The

monitoring and evaluation of the school's work highlights its strengths and weaknesses well. This is beginning to have an impact on improvements at subject level. Provision for special educational needs is good. Teaching and learning have improved in Years 7 - 9, yet further work is needed to share the very good practice evident in several subjects, across the whole school. Attendance has improved overall, in Year 11 in particular, yet unauthorised absence is still above the national average.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved at the end of Year 11 based on average point scores in GCSE examinations.

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
GCSE examinations	D	D	E	-	Well above average A Above average B Average C Below average D Well below average E

There is no comparison in this report between the school's results and results in similar schools on the basis of free school meals because this does not reflect accurately the social circumstances of pupils at this school or their attainment on entry. Overall pupils are making satisfactory progress throughout Key Stage 3, yet better progress is made at Key Stage 4. Pupils' overall performance in GCSE examinations was well below national averages in 2001. The proportion of pupils who gained at least five GCSEs at grades A*-G in 2001 has been below that gained nationally for three years now. However, for pupils gaining at least one GCSE at A*-G grade performance is well in advance of national figures. When considering how well pupils achieve against their prior attainment, results in five or more GCSEs at A*-C grades are low compared to results in similar schools. They are similar to the national averages in respect of the proportion of pupils obtaining five or more GCSEs at grades A*-G and well above the national average in respect of those gaining at least one GCSE at grades A*-G. The overall trend in results at GCSE is below that seen nationally. Over the last three years boys did not achieve as well as girls but, in 2001, girls' performance dropped much more than that of boys. In English, mathematics and science, attainment in GCSE was considerably below national averages. In only a few subjects was attainment higher than the national average: in drama, art and design, business studies, information and communication technology and music, subjects attracting relatively small numbers of entries. Results in history and aspects of design and technology were lower than in other subjects.

Performance by pupils aged 14 in 2001 in all core subjects was just in line with national averages. Performance in mathematics fell below that of English and science. English results in Years 7 - 9 have improved considerably since the last inspection. Science and mathematics results in 2000 were lower than previously, but both improved in 2001. The trend in the school's results over three years has been broadly in line with the national trend. However, the attainment of pupils on entry has been declining in recent years. Compared to pupils' attainment on entry, results in Year 9 National Curriculum tests and GCSE represent satisfactory progress overall. The school did not meet its set target for achievement in the average points score in GCSE.

The standards of work seen in lessons are below average by the time pupils reach Years 9 and 11 but are better than the picture given by results in GCSE examinations last year. This is partly a reflection of further improvements in the quality of teaching and learning and also because most pupils demonstrate better knowledge and understanding orally than they do in writing. Achievement is good in drama, art, aspects of science and physical education, so that it is in line with national expectations by the time pupils reach 16 years of age. In other subjects achievement is at least satisfactory and often good, but standards remain just below those seen nationally.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are enthusiastic about lessons. Most enjoy school and want to learn, even though a small number do not value education.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The school is orderly and behaviour in lessons is good, though there is a small minority of pupils who do not co-operate with teachers.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Relationships between all in the school community are a strength. Pupils are sociable, polite and usually offer help without being prompted.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance is close to national averages, but unauthorised absence is above the national average.

The school is successful in promoting good behaviour, attitudes and relationships. This creates an atmosphere that encourages most pupils to work hard. Pupils enjoy school. The school has improved levels of attendance considerably. Punctuality to school is often adversely affected by the late arrival of coach transport for some pupils.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Good

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

The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. It is better in Years 10 - 11, where greater demands are made on pupils. Slightly more unsatisfactory teaching is evident in Years 7 - 9, tending to reflect the difficulties of individual teachers. In most lessons, teachers' secure subject knowledge is enthusiastically used to promote pupils' knowledge and understanding. Most teachers establish good working relationships with pupils wanting them to succeed through effective help and support. Pupils learn best where they understand exactly what is expected of them and what they are expected to do to improve. However in some lessons, mostly in Years 7 - 9, the pace and challenge are not demanding enough. Occasionally teaching methods are too limited to meet pupils' needs as effectively as they could. Homework is varied in quality, as is marking more evidently in Years 7 - 9. Teaching in ability groups is satisfactory overall, but work is still not always well matched to pupils' needs. Teaching of literacy skills is satisfactory across the curriculum. Too little attention is given to numeracy in subjects across the curriculum. For pupils with special educational needs teaching is effective in improving literacy skills.

Teaching of English and science is good across the school. Teaching of mathematics is satisfactory in both key stages. The largest proportion of good teaching was seen in history, physical education, English, Spanish, art and drama.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. A sound range of courses is offered throughout Key Stage 4 with the New Start course, for less able pupils, being a particular strength. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, but the provision for pupils' numeracy skills is unsatisfactory. Extra-curricular activities are satisfactory.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in mainstream classes. Good plans and guidance are provided and the work of support assistants in English and mathematics is effective.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is good. Pupils' cultural development is unsatisfactory as pupils have insufficient opportunities to learn about traditions outside Western cultures or to prepare for life in Britain's culturally diverse society. Spiritual development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good: a dominant factor is the school's good ethos. Pupils are treated respectfully, as individuals, and most form tutors know their classes well. Academic progress is regularly reviewed and target setting is increasingly effective. Good procedures ensure pupils' welfare and protection.

The curriculum has good features in the provision of New Start courses in Years 10 and 11, involves some lower ability pupils going regularly to the local college, as well as having extended work experience. However, the curriculum in Years 10 - 11 does not fully meet statutory requirements for design and technology and religious education. Provision for the pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education is satisfactory. The school works soundly in partnership with its parents, yet not all parents are actively involved in supporting their children's education. The quality of information provided for parents, particularly about pupils' progress, is good. Partnerships with local schools and colleges is a strength.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory overall. The headteacher leads effectively with a clear vision, well supported by his management team. The school's management is sound overall and improving. There is a clear commitment by all to improve the school. However, the work of a few subject leaders has yet to have a significant impact in raising standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors take full responsibility for actions needed to move the school forwards and have worked hard in shaping the direction of the school. They are well aware of the school's relative strengths and weaknesses. They help in any way they can, monitoring the school's work soundly and supporting both pastoral and curriculum work by regular visits. Some statutory requirements are not met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There are clear targets for raising standards. Good arrangements are in place for analysing data, monitoring the work of middle managers, the quality of teaching and pupils' performance. The impact of these on pupils' attainment will take time. The first cycle of performance management has supported much of this work. Overall, subject leaders are not yet adept at evaluating the impact of teaching on learning and on pupils' standards, although this is improving.
The strategic use of resources	Financial resources are managed effectively and the school plans its budget carefully. Good attention is paid to the principles of best value so that good use is made of the school's resources in order to benefit pupils, despite the need to reduce a large budget deficit. Subject areas are resourced soundly.

Since the last inspection, the senior management team and governors have improved the quality of both strategic and overall planning. The work of middle managers is improving from a low base, especially in several subject areas. Despite some very effective teachers and learning support assistants, the staffing overall is unsatisfactory as the school has had difficulties in recruiting suitably qualified and experienced staff to meet the demands of the curriculum. Accommodation is good, especially in science and information and communication technology, which has had a significant impact on pupils' attitudes to study. Resources, such as books and equipment, are satisfactory in lessons and the library.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school helps pupils to become more mature. • Children make good progress. • Their children like school. • Feeling comfortable in approaching the school about any problems. • Extra-curricular activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The regularity and effectiveness of homework. • The regularity of reports, even though the quality of them is good. • Information about how well their children are getting on. • The level of overall support for the school from parents. • The behaviour of a few pupils.

The returns from the parents' questionnaire were not particularly high; only 27 attended the pre-inspection meeting. Positive comments considerably outweighed any that were negative. Pupils are happy at school and make at least satisfactory progress. Extra-curricular activities are sound. A few negative comments concerning contact between school and home were given, but many parents were very positive about how welcoming the school is. The school works hard in maintaining working relationships with parents but does not always have a suitable response from some. Parents receive good annual reports on pupils' progress, yet also have other opportunities to discuss their children's progress with teachers. The inspection team does share the parents' concern about the inconsistency of homework, but more evidently at Key Stage 3 than elsewhere. Behaviour is good overall.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The pupils' overall attainment on entry to the school has been consistently well below average at the beginning of Year 7 in literacy and numeracy especially. Even though most pupils make enough progress throughout Years 7 - 9, standards are still below average overall. A greater proportion of boys than of girls is not at the average level of attainment seen nationally. The complex social factors surrounding the school, such as the low levels of literacy in a local ward from which many of Harrow Way's pupils come, mean that any comparison with similar schools on the basis of free school meals is unhelpful.
2. The results of the national tests taken in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 9 in 2001 show that overall pupils are working at a level just below average compared to the national results. The overall picture hides some differences between the subjects. Standards were just in line with those achieved nationally in English and science in 2001; that is broadly good achievement in terms of their attainment on entry. However results in mathematics were below average, yet achievement was broadly satisfactory. In English and mathematics the standards of the current Year 9 pupils are just below average but in science they are broadly average. This represents good achievement overall. In 1999 and 2000, overall results in these three subjects were lower than those recorded nationally. Between 1999 and 2001, girls performed better than boys in English and science, but their attainment was similar in mathematics.
3. Teacher assessments in Year 9 in 2001 in other subjects show average standards in art, information and communication technology (ICT), modern foreign languages and physical education and above average in drama and geography. They were below in design and technology, music and religious education and well below in history. However, the history standards were adversely affected by staffing problems and inaccurate assessments. Standards of work seen in history indicated that standards are just below national averages. The work seen during the inspection confirms these judgements for other subjects, yet in geography standards are currently just below national expectations.
4. GCSE results were below the national average in 2001. The proportion of pupils achieving five or more grades A*-C declined in 2001 from 2000. The proportion of pupils achieving five or more grades A*-G has improved to be slightly below the national averages. However, results at one plus A*-G grades are well above those recorded nationally. They are well below the results of a school whose pupils obtained similar results in Year 9. Even though these results have been affected by staffing changes, they nonetheless indicate that many pupils did not make as much progress as they should have done.
5. In English, mathematics and science, 2001 results were considerably below the national average for the percentage of pupils attaining grades A*-C. However, results of pupils gaining at least a grade G in these three subjects are close to the national averages. In other subjects, the GCSE results were below average in most subjects and had dropped since the previous year. Only in business studies, music, Spanish, art and drama were the results better than those achieved nationally. In the two latter subjects, which are strengths in the school, results were well above national results. Almost all pupils were entered for at least one GCSE examination in 2001. Girls outperform boys quite substantially when considering attainment at the higher grades of A* to C in GCSE. However, when looking at results of at least five GCSE A*-G grades gained, boys achieve better than girls. In contrast, the average points score gained indicates that girls performed slightly better than boys. Over the last three years this has also been the case, with boys' results well below national averages.
6. Only in a small number of subjects did pupils not achieve a grade at all, totalling 12 in all from an entry of just over 1000 examinations. The school met the target the governors set for attainment with the percentage of at least five grades A*-C, which was in line with the predicted target indicated by the school's *Year Eleven Information System* (YELLIS) analysis of the cohort. However, it did not meet the target for achievement in the average points' score in GCSE. These targets set were cautious but appropriate given the internal difficulties faced. New targets will move the school forwards but have to

- be realistically set against prior attainment of pupils.
7. Most pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve good standards in relation to their capabilities. Their progress is particularly good when teachers' planning takes into account the specific learning needs of pupils and where the task in hand matches their abilities. Pupils achieve well in English and mathematics when learning support assistants work closely with them in classrooms. Pupils make good progress in their withdrawal lessons. In a concentrated session to improve reading for Year 7 pupils, they made good progress with understanding a range of short texts and words through reading aloud, discussing what they had read and being rewarded by a clear 'scoring' system that rewards hard work. The pupils in the New Start group make a good achievement overall, especially where the texts read and teaching strategies challenge them to make small steps. This was evident in a Year 10 group considering the strengths of books that can be shared with younger less-able pupils.
 8. By the end of Year 9, the more able pupils achieve soundly in relation to their prior attainment, as do average ability pupils. Pupils of below average ability make the best progress. Overall standards, though lower than the national expectations, nevertheless represent good achievement for many of those pupils in relation to their starting points in Year 7. Generally, progress in Years 10 and 11 is good for most pupils; a minority of pupils are not well motivated enough to take advantage of the good teaching.
 9. In English, by the end of Year 9, pupils have become more competent readers and this enables them to understand the details of texts they are reading. Not enough read for pleasure, though, or to find information. They learn to structure their writing but only higher attaining pupils combine this with work of sufficient length to allow interesting development of ideas. Most pupils have a limited general vocabulary and this inhibits their ability to both fully understand what they read and also their ability to express themselves in speech and writing. Pupils generally have clear handwriting and can spell competently, although lower attaining boys tend to be less accurate. At the age of 16 in English, higher attaining pupils show mature understanding of the intentions and techniques of writers, whereas other pupils tend to recount events. In their speaking and listening, most pupils can argue a point well, but do not always sustain their ideas appropriately. Most can write in a clear, simple style, with the most able sustaining ideas and imagination fairly well.
 10. By the age of 14, attainment in mathematics is below national expectations, but achievement is at least satisfactory. Most pupils can recall number facts, handle simple decimals and estimate with some accuracy solutions to problems. Higher attaining pupils in general complete a reasonable amount of work at a sound level, for example in learning facts about angles and polygons. By the end of Year 11, lower attaining pupils can measure angles accurately, calculate areas of quadrilaterals and triangles, whereas higher attaining pupils confidently use trigonometry in three dimensions and solve problems. The larger number of average attaining pupils use, analyse and display statistical data with confidence. Achievement overall for older pupils is at least satisfactory and often good.
 11. In science, achievement and attainment are satisfactory for pupils in Years 7 to 9. The higher ability pupils can write accurate balanced equations for the reactions between metals and acids, whereas average ability pupils understand the relationship between force and distance. Lower ability pupils can describe the effects of acid rain. Most pupils show a good deal of interest in their work. For pupils aged 16, achievement gained when taking earlier attainment into account is good. More able pupils in science have developed good skills of understanding, writing balanced equations for the reactions of metals, carbonates and oxides with acids. Other pupils sustain good achievement, for example, being able to describe the main features of ionic bonding. When concepts are clearly explained and where class management was firm, good progress was evident.
 12. Standards are in line with national expectations in ICT by the end of Year 9, with pupils having made satisfactory progress since Year 7. Achievement in ICT for many pupils is characterised by their ability to use spreadsheets to model problems and in integrating texts and graphics. By the end of Year 11, pupils extend their knowledge of databases and spreadsheets. The more able learn to create their own simple programs. Independent Internet research and e-mail usage are secure. Attainment and achievement are satisfactory overall. In all year groups pupils have some opportunities to practise what they have learnt in some subjects, but this is not yet extensive enough in history, music and art, thus impeding better achievement.

13. In design and technology, attainment is below average and achievement is unsatisfactory overall. Year 9 pupils have an adequate grasp of the nature and stages of the design process and an adequate understanding of the meanings of the main technical words used. By the age of 16, most pupils in design and technology can understand the design process and its cyclic nature and various methods of evaluating a final product. However, overall achievement is improving now that the department has new leadership.
14. In modern foreign languages, pupils are achieving satisfactorily and attainment is close to national averages. All pupils can understand their teachers' fluent use of French for everyday classroom business. All follow simple French recorded on tape on topics familiar to them. Pupils can write in a variety of styles; speaking skills for the majority of pupils are satisfactory. By the end of Year 11, achievement by pupils in Spanish is good, as many become fluent speakers and effective listeners. In French it is satisfactory. The pupils' skills improve well, so that vocabulary use and understanding develops well, even for the less able. Good opportunities for pupils to speak at length also improve.
15. In history and geography by Year 9 pupils' work shows reasonably good factual knowledge and understanding in both subjects. However attainment is just below national expectations. Higher attaining pupils demonstrate they are able to analyse information and draw sensible conclusions but the work of other pupils lacks important details. Achievement overall is satisfactory. By the time pupils reach Year 11, in geography, most pupils have made good progress and can make inferences and transfer knowledge from one area of enquiry to another. Many can draw and interpret maps accurately. Pupils in history understand how to find evidence about the past but some encountered difficulty with the complex areas of history. Standards are in line with those expected nationally in both subjects.
16. By Year 9, most pupils in religious education have a basic knowledge and understanding of aspects of Christianity and Islam and Judaism but their knowledge and understanding of world religions in general is not strong. By the age of 16, some pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of many aspects of Christianity and they can meaningfully consider how its beliefs influence a range of moral and social issues. However not all pupils have enough teaching time to improve their knowledge and understanding.
17. By the age of 14, standards in art are in line with national expectations. Achievement is good, as pupils have developed good skills in composition and understand the effects they are creating when using different materials. However by the end of Year 11, attainment is very good. Many pupils have learnt high level skills in textile and ceramic work, often reflecting the styles of particular artists. The higher attaining pupils show the level of understanding necessary to make links between their own work and that of the artists. At the end of Year 9, standards in music are lower than those seen nationally. However, most pupils have learnt skills that are good enough for them to play simple tunes. Their technical vocabulary is limited, as is their knowledge of notation and musical elements. They are not able to talk about music at the level expected by 14 year olds. Pupils at the age of 16 attain close to the national average. Good performers in music use their experience of instrumental lessons to help them to compose. But others do not have the same stimulus and often struggle to realise their ideas for composition. Achievement is good overall.
18. In physical education achievement is good overall and very good for 16 year olds. Younger pupils can apply the techniques, skills and competition rules to several games, and observe and analyse their own and others' performances. In Year 11, pupils understand all the components of fitness, particularly the importance of flexibility and can record them accurately for other pupils in the group. Achievement in drama across the school is good. By the end of Year 9, pupils in drama make at least good progress in their work, communicating and co-operating well and displaying a good understanding of different theatrical techniques. Pupils in Year 11 make good progress with stagecraft skills, the ability to improvise, work in role and interpret the work of dramatists and writers. Pupils on the New Start course achieve soundly in most aspects of the course.
19. In literacy, pupils' speaking and listening skills are close to national standards by the end of Key Stage 4. How they express themselves does improve as they have more experience and use of technical words. The more able pupils can explain quite complex ideas in science and mathematics well, often using precise language. Average ability pupils are more confident in describing thoughts or what they completed in most subjects, rather than giving reasons for their choices. The reading skills

of many pupils are below national standards at both key stages. Not all pupils have enough practice during lessons or for homework or through informal times at school. Good opportunities are given though for pupils in some tutor times to read quietly. Pupils' quality of writing is broadly in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 4 for the average and above average pupils. Good use of writing frames is evident in several subjects, especially history, mathematics, geography and science. Higher-attaining pupils can write well and form well reasoned arguments in essays. Pupils' spelling has improved since the last inspection and several departments make good use of different strategies.

20. Pupils' standards of numeracy are below national averages. However, most pupils' numerical skills are sufficient for them to access most areas of the curriculum. Most pupils, though, are not yet confident at carrying out extended calculations without the aid of a calculator in different subjects. When using computers pupils can enter and use formulae in spreadsheets and many can recognise errors generated by incorrect data entry. Most pupils in design and technology can measure accurately for cutting out material. There is a good range of drawing of charts, graphs and diagrams in science, history and geography. But overall numeracy skills are underdeveloped as no whole school approach is securely in place.
21. Attainment has improved by the end of Year 9 since the last inspection when results of the Year 9 tests were below national averages for all schools. However, this decline has been halted and results are closer to other schools nationally. However, attainment at GCSE dropped last year from the results gained in 2000. In lessons, pupils now make better progress than was reported in the last inspection in Years 10 and 11. Overall, progress has been satisfactory since the last inspection.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

22. Pupils' attitudes to school are good overall. Most are well motivated, interested and responsive. This is most evident when the teaching is stimulating and challenging, and the teacher's expectations in terms of behaviour are high. For example, in a year 9 history lesson about the Battle of the Somme, all pupils were keen to participate in the discussions and were very interested and worked hard throughout. In a Year 11 English lesson, pupils responded with enthusiasm, attended well and made good progress when they studied a poem on 'Onions' and examined real onions for themselves. Instances were seen during the inspection when pupils worked hard and conscientiously, even when the teaching lacked pace and challenge. However, some pupils do not value education and attempt disruption, particularly if the subject or lesson does not appeal to them. Many pupils are interested and involved in school activities. They participate enthusiastically in the school drama productions, sporting fixtures and other clubs. The extra-curricular activities are generally well supported even though transport is often difficult.
23. The behaviour of pupils is good overall, both in lessons and around the school. The school has an orderly atmosphere. Pupils move around the site in a calm and quiet manner. Most pupils adhere to the 4 C's of *courtesy, consideration, common sense* and *co-operation*. Pupils usually put their litter in bins, and overall there is a respect for property. Letters complimenting the behaviour of pupils when away on trips have been received by the school. Some parents are concerned that behaviour is unsatisfactory. A small number of pupils have behavioural difficulties and require much guidance and control. Their occasional poor behaviour does sometimes affect the learning of the rest of the pupils in class when teachers fail to deal with it effectively. The number of temporary and permanent exclusions is high when compared with national figures. This is a consequence of the consistent application of the school's discipline policy by the headteacher. However, the numbers compare well with other schools of similar types. Year 7 has a large proportion of the exclusions due to the inappropriate placement of pupils in the school.
24. Pupils make good progress overall towards becoming mature and responsible. The quality of relationships in the school is good. There is good social interaction in many of the lessons. In a Year 7 physical education lesson on the development of passing skills, the pupils co-operated well in small groups and had an excellent relationship with the class teacher. The pupils generally respond well to PSHE. Discussion was encouraged and the pupils responded well, with a few exceptions. Circle time is used when appropriate. Pupils respond well to the opportunities to take responsibility for others. For example, several pupils have been trained to act as mentors to other pupils, originally to support those

being bullied. These pupils show a very mature attitude and take full responsibility for their own day-to-day organisation and the development of this peer mentoring scheme. Many pupils help each other and are tolerant towards others. They show considerable awareness and understanding of pupils with physical impairment. Pupils feel that the school is a safe place to be and that staff will appropriately address incidents of bullying. Pupils acting as mentors make a valuable contribution to diffusing situations and providing a listening ear. Most pupils show a willingness to tell if incidents happen. There are a few incidents of racist behaviour; these are recorded and appropriately dealt with. The attitudes and values of pupils with special educational needs are usually very positive. Pupils with physical impairments exercise high levels of independence and pupils with problems of behaviour try very hard to organise themselves and to behave well. Pupils around the school show high levels of understanding of their classmates' difficulties and do their best, usually, to help them.

25. The attendance of pupils overall is satisfactory and is broadly in line with the national average. However, it decreases as pupils go up the school and is unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Unauthorised absence is higher than the national average. The school does not authorise an absence for which parents have not supplied a valid reason, even if they bring a note. As a result of this considered action their unauthorised figures have increased. The significant number of pupils who travel to school by organised transport buses are frequently late. This severely disrupts the assemblies and tutor time. The school has worked hard with the contractors and the LEA to improve the situation but so far has not met with any success.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

26. Teaching is satisfactory overall with over nine out of ten lessons being graded satisfactory or better and over six lessons in ten judged as good or better. In Years 7 - 9 teaching is satisfactory often with good features. It is good overall in Years 10 and 11 where much of the teaching makes an important contribution to pupils' personal development and giving them a sense of purpose. Teaching in some subjects, notably English, science, history, drama and art, is well adapted to the diverse learning needs of the pupils and leads to good achievement in the longer term, even though standards remain below average. In general teachers have secure subject knowledge and are enthusiastic about their subjects. They are very committed to their pupils and want them to succeed. In a few classes the teaching was better than the learning because teachers were working hard to inspire pupils who were not well motivated to learn. In the core subjects, teaching is good in English and science and in mathematics it is satisfactory. In both science and English there were some examples of very good teaching and some good teaching in mathematics.
27. Very good teaching is based on high levels of professional knowledge and understanding, combined with personal commitment to meet the needs of pupils, many of whom begin with low standards. As a consequence, pupils show high levels of interest in their work and very good attitudes to their learning. Some excellent teaching was seen in history, science and physical education. In these lessons, teachers are consistent in their approach and make their expectations for work, learning and behaviour very explicit. They use rewards and sanctions effectively. Relationships are often very good and teachers manage behaviour with a mixture of firmness and good humour. The high quality of teaching in drama and art is engaging large numbers of pupils in effective learning. This was also evident in a Year 11 information and communication technology lesson where pupils were polishing coursework. The teacher set clear targets for this work, followed it up with individual questioning that concentrated on improving pupils' understanding.
28. Good teaching exhibits a combination of many strengths. In these lessons teachers have a good knowledge of their subject and convey enthusiasm, through confident and well informed teaching. A good example was seen in a science lesson in Year 9, where the teacher used pupils' own knowledge and understanding of displacement reactions in different solutions, allied to his own knowledge and then checked the pupils' learning. Good quality teaching enables pupils to make significant progress in their learning. Pupils acquire new knowledge or skills that enable them to apply the intellectual and physical effort required to raise standards. They become more independent in thinking and learning for themselves. This is much more evident in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 - 9.
29. Teachers often set high expectations that challenge pupils to extend their learning into new aspects of knowledge and understanding. In the most effective lessons they use their knowledge of pupils' prior

- attainment to adapt the structure of lessons. In a Year 10 science lesson, the teacher helped a lower ability class to make rapid progress in their understanding of the manufacture of salts, within a module dealing with materials and reactions. Many short well-matched tasks enabled all pupils to have a far better understanding of the names of acids and alkalis by the end of the lesson. During a geography lesson a Year 9 average ability group were studying volcanoes through pair work. Good questioning by the teacher was also evident but also effective use of key words about the topic. The teacher challenged pupils to decide what questions they would ask to learn about volcanic activity. Good thinking skills were encouraged.
30. Most teachers' planning concentrates on the important knowledge and skills required for pupils to succeed. A lower ability Year 8 French class learnt the phrase ' *J'ai mal à* ' by imaginative acting and use of props by the teacher: their confidence grew as the lesson progressed. Teachers make good use of time, employing a variety of different teaching methods and resources, so lessons are broken into several related activities that maintain interest and challenge. In a Year 7 art and design lesson, the teacher used a range of different potters' work to help pupils' understanding of thumb techniques to make small pots. Good questioning linked to the good practical skills and then close support for pupils, led to very good skills learning.
 31. Where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, it is usually because expectations of what pupils should achieve are not very high. Not enough good use is made of what pupils have learnt previously. In many of these lessons pupils were attentive and followed the activities well. Typically, not enough imaginative activities or opportunities for pupils to investigate situations are planned. Opportunities for independent learning are therefore limited. However lessons are adequately taught and enable pupils to make steady progress. Usually, homework is set to support pupils' learning, but is not always challenging pupils to work independently. In satisfactory lessons the intense engagement of pupils' interest, common in good lessons that provides strong motivation for learning and rapid progress, is often missing.
 32. In the few lessons where teaching is still unsatisfactory, teachers lack the skills of promoting effective learning. The match of work to pupils' needs is limited, but more often teachers are not able to manage difficult pupils successfully. Insufficiently clear explanations of what pupils should understand or do are given. In a handful of lessons teachers expected too little of pupils or pitched the challenge incorrectly, because they had not linked their new teaching to prior learning well enough. Pupils are often not given opportunities to exercise initiative in these lessons.
 33. The teaching of literacy is satisfactory overall, even though the school has only recently embarked on the use of the national strategy. Teachers are aware of their responsibilities and 'key words' are a feature of many lessons. Basic skills such as examining language and using the correct terminology for techniques are well taught in English. A Year 7 class was able to infer an author's intentions from studying a range of younger children's books and speculate about what children might learn because the teacher had asked progressively harder questions. In science and history lessons, teachers use a good range of strategies to enable pupils to develop skills in literacy, in particular the development of technical vocabulary. In design and technology, good opportunities to write well structured design briefs are given. Opportunities for group discussions are variable, yet are strongest in drama and English. Opportunities to write at length in several subjects are under-developed.
 34. Numeracy skills are not taught satisfactorily across the curriculum. The lack of a coherent whole school approach means that some of the good work in science, information and communication technology and design and technology is not consistently promoting the best learning for pupils. Teachers do, however, take opportunities to improve pupils' numeracy skills and knowledge in several subjects, including modern foreign languages and geography, for example.
 35. Pupils' work is regularly marked but in several subjects, such as information and communication technology, mathematics, English and modern foreign languages, it is not always used effectively to support progress or give pupils clear guidance on how they might improve their learning. Whilst most departments have a growing understanding of how the information gained from short-term assessment can be used more effectively to monitor progress and plan work, this is not yet consistently rigorous and needs improvement. Homework is not set consistently in Years 7 - 9, as about one third of parents indicated in the questionnaire. Several pupils also confirmed this during discussions. However, in Years 10 and 11, homework, course and project work are more effectively managed by teachers.

36. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good overall. Some very effective teaching was observed in Year 8 and with pupils in Year 10 New Start lessons. Pupils with special educational needs are very well taught in their withdrawal lessons. The learning support assistants make a very valuable contribution to the teaching and learning of all the pupils with whom they come into contact; this is very evident in English and mathematics. Most teachers make good use of their specific skills and their commitment to their job is highly valued by the school. Support in mainstream lessons is usually good where it is available. However planning for special educational needs pupils in subject areas is not consistently developed yet, but is good in information and communication technology, geography and design and technology in particular.
37. Since the last inspection teaching has improved. Only one lesson in 20 during the inspection was judged as unsatisfactory whereas, in the previous inspection, one lesson in ten was unsatisfactory. Then, teaching overall in Years 7 - 9 was unsatisfactory. Many fewer lessons for that age range are now unsatisfactory. In particular, the teaching of English has improved considerably. The good teaching identified in the previous inspection has been maintained. The Teaching and Learning Group is beginning to make a significant contribution to improving the quality of teaching in the school, and its work will be vital in bringing about further improvements. The overall consistency of teaching is now good for pupils with special educational needs.

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

38. The quality and range of learning opportunities across the school are satisfactory. An appropriate statutory curriculum is in place at Years 7 - 9, but some statutory requirements are not met In Years 10 and 11. Insufficient time is allowed to cover the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus in religious education and provision for design and technology is unsatisfactory. Some pupils are appropriately disapplied from design and technology and modern foreign languages to allow them to follow the effective New Start course that has been introduced in Years 10 and 11 for lower ability pupils. This involves pupils going regularly to the local college, as well as extended work experience. Opportunities are still available for pupils to follow accredited courses, often at entry level. In Years 7 to 9 all pupils follow courses in English, mathematics, science, history, geography, design and technology, French, art, music, drama, ICT, physical education and religious education. The quality of overall planning in most subjects has improved with better schemes of work in most subjects now.
39. The strongest areas of the curriculum are to be found in history, science, physical education, art and provision for pupils with special educational needs. In these areas teachers consistently make strong contributions to many aspects of school life. Some limitations are still evident in design and technology, although this has improved since the last inspection.
40. Taught time at 25 hours per week meets the Department for Education and Skills' recommended guidelines. The day is currently divided into six periods of 50 minutes each. Some departments have expressed an interest in moving to lessons of one hour's duration and the school may wish to review this aspect of provision. The school will need to consider the best way to meet all needs and ensure curriculum breadth and balance, especially in light of the introduction of the new strategies in English, mathematics and science for pupils in Years 7 - 9. Whilst pupils in those years are set in teaching groups according to their attainment levels, planning for pupils at different levels and in varying attainment groups is not always well suited to their individual learning needs. There are also some differences in the attainment of boys and girls that are not fully addressed in planning.
41. There is an imbalance in time allocation between subjects; some are based on pragmatic decisions resulting from the staffing situation and others after discussion at the curriculum committee. For example, in Year 7, history is only allocated half the time compared to other years and subjects. This is causing difficulty in developing key historical skills in sufficient depth, even though a better time balance is achieved by the end of Year 9.
42. The school provides a better overall curriculum in Years 10 and 11 now to meet the needs of all pupils. All pupils follow a course in English, mathematics, science, ICT, physical education and personal and social education, including citizenship. Most pupils follow the more traditional route of GCSE subjects.

The alternative course, New Start, is proving effective in engaging the interests of lower ability pupils. A new vocational course, Skills for Working Life, has just started. Some funding for New Start comes from the local Learning and Skills Council and involves partnership working with the local college and other schools in the Andover consortium. Benefits identified by the school include a reduction in exclusions and an improved attitude to learning. This is confirmed from observations during the inspection.

43. Some departments have embraced alternative accreditation more readily than others. In 2001 a small number of pupils were entered for awards in Environmental Studies, Travel and Tourism, Sport and Recreation and Food Studies. Some pupils in geography are entered for the certificate of achievement as appropriate. The school should undertake a review of the accreditation on offer, including the new vocational GCSEs to be offered from September 2002 to achieve a consistent approach across all departments.
44. The school's provision for the support of pupils' learning represents a very significant improvement since the last inspection. Crucial to this improvement has been the appointment of a very experienced teacher as the co-ordinator of special educational needs who is very knowledgeable of overall curriculum needs and how pupils can benefit from a well organised literacy programme. Pupils receive specialist teaching in the lower bands in a few subject areas and those with low reading and spelling ages are withdrawn for additional literacy support. The literacy summer schools have also had a positive effect on pupils with special educational needs, as has the support work that follows it. The majority of pupils are totally integrated in mainstream lessons. Individual education plans are realistic, precise and are increasingly used by members of staff, but not yet on a consistent enough basis for pupils to receive the full benefit of effective teaching. Gifted and talented pupils are not yet identified on a register and development is still at an early stage in subjects.
45. The provision for literacy is satisfactory overall. There are effective strategies in place for teaching literacy skills, but they are inconsistently applied. In Year 7 the national strategy is effectively integrated into the English curriculum. Most subjects plan satisfactorily the development of literacy skills through 'key words' but without the same emphasis so far on writing. Strategies to improve pupils with limited literacy skills and understanding are growing in effectiveness. A broad programme of literacy support is developing, which includes additional lessons and withdrawal work. There is as yet no whole-school policy on literacy and at the time of the inspection teachers had not received substantial training of the application of the National Literacy Strategy to their own subjects. In some subjects that have their own policy on literacy, for example religious education, the policy is not put into consistent practice. Most subjects place an at least satisfactory emphasis on the correct use and spelling of vocabulary specific to the subject and some subjects, for example ICT, reinforce the importance of this by carrying out regular spelling tests. The two summer literacy schools held in Harrow Way have improved links with feeder schools.
46. The provision for teaching numeracy skills across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. The Key Stage 3 Numeracy Strategy is not fully in operation across the school. There has been no whole school training in the use of numerical skills across the curriculum and the audit undertaken is incomplete. However inspection evidence suggests that most pupils' numerical skills are sufficient for them to access all areas of the curriculum. Although there has not been an audit many departments have a policy for the inclusion of numerical skills and awareness within their own policy documents. However, the lack of a co-ordinated approach is currently hampering progress in important skills across the curriculum.
47. Provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. There are some difficulties in promoting take-up, as many pupils have to leave straight after the end of school to catch buses. However a recent survey showed that 90 Year 7 pupils were involved in various activities. There is a good range of PE and sports activities, with several staff from outside the PE department helping. The school has successfully bid for money from the New Opportunities Fund to run specific activities, such as Theatre Technicians, Dance, Choir and Rock Music. Drama productions are a regular feature and rehearsals were under way for the latest - *Henry the Tudor Dude*. About 50 pupils were involved in various capacities, supervised by two members of staff.
48. A homework club has recently been started, run by teachers and learning support assistants resourced

by a specific grant through the Standards Fund. Refreshments are provided and attendance limited to those with specific homework assignments to work on. Some departments run after-school revision and coursework classes in the run-up to examinations.

49. Pupils are encouraged to make a contribution to the community and each year a Community Achievement Award is made. For example, pupils help with the Mencap Sports Club for young people with disabilities.
50. Equality of access and opportunity is satisfactory, but the current organisation of withdrawal in Year 7 for pupils with special educational needs is leading to a skewed curriculum with some lessons, such as ICT, being missed on a regular basis. The current curriculum in Years 10 and 11 provides a better match to pupils' needs. For most lessons pupils are in banded groups. It is important to keep this method of organisation under constant review to ensure that opportunities are not denied to pupils by being placed in an inappropriate band or grouping.
51. Provision for personal, social, citizenship and health education (PSHE) is satisfactory and an improvement on the last inspection. All pupils in Years 7 - 9 have one lesson per week and are taught according to a clearly planned programme. For pupils aged 14 to 16 years, a carousel system is in operation, incorporating PSHE. An enthusiastic new co-ordinator in post has begun to compile a useful staff handbook. All aspects of PSHE are covered in the lessons, including drugs and sex and relationships education. Statutory requirements are met and appropriate policies are in place. Preparation for statutory provision of citizenship is in hand. An audit of departments' contributions has been undertaken. The co-ordinator intends to create a citizenship folder for each pupil to capture cross-curricular work. It is intended to set up a school council in the summer term and advice has been sought from a local school. A link governor for citizenship has been appointed. The co-ordinator would like the school to join the Healthy Schools Scheme that would create good opportunities for curriculum improvement.
52. At present the PSHE programme is taught separately from the assembly and tutor time programme and also from the programme for careers education and guidance. It would be helpful for the co-ordinators of these programmes to begin to meet to examine ways to co-ordinate their activities more closely.
53. Careers and vocational education is satisfactory and represents an improvement on the last inspection. A staff handbook has been produced and a programme of work - STEPS - introduced with the help of the LEA adviser. Pupils undertake a programme of one lesson per week for about six weeks in Year 9, 16 weeks in Year 10 and 8 weeks in Year 11. In Years 10 and 11 it is taught as part of a carousel with PSHE and religious education. A careers base has been established and a wide range of information is available in the school library. The co-ordinator is looking to develop ICT information systems and is being helped by a link governor.
54. There is a close working relationship with Southern Careers, the local provider. Two advisers are available for individual work, parents' evenings and the annual careers' fair. A theatre company is also used regularly to raise issues with the pupils. There is an established work experience programme in place, supported by the local Trident office. There is good support from local employers and pupils go out in two cohorts. Very few pupils do not take up the opportunity.
55. The next stage of development will need to address the wider work-related curriculum and vocational education. A start has been made, through the introduction of Skills for Working Life but subject departments need to be more closely involved in addressing their potential contribution. A more co-ordinated approach to key skill development, beyond the basic skills of communication, application of number and ICT, should also be undertaken.
56. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is satisfactory. A range of activities takes place on the school site during the day and in the evenings. The pre-school group visits the school library every week and Year 10 pupils help with reading. The school is involved in a community learning project designed to support family literacy and numeracy. There are regular visitors from the local and wider community to support various aspects of the curriculum, including citizenship, PSHE and work-related learning. A support worker from the Kids' Church works in school with a behaviour support worker. The programme of liaison with primary schools is effective. Planned visits by the head of

drama with other colleagues, as well as a significant programme of visits to Harrow Way by both Year 5 and 6 pupils, are of good quality. The special educational needs co-ordinator plays a significant role, as well, in learning about specific needs that can then be planned for in the Year 7 support programme. More work between teachers in feeder primaries and Harrow Way is planned to improve the satisfactory programme in place.

57. There are good relationships with partner institutions. The school is an active member of the Andover consortium. This provides opportunities to share good practice through joint training days and meetings for heads of department. Links with local colleges, to which about 70 per cent of pupils progress, are also good. The National Record of Achievement is effectively used in Years 10 and 11 to collect evidence about pupil achievement in its widest sense. Several departments have links with initial teacher training institutions, such as the University of Southampton.

Provision for the personal - including spiritual, moral, social and cultural - development of pupils is satisfactory overall.

58. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Since the last inspection a training day has been organised on spiritual development to encourage all departments to make a contribution. In some subject handbooks, such as history, there are sections on promoting spiritual development and opportunities are planned. In a Year 9 lesson on war the spiritual dimension was addressed through the concept of comradeship. In design and technology considerable attention is paid to the aesthetic and creative dimensions. In other handbooks there are policies in place but not enough evidence was seen of planned opportunities. A common approach to spiritual development is not yet consistently applied across the curriculum. Each year group attends an assembly weekly. A theme forms the focus of the assembly with an opportunity to follow it up in tutor time once a week. In the assembly a range of resources was used - a scooter, overhead projector, poetry and music - and the pupils were well behaved. There was no opportunity for reflection, although this was provided in some tutor periods. The school accepts that it is not meeting the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship.
59. Provision for pupils' moral development is good and the school promotes principles that distinguish right from wrong. There is a clear code of behaviour and pupils subscribe to the school's core values of courtesy, consideration, common sense and co-operation. These are reinforced in various ways.
60. The theme of the week was reconciliation and focused on settling arguments amicably without holding grudges. In religious education there is work on moral codes drawing examples from some world faiths. In PSHE, issues relating to bullying are addressed and concepts such as self-discipline, rights and responsibilities are regularly discussed. In drama lessons pupils are encouraged to make choices, distinguish right from wrong and are regularly put into problem-solving situations. In English texts are used to explore male and female roles as well as concepts such as guilt through the study of *Macbeth*, for example. In careers education pupils are informed about the employment rights of children and young people. In PE pupils discuss rules applying to sports as well as the concept of fair play.
61. Provision for pupils' social development is good. The quality of relationships between pupils in the school is good and opportunities are taken in many subjects to develop these, by planning for a variety of groupings. In many lessons there were opportunities to work in pairs and larger groups. In PE there were many opportunities to work together with pupils supporting each other well. In history and geography there were many opportunities for pupils to think for themselves. In a Year 7 history lesson the teacher explained why they should work in pairs and not always with their friends. In design and technology an understanding of social structures and institutions is developed. There are opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities through the prefect system and through involvement in a wide range of activities, within and beyond school. The establishment of a school council will extend these opportunities and will need to involve as many pupils as possible.
62. Provision for pupils' cultural development is unsatisfactory. There are some opportunities for pupils to appreciate cultural traditions through the art, drama and music programmes. For example in a Year 7 art lesson pupils were asked to consider the philosophy behind a painting. The drama productions are well received. Trips are organised for pupils, including to France and Spain. In other subjects opportunities are often missed to develop cultural awareness. In modern foreign languages the emphasis is on language acquisition whilst not consistently taking account of the context in which the language is spoken.
63. There is very little evidence of a planned approach to preparing pupils for life in a multicultural society. A policy has been produced and is currently under review. There is limited reference around the school to other cultures and traditions within Britain and the wider world. The school has a policy about dealing with racist incidents and there is evidence of issues being handled effectively. There needs to be a greater emphasis on creating an ethos where different cultures are tolerated and celebrated. For example in religious education the impact of major world faiths should play a greater role in the curriculum on offer.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

64. The support and care provided to pupils has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Pupils are well known to staff and their personal development is important to the school. Overall, pupils like and respect their teachers. They are confident that there is always at least one person with whom they would be comfortable to share concerns. There is a strong system of Year Heads led by the deputy headteacher. Form tutors stay with the pupils through their time at school so that they can get to know their pupils well. The turnover of staff impedes this approach, but things are more settled than at the time of the previous inspection. The tutor time at the beginning of each day now has a satisfactory structure. It includes a weekly theme that ties in with the assembly topic. Some tutors use this period efficiently and provide quality time. However, when logbooks are just routinely ticked without any dialogue or close inspection, it is unsatisfactory. There are well-planned arrangements to introduce pupils to school when they start in Year 7 to help them settle in. Pupils with physical impairment are enabled and encouraged to lead as independent lives as possible. Sometimes however, they are late to classes upstairs as they have to wait for the stairs to clear.
65. The educational and personal support for pupils is good. During each year the pastoral team hold review meetings for every pupil. Both academic progress in each subject and personal development are discussed and recorded. Any relevant outcomes are communicated with parents, who appreciate this. Pupils know how well they are doing, and the specific and achievable targets that they have been set. All pupils in Years 9 and 11 have mentors to help support their learning.
66. The school's systems for collection and management of information related to assessment are good. A comprehensive range of data is available to teachers and it is easily accessible. The school now has a clear whole school policy on the marking of pupils' work and on using the information in setting targets for them. All departments are aware of this system and it is now fully in place. Last year there were some problems with assessing end of key stage levels in some foundation subjects because of loss of key teaching staff. The Learning Support department has very good systems for identification, diagnosis and provision for pupils with special educational needs. Monitoring of progress has made significant difference to pupils withdrawn for help with reading and spelling. They have made quite startling progress over relatively short periods of time.
67. The school has a clear aim to raise standards by target setting. Marks are given for effort and for achievement and data from cognitive ability tests and National Curriculum tests and others are used in setting targets. YELLIS data is used effectively to set targets at GCSE. There is a clear expectation that work will be marked regularly and that pupils should understand what the marks mean. Pupils have an explanation of the system pasted into their notebooks. The well-established pupil review meetings have been well received by parents and pupils. Heads of department carry out a thorough analysis of examination results and other data. Assessment is related to national curriculum attainment targets. Pupils are involved in some peer group and self-assessment but only in some subjects, such as modern foreign languages and in science. The recording of pupils' attainment and progress is good. The new procedures are being put in place effectively and they are now well established in most subjects. However, some departments have been affected by recent staff changes. Staff development is taking place to ensure that all staff are aware of the school focus on teaching and learning and its expectations about the use of assessment data.
68. The use of assessment to inform curriculum and procedures for monitoring and supporting academic progress are satisfactory. Assessment data is readily available for lower school and examination classes. It is used to set pupils by ability in core subjects in Years 7 - 9. The needs of pupils with special educational needs are assessed well and they are given appropriate support in class and in support lessons. Assessment procedures identify the very able and the exceptionally gifted and talented pupils but these pupils are not yet formally identified on a register. Examination results show that these pupils are achieving well. Day-to-day assessment of pupils with special education needs is very good overall and excellent in withdrawal groups. Occasionally pupils work with older pupils or at the local college if this suits the level of their potential attainment. Overall the use of assessment information to help plan future lessons is broadly satisfactory although it is not used to vary tasks or resources sufficiently in groups where, despite the setting system, there is still a wide range of attainment. In some classes all pupils engage in the same task and use the same resources whatever their potential level of attainment. The school has recognized the value of assessment information as a

vital component in the planning of the curriculum and in the development of a range of teaching and learning styles in the classroom. There is a Teaching and Learning group, which is well established and which focuses on developments, such as sharing of good practice amongst the staff. In some lessons in science and in geography the influence of this approach is very clear but it has yet to have an impact across the school, partly because of the recent staff changes. Progress made in assessment and recording since the last inspection is satisfactory. More use is made of results and target setting and self-assessment is being developed well in some subjects.

69. The arrangements that the school makes to ensure pupils' welfare and safety are now good. The health and safety co-ordinator makes formal site inspections half-yearly and concerns are recorded. The policy is regularly reviewed and the governing body appropriately involved in health and safety issues. Contractors annually check electrical equipment and PE equipment. Fire drills are carried out regularly. The school nurse makes a valuable contribution to pupils' welfare and there are sufficient trained first aiders. Appropriate Child Protection procedures are in place with a named person who is known to staff.
70. The procedures for the monitoring and promotion of good behaviour continue to be good. The school has identified that it has a problem with the behaviour of some pupils and has introduced new initiatives to improve the situation. There is now detailed recording of incidents for the tracking of the behaviour of all pupils which is readily available to staff on the computer. Educational planning meetings take place when there are concerns about any pupil and parents are involved. A Behaviour Support Worker, trained in anger management, works with individual pupils and small groups to help them understand the causes of their feelings and to learn to deal with them. A New Start programme has been introduced for some pupils in Year 10 that offers more vocational courses. It has been successful overall in keeping pupils in school, who were becoming disaffected with education. The school makes very good use of community specialists and organisations such as Kids Church and the Andover Community Family Learning Project to support the work it does with individual pupils. The Learning Support department operates a very sensible scheme for pupils who sometimes have difficulty behaving in an appropriate manner. Pupils have three opportunities only weekly to ask to leave a mainstream lesson if they feel that they will not be able to sustain the necessary standard of behaviour. This has the dual effect of assisting pupils to retain some responsibility for their own actions and ensuring that other pupils in the teaching and learning group do not have their education disrupted.
71. The anti-bullying policy is comprehensive. Pupils say they feel safe and secure in school and are confident to report incidents to staff. Incidents, such as bullying, are almost always taken very seriously when known by staff and prompt and appropriate action is taken. Peer mentoring has been introduced as a response to the concerns of pupils about bullying. Pupils during interviews spoke highly of the scheme and its help in diffusing and sorting out difficult situations.
72. Procedures to monitor and improve attendance are satisfactory overall. The importance of regular attendance is stressed and communicated to parents. Heads of Year receive frequent reports, which enable them to look for patterns of absence. A first-day call home system operates for identified pupils with attendance problems. Since the previous inspection the school has had the support of a full-time education welfare officer. The school is meticulous in not automatically authorising absence. The educational welfare officer has followed up all cases of unauthorised absence, and much effort is made to improve the attendance of these pupils. However, there is not enough focus in school on improving figures - for example, statistics of attendance for each class and year group are not prominently displayed and there is no system of rewards for promoting good attendance.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

73. The parents who responded to the questionnaire and attended the meeting continue overall to feel positively about the school. The questionnaire shows high levels of satisfaction by parents about the school and its work. There was some concern about the amount of homework, the information provided about progress and about behaviour. The inspection team found the amount of homework overall to be appropriate but that there are inconsistencies across some year groups and through the school, mainly in Years 7 - 9.

74. The school has satisfactory links with parents. It makes good efforts to involve them in their child's education and contacts them when there are concerns or when their child has done well. Several parents at the meeting said that they appreciated this. This year the English department has telephoned around 30 parents about underperforming pupils, late course work, borderline grades and booster GCSE classes. Parents find the school approachable. The quality of information provided for parents is good overall. There is one consultation meeting for parents each year. The school often targets those parents it specifically wishes to see. The annual reports to parents are very good. They give great detail about both academic and personal development, clearly identifying strengths and weaknesses and setting specific and achievable targets. The headteacher and staff are open and accessible at other times if parents wish to have informal discussion about their child's progress. A session was held to enable parents of children in Year 7 to support their children's learning in mathematics. Attendance was good. One other marked strength is the support given by the school to running ParentAid, with a local charity, to work with parents and carers with literacy needs. The learning support department communicates very effectively with parents. The telephone is used rather more than letters, and there are good relationships and a strong level of trust between home and school.
75. General information is satisfactory. The termly newsletter, *The Eagle*, gives good and detailed information about school developments and celebrates the achievements of the school. However, parents get no consistent information from subject departments about what their child is currently studying. This reflects the concern expressed in the parents' questionnaire and the school could investigate further ways to ensure that communication is more effective. The prospectus is well presented and informative, but fails to include any information about how the school works with parents to support their child's learning. The governors' annual report to parents does not contain all the required information.
76. Parental involvement in the life of the school is satisfactory overall. Many parents come to the Induction Evening when their child starts in Year 7. The attendance of parents at parents' evenings is more than 60 per cent. Logbooks work well for many parents as a means of communication between home and school. Attendance at school performances is good. A small number of parents are very supportive of the school and help with specific events such as school performances and team matches. However, others are apathetic and complacent. The Parent Teachers Association has been unsuccessful in gaining support for its events. Few parents turn up to meetings concerning the general life of the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

77. Overall, leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher, governors and senior managers work well in partnership and have a clear vision for the school. This is reflected well in its work. The governors have critically supported school improvement over the recent past. Good planning means that the school has managed to reduce its very large budget deficit of two years ago. There is a clear strategic plan that sets out goals for the future and the stages on the way. There are also academic strategies in place to move the school forward, although these have yet to have an impact on overall attainment. The headteacher has significant confidence in his school, the teachers, other staff and pupils, both on the basis of his vision for improvement in the future and the committed hard work of all involved. The school has a well-deserved reputation as a caring and inclusive school in which all pupils, especially those with learning difficulties, are supported well.
78. The leadership of the headteacher is an important strength. He has drawn on his wide experience, with good support from the governors, external agencies and senior colleagues to encourage teachers and individuals to a greater level of responsibility than before whilst raising expectations of corporate commitment. Much has been achieved since the last inspection when the overall leadership and management were judged as unsatisfactory. Despite not being able to replace a deputy head, the headteacher has been clear about the need to improve the responsibilities and accountabilities of senior and middle managers alike with regular monitoring. Management effectiveness is evident in an orderly school in which most routines run smoothly and where there are positive relationships between adults and pupils. A climate has been established for raising standards that have yet to be fully secured. The parents' questionnaire indicated that the school is well led and managed. The inspection confirms that this is predominantly the case.

79. The senior management team of three is a cohesive group, with each member taking a major responsibility for aspects of the school, working effectively across the school. It is working hard to raise standards for all pupils and is being rewarded with early success, even though they realise that much is yet to be done. For example, a very good system of data analysis has made target setting more effective; this process is being soundly linked with the work of the Teaching and Learning Group. In turn, this is beginning to have an impact on classroom practice. The analysis and evaluation of effective teaching is satisfactory, yet not enough staff have been able to benefit from observing good practice. Teaching is well monitored on a regular basis by senior managers and the school has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. Additional support has been given and, in a few cases, specific targets for improvement have been agreed with colleagues; these are usually followed up with additional monitoring and support. Other aspects of monitoring of pupils' attitudes to school and their attendance have been pursued rigorously and the outcomes have promoted further improvements in practice. The pastoral life of the school is managed well. It is very effective at promoting a high level of support and guidance for pupils and has given the school its purposeful ethos of care and promoting good behaviour. Heads of year give good leadership overall to their year teams. There is an effective programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education and work related learning. The latter is being enhanced by a well planned and steadily improving New Start course for several Year 10 and 11 pupils.
80. Subject management responsibilities are carried out satisfactorily overall. Good leadership is evident in science, physical education, geography, history, music, and drama. Elsewhere it is at least satisfactory and has improved well since the last inspection. The new leaders in design and technology and English have made a promising start in improving quality. Most departments have good documentation fully in place, particularly teaching programmes. Since the last inspection, the system of monitoring teaching and learning has developed fairly well, but still has to be more consistent in its impact. Not all subject leaders follow a rigorous approach to evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of their departments, or tracking the progress of individual pupils well. This impedes overall development. Regular meetings are held between heads of subjects and line managers, with a focus clearly directed on standards achieved, target setting, teaching and learning and subject monitoring. The impact of this work has been greater in subjects where experienced leaders are in post and where there is a clear understanding of how to draw together all the important strands for improvement.
81. The Learning Support department is a vital part of the school's provision. Its management and support from outside agencies, are good. The recently appointed co-ordinator has improved the school's work in this area, having considerable expertise to lead the development of teaching approaches for both class teachers and learning support assistants. Whilst literacy has been developed soundly across the curriculum and is improving, work on numeracy has not had the same urgency. The leadership and management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs throughout the school are very good. The headteacher, his deputy, the special educational needs co-ordinator and the recently appointed governor with responsibility for special educational needs, all work very hard to the significant benefit of the pupils they seek to serve. There is now a coherent draft policy, taking account of the new requirements of the special educational needs Code of Practice. The implementation of this will assist the school in its drive to match the learning tasks to pupils' abilities and learning styles. The school now needs to concentrate on the implementation of the more specific elements of the Teaching and Learning policy to ensure that all teachers are teaching all pupils on the basis of their need and abilities.
82. The school has identified very clear priorities for development and these are pertinent to key issues that require improvement, such as increasing pupils' attainment in literacy and numeracy, further developing pupil motivation and attitudes and increasing the range of accreditation for older pupils. The work on these has been mostly good, yet some of the success criteria need sharpening so that evaluation can be more effective. Much has been done in the last two years and there is clear evidence that the school is good at taking action to improve educational provision and staff performance in a measured way. The overall improvement since the last inspection has been good. The improvements in teaching and learning have generally been good, with the exception of implementing the numeracy strategy in Years 7 - 9. The leadership and management of the school have developed well and coherent procedures are in place to monitor and evaluate the school's work to

good effect. These can be improved even more to increase the impact on standards. Attendance is now close to the national average.

83. The governors' role in shaping the direction of the school is a growing strength. Following the previous inspection, the governors worked much more closely with the senior managers of the school and local education authority, to produce a good action plan that has been largely successful in promoting the improvements evident since 2000. Led by an enthusiastic and energetic Chair, the governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The governors' committee structure works well, with clear terms of reference for them. In particular the Performance, Planning and Development Committee fulfils an effective role in co-ordinating governing body business. A knowledgeable and committed governor who liaises well with the senior management team chairs each committee. Through appropriate review procedures the governing body holds the school to account. Questioning of the headteacher and senior managers is now more rigorous than before, especially on their analysis of how pupils are achieving. There is clear understanding of the division of responsibilities between school staff and governors. A good example of the more rigorous work from the governors is their grid structure for carrying out their monitoring work. This has been used by the local education authority as a model of good practice. Governors are 'linked' to subjects yet the impact of this role has yet to be fully felt and monitoring visits could be more systematic. From a precarious financial position two years ago, the large deficit has been reduced by setting careful priorities that demand little additional spending. However, it is a tribute to the governors that they have overseen good improvements in the school's accommodation at the same time. Other priorities are funded appropriately.
84. Governors fulfil most of their statutory duties and responsibilities soundly. However, in Years 10 and 11 the statutory requirements for design and technology, and religious education are not fully met. The requirement for a daily act of collective worship for all pupils is not met, even though daily assemblies take place for each year. Health and safety monitoring is good, yet the governors' annual report to parents does not contain all the required information.
85. Financial management is of good quality. The deficit of nearly £200,000 in 2000 has been halved and the school has effective plans in place to reduce this even further. The recent auditor's report indicated good monitoring of spending and an effective approach to budget planning. The governors' finance committee is rigorous in its monitoring whilst being shrewd in what spending it agrees to, in line with the overall strategic plan. It receives detailed monitoring statements and meets regularly to discuss issues. Effective steps are taken to ensure the best value is gained from contracts, for example, for catering, new building and purchases of educational equipment. Several grants are sought and used to allow developments, but the deficit has not allowed the potential flexibility of additional monies, such as the 'Chancellors' gifts', to be used as the school wished. Some further income is gleaned from lettings and the school receives a small benefit from the community use of the site. The principles of 'best value' are being applied soundly. The day-to-day management and control of the budget are good. Despite all the difficulties that the school has faced with the budget, it is giving satisfactory value for money as it is delivering a sound quality of education for all of its pupils, supported by improvements in the quality of teaching, overall monitoring and planning.
86. There has been much mobility in the teaching and classroom support staff in the last few years. In particular since the previous report in 2000, well over half of the teaching staff is new in post. In some subject areas, vacancies have been filled by newly qualified teachers, unqualified teachers, or by supply staff. This is most notably the case with art and design, English, geography, maths and science. It is a tribute to the school that overall the provision of guidance and training to all the teachers is satisfactory, bearing in mind the fluid staffing situation. Continuing professional development of serving staff is well matched to subject and whole school improvement plans. Performance management has been effectively introduced and has been positively received by staff. However, there are subject areas where the match between the staff available and the staff needed to support the necessary teaching activities is unsatisfactory. For instance, six teachers are needed to deliver design and technology fully to all the pupils, but there are only three. No food technology is taught as a consequence. In English, more teachers are in post than are needed. In several subjects (including art, physical education, religious education and science) there is a particularly good match of teachers to curriculum need. The school recognises, as well, that more curriculum support for learners with special needs would be valuable but it is not able to recruit. However, the decision to

provide targeted support in English and mathematics by learning support assistants is working well. In art and ICT there is insufficient technical support to free the teachers from tasks for which they are not best qualified, to allow them to teach more effectively. Technical support in science and design and technology is good. There is a marked shortage of learning support assistants for the number of pupils in the school who exhibit learning difficulties. The assistants have all completed a training course at the local college of further education. However, that course is not of the calibre recommended by the Government. Further training could well be considered.

87. Learning resources are satisfactory, with books, equipment and materials being adequate to promote learning. The ratio of computers per pupil - one to six - is well within the recommendations, and they are being used well in information and communication technology lessons. Good use is made of computers and software out of curriculum time by many pupils. However, across the curriculum inconsistency of use is evident; it is good in science, yet limited in English and mathematics. The library is well used, as it is a welcoming and efficient resource for independent learning. It has a good stock of books and software and is building a stock of videos. It supports homework clubs after school. Several departments make planned visits for teaching purposes and the librarian prepares topical displays, often making book boxes for project work. It has the potential to play an even more significant role in learning.
88. The quality of accommodation is good overall. The recent improvements to science and information communication technology areas have stimulated the work of those subjects. The rest of the school is generally bright and well established for teaching, with subject areas well defined. The design and technology area has recently had some refurbishment but suffers from not having all of its rooms together. The large sum of money spent on refurbishing five science laboratories has been instrumental in promoting more effective learning in the subject. Physical education facilities are good, with large indoor and outdoor facilities being well used. All office areas of the school are efficiently used and heads of subject and years have adequate working space. The school successfully maintains its buildings with a routine upkeep funded as far as the budget allows. Overall the site is well cared for by hard working staff, being kept free from litter, graffiti and any undue damage.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

To move the school on and enable pupils to achieve to the best of their ability, the headteacher, senior management team, staff and governors should:

- i. continue to improve standards of attainment overall, by
 - ensuring that the outcomes of monitoring the quality of teaching and learning are consistently used by departments to improve provision;
 - developing pupils' ability to become independent learners on a more consistent basis;
 - providing a co-ordinated approach to the use of numeracy across the curriculum;
 - extending further the co-ordinated work on literacy across the curriculum to ensure consistency in delivery;
 - strengthening the approaches for setting individual targets for pupils at both key stages;
 - raising expectations of pupils' efforts and levels of work, especially in Years 7-9;
 - making sure that homework tasks form an effective part of pupils' learning on a routine basis, notably in Years 7 - 9; and
 - strengthening the overall quality of the teaching staff and quantity of learning support assistants when possible.

(paragraphs 2, 4, 5, 19, 20,21, 22, 31, 32, 34, 35, 40, 44, 45, 46, 67, 68, 79, 80, 82, 86, 96, 99, 102, 107,108, 120, 126, 133, 143, 153, 160, 169, 177, 183, 189)

- ii. extend the range of learning opportunities to match the needs of all pupils through
 - setting pupils clearer objectives for learning that are challenging and relevant , particularly in Years 7-9;
 - using short term assessment more effectively so that all pupils know precisely what they need to do to improve on a routine basis;
 - ensuring teachers can adapt their work so that pupils can consistently achieve better in the short term; and
 - making the best use of information and communication technology across the curriculum.

(paragraphs 31, 32, 40, 44, 50, 55, 67, 68, 74, 79, 80, 82, 97, 104, 105, 116, 126, 128, 134, 141, 142, 153, 154, 160, 161, 162, 166, 173, 176, 177, 183, 184, 190)

- iii. develop further the effective sharing of high quality teaching approaches throughout the school by
 - strengthening the work of the 'Teaching and Learning Group';
 - ensuring the senior management team continue to rigorously evaluate all teaching;
 - identifying which teaching strategies provide the best learning opportunities for pupils of differing abilities;
 - encouraging more peer observation of good practice and analysing its outcomes; and
 - setting clear deadlines for ensuring that this work is effective.

(paragraphs 27, 28, 29, 30, 32, 36, 37, 68, 79, 80, 81, 82, 101, 105, 120, 134, 152, 168, 176, 177, 185, 195)

- iv. improve the cultural awareness of pupils and their place in today's diverse society by:
 - widening pupils' experiences, understanding and appreciation of multi-faith, multicultural and multi-ethnic life in the UK and elsewhere through the planned curriculum; and
 - extending the range of extra-curricular provision, wherever possible.

(paragraphs 47, 62, 63)

The governors should consider the following minor issues in their action plans:

- ensure that attendance continues to improve, especially in Key Stage 4 (*paragraphs 25, 72*);

- ensure that the governors' annual report to parents contains all the required information(*paragraphs 75, 84*);
- continue to develop better ways of communicating effectively with parents (*paragraphs 72, 74*); and
- improve current arrangements so that the school meets statutory requirements in design and technology at Key Stage 4 and religious education, as well as a daily act of collective worship (*paragraphs 38, 58, 84, 136, 191*).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	159
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	53

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	4	35	61	51	7	1	0
Percentage	3	22	38	32	4	1	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	724
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	66

Special educational needs	Y7 - Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	11
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	316

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	25
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	30

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	7.7	School data	1.8
National comparative data	8.1	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 (Year 9)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	67	77	144

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	41	37	44
	Girls	63	46	49
	Total	104	83	93
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	72 [43]	58 [54]	65 [55]
	National	64 [63]	66[65]	66 [59]
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	24 [31]	30 [29]	32 [21]
	National	31 [28]	43 [42]	34 [30]

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	30	46	51
	Girls	51	50	59
	Total	81	96	110
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	56 [61]	67 [62]	76 [59]
	National	65 [64]	68 [66]	64 [62]
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	15 [22]	40 [34]	36 [15]
	National	31 [31]	42 [39]	33 [29]

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 (Year 11)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	78	67	145

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	21	70	78
	Girls	25	57	65
	Total	46	127	143
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	32 [44]	88 [82]	99 [98]
	National	48 [47]	91 [91]	96 [96]

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	29.6 [33.5]
	National	39.0 [38.4]

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
	National	N/A

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	5
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	2
Indian	1
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	1
White	704
Any other minority ethnic group	7

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	84	6
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 - Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	46.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.7

Education support staff: Y7 - Y11

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked per week	341

Deployment of teachers: Y7 - Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	73.2
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Average teaching group size: Y7 - Y11

Key Stage 2	N/A
Key Stage 3	22.7
Key Stage 4	22.1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	2109693
Total expenditure	2048245
Expenditure per pupil	2783
Balance brought forward from previous year	-171475
Balance carried forward to next year	-110027

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two Years	20.2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two Years	26

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	2
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.6
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	724
Number of questionnaires returned	127

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	31	57	9	2	1
My child is making good progress in school.	31	61	6	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	11	51	18	6	13
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	18	50	24	9	0
The teaching is good.	17	61	11	3	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	22	43	24	9	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	39	47	9	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	35	57	5	1	2
The school works closely with parents.	17	46	24	9	3
The school is well led and managed.	26	57	9	5	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	26	59	9	1	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35	41	15	1	9

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

The returns from the parents' questionnaire were not particularly high; only 27 attended the pre-inspection meeting. The large majority of parents agree with the positive comments. Pupils are happy at school and most are making at least satisfactory progress. Extra-curricular activities are sound. Negative comments mostly concerned contact between school and home, but this was counter balanced by the very positive view about parents' ease in contacting school. The school works hard in maintaining working relationships with parents but does not always get a suitable response from some. Parents receive good annual reports on pupils' progress, yet also have other opportunities to discuss their children's progress with teachers. The inspection team shares the parents' concern about the inconsistency of homework, which is more evident in Years 7 - 9 than elsewhere. Overall, pupils' behaviour is good.

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

ENGLISH

Overall, the quality of provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- The consistent improvement in the attainment of 14 year olds, which is now broadly in line with the national average.
- Teaching is consistently good across the age range.
- The implementation of the Key Stage 3 strategy in English has been good.

Areas for development

- To raise attainment, particularly in GCSE.
- To put in place strategies to raise the attainment of boys to match that of girls.
- To improve the quality of marking and accurate use of grading.

89. In 2001 the attainment of 14 year old pupils, based on average points scored in national curriculum testing, was broadly in line with the average for all schools. These scores have risen steadily over the past four years, as has the percentage of pupils attaining the higher grades. In 2001, this increase was very high from 2000. The attainment of girls is consistently higher than that of boys and this difference is greater than is seen nationally. A full range of evidence seen during the course of the inspection indicates that attainment of 14 year olds is just below national expectations.
90. Pupils enter the school at the start of Year 7 with attainment in English that is well below the national average and by the end of Year 9 their attainment is just below the national average. During Years 7 to 9 pupils' achievement is good, particularly in the use of specialised technical language which is used in their analysis of how English works. Achievement is also good in their understanding of the purposes of writing and the way in which language is used to meet these.
91. The attainment of 16-year olds in their GCSE examinations in 2001 was considerably below the national average for grades A*-C, as was the percentage attaining the two higher grades A* and A. These results represented a considerable decline from the previous year, when the percentage attaining A*-C was much closer to the national average. The attainment of girls was higher than that of boys and the difference was greater than the national difference. All pupils entered for the examination obtained a grade in the range A*-G, which is slightly higher than the national average. In English Literature, which is taken as a separate subject by a minority of pupils, the percentage attaining grades A*-C was significantly above the national average, while the percentage of A* and A grades was broadly in line with what is seen nationally. A full range of evidence seen during the course of the inspection indicates that attainment at the end of Year 11 is below national expectations.
92. The pupils who took English GCSE in 2001 had attainment at the end of Year 9 which was also considerably below the national average and their achievement during Years 10 and 11 was satisfactory, even though GCSE results were well below the national averages. Pupils currently in Years 10 and 11 are making good progress, particularly in their use of the specialised terminology of literary and linguistic criticism and in their understanding of the way in which writers use language in order to achieve an effect.
93. By the age of 14, most pupils write in complete sentences and use basic punctuation correctly. They begin to form their own opinions about the texts they read and make simple references to these in order to justify their opinions. Most pupils begin to develop a range of specialised vocabulary in order to express these opinions and some higher attaining pupils have a good vocabulary of words specific to the subject. The majority of pupils, especially the higher attainers, understand the way in which writers use language in order to achieve their intentions, for example, Year 9 pupils looking at

promotional leaflets understood how the writers used language to persuade the readers to a particular viewpoint. Higher attaining pupils develop higher order reading skills such as skimming and scanning to make more efficient use of what they read. Most pupils have a very limited general vocabulary and this inhibits their ability to fully understand what they read and also their ability to express themselves in speech and writing. Although all pupils enjoy the opportunity to learn through discussing and comparing their ideas, some pupils lack the ability to listen to others and inhibit the effectiveness of their contributions by shouting them out in an inappropriate and unconsidered manner.

94. By the time they are 16 years old most pupils write in a clear, simple style. The notes they make show understanding of the texts they study, although average and lower attaining pupils lack confidence in their own notes and do not use them to full advantage. Nearly all pupils at least have a basic understanding of the plot or meaning of what they read and show a mature understanding of character and motivation. For example, a lower attaining group of pupils were able to make perceptive comments about the social isolation of Curley's wife in "*Of Mice and Men*" and the effect this would have on her attitudes and actions. Higher attaining pupils show mature understanding of the intentions and techniques of writers. Despite their understanding of the texts they study, average and lower attaining pupils have a tendency, when writing about them, to simply recount and summarise their content, rather than make considered comments. The restricted general vocabulary of most pupils, including higher attainers, means that they are limited in what they are able to understand or express in both speech and writing.
95. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils are good. In a third of lessons seen in Years 10 and 11 they were very good. In Years 7-9 pupils generally are eager to participate in all activities. They enjoy the opportunity to join in discussions and are keen to share their ideas. Incidents of inappropriate and distracting shouting out are occasioned more by lack of self-control when excited by activities than by any desire to be disruptive. In general, pupils work hard in lessons, do their best and on occasions display thoughtful responses. On the one occasion when the behaviour of a small minority was deliberately defiant and disruptive, most of the class responded well to the teacher's calm handling of the situation and behaved very sensibly, not allowing themselves to be distracted by what was happening. Older pupils in Years 10 and 11 show a mature and thoughtful approach to their work, including those for whom it is particularly challenging. They make good use of the opportunities they are given to discuss their work. For example, a group discussing the underlying themes in the novel "*Kes*" encouraged each other to contribute their ideas, although some found this difficult and listened respectfully to a range of opinions.
96. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Nearly all lessons seen were at least satisfactory and a large majority was good. Two lessons were very good. A strength of the teaching is the planning of lessons. Teachers have clear objectives for what pupils should learn and these are shared with pupils, so that they know what to expect and what is expected of them. Lessons are planned to meet the needs of pupils across the range of attainment including those with special educational needs, so that although expectations are high they are realistic and all pupils have the opportunity to experience success. There are examples of lessons that have been appropriately modified or re-planned in order to meet the perceived need of a class or group of pupils within a class. The learning support assistants have very good relationships with pupils and work well with a range of pupils. They are very careful to ensure that all pupils requiring additional support receive this. Teachers make good use of discussion and questioning to make pupils think hard and on these occasions pupils make good progress, sometimes commenting with surprise on how well they have got on. Teachers make good use of a wide range of activities and tasks in order to maintain interest and concentration, especially when the topic is particularly challenging. For example, when a Year 10 class was looking at the way a poet described the many stages and "layers" of love by comparing it with an onion, the teacher gave each member the opportunity to peel and cut through their own onion in order to demonstrate the effectiveness of the poet's description. All pupils were enabled to make good progress in understanding and offering ideas about the poem that they might have otherwise found impenetrable. Most lessons consist of a number of inter-linked activities, frequently escalating in terms of complexity and lessons maintain a good pace. Pupils respond well to this by working hard and putting thought into what they do. In the two less successful lessons that were seen, pupils responded to the slow pace and lack of challenge by losing interest and they made insufficient progress, although their behaviour remained perfectly acceptable. In lessons in Years 7-9 teachers make effective use of the framework for teaching English to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding on a number of levels.

Although the implementation of this strategy has taken place too recently for there to have been any appreciable effect, it is clearly meeting the needs of all pupils, especially the significant majority of pupils for whom a very limited vocabulary inhibits progress.

97. The management and leadership of the department are satisfactory. The head of department has been appointed very recently after a term when there was no head of department. In the very short time available the new head of department has correctly identified several priorities for the raising of pupils' attainment in English and has successfully implemented some new initiatives. Most notably, the English Strategy has been implemented thoroughly and successfully in Years 7 to 9, with the exception of the work on Progress Units that still needs to be more coherent. There is a good range of effective schemes of work already in operation and the implementation is on course to be fully completed before the end of the school year. The head of department has correctly identified the use of marking and assessment as an area for development. At present, although all teachers mark pupils' work regularly, this is not fully informative for pupils. Marking tends to be too congratulatory in tone and offers insufficient advice on what pupils need to do to improve. Teachers are insecure in their use of national curriculum grades, a point which is exemplified by the fact that teachers assessments of the attainment of 14 year olds is significantly different from the external marking of the national curriculum tests. There is a great deal of information available concerning the assessment of pupils' attainment, but much of this is not used as consistently or effectively as it should be. For example, the disparity of attainment between girls and boys has not been identified or quantified and therefore there are no strategies in place or plans to rectify this. Resourcing levels are good, particularly for the literacy strategy. However, the accessibility of ICT facilities is limited and difficult. There are no identified opportunities in the schemes of work for the teaching of ICT skills despite this being a requirement of the National Curriculum.
98. Since the previous inspection, there has been improvement in the standard of attainment of pupils aged 14, which was judged to be well below the national average. However, there has been little improvement in attainment at GCSE, especially in 2001, when there was a drop in the percentage of pupils attaining grades A*-C. There has been good improvement in the quality of teaching since the previous report, when teaching in Years 7 to 9 was judged to be unsatisfactory and contributing to low standards. Teachers' approaches to literacy skills were judged to be insufficiently rigorous and very good progress has been made in this. Some well-planned strategies have been put in place since the new head of department has been in post which show signs of being very effective.

Literacy

99. The use of literacy skills in areas of the curriculum other than English is satisfactory. Standards, though, remain just below average overall. Some subject areas make good provision for pupils to use a range of literacy and oracy skills and pupils make good progress, but the overall picture is inconsistent. This is partly because there is as yet no whole-school policy on literacy and at the time of the inspection teachers had not received any training of the application of the National Literacy Strategy to their own subjects. In some subjects which have their own policy on literacy, for example religious education, the policy is not put into consistent practice. Most subjects place a satisfactory emphasis on the correct use and spelling of vocabulary specific to the subject and some subjects, for example ICT and business studies, reinforce the importance of this by carrying out regular spelling tests. In modern foreign languages the importance of using a wide vocabulary and of spelling it correctly is reinforced by the use of dictionary skills. In many subjects pupils are given good opportunities to carry out extended writing, sometimes using "writing frames" to support those who find extended writing more difficult. For example, in mathematics these are used to support pupils in writing up the results of their coursework investigations for their GCSE. In other subjects, for example geography, limited and inconsistent use is made of such support for pupils who require it. In some subjects pupils have the opportunity to use their reading skills to extend their knowledge and understanding. For example, in science some Year 9 pupils read and answered questions on a passage about the circulatory system and in history good use is made throughout the age range of the poetry of World War 1, including some of the lesser known and more demanding poems of Siegfried Sassoon.

MATHEMATICS

Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Creates a good atmosphere to promote learning.
- Establishes good relationships with pupils.
- Makes effective use of the designated learning support assistant.

Areas for improvement:

- The use of assessment to inform curriculum planning and delivery.
- The consistency of marking practices across the department.
- The range of teaching and learning strategies.
- The consistent approach to numeracy across the curriculum.

100. The standards of pupils when they enter the school are well below what could be expected nationally. The results in the national tests in 2001 for pupils at the age of 14 were below the national average for all schools and only a few pupils gained the highest grades available. However, these results are better than in previous years and have reversed a downward trend. If the prior attainment of these pupils is taken into account the results indicate satisfactory progress over time. Girls achieve slightly better results than boys but the difference is similar to the national difference. From work seen during the inspection there is a majority of pupils, who, by the age of 14 are likely to reach national expectations. Higher attaining pupils in Year 9 were confident in their use of Pythagoras's Theorem and could solve simultaneous equations. This is from level 7 of the National Curriculum and above the expected levels. Average attaining pupils can form and solve equations and use their findings to plot points and draw graphs. This work is at the expected levels. Lower attaining pupils reinforce their numerical skills in a range of different situations.

101. These results are built upon during Years 10 and 11 as pupils follow an examination course suited to their prior ability at higher, intermediate or foundation level at GCSE. The results in 2001 were below the national figures but when the prior attainment is considered the indications are that progress is at least satisfactory and for some pupils is good. From pupils' work seen, higher attaining pupils in Year 11 confidently use trigonometry in three dimensions and solve problems involving volumes of cylinders and spheres. The proportion of pupils at this level is small and there are a larger number of average attaining pupils who use, analyse and display statistical data with confidence. Many of these pupils aspire to achieve the higher grades at intermediate level and from discussions in lessons are motivated to achieve these results. Lower attaining pupils follow the GCSE foundation course and can draw and measure angles accurately and calculate areas of quadrilaterals and triangles. Pupils in the New Start group are also following the foundation level course. The results have been static over recent years but the indications are that if current progress is maintained there should be a rise in the future. The progress made by pupils who have special educational needs is satisfactory. All teachers are aware of their needs but this is not always reflected in their planning.

102. Since the last inspection there have been major changes in the teaching staff for mathematics. Teaching overall is satisfactory, with teaching in Years 10 and 11 slightly better than in Years 7 to 9. Some lessons seen were judged good; only a small minority was judged unsatisfactory. The unsatisfactory lessons were from less experienced teachers whose teaching skills need further refinement to ensure that lessons have a good pace with ample material for all pupils. All lessons were well prepared; the main difference between satisfactory and good lessons was delivery and presentation. Confident delivery and presentation moved satisfactory lessons to good lessons. All teachers had good subject knowledge and used this in a majority of lessons to provide work that was relevant. The teaching strategies used were mainly exposition and practice although some lessons involved the pupils in working solutions on the board. The better lessons had a good pace and contained material that was challenging but achievable for all pupils. These lessons also contained question and answer sessions with open style questioning being used to develop thinking and reasoning. Even satisfactory lessons had some weaknesses, these being: too little challenge, insufficient work at the correct level or no extension for the more able pupils. There was little recognition in lesson plans of the needs for pupils of higher or lower ability. There was a small amount of practical work seen; this could profitably be extended to enrich pupils' knowledge and confirm

- understanding.
103. The attitudes of pupils to mathematics are positive. Even in lessons where pupils had to wait for work after finishing their initial task, there was no poor behaviour, disruption or off task talking. Pupils are polite and well mannered in lessons. They arrive promptly, settle quickly and in lessons seen the attendance was good. When required to issue or collect equipment, pupils do so with the minimum of fuss and disruption to other pupils. Lower attaining pupils show a positive attitude to mathematics and they have not been unduly disenchanted by the major changes in staffing over recent years. The rate of learning is generally satisfactory but for many pupils more challenging targets could be profitably set. Pupils display positive attitudes to their learning, but many could pay better attention to the layout of their work and the efficient use of space in their exercise books. Pupils work well in pairs when asked to do so and co-operate well with each other. This was seen with a class in the computer room and in another class when pupils were set the task to work in pairs to relate graphs to their equations and co-ordinates. When pupils mark their own work they do so fairly and honestly. They support each other when working to solve problems by discussing their solutions and giving reasons for their answers.
104. Day to day assessment is satisfactory but the feedback seen in pupils' exercise books lacks detail as to how they can improve. At best it is encouraging. External examination results are analysed by gender. There is an agreed set of marking codes but the overall marking is inconsistent in both quantity and frequency. There is no evidence to suggest that analysis of results after assessment is being used to inform future teaching or to modify the curriculum plan. The passing on of records is poor, as some classes in Year 10 have to repeat work covered in Year 9 to cater for the whole class. The reports to parents are good except that in reports seen the targets set were very general and not subject specific. Other links with parents include a mathematics curriculum evening for Year 7 parents. This was well received and may well form a part of future plans.
105. An experienced teacher who has only been in the school for a short time leads a department with a common desire to raise standards. The enormity of the task ahead had been recognised; it is daunting but priorities have been set. These should concentrate upon the important rather than the urgent. There has already been some improvement made in the short time the head of department has been in the school. There is a development plan to guide the way forward but this needs further refinement in terms of time scale and costs. The scheme of work is being reviewed to include guidance for teachers in preparing lessons. A start has been made on this and all members of the department are contributing towards the development. Monitoring of teaching and learning is in its infancy as is the use of data to set targets for different teaching groups. When fully in place there are plans to refine these targets so that individual pupils can be mentored to secure improvement. The curriculum fulfils statutory requirements and is planned to provide continuity and progression. The setting structure is inconsistent throughout the school and hinders continuity especially from Year 9 to Year 10. No specific work has yet been developed to initiate the Year 7 'catch-up' programme in mathematics. In Years 7, 8 and 9 work from Attainment Target 1, Using and Applying Mathematics, could be expanded so that pupils develop independent learning and study skills at an early age and thus benefit from them when coursework tasks are encountered in GCSE examinations.
106. There have been difficulties in staffing for mathematics and the effects of this cannot be underestimated. There are at present sufficient teachers for the delivery of the curriculum but the length of experience of staff does not allow experienced input to discussions on improvement. One member of staff is unqualified and another has returned to teaching after a long period in industry. Although experienced in mathematics, these teachers need support to refine their teaching skills. Teachers are mutually supportive in their work and in lessons are well supported by an efficient and effective learning support assistant who is specifically assigned to the mathematics department. The use of the learning support assistant enables the needs of pupils with special educational needs to be met and supports the work of the department by acting as a link with the co-ordinator for special educational needs. Future developments of this area of the department include the provision for able and talented pupils. Accommodation is in a suite of adjacent rooms of a suitable size to enable a range of teaching strategies to be used. These are suitably furnished. Some displays of work and some attractive commercial posters enhance the whole area. The resources to support teaching are just adequate. There is a lack of computers to use in the classroom and there are no suitably mounted screens for the overhead projectors that are in frequent use. This affects the presentation of lessons and impairs learning.

107. This is a department with much potential. There has been no real improvement since the last inspection because of the changes to and instability of staffing and the appointment of a new head of department within the last year. The examination results have stayed static mainly because of these changes. The overall quality of teaching has improved but the staffing of the department has not been stable for long enough to have a major impact on results.

Numeracy

108. Numeracy across the curriculum is at present underdeveloped. The National Numeracy Strategy is not fully in operation across the school. There has been no whole school training in the use of numerical skills across the curriculum and the audit undertaken is incomplete. However inspection evidence suggests that most pupils' numerical skills are sufficient for them to access all areas of the curriculum. Lower attaining pupils in Year 7 are the exception and the 'catch-up' programme for pupils who have not yet achieved level 4 of the National Curriculum is not yet functioning adequately. Numerical and mental skills are part of the mathematics curriculum and pupils are taught to use an electronic calculator efficiently. There is no over reliance on a calculator but many lower attaining pupils feel secure in their use of a calculator and sometimes make unnecessary use of it as a calculating aid. Although there has not been a cross curriculum audit of skills many departments have a policy for the inclusion of numerical skills and awareness within their own policy documents. Pupils in design and technology can measure accurately for cutting out material. There is good use of charts, graphs and diagrams in science, history and geography. In modern foreign languages there is a department policy on numeracy, which includes opportunities for use of numerical examples in each year. Pupils in Year 8 can count in the target language and pupils in Year 10 can convert currency between sterling and euros with confidence. When using computers pupils can enter and use formulae into spreadsheets and many can recognise errors generated by incorrect data entry.

SCIENCE

Overall, the quality of provision in science is **good**.

Strengths

- Teaching by knowledgeable staff is good, resulting in pupils' good achievement.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good.
- The science department is well led and well managed.
- Accommodation is very good.

Areas for improvement

- The proportion of A* to C grades at GCSE.
- Teaching strategies in a small minority of lessons.
- Monitoring and evaluation should be followed up more rigorously in order to ensure appropriate impact across the department.

109. Since the previous inspection in 2000, the science department has succeeded in making good improvements in the areas for development contained in the report.

110. Attainment of pupils on entry to the school in Year 7 is below the national average. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils attain standards in the national tests that are broadly in line with the national average for all schools, as they were in 2001. The results have improved since 1999 and 2000. In both 1999 and 2000 girls' performance in the tests was slightly better than that of boys. In 2001 the results of boys and girls were almost identical. The department has developed strategies that are helping to improve pupils' literacy skills, in order to help raise attainment in science.

111. In the double award examination at GCSE in 2001 a lower proportion of pupils gained grades A* to C than pupils nationally. A much higher proportion of girls achieved grades A* to C than boys. All pupils entered for the double award science examination gained grades A* to G. This was slightly above the national average. Twelve pupils were entered for the single award examination. All achieved a grade in the range A* to G, although none achieved a grade A* to C. In the previous two years pupils'

attainment in the GCSE examinations was in line with national averages.

112. During the week of the inspection, the standard of work seen in Years 7 - 9 was in line with national expectations. In Year 7 pupils were able to discuss the results of mixing substances together using their knowledge of chemical reactions. Pupils in a top Year 7 set achieved high standards when they chose appropriate axes to draw graphs to show the variation of human characteristics in the class. Year 8 pupils in a middle ability set used their knowledge and understanding of respiration accurately to explain the results of the effects of exercise on the body. In Year 9 pupils in a middle ability set achieved satisfactory standards when they described the relationship between force and distance during a discussion about levers. Lower ability pupils were able to describe the effects of acid rain. The more able pupils in Year 9 attained high standards when they wrote accurate balanced equations for the reactions between metals and acids.
113. During the week of the inspection, the standard of work seen in Years 10 - 11 was in line with that seen nationally. Pupils in a Year 10 double science lesson were able to work out the relationship between current, voltage and resistance. They correctly described the flow of electricity through a wire in terms of electrons. In a Year 10 single science group the pupils used indicator papers to help them classify liquids as acid or alkaline. Pupils in a top set for double award science were able to describe the functions of different parts of a plant cell. In Year 11 the more able pupils interpreted speed-time graphs correctly. They calculated the acceleration of a trolley as it travelled down a ramp. Year 11 pupils reached high standards when they described the difference between the evolutionary theories of Darwin and Lamarck. These pupils were able to illustrate their descriptions with evidence from fossil records. They used terms such as "gene, mutation and natural selection" effectively when discussing evolution. The scrutiny of pupils' work showed that the more able Year 11 pupils could write balanced equations for the reactions of metals, carbonates and oxides with acids. Pupils in the foundation sets attained satisfactory standards when they described the main features of ionic bonding.
114. Teaching is good in both key stages. Teachers explain the aims of lessons to pupils. This enables pupils to be clear about what they are supposed to be learning during lessons. Throughout the department teachers have good subject knowledge and understanding. This enables them to provide clear explanations and to ask probing questions. In the best lessons teachers encourage pupils to think about the nature of science and how scientific ideas develop. In a Year 8 lesson on the circulatory system the teacher encouraged pupils to look at how the work of individuals such as Galen, da Vinci, Ibn an Nabis and Harvey have contributed to our present understanding. In a Year 11 lesson on evolution the teacher led a discussion that enabled the pupils to see how ideas in science can impact on the lives of us all. In both key stages marking of pupils' work helps them to understand what they need to do in order to improve. Teachers regularly draw pupils' attention to descriptions of levels of attainment displayed on the walls of the laboratories. This helps pupils to understand what they need to do to reach high standards. The department is developing targets written in language that pupils can easily understand. These targets are given to pupils in their books. They are effective in enabling pupils to take greater responsibility for their own learning.
115. Teaching was good in Year 7 where the teacher of a lower ability group gave clear instructions and provided good support for individual pupils. This enabled the pupils to remain focused on their tasks and to make good progress in recording their measurements of different types of tomato. In a Year 8 lesson the teacher carefully explained what the pupils should do in order to reach high levels. This led them to write conclusions about their investigations on the effects of exercise on the body using their scientific knowledge and understanding. The teacher used a video clip of the heart very effectively, stopping it at appropriate points to ask questions and highlight teaching points. She used a CD ROM and interactive whiteboard well to consolidate pupils' learning at the end of the lesson. In a top set Year 9 lesson the excellent teaching enabled the pupils to attain high standards and make very good progress in their understanding of displacement reactions. The teacher had high expectations and made these clear to the pupils. She used a small group of pupils very effectively in order to model a displacement reaction. This helped them to understand that a more reactive metal would displace a less reactive metal to combine with oxygen. She maintained a very good pace throughout the lesson and actively supported individuals and small groups. This helped to create a good working atmosphere where all pupils were trying to do their best. Year 9 pupils in a middle ability group made good progress in developing their understanding of the relationship between pivots, effort and load. The teacher's planning identified clear objectives and appropriate scientific vocabulary. This enabled her to

- maintain a clear focus throughout the lesson. The teacher used her good subject knowledge and understanding to provide clear explanations and ask probing questions as she illustrated the use of levers. She used a group of pupils effectively to help model her explanations. This successfully engaged everyone in the class. Pupils were keen to ask further questions and this helped to consolidate their understanding.
116. In Year 10 teaching was very good where the teacher's questions challenged pupils to work out the relationship between current, voltage and resistance. The teacher made very effective use of a variety of teaching strategies, which were successful in helping pupils to understand electric currents. The teacher engaged pupils well and got them thinking by making models using different sized sweets to represent atoms and electrons. Teaching in Year 10 was satisfactory when the teacher of a single award science group used a card activity to focus pupils' attention at the start of the lesson. The teacher provided the pupils with sufficient activities and gave them appropriate support to enable them to understand how to use the pH scale. In one Year 10 lesson teaching was unsatisfactory. The teacher used her appropriate subject knowledge to explain clearly the functions of different parts of a plant cell. However, the teaching strategies were not appropriately matched to the needs of the pupils. Consequently, many of the pupils made unsatisfactory progress in this lesson.
117. Teaching was very good in Year 11 where the teacher used his good subject knowledge and understanding to ask questions that helped pupils to give accurate definitions of speed, velocity and acceleration. Another Year 11 teacher used his very good subject knowledge to provide clear instructions for practical work. He focused well on the main teaching points of the lesson. This enabled the pupils to carry out the practical activity involving the cracking of an alkane well. They made very good progress in understanding the structure of alkanes and alkenes. In another Year 11 lesson the teacher used his good subject knowledge to ask probing questions and give clear explanations. This enabled the pupils to make good progress in developing their understanding of electrolysis. Pupils in the Year 11 Newstart class made very good progress because the teacher used a good range of teaching strategies with the right balance between giving careful explanations and challenging the pupils to think for themselves.
118. The majority of teachers establish very good working relationships with the pupils. They have high expectations of work and behaviour and make them clear to pupils. This means that pupils work hard and contribute well to the lessons. Time is used effectively and as a result pupils make good progress in the vast majority of lessons.
119. Sufficient time is allocated to teaching science, although in a small minority of cases the 50 minute lesson time is too short. This applies mainly to practical sessions in Years 10-11 where thinking time is needed as well as time for more complex practical work. Pupils throughout the school are given ample opportunities to develop their practical skills, including those involving whole investigations. Teachers also use practical activities effectively in order to increase pupils' knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are given appropriate guidance in order for them to understand what they should do to attain the highest standards in investigative work. The department is developing a scheme of work for Years 7-9 based upon the scheme published by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. This helps teachers to build upon pupils' prior learning from their primary education. The second teacher in the department liaises with the main feeder primary school. The department runs an induction day for Year 6 pupils. Most pupils in Years 10 and 11 follow a modular double award GCSE science course. The department also offers a single science GCSE award or certificate for those pupils who would find the commitment to the double award inappropriate. The science curriculum is enriched through a variety of out of school visits. These include a Year 7 trip to the Science Museum, a Year 10 visit to the Natural History Museum and a week's work by Year 9 pupils at a local agricultural college.
120. The department is well led by an enthusiastic head of department who works closely with the second teacher in the department. Together they ensure that teachers maintain a strong focus on raising achievement through sharing good practice. There is a very thorough departmental handbook. This provides members of the department with good guidance on a variety of teaching and learning issues. This has been effective in helping to establish good practice in developing literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology in science lessons. Since the last inspection, the monitoring of teaching and learning has improved. However, the results of monitoring and evaluation

are still not followed up with sufficient rigour to ensure consistent impact throughout the department.

121. The science department has recently been refurbished. Accommodation is now very good and enables teachers to use appropriate teaching strategies well. Technical staff give very efficient support to science teaching. Their hard work has a positive impact on the quality of provision in the department.

ART AND DESIGN

122. Overall, the quality of provision in art and design is **good**.

Strengths

- The teachers' very good management of their pupils with very clear expectations of effort and behaviour.
- The teachers' very good depth of knowledge about art and design.

Areas for improvement

- The standardising of assessment levels at the end of Year 9.
- The use of ICT as a creative tool.

123. The standards attained in art and design by pupils at the end of Year 9 are average. This represents good achievement when considering that their standard of attainment on entry was below the expected standard. Pupils make good progress in acquiring painting and drawing skills and, by the end of Year 9, the majority of them are showing a very confident drawing style with a sensitive use of line and a good sense of shape and composition. They have a limited critical vocabulary, though and only the higher attaining pupils are prepared to express their views and opinions about the works of artists.
124. By the end of Year 11 the standards attained in art and design are very good. The GCSE results in 2001 were well above the national average with over three out of four pupils attaining the higher A*-C grades compared to around three out of five pupils nationally. A significant proportion of pupils, almost one third of the school's entry, attained A* or A grades. This maintains the department's high standards over recent years. Girls perform better than boys reflecting the national trend, but the boys' results are well above those of boys nationally. Pupils' achievement in art and design at this age is very good. On average, pupils taking art and design at GCSE in 2001 gained results almost one and a half grades higher than their average in other subjects. In the lessons seen there were examples of very high quality textile and ceramic work, often reflecting the styles of particular artists. Good sketchbook work forms the basis for strong, confident designs created in batik and developed from carefully observed drawings. While all pupils carry out research into the life and works of various artists as part of their coursework, it is the higher attaining pupils who show the level of understanding necessary to make links between their own work and that of the artists.
125. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in art and design are good overall in all age groups. They are polite and sensible in their relationships with their teachers and with each other. Across the age range they are attentive and concentrate well. However, in two lessons, some pupils took a rather leisurely approach to their work.
126. The quality of teaching and learning is good across the key stages. In Years 7 to 9 teaching and learning were good in three-quarters of the lessons seen and very good in the remainder. Lessons are well planned and organised to make full use of the time available. The teachers' high expectations of pupils' behaviour and commitment are made clear from the outset and reinforced throughout the lesson. All but one of the lessons seen in Years 7 to 9 were the first sessions of a new carousel round and involved very directed instruction with few adaptations made to meet the needs of pupils with different skills. Well-targeted, individual guidance was given to pupils, however, to check understanding and set specific targets. In Years 10 and 11 teaching and learning was very good in two thirds of the lessons seen and good in the remainder. The same strengths are apparent as in earlier Years with an increased emphasis on individual support and a more rigorous teaching of skills. The teachers' very good knowledge, particularly of the practical aspects of the subject, is evident in all the lessons and is a key strength of the department. Good procedures for monitoring the progress of pupils are in place and the marking system has been brought into line with the school's marking policy. The new system is not, however, easily related to National Curriculum levels for art and

design. At present the department does not have a folio of assessed and levelled work to standardise the teachers' judgements for the end of Year 9 and to set clear targets for pupils.

127. The leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. The department is currently in a state of flux following significant changes in staff. The head of department has been in school for some years but has only been in post for five weeks before the inspection. However she is already establishing the character of the department and leading by example. The other two teachers also began work in the school five weeks before the inspection and have established good working relationships with each other and with their pupils.

128. The use of ICT in art and design is unsatisfactory. There are presently no facilities within the department to teach or develop appropriate skills, although two computers are expected soon. The head of department has undertaken a course in ICT use and pupils often use computers at home or in school to carry out research on the Internet and word process their findings. The accommodation and resources for art and design are good. There are three good-sized art rooms including a well-equipped ceramics studio. Storage space is adequate in all three rooms but there is very limited display space in the ceramics studio.

129. Improvement in art and design since the last inspection is satisfactory. High standards have been maintained and staff changes have been effectively managed. The use of ICT as a creative tool remains to be addressed.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in design and technology is **unsatisfactory**.

Strengths

- Hardworking nature and competence of the head of department.
- Detail, care and comprehensive nature of teaching schemes.
- The progress made since the last inspection two years ago.

Areas for improvement

- Pupils' access to design and technology in Years 10 -11 through appropriate accommodation and staff.
- Teachers' application of design and technology principles to lessons and sequences of lessons.
- Statutory requirements, the organisation of physical and learning resources, and accommodation.
- Integration of ICT as a tool for effective teaching and learning through the whole design and technology curriculum.

130. In recent years teachers' assessments of pupils' skills knowledge and understanding in design and technology (DT), indicate below average attainment at the end of Year 9 with around 40 per cent reaching the target standard of level 5. While there has been a slight improvement over the period, the figures are well below those found nationally (which are over 60 per cent). Assessments during the inspection week of how well the pupils have learned DT indicate a more promising picture. For instance, while the Year 9 pupils seen are on the whole still not reaching national standards, more of those in Year 8 are on line to do so and most in Year 7 also. Thus, the quality of the graphics in Years 7 and 8 is not much different from that in Year 9 regarding the cleanliness and tidiness of the work, the accuracy of the measurements, the fineness of pencil lines, the maturity of lettering and shading and even, sometimes, the imagination, thoughtfulness and appropriateness of the designs. Again, as many Year 7 as Year 9 pupils have an adequate grasp of the nature and stages of the design process (how to try to solve problems) and an adequate understanding of the meanings of the main technical words used. Overall better progress in raising standards is evident in Years 7 and 8 than in Year 9.

131. Most of the older pupils do not study DT. Those who do, take a GCSE course. In recent years the numbers reaching or passing GCSE Grade C have been between a fifth and a third - with some overall improvement, but again always well below the national figure of about 50 per cent. What was observed of the DT work of the pupils in Years 10 and 11 in the inspection week – in some folders and displays, in the products and activities of Year 11 pupils dropping in to the department after school to get on with their course work and in talking with them – confirms that their design skills and their knowledge

and understanding of the subject indeed average below national expectations. The work in Year 10 is closer in standard to that found nationally. This all applies to their grasp of the design process and its cyclic nature, their ability to choose between materials in given circumstances, their skills in finishing a product off, their methods of evaluating a final product and the professionalism of their writing up. Again, good progress in raising standards is apparent.

132. In the short period since the last inspection what pupils know, understand and can do is improving. In Years 7 - 9 at least, the pupils' attitudes to the subject area are becoming more positive. There is clear excitement at times in many lessons and, while some pupils' lively behaviour sometimes disturbs others' working, this is rarely the result of dislike of the subject. Indeed the teachers often make efforts to develop the pupils, for instance, by giving them responsibilities, by expecting high quality products and by encouraging them to see the spiritual, moral and work-related implications of what they meet in lessons.
133. Overall the quality of teaching is satisfactory with good features. Lessons last over an hour and a half – this is a long time, and the teachers (who are well qualified and hard working) generally cope well with this. They recognise the need for lively, fast moving starts and ends to lessons with plenty of quick-fire questions and, between the starts and ends, a good variety of activities, tasks and resources. In the better lessons, the central part is a succession of individual practical activities and whole class discussions; otherwise the pace of work in that central part can slacken too much. Also, good quality teaching here is marked by good working relationships with the pupils and encouragement to improve their skills, knowledge and understanding effectively and with enjoyment – and then good learning is clear, including for the pupils who find learning hard. However, where learning is unsatisfactory, the pupils do not enjoy what they do or find it of value. On the whole, the teachers are much more successful at encouraging effective learning when dealing with individuals and small groups than when facing a whole class. When facing a whole class, the questioning falls in quality – even disappears – and the teachers have a much less useful knowledge of how well the pupils are progressing. On a whole class level, however, they are all particularly good at encouraging the pupils to use language and numbers properly, though the displays in these areas – such as the word lists on the walls – are not effective.
134. A strength of the teaching is that in most lessons there is much effort to emphasise that technology is about successfully solving problems and that the use of a standard, straightforward approach – the design process – can make success likely, whatever kind of problem is faced. Poor emphasis on and use of this design technology philosophy were concerns in the previous inspection report, but now it is clear that the staff – and the pupils – are getting to grips with it and seeing its value in a wide range of contexts. Even so, there is still some way to go. For instance, in most classes only a few pupils realise that what the teachers call “situation” defines a problem to be solved, the “design briefs” are not all developed by the pupils (who, therefore, do not understand or “own” them on the whole) and “research” often does not relate correctly to the overall design process.
135. The need to apply the DT philosophy and approach mentioned above to lessons and sets of lessons is essential. Currently, DT lessons so far do not have specific, tailored learning objectives. The planning does not yet consistently involve enough thought and design, or adequate evaluation or assessment. As a result, the pupils do not learn as well as they are able (especially the more able). Even so, where lessons were repeated with different groups during inspection week, it was clear that the teachers recognised imperfections and took steps to improve.
136. A year ago, the school lost both teachers of food technology. Since then they have not been able to find suitable replacements and, as a result, the pupils of Years 7 - 9 do not have the opportunity to apply the approach to the design and making of products from food stuffs to meet given needs. Whilst the school meets National Curriculum requirements for design and technology in Years 7 - 9, it is harder to ensure the pupils understand the wide relevance of the theory they meet so well. In Years 10 and 11, however, the school does not follow the requirements of the National Curriculum, as most pupils choose to study other subjects. Thus most pupils from those two years do not have the chance to develop their grasp of DT as the National Curriculum expects. In order to meet the lack of food technology teachers, the school has arranged for quite a large number of pupils to travel to a nearby college to study food technology.

137. In the previous inspection, the quality of leadership and management was unsatisfactory. Much progress has been made since then, following a restructuring of the department, including the appointment of a new subject leader and a great deal of support to improve the environment and facilities. The head of department is a strong manager and has put in a great deal of work to develop the rooms, the systems, the teaching schemes and the resources (in particular the ICT resources). Some of these are outstanding and the positive effect on the work of the department and on the pupils' learning is clear. For the department to become more successful, an integrated consistent approach to the development of resources and administration systems is now needed. These include work on assessment, as well as developing literacy, numeracy and the use of computers.

GEOGRAPHY

Overall, the quality of provision in geography is **satisfactory**; it is **good** in Years 10 and 11.

Strengths

- Good quality of teaching, especially at Key Stage 4.
- Good leadership and management.
- Good attitudes to the subject from most pupils.
- Effective contributions to pupils' literacy skills.

Areas for development

- The need for greater consistency in teaching and learning.
- Greater challenge in some lessons.
- Continued broadening of the range of resources, including ICT.

138. By the end of Year 9 the standards of pupils' work are currently just below national expectations. This differs from the 2001 Key Stage 3 teacher assessment results which, at 66 per cent at Level 5 and above, were slightly above the national average and an improvement on results of previous years. However, in lessons observed pupils were achieving well particularly where teaching is good or better. Most pupils have a good surface knowledge of places and geographical aspects, but understanding about the underlying patterns and processes is less well developed. The development of geographical skills is at least satisfactory. In one Year 9 lesson pupils were able to sort cards relating to the Braer oil tanker disaster into causes and effects, but only a few were able easily to explain the different categories of effects - social, economic and environmental. In another Year 9 lesson on volcanoes, however, the pupils were encouraged to develop their thinking skills and to reflect on this. They were able to explain the reasons behind their use of categories when devising a spider diagram.
139. Standards by the end of Key Stage 4 are in line with national expectations, with work seen reflecting the results achieved in 2001 GCSE examinations. Progress made by older pupils is good. By Year 11 most pupils have developed a wide range of knowledge. For example, in one lesson pupils were able confidently to explain the effects of deforestation in the Amazon, using appropriate vocabulary. Most pupils are also able to make inferences and transfer knowledge from one area of enquiry to another. In their coursework they are able to draw and interpret maps accurately, as well as use appropriate graphic techniques.
140. Over the last two years considerable progress has been made in improving pupils' attitudes to their work and they are good, with behaviour being very good. Where the teaching was good or better pupils responded very well, showing initiative and enthusiasm. In other lessons their involvement was not encouraged and they were more passive and less well motivated. Relationships were generally good with a pleasant working atmosphere in most lessons. Since the last inspection work has focused on the introduction of a wider range of teaching and learning activities, including thinking skills and the sharing of good practice. There has also been a focus on improving boys' achievement, literacy skills and the better use of attainment levels. This has had a good effect on overall standards.
141. Teaching overall was good, ranging from very good to unsatisfactory. Teaching was satisfactory in Key Stage 3, but good in Key Stage 4. Where teaching was good or better, pupils were set challenging tasks, encouraged to think and given useful learning strategies to do so. Lessons were well structured to maximise pupil involvement with pair and whole class groupings used appropriately. In one lesson pupils were asked to tell their partners three things they had learned in the last lesson and later to explain what makes a good geographical enquiry question. Where teaching was less than good these strategies were not in use, pupils being set less challenging, lower order tasks. For example a Year 9 class was given an interesting and well-prepared card activity, sorting statements, to work on in small groups. This was an effective learning strategy, devalued by then asking all the pupils to copy the statements out, a time-consuming activity with no challenge. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, planning to meet pupils needs was ineffective and resources poorly used.
142. Pupils' work is regularly marked according to agreed criteria. The department has begun to encourage the pupils to develop a greater understanding of the attainment levels at Key Stage 3. Pupils have a good understanding of the objectives they are set for learning and most respond well. There are some formative comments on the pupils' work, giving clear guidance on how they can improve, but this is

still at an early stage of development. Homework is set appropriately with pupils often provided with useful guidance and support. The department is very aware of the literacy needs of pupils and has made good efforts to develop the department's contribution to overall literacy skill acquisition, but this is applied inconsistently. In one lesson pupils were provided with a helpful sheet for taking notes while watching a video with guidance from the teacher on how to use it. In another lesson pupils were asked to write a leaflet giving advice on taking shelter from hurricanes, but an opportunity was missed to reinforce key aspects of the genre of leaflet design and writing. There are some opportunities for extended writing, but the head of department is keen to increase them.

143. Pupils' learning is at least satisfactory at Years 7 - 9 and good at Years 10 and 11. Pupils respond well to challenging teaching, working at a good pace with interest and concentration. They can work independently and need to be provided with more opportunities to do so from Year 7. In some lessons they are beginning to develop awareness of their own learning, when suitably encouraged to do so. The best practice observed in some lessons needs to be more consistently applied. Pupils with special educational needs often make good progress, with examples observed of work being matched to their needs. This reflects the high level of support that pupils receive in much of the geography teaching.
144. The current schemes of work ensure coverage of the National Curriculum programme of study In Years 7 - 9 and the examination requirements for GCSE. The department has begun a review of the Years 7 - 9 scheme of work with a view to reducing the amount of content coverage. This is vital if time is to be made available to develop thinking skills and deepen the pupils' understanding about key geographical concepts. Sources of advice, such as the QCA scheme, can be used where appropriate.
145. The department is well led and managed by a highly knowledgeable practitioner. The head of department has a clear sense of direction and is a good role model to other staff. She encourages the sharing of good practice through discussions at department meetings and needs to develop this further by increasing opportunities for teachers to observe each other and give constructive feedback. Good links have been established with the University of Southampton with the department benefiting well. She has promoted the use of thinking skills activities and now needs to maximise their consistent use, so that all pupils benefit. She has focused well on boys' achievements, looking to develop alternative approaches. This has improved their results considerably. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory.
146. The department is well resourced with books, maps, atlases and videos. There is a move away from reliance on a single textbook towards greater variety. There is some evidence of the use of ICT in pupils' folders, but there is a need to further integrate ICT-focused activities more into the schemes of work. Fieldwork takes place in all years, except Year 9 and includes an extended trip to Dorset in Year 10. There are plans to introduce fieldwork in Year 9; these should be pursued as soon as possible.

HISTORY

Overall, the quality of provision in history is **good**.

Strengths

- The provision of teaching and learning is very good.
- The department is very well managed.
- Pupils with below average attainment and those with special educational needs are well supported and all pupils are cared for well.
- Homework is used well to support learning.
- The department makes a good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
- The department makes a good contribution to the development of skills in literacy.

Areas for improvement

- Tasks and resources are not always sufficiently well matched to the needs of pupils.
- The provision of more opportunities for individual and group research activities in the classroom and the use of computers in the classroom.

- Pupils in Year 7 have only one 50 minute lesson per week which provides insufficient time for the teaching of skills.

147. Attainment at age 14 as observed in lessons is close to that expected of pupils of similar age nationally although the weakness in literacy of some pupils reduces overall standards of written work. The percentage of pupils assessed at National Curriculum level 5 or above in 2001 was well below that found nationally. This was a result of a change of staff and the use of an inaccurate form of assessment. In recent years results at GCSE at grades A*-C have been well below those expected nationally but the number of pupils entered has been too low to provide a statistically valid comparison. The number of pupils gaining grades A*- G compares well with national results and individual pupils have reached the highest grade. The 2001 entry represented a weaker group of pupils and the department had been affected by the loss of key teachers. Inspection and assessment evidence shows that standards in the present Year 11 are better and are now similar to those found in schools elsewhere and that pupils achieve well. This is because of the quality of teaching within the department and the very positive attitudes of pupils towards the subject.
148. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils have a good understanding of some of the major developments in the conduct of warfare in the early twentieth century. Their understanding of key issues, particularly the impact of new weapons such as poison gas, barbed wire and machine guns, is often good. Pupils of below average potential attainment show particularly good knowledge and understanding of events of 1914 and about trench warfare. These pupils use a variety of resources well, including the poems of Wilfred Owen, to form conclusions about the issues such as the conduct of the war by the generals. Written work is often affected by poor literacy skills but pupils show better levels of knowledge and understanding in discussion. Average ability pupils talk about sources of evidence with confidence and higher attaining pupils can recognize bias and understand reasons for the use of propaganda posters and censorship. Most pupils show a clear understanding of the importance of comparing sources of evidence before reaching a conclusion. Although some lower attaining pupils show lack of understanding of cause and effect and are vague about details they are all able to understand and sympathize with the life of soldiers in the trenches. One pupil showed that he understood that young men would have been forced to volunteer because of peer group and family pressures. The approach to this topic makes a valuable contribution to the moral and cultural understanding of pupils.
149. Work in GCSE lessons shows that pupils are able to use the analytical and research skills gained in Years 7 -9 and it is clear that the teaching of skills is very good. Early in their GCSE course pupils have a good understanding of the inter-war period and the events that led to war again in 1939. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, understand about the use of resources to provide evidence about the past but some encountered difficulty with the complex areas of history, for example the failure of the Weimar Republic. In Year 11 the highest attaining pupils use documents and extracts very well and talk about legislation such as the Defense of the Realm Act in detail and with real confidence. Average pupils are able to talk about the problems with using certain types of sources, particularly posters and photographs. During the inspection pupils were starting work on the Cold War. Some clearly found difficulty with the sequence of events but most were clear about the ideological and economic causes. They were also very aware that both sides contributed to a very dangerous creation of tension between the USA and the USSR. One particularly thoughtful pupil was able to talk about how some of the war was fought by proxy, for example in South East Asia, because he had been researching the topic for himself. Pupils in Year 11 are confident in using computers for presenting work for assessment and the majority of pupils show the level of skills, knowledge and understanding to reach the higher grades at GCSE.
150. Attitudes to the subject are very good. Most pupils work hard and participate well in lessons. They enjoy activities in class and find the work interesting and challenging. More pupils are now choosing to take the subject at GCSE. The response of pupils is often very good and they are very eager to take part in discussion and then to use the library or web sites for their own research for homework. Boys are very ready to contribute in lessons. Pupils are proud to show how they have used web sites to find out about Norman castles and to bring in family treasures, including medals, from the Great War, to share with the class.
151. Teaching is now very good. The quality of teaching observed was usually good and often very good or excellent. The teaching of pupils with below average attainment is particularly effective. In an excellent lesson in Year 9 the quality of questioning, the use of resources and the real challenge of the

approach used, created a really excellent learning environment and because of this pupils showed higher than expected levels of knowledge and understanding. Where lessons are less successful the pace is slower and resources are not well matched to the needs of pupils. Teachers are using a variety of approaches to teaching and learning. They are knowledgeable about the subject and their lessons are well planned, managed and resourced. Lessons have focused objectives that are shared with and understood by pupils.

152. Learning is very well managed in history. Two excellent lessons were observed during the inspection. There is a consistent focus on providing opportunities for the improvement of skills in literacy. The identification of subject specific vocabulary, a good variety of tasks and writing frames to help those of lower potential attainment are all key features of the lessons. Tasks and resources are usually well matched to the attainment of pupils and they are supported well. There is a good range of activity within each lesson and because teachers use resources such as video well pupils can gain valuable insight into key events such as the execution of Charles 1. In Year 9 a variety of resources are used to help pupils understand about the Great War. Special needs staff work directly with pupils in class and this ensures that they learn well because they are able to participate fully. A pupil who has a statement of special need was able to talk about features of life in the trenches and another to explain why bombardment made the problem of barbed wire worse.
153. The majority of pupils develop an understanding of chronology and the impact of change over time. Teachers use time lines and emphasize the importance of cause and effect, for example, by ensuring that pupils understood that Norman castle building took place after the Battle of Hastings for specific reasons. Progress is good because pupils have the opportunity to develop skills in history as they progress through the school. The work of pupils in Year 7 is affected by the lack of time for teaching and this means that skills development is delayed, although pupils do cover an appropriate range of topics. Pupils do take responsibility for their own learning and that of others by working in groups and in most lessons they are active learners rather than passive listeners. However, there is not enough opportunity for individual research using a range of books in class. Tasks set for homework link well with work in class and pupils are able to use information technology and the library to complete their homework. Pupils with special learning needs make good progress because of the quality of support available. Pupils with the highest level of ability are identified and supported well in GCSE classes. However there is a need to ensure that a really close match of tasks and resources to the ability of pupils and to provide extra intellectual challenge for average and more able pupils.
154. The ethos of the department is one of inclusion and pupils work together well. Arrangements for visits, the opportunity to attend study days and the provision of after school support classes for GCSE pupils are evidence of the quality of care provided. The department has insufficient access to computers in the classroom to take full advantage of their potential in promoting effective learning. Targets are set and pupils are assessed effectively ensuring that progress is carefully monitored. The history rooms are used for displays of pupils' work, for example their posters and booklets on slavery and this celebration of their success contributes to their enjoyment of the subject. Because of its rich curriculum content and variety of opportunities for discussion teaching in the subject makes a good contribution to spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. During the inspection pupils discussed a range of issues including the way Charles 1 was tried for treason and why the Saxons had reason to dislike the Normans. The department uses the satisfactory level of resources very effectively in the majority of lessons.
155. The department has many strengths, being very well led. There has been a good level of improvement since the last inspection. A great deal has been achieved in the months since the appointment of a new head of department who has a clear view of the way forward for history in the school. Management is very good particularly in the development of resources and in the development of assessment procedures and documentation. Careful planning and monitoring now ensure that resources and assessment procedures are being effectively used to promote progression and continuity and to improve standards.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- All 16 year-olds follow General Certificate of Secondary Education courses.
- Examination results among 16 year-olds match the national averages.
- There are good improvements in the use of information technology to support learning in science, maths and special educational needs.
- Resources have improved since the last inspection.
- Monitoring and assessment procedures are good.

Areas for improvement

- Raise the profile of information technology among girls.
- Continue to develop and strengthen the use of computers in other subject areas.
- Ensure that higher achieving pupils are sufficiently challenged.
- Ensure that all Year 7 pupils have equal access to information and communication technology lessons.
- Further develop the resources and training for cross-curricular information and communication technology.

156. Standards in information and communication technology, including business studies, are satisfactory overall. By 14 years of age, the majority of pupils are at or near national averages. A small number achieve above national expectations. In Years 10 and 11 all pupils follow nationally accredited examination courses. In the first year (2001) General Certificate of Secondary Education results in information technology, over half of all pupils gained A*-C grades, which matches the national average. However results in business studies have now fallen below those recorded nationally at GCSE. However, there is an imbalance between boys and girls, with significantly fewer girls choosing to take the full course examination.
157. The pupils have a limited knowledge of the subject when they start at the school. However, from this low baseline they make satisfactory progress as they rise through the school. A small number of pupils make good progress. For example, 11 year olds work hard as a team to produce a class newspaper, which introduces them to word processing skills and supports their English work. They begin to understand newspaper columns and layout, using actual newspapers for comparison. By the age of 14, their desktop publishing skills enable them to produce posters and advertising literature for a range of audiences. They acquire knowledge of spreadsheets, using formulae accurately to enter and amend data.
158. From the age of 15 years onwards, the pupils' work is dictated by examination requirements. They extend their knowledge of databases and spreadsheets. For example, they prepare and conduct surveys on a range of topics, presenting their findings as spreadsheets and graphs, which they later analyse. Higher achieving pupils have the opportunity to learn 'visual basic' to create their own simple programmes. There is much evidence in their coursework to indicate independent Internet research and E-mail usage, especially in business studies.
159. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall in information and communication technology, and business studies. It is good in Years 10 and 11, where older pupils have gained maturity and confidence in using computers. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. All classes are taught in ability groupings with lessons being well structured and balanced. In a Year 10 business studies lesson, good planning by the teacher enabled pupils to collaborate in preparing a consumer questionnaire. However, there are insufficient classroom assistants, which sometimes slows the pace of lessons. Lesson aims and expectations are clearly explained, but individual needs are not always fully met. For example, where the teachers' vocabulary and use of texts are sometimes beyond the understanding of lower achieving pupils, this results in a loss of concentration and interest. On occasions, there is insufficient challenge to higher achieving pupils, who complete the set task ahead of time. English skills and good presentation are well promoted through original writing and design work, much of which is hand-written by pupils as homework before being transferred to the computer. Basic literacy is encouraged through regular spelling tests, which reinforce the pupils' key vocabulary. Teachers are

confident and competent, and use their very good relationships with the pupils to create a pleasant learning environment. There is very little inappropriate behaviour. Effective question and answer sessions at the end of lessons reinforce the pupils' awareness of their own learning. Marking of work is achieved through end of term assessment tasks for 11-14 year olds and through constructive reviews of individual work with Year 10 and 11 pupils. Teachers keep clear records of the pupils' progress, using this to inform their lessons and predict examination directions.

160. Information and communication technology is used well to support maths, science and special educational needs, with English and drama skills extended through discrete computing lessons. It is satisfactory in most other subjects. Control and measurement techniques are taught through science, geography and design and technology. However, insufficient computer resources in some subject areas, such as history, music and art and the lack of availability of computer suites, impede the cross-curricular development of the computer as an effective tool to support learning. Overall its use is just satisfactory. Although all staff have received government funded training in the use of computers in their subjects, a significant number still lack confidence in their skills.
161. Within discrete lessons, the curriculum is broadly balanced and meets statutory requirements. However, there is an issue with seven pupils from Year 7, who miss their single weekly lesson for extra reading sessions and this is unsatisfactory. The new co-ordinator has recently revised all departmental documentation, and schemes of work match the National Curriculum programmes of study for Year 7 - 9 pupils. Recently introduced assessment procedures are good and are used to inform lessons and highlight pupil and subject needs. The General Certificate of Secondary Education has been introduced as either a full or short course for all pupils aged 15 and 16. Specialist teachers have very good subject knowledge and the co-ordinator has identified the need for the further training of other staff. Departmental accommodation and resources are good, with three fully networked computer suites, plus a small number of computers available in the library. There is a separately networked computer suite in the design and technology department. The ratio of computers to pupils is one to six. A well-qualified technician attends to any networking and hardware difficulties. In all areas, attractive displays of pupils' work are complimented by well presented notices and posters. Daily lunchtime computer clubs are well attended, with pupils conducting independent research or completing their homework.
162. Since the last inspection, resources have significantly improved and networking has been achieved. There is now consistency in examination options for older pupils and the first results of these are positive. Business studies now has appropriate teaching accommodation as well as direct access to the information and communication technology suite. All pupils now have access to National Accreditation in computing skills. There is increased use of computers in other subject areas. Improvement since the previous report is satisfactory.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Overall, the quality of provision in modern languages is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- By the age of 16 attainment in Spanish is good.
- The proportion of pupils who are entered for a full GCSE examination and achieve a grade is higher than the national proportion.
- The listening and writing skills of younger pupils are good.
- Pupils have the opportunity to study both French and Spanish from the age of 14.
- Much of the teaching is good or very good.
- The inter-school project at the end of Year 9 is effective in building pupils' confidence and improving their competence and motivation in French.

Areas for improvement

- The quality of the writing of older pupils is often marred by inaccuracy because of an insecure grasp of basic structures.
- Pupils have insufficient experience for improving their linguistic skills in some aspects of information and communication technology.
- Whilst teaching is satisfactory overall, it is uneven. Some teaching is far more effective in bringing the

163. By the end of Year 9 standards of attainment of classes evaluated during the inspection are broadly in line with national averages. Girls' attainment is higher than boys' attainment. The margin of difference is smaller than the national difference. Over the last three years the proportion of pupils gaining A* to C grades in GCSE examinations in French improved steadily to just below the national average. In Spanish, results remained well above the national average. The decline in results at this level in 2001 in both subjects was not typical. Standards of work seen during this inspection reflect the earlier picture of standards in line with national averages in French and good in Spanish. The proportion of pupils who are entered for a full GCSE examination in French and achieve a grade is consistently higher than the national level.
164. There are several good features of pupils' work up to the age of 14. They have regular practice in the four language skill areas so that they gain in confidence and extend their knowledge satisfactorily. Their listening skills are generally good. Pupils of all abilities can understand their teachers' fluent use of French for everyday classroom business. All follow simple French recorded on tape on topics familiar to them. In a Year 9 lesson, higher achieving pupils easily understood, at first hearing, a lengthy description of their house by native speakers on audio and then videotape. All pupils comprehend written French satisfactorily. They are used to reading passages from course books and using glossaries or dictionaries to help them.
165. From Year 7 onwards all pupils have ample experience of writing in French with increasing complexity. By Year 9, therefore, they can write about themselves, past events, future aspirations and express simple opinions well. The range of their writing is varied and imaginative for example posters, storyboards, poems, puzzles, questionnaires, recipes, diaries and horoscopes. They make good use of computers to improve the presentation and illustration of their work.
166. Speaking skills for the majority of pupils are satisfactory. Most pupils attempt to answer their teachers' questions in French. They are also prepared to ask and answer questions of each other. By Year 9 the majority can sustain a simple presentation about themselves and their daily routine. The Year 9 inter-school project to invent and act out a scene in the daily life of a typical family has been very effective in developing confidence and competence in pupils' speaking capability. Pronunciation, intonation and fluency vary widely. Many pupils rely too heavily on written prompts and, as a result, their speech is often hesitant and anglicised.
167. In both French and Spanish higher achieving pupils in the current Years 10 and 11 develop their linguistic skills well in line with the requirements of their examination syllabuses. They expand the quality and the quantity of their writing by extending their range of vocabulary and, particularly, idiom. However, in French the work of some pupils is marred by carelessness and inaccuracy, revealing an insecure grasp of basic structure. In both languages they use context and cognates increasingly to deduce the meaning of what they read and hear. They also improve their ability to use dictionaries wisely. They are prepared to answer at greater length and are beginning to vary routine responses with their own material. However, many still lack the confidence to rely on memory rather than written prompts, with a resultant loss of fluency. Lower achieving pupils sustain their interest. Their recall of previously learnt vocabulary is good and they understand most of what their teachers say to them. Although limited, they make genuine attempts to communicate in French and are able to write or copy very simple sentences sufficiently to obtain lower grade passes in GCSE examinations. In comparison, there is evidence of underachievement for some average-achieving pupils, especially in Year 10. Although their recall of single words learnt recently is satisfactory, their longer term recall of basic vocabulary and expressions is weak so some find even simple reading exercises difficult. They understand only the most basic of French that they hear and find answering their teacher in whole sentences an effort.
168. Relative to their ability, pupils make satisfactory progress overall. All pupils cover a similar range of topic areas. The broad division of pupils according to their ability ensures that, generally speaking, their differing needs are addressed. Pupils with special educational needs are satisfactorily integrated into lesson activities. Where individual support is available, pupils with special needs are kept on task well. Two pupils with visual impairment, one in a Year 7 class and one in a Year 9 class, were both able to take a full part in the lesson because of the teachers' discreet provision of larger print material

and extra individual support. Nevertheless, there is variation in the rate of progress, related to the quality of teaching. Where teachers are experienced or know how to manage the behaviour of their pupils and have good rapport with them, pupils make significantly better progress. In these circumstances pupils show respect for each other and work well in pairs, groups and individually. They appreciate what they must do to succeed and apply themselves willingly. However, where the teaching is less effective, behaviour is unsatisfactory, pupils have difficulty keeping on task and can become disruptive.

169. The quality of teaching, overall, is satisfactory. In French in Years 7 - 9 most teaching observed was satisfactory; nearly half of it was good or very good. One lesson was unsatisfactory. In Years 10 and 11 all teaching was satisfactory; half of it was good or very good. All teaching in Spanish was very good. Strengths in teaching include the high level of personal fluency of all staff and lessons that have clear objectives. They are conducted at a brisk pace, but provide pupils with the support they need to perform tasks and activities successfully. Tasks have been chosen with flair and imagination to include a wide variety of 'fun' activities to maintain interest as, for example, the drama with the bloodstained bandage to get Year 8 pupils talking about illness, the code breaking competition to consolidate vocabulary in Year 9 and the use of songs as listening tasks in Year 10. Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly and give them good advice on how to improve. They set homework that consolidates pupils' knowledge. Where teaching has weaknesses, it is characterised by poorer behavioural management and subsequent lack of pace. Tasks are not sufficiently well explained to enable pupils to succeed nor sufficiently consolidated to ensure secure knowledge. Marking, though thorough, is often too lenient; accuracy is not demanded nor correction required. Teachers make good use of audio and visual tapes to help pupils evaluate their own work and word processing to stimulate interest. However, the use of other information and communication technology, such as the use of email to stimulate writing or word processing for rigorous critical appreciation of personal style, will benefit from further development.
170. The head of department has an effective understanding of where the department is at present and its future direction. Good support is given to members of the department and a regular exchange of good practice has been established. Data from assessment has started to be used to improve teaching and learning. Routine monitoring of the work of the department is leading to more robust target setting for individual members of staff.
171. Since the last inspection the transfer of leadership of the department has been successfully managed. Standards have been maintained. The behaviour of lower attaining pupils is now generally good and their progress satisfactory.

MUSIC

Overall, the quality of provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Teaching is underpinned by very good musicianship.
- Good standards of instrumental and vocal performance are encouraged.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about practical music-making.
- Good relationships are fostered.

Areas for improvement

- Standards in Years 7 to 9.
- Procedures for assessing pupils' work.
- Greater use of ICT to support learning and music-making.

172. By the end of Year 9 the level of attainment in music is below average. There is very little difference in the attainment of different groups of pupils including those with special educational needs, although those pupils who have instrumental lessons are better able to cope with performance. Most pupils have skills on keyboard and tuned percussion, which are good enough for them to play simple melodies in class performance. They understand words such as ostinato, riff, chords and can make up their own in group compositions. In a taped example pupils had suggested ideas to the teacher who then played them into the computer so that they could hear the effect they created. Knowledge of

notation, the musical elements and technical vocabulary are weak and pupils are not able to talk about music at the level expected of 14 year olds. The very little singing heard was of a poor quality. However pupils in Years 8 and 9 have suffered interruptions to their music because of staffing difficulties. Coupled with low attainment on entry in Year 7 much of the foundation work has not been covered. Against this background achievement is good.

173. Very few pupils have chosen to study music for GCSE in recent years and although they have achieved better results in music than in their other subjects, comparisons with national results do not mean very much. Through talking to pupils, looking at their work and observing them in lessons their attainment is close to the national averages by the age of 16 years. There are some good performers who use their experience of music to help them to compose. The best examples are well structured with clearly contrasted sections, making use of contrasts of major and minor and of varied texture and harmony and pupils can explain how they have worked. Those who do not have instrumental lessons do not have the same stimulus and often struggle to realise their ideas for composition. The same correlation exists between performance and listening and appraising, the weakest area of their work. Pupils in Year 11 have had less time than their Year 10 colleagues to develop skills in these areas because of the interruption to their lessons at a critical time for them. Because they have less time, one lesson per week after school, this represents good achievement.
174. Behaviour in lessons is good but overall personal development is satisfactory. Pupils enjoy practical music making. Year 9 classes gave enthusiastic performances of 'Rock Around the Clock' recently recorded on videotape when they were introduced to bass guitar and drum-kit. Pupils in Year 7 approach their work on Raps with obvious enjoyment. Because the teacher leads most of the activities there is little opportunity for pupils to take the initiative; they follow instructions well but wait to be told when to move on. When they concentrate and persist with tasks they enjoy the reward of performance. However not all pupils are able to do this and are too easily defeated. About 30 pupils learn an instrument with teachers from the Hampshire Music Service, a relatively low number for the size of the school. Through New Opportunities Funding the school is able to offer these pupils the chance to play together as a band after school. In addition there is a Rock School for aspiring rock bands and a choir, run by visiting tutors which pupils attend with enthusiasm.
175. Teaching is satisfactory but with significant strengths. The greatest strength is the very good musicianship that enthuses pupils. This has earned the respect of pupils and has helped to form good relationships. Detailed knowledge of musical concepts and repertoire enables appropriate topics and pieces of music to be chosen, presented in an interesting and achievable way. Up to date knowledge of modern technology is in evidence and used to demonstrate to pupils and to show them how to record and improve their own work using computers. Pupils are expected to behave well and they respond to this so that unacceptable behaviour does not get in the way of making music.
176. Pupils are not always clear, especially in the younger classes, of how well they are doing because not enough use is made of day to day assessment. The aims of lessons are identified but not explicitly shared with pupils so that they can check whether they have been achieved. Although music itself gives ample opportunity for everyone to take part according to their ability, the individual needs of pupils, particularly those of above and below average attainment and those with special educational needs, are not fully understood. Too little attention is given to these matters in the planning of resources and deciding on the methods to help all pupils achieve their best.
177. The leadership of the subject is good with clearly defined priorities and the day to day running of the department is satisfactory. A new head of department was appointed almost a year ago following a period of instability. The priority was to revive pupils' interest in music and regain their confidence. This has been very successfully achieved and the head of department is ready to turn his attention to raising standards. A good start has been made with a scheme of work, which takes an integrated approach to the three activities of performing, composing and listening. Although this contains identified opportunities for assessment it has not yet been completed to provide a comprehensive policy which will lead to secure judgements of pupils' attainment at the end of Year 9. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and improvements have been made to the accommodation. Although the room is bright and welcoming it is too small to permit group work which would help pupils to work more on their own. Provision for ICT is barely satisfactory with only the one computer, which is used very well by the teacher and older pupils. Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in physical education is **good**.

Strengths

- The quality of all of the teaching.
- The very positive relationships between staff and pupils.
- The organisation of the department.

Areas for improvement

- The setting of targets for improvement for individual pupils.
- The time allocated to physical education for pupils aged 14 –16.
- The use of information and communication technology.

178. By the end of Year 9 teacher assessments in 2001 and evidence from lesson observation indicate standards that conform to the national average. The attainment of the majority of pupils conforms to the national average in most areas of the physical education curriculum and many pupils are able to apply the techniques, skills and competition rules to several aspects of the curriculum, including football, rugby, dance and gymnastics. In football pupils have sound control and passing skills and some awareness of the importance of making space to receive the ball. In gymnastics they are able to execute simple balance and roll movements and combine them into a sequence of movements. They are also developing an understanding of the concept of quality of movement and are beginning to incorporate this into some of their sequences. In dance pupils have a sound understanding of the various components of movement and are beginning to use some of these principles when composing their dances. They are also beginning to develop a range of movement patterns and techniques when creating and performing dances. The ability of pupils by the age of 14 to observe and analyse performance is good and is contributing to their improvement in performance. They are also able to use planning skills in a variety of activities and know how different types of activity affect specific aspects of their fitness.
179. GCSE results for 2001 were below the national average for A* - C grades although they were above the average grades in other subjects and over a three year period were above the national average. Practical skills for pupils in GCSE groups are above the national average. Attainment for other pupils by the age of 16 conforms to the national average.
180. Pupils in a Year 11 GCSE practical lesson on badminton had sound basic racquet skills and a good range of shots which they were able to adapt to a game situation. Their ability to analyse and observe performance enables many of them to effectively judge how good a performance was and decide how to improve it. In a Year 10 GCSE theory lesson pupils illustrated a good knowledge of anatomy and physiology and were able to apply this to their understanding of factors affecting both performance and fitness in sport.
181. The achievement of pupils in Years 7 - 9 was good. In football pupils are encouraged to develop, not only skills but also some understanding of the techniques and the importance of creating space. In dance the pupils developed their own repertoire of movements in addition to those prescribed by the class teacher and many were able to successfully apply and choreograph these to their own narrative dance. In Years 10 and 11 progress and learning in lessons observed were very good and in a Year 10 GCSE lesson they were excellent. Here pupils developed an excellent understanding of all the components of fitness and particularly the importance of flexibility in the development of fitness. They also learnt how to measure and record this accurately for other pupils in the group. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities and fixtures with other schools, where there are many opportunities for pupils to extend and develop their skills. Staff from the physical education department receive good support from other members of staff.
182. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good at both key stages. Many are enthusiastic, well behaved and co-operative, demonstrating a real enjoyment of the subject. They are generally attentive and are able to sustain concentration throughout the lesson. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are very positive and this is a significant factor in the progress made in many lessons. Opportunities for pupils to work independently at both key stages are good, as are opportunities for

pupils to take responsibility in lessons. Opportunities for pupils to undertake different roles such as coach or official are still developing.

183. The quality of teaching overall is very good and is slightly better in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 to 9 but was never less than good. A secure knowledge of the subject is regularly conveyed to pupils through perceptive observation of performance, appropriate intervention and good teacher directed question and answer sessions. Thorough planning, incorporating varied teaching strategies and an appropriate sequence of activities involving both individual and collaborative learning, is also a feature of these lessons. Discipline and class management are very good. In those lessons that were not quite so good planning was not specific or detailed enough and the range and type of activities was not appropriate. Assessment of performance during lessons by teachers is regularly used to enhance teaching and learning and evaluation by pupils is consistently applied in most lessons and has a significant impact on learning in many lessons. With the exception of some limited developments for GCSE pupils, the recording of assessment involving pupils to set their own targets for improvement in specific activities is not being utilised. The quality of the assessment of GCSE theory work is inconsistent and does not always provide the appropriate information for pupils to make the necessary improvements to their work. Opportunities for pupils to have work marked regularly and to relate this to GCSE standards are also limited.
184. The curriculum meets statutory requirements at both key stages. The balance of activities is generally appropriate in Years 7 to 9 and the range of activities in Years 10 and 11 is developing. However the time allocated is not adequate to fulfil the requirements of the National Curriculum and does not allow for appropriate depth to provide a good preparation for post 16 leisure activities. Schemes of work are reasonable working documents although they are still developing in several areas and do not provide opportunities for the use of information technology.
185. Management of the physical education department is good and the day to day organisation of the department is secure. Although short term development planning is sound, long-term planning is inadequate and the educational direction for the department for the next few years is unclear. Procedures for analysing GCSE results are very good: the department are already responding to lessons learnt from these results and developing and using data on existing pupils to ensure that as many pupils as possible achieve their full potential in examinations as well as in the physical education course overall. All members of the department are committed, are very generous with their time and are very good role models. They all have specific responsibilities and give very good support to the head of department. The departmental handbook clearly identifies most policies and procedures. There are regular departmental meetings although these reflect an inappropriate focus on teaching, learning and curriculum development. There are not enough opportunities for the department to share good practice, particularly in teaching. Progress since the last inspection is good. The balance of activities in the curriculum in Years 10 and 11 has improved and is still developing while the movement vocabulary for pupils in both dance and gymnastics is now good. Assessment procedures have improved but are still developing with plans to incorporate specific criteria for individual activities into assessment procedures and to involve the pupils in assessment and individual target setting.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

Strengths

- The department has good documentation.
- The behaviour and attitude of the pupils is good overall.
- GCSE results for the option group are in line with national standards.
- There is a good emphasis on spiritual development.

Areas for improvement

- Apart from the provision for the small GCSE option groups, statutory requirements are not being met in Years 10 and 11.
- More differentiated work would be of benefit to the pupils' learning.
- Some work in Years 7 to 9 needs to have a stronger emphasis on the beliefs and teachings of world religions.

186. At the end of year 11, the standards of attainment in the GCSE examination course are in line with national standards. Of the 15 pupils entered for the examination about 53 per cent gained the higher grades of A* to C. No examinations took place in year 2000. About 41 per cent of the 17 pupils entered for the examinations in 1999 gained the higher grades of A* to C. There is therefore a rising trend in the school examination results. The standards of work seen during the inspection, in the lessons and in their books are close to the standards expected at this stage. The pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of many aspects of Christianity and they can meaningfully consider and reflect on how its beliefs work themselves out in a range of moral and social issues. Their written work is well developed. The pupils are good at research work and they can present their findings in the classroom in a capable way. Their ability to respond to and evaluate alternative points of view could be stronger but otherwise their verbal skills are good. No statement can be made about the standards of attainment for the large number of pupils who follow the general religious education course in Years 10 and 11 as only one lesson was seen during the inspection. The amount of written work produced by this large group of pupils is minimal and so it too cannot be used as a means of judging their standards of attainment.
187. The standards of attainment at the end of year 9 are below those indicated in the Agreed Syllabus. The pupils have a basic knowledge and understanding of some aspects of Christianity, Islam and Judaism and they can understand and use some specialist religious language in a meaningful way. Overall the pupils' knowledge and understanding of world religions in general is not strong. The pupils are more familiar with the outward forms such as how the religions manifest themselves on the moral and social level, than they are with the more intellectual aspects such as the belief systems and world-views that support and underlie these forms. The pupils are stronger at reflecting on and exploring and responding to many aspects of human experience, such as issues about the environment. Many pupils are good at making verbal responses. Their written skills could be better particularly through more opportunities being given for them to participate in extended writing exercises.
188. The achievement of pupils in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory whereas in Years 10 to 11 it is good as the GCSE results are in line with national standards. Progress in individual lessons is sometimes stronger than it is over the longer period of time. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress through the support given to them in classes but a more consistent policy on providing differentiated work would strengthen this provision as well as providing for the more able pupils. More extension work would similarly benefit the more able as well as the pupils identified as gifted and talented. There is some evidence to indicate that boys are performing better than girls.
189. The response of the pupils is good and often very good. The pupils are well behaved and attentive and they apply themselves well to their work. The pupils show an interest in what they are studying and they are willing to respond and think through many of the issues brought up by the lesson. The pupils are respectful of the teacher and of each other and they also respect the viewpoints and opinions that others put forward. In the GCSE option group in particular, the pupils are very actively involved in the class work and they participate with enthusiasm. In general the pupils have a very positive attitude to the subject.
190. Overall the teaching is satisfactory, with good elements strongly evident. The teaching in Years 10 to 11 is better than it is in Years 7 to 9. All lessons are well prepared and the teachers use a good range of activities to engage the pupils and to put across the subject matter. The objectives of the lesson are clear though sometimes the pupils themselves would benefit if the objectives of the lessons were written on the board more consistently so they could remind themselves what they have to achieve by the end of the lesson. At times some low level tasks do not make the best use of the time available, and higher expectations, in terms of more intellectual rigour, and a faster pace would enable more learning to be done in the time available. Sometimes the religious content of the lessons needs to be stronger, even if it is only the odd sentence here and there to remind the pupils of how they will need to relate their immediate general learning to religious beliefs and viewpoints at some later date. The best lessons are characterised by a fast pace and high expectations and by the lesson having an unambiguous religious content and by the teacher endeavouring to relate the subject matter to their own lives and experiences. Most lessons have a good spiritual emphasis where pupils are encouraged to reflect and to consider issues that have an impact on people's lives and experiences. This emphasis could be balanced out by a more explicit presentation and learning about the central

beliefs and teachings of the various world religions that they are studying. The teachers manage the pupils very well and so disruptions in the lesson through unsatisfactory behaviour are rare. Homework is consistently set and the marking of the pupils' books is of a high quality.

191. The department is well managed by a specialist teacher and another teacher has an input to teaching. The documentation is of a high quality. The requirements of the Agreed Syllabus are clearly being implemented in Years 7 to 9. There are small GCSE option groups in Years 10 and 11, but otherwise statutory requirement for the majority of pupils in Years 10 and 11 are not being met. It was the same at the last inspection and so there has been no progress on this since then. No other particular issues were raised at the last inspection. The department makes an input to the standards of literacy in implementing its policy document. The department also makes a significant input to spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspect of school life, in its emphasis on reflection and study of moral codes. The department uses information technology in some of its work, in word processing and some internet work. The accommodation is good and the resources are good. The department has a good capacity for further development and improvement particularly by statutory requirements being met in Years 10 and 11.

DRAMA

Overall, the quality of provision in drama is **very good**.

Strengths

- Well planned and well taught lessons, so that pupils learn at a good pace.
- Drama lessons make a very good contribution to pupils' personal development.
- Pupils have good levels of achievement in Drama at GCSE. All candidates have gained an A* to G grade in recent Years.

Areas for improvement

- Extend some of the techniques learnt by pupils in drama about group work, problem solving and the skills of speaking for different purposes into other areas of the curriculum.

192. Drama is a strength of the school. It is taught to all pupils in Years 7 - 9 and is a popular GCSE option. GCSE results in the last three years have been amongst the highest in the school and, in 2001, were well above the national averages with 76 per cent of pupils gaining at least grade C. As has been the case for some years all pupils entered for GCSE gained an A*-G grade.

193. Standards of work seen in lessons confirmed that pupils have drama skills that are at least in line with and very often above, national averages by the end of Year 9. By the end of Year 11, standards are above national levels. Achievement is good at both key stages. This is because the teaching of drama perseveres with improving pupils' skills of communication, co-operation, interpretation and performance, as well as their understanding of different techniques. This allows all, including pupils with special educational needs, to make good progress. Good techniques ensure that boys and girls learn to work together well and that all pupils work beyond their friendship groups, making new relationships. As a result, by the age of 14 years, pupils learn to work effectively as a whole class, in pairs and different groups. Their co-operation and turn taking skills improve considerably. Their ability to support each other improves and, as a result, they can solve problems posed to them. For example, in a Year 9 lesson, based on *'Our Day Out'*, groups in role on a coach trip to the seaside encountered various new problems and had to quickly decide how to manage them. However, younger pupils still find difficulty in maintaining a still image when directed to. By Year 11, though, the greater maturity of pupils allows them to benefit from taking greater responsibility for producing, directing and staging their own work. They understand that the greater good of the group is essential in polishing techniques and content. Pupils are more skilled as well at making very good use of music to enhance this work. The most able show high levels of ability to motivate others, and evaluate and direct group work. All pupils are aware not only of how to behave as an audience but of how they can learn from and improve others' performances. This was evident in a lesson where pupils were interpreting two Oscar Wilde stories for a production.

194. Teaching of drama is very good. Lessons are well planned from a clear scheme of work that shows good progression within, and across, each key stage. Close attention is paid to how skills are

developed to complement knowledge and understanding and what particular features enable pupils to make progress. Good explanations are given of why certain tasks are being carried out. A good balance between whole class, pair and group work is evident and the teaching is strongly influenced by clear direction to enhance rehearsal and performance in many forms. Question and answer sessions are brisk and challenging. Older pupils are confident enough to disagree with teaching direction, explaining why their ideas are better. Younger pupils could benefit from being expected to explain and justify their ideas more. Good interaction between pupils is fostered by appropriate intervention with perceptive comment and analysis. Very good subject knowledge and understanding of different acting techniques are a key feature of the teaching.

195. Pupils value drama and show a very good attitude to it. Behaviour is nearly always good and younger pupils quickly learn the important disciplines of the subject. Very few have to be reminded about concentration or remaining on task. In a Year 8 lesson, called '*pub wink murder*', pupils gained confidence from developing their own characters and then having opportunities to refine them when given further directions. Working together promotes co-operation and thoughtful teaching encourages even shy pupils to join in with presentations. Older pupils can give and take quite sharp criticisms well, recognising the value of improving their overall performance.
196. Drama is well managed. Good use is made of the well-appointed drama studio, as well as the main auditorium for performance and rehearsal. Drama productions provide opportunities for many different pupils to undertake public performances that are well supported by parents and the local community. Resources are well-used and are often 'home made' for particular purposes. The high standards reported in the last inspection have been sustained and extended now with a broader based curriculum.