

INSPECTION REPORT

TRINITY SCHOOL

Newbury, Berkshire

LEA area: Newbury

Unique reference number: 131790

Headteacher: Mrs Rosemary Roscoe

Reporting inspector: Alan Haigh
2630

Dates of inspection: 19th – 23rd March 2001

Inspection number: 230037

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 - 18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Love Lane Shaw Newbury Berkshire
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Gerald Orbell
Date of previous inspection:	not applicable (new school)

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2630	Alan Haigh	Registered inspector		Results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
13448	Dawn Lloyd	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
19866	Peter Austin	Team inspector	Art	
30576	Peter Bannon	Team inspector	Mathematics	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
3758	Tony Barringer	Team inspector	English	
2628	Jim Edwards	Team inspector	Physical education	How well does the school care for its pupils?
8873	Charlotte Evers	Team inspector	History Equal opportunities	
12470	Brian Greasley	Team inspector	Geography Special educational needs	
20172	Arthur Harvey	Team inspector	Religious education	
17277	Sharon Mansell	Team inspector	Design and technology	
29806	Jose Marshall	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
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3937	John Seed	Team inspector	Science	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is an average sized, new comprehensive school educating 885 boys and girls aged 11-18 years. There are 90 pupils in the sixth form. The school opened in September 1999 following the closure of two small 11 - 16 schools, Shaw House and Turnpike. It has grown steadily since opening but is not oversubscribed. It is located in the village of Shaw on the northern edge of the market town of Newbury, a part of the West Berkshire Local Education Authority. Eight per cent of the pupils are entitled to free school meals; this is below the national average. More than 98 per cent of pupils are from white ethnic families and the percentage of pupils speaking English as an additional language is low. The school has a designated specialist unit for 25 pupils with dyslexia. Twenty-eight per cent of pupils are on the special educational needs register; this is above the national average. Almost seven per cent of pupils have statements of special educational needs, a figure well above the national one. The attainment of pupils entering the school is below average. The socio-economic circumstances of the area from which the majority of pupils are drawn are a little below average. The school has already achieved the Investors in People award and will have Performing Arts status in September 2001. The inspection included a detailed inspection of the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Trinity is a very good school that already has many excellent features and very few weaknesses. It has made rapid progress in its first 18 months. Standards are generally close to the national average at all stages and are improving. The quality of teaching is good. Leadership and management are excellent. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The standards in English and history are above average, reflecting the 2000 GCSE results that were above the national average.
- The pupils' very positive attitudes to school result in enthusiastic learning at all stages.
- Relationships at all levels are very good; staff know pupils well and consequently monitor and support pupils' progress very effectively.
- The school's very effective provision for the pupils with special educational needs enables these pupils to make significant strides in their learning.
- Teaching is overwhelmingly good; much is very good and pupils progress very well as a result.
- The range of extra-curricular activities is extensive; this, together with the strong provision for pupils' social development, results in mature and confident young people.
- The school cares for its pupils very effectively and procedures for improving attendance and behaviour are working well.
- Leadership and management are excellent; the governors are knowledgeable and committed.

What could be improved

- Standards at GCSE in art in 2000 were significantly below average and are not improving.
- The carousel arrangement in the curriculum results in too little time for religious education and a lack of continuity in the teaching and learning of drama and of personal and social education.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual development is too narrow; pupils do not attend a daily act of collective worship.
- Parents are not yet fully enough involved in their children's education.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

This is the first inspection of a new school. Rapid progress has been made in the 18 months since it opened. Standards are rising. The governors' initial targets for the school are being largely met.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
GCSE examinations	no candidates	no candidates	C	E
A-levels/AS-levels	no candidates	no candidates	no candidates	

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

The levels of attainment of pupils coming into the school are, overall, below the national average. The proportions of 14-year-old pupils who reached the expected levels in English and science in the national tests in 2000 were in line with the national averages. The corresponding figure for mathematics was below average. The English results were below those of similar schools (as defined by the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals; this, however, is not an appropriate measure of 'similarity' as it does not accurately reflect the below-average socio-economic backgrounds of many pupils). The science results were well below those of similar schools; the mathematics results were in the lowest 5 per cent of similar schools. There is insufficient data to detect any trends at any level.

The GCSE results for all 16 year-old pupils, measured by their average point scores, were in line with the national average in 2000 but well below the average in similar schools. Boys' results were, however, below the national average. The proportion of pupils who gained five or more GCSE passes with grades C or better was in line with the national average but well below the average in similar schools. The proportion gaining five or more GCSE passes with grade G or better was below the national average and in the bottom 5 per cent of similar schools. Results fell below the school's targets, although these were unsafe as the prior attainments of pupils were very unclear. The strongest subjects at GCSE were English and design and technology, the weakest were mathematics, art, business studies and French. There were no pupils in Year 13 in 2000 and so there are no A-level results.

The standards observed of work of 14- and 16-year-olds are mostly in line with national averages. Those in science are above average at all stages and those in English are above average for 16-year-olds but average for 14-year-olds. Standards in mathematics are average for 14 and 16-year-olds. Standards are improving in the vast majority of subjects. The standards observed of sixth form pupils were mostly above those expected.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	These are very good. The vast majority enjoy school and are enthusiastic about their lessons. They also participate keenly in out of class activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	This is good overall both in lessons and around school and is improving. In a very small proportion of lessons in Years 7 to 9, it was unsatisfactory.
Personal development and relationships	These are very good. Staff know pupils very well and there is a positive, friendly atmosphere in school which encourages effective learning.
Attendance	This is a little better than average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The overall quality of teaching is good. More than 97 per cent of lessons seen were at least satisfactory. Four-fifths were good or better and a third were very good or excellent. Only three per cent were less than satisfactory; temporary staff working outside their specialist areas mostly taught these. The teaching of English was very good at all stages; that of mathematics and science was good at Key Stages 3 and 4. That in science was very good in the sixth form and mathematics teaching was satisfactory at that stage. The teaching of history in the sixth form was very good as was much of that in religious education in Years 7 to 9. Literacy is taught very well and numeracy is taught satisfactorily. The teaching meets the needs of all pupils very effectively; the vast majority achieve well. The brightest are challenged appropriately. The pupils with special educational needs are taught with care and sensitivity. Teachers manage pupils of all abilities with great skill and patience ensuring good learning at all stages. The gifted and talented pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. Teachers have a good grasp of their subjects. This is a particular strength of sixth form teaching. Pupils concentrate well at all stages and have a good grasp of how they are getting on. The teachers assess pupils very thoroughly and provide them with individual targets. The learning is particularly good in Years 10 and 11 and in Year 13.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is of sound quality: it is already under review. There are many strong features. The extracurricular provision, the strategies for teaching literacy, the contributions of the community to pupils' learning and the relationships with partner institutions are all very good. The carousel arrangements result in too little time for religious education and a lack of continuity of provision for drama and for personal and social education and so hinder pupils' progress.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	This is very good; leadership, planning and administration are of a high standard. The work with pupils with dyslexia is especially successful.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	This is good overall. That for pupils' social development is particularly strong, resulting in mature young people leaving school. The provision for cultural and moral development is good. That for spiritual development is only satisfactory; there is too little time for religious education. The statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship for all pupils are not met.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is very strong. Pupils' progress is monitored closely; staff know pupils very well and offer clear personal support and guidance to all pupils.

The school tries hard to work well with parents but does not meet with the success it strives for; documentation is of good quality and reports are informative.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	These are excellent. The headteacher, deputies and school manager are able, hardworking and very effective in implementing the school's aims. Departmental and house leadership and management are of a high quality. The commitment to improvement, shared by all staff, is excellent, as is the capacity for success.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are very knowledgeable, committed and hard working. They fulfil all their responsibilities except those relating to collective worship and religious education.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is good and is improving, supported by very clear planning and systems of reviewing progress. Governors' involvement is excellent.
The strategic use of resources	This is very good. Specific grants are used well. There are sufficient well-qualified staff in the vast majority of subjects. There are gaps in art at present. The school has good, well-used resources. Accommodation is very good and is used effectively. The school fully applies the principles of best value.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children make good progress. • Teachers have high expectations. • The teaching is good. • School helps their children to become mature and responsible. • The school is approachable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework is either too much or too little. • They would like more information on their child's progress. • They think school could work more closely with them.

The team fully endorses the parents' positive comments. The amounts of homework are, overall, about right. The information provided on pupils' progress is very clear and informative. The school is seeking strategies to enable it to work more closely with parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The levels of attainment of pupils coming into the school are, overall, below the national average. The proportions of 14-year-old pupils who reached the expected levels in English and science in the national tests in 2000 were in line with the national averages. The corresponding figure for mathematics was below average. The English results were below those of similar schools (as defined by the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals; this, however, is not an appropriate measure of 'similarity' as it does not accurately reflect the below-average socio-economic backgrounds of many pupils) and the science results were well below those of similar schools; the mathematics results were in the lowest five per cent of similar schools. There is insufficient data to detect any trends at any level, as only one year's results are available.
2. The GCSE results for all 16 year-old pupils, measured by their average point scores, were in line with the national average in 2000 but well below those in similar schools. Boys' results were below the national average for boys. The proportion of pupils who gained five or more GCSE passes with grades C or better was in line with the national average but well below the average in similar schools. The proportion gaining five or more GCSE passes with grade G or better was below the national average and in the bottom five per cent of similar schools. Results fell below the school's targets, although these were unsafe as the prior attainments of pupils were very unclear. The strongest subjects at GCSE were English and design and technology; the weakest were mathematics, art, business studies and French. There were no pupils in Year 13 in 2000 and so there are no A-level results.
3. The standards observed of work of 14-year-olds are mostly in line with national averages. Those in science and history are above average. Those in English and mathematics are average, as are those for all other subjects except art and physical education that fall below average. Most 14-year-olds speak clearly and present written work neatly and accurately. Many pupils produce extended written work of good quality in history. Pupils generally develop good techniques in mathematics, applying them with reasonable understanding. Many are, however, insecure in the skill of estimating. The 14-year-olds have a good knowledge and secure understanding of their science work. Standards in trampolining are good for pupils of this age but many do not produce expected standards in gymnastics, being unable to sequence their work properly. Pupils are a little reluctant to give personal reflections about their own beliefs and values in religious education lessons. Standards are improving in the vast majority of subjects as a result of pupils' good attitudes to learning, encouraged by the good teaching.
4. By the age of 16, pupils attain standards that are above average in English and in science and in line with the average in mathematics. Standards of reading are above average and much written work is of well above average standard in English. The most able scientists display good practical skills and a thorough grasp of new work. Standards are in line with national averages in all other subjects except art where they remain below average, largely because of the serious staffing problems in the department. Standards in business education, which were well below average last year, are now in line with it. The standards of practical work are above average in design and technology; pupils design well, measure accurately and evaluate their work sensibly. The high ability pupils' good research and fieldwork enquiry skills enable very good quality investigation work in geography. Pupils are confident users of information and communication technology by this age. Their strengths are in word-processing and computer-based presentations. Many make good use of the Internet in most subjects. The standards in computer modelling and data handling are not as high as would be expected. Many pupils listen, write and understand French or German by the age of 16. They are, however, often reluctant to speak in the language. Pupils make good use of information and communication technology in their music lessons but composition work is not of a high enough standard. The pupils' knowledge of dance in the GCSE dance course is above average.

5. The standards observed of sixth form pupils were generally above those expected. This is seen especially in English, history, information and communication technology and music. Those in mathematics and modern foreign languages are below expectation. Those in the other subjects are generally in line with what is normally seen in sixth forms. Pupils in the sixth form work imaginatively in art and produce personal ideas that reflect the expected standards. The standards of musical performance are high, both in A-level and GNVQ studies and in school productions.
6. Pupils' achievements and levels of attainment are generally higher than would be expected when their prior achievements are considered. Most are progressing well at all stages because teachers' expectations are high and pupils try hard to do their best.
7. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in Years 7 to 9 and in Years 10 and 11 in all their subjects except physical education where their progress is only satisfactory. Progress is good because of the effectiveness of the teaching and good use made of the well-written individual education plans. The gifted and talented pupils progress well in the main. They make particularly good progress in geography in Years 7 to 9 and in modern foreign languages in Years 10 and 11. The overall progress of pupils with dyslexia is good. Work is generally well matched to the needs of the individual pupils and is particularly closely matched in English, design and technology and geography, so ensuring good progress.
8. Standards of literacy are above average at all stages, reflecting the school's successful efforts in this area. Pupils read well and, when asked to read out loud, do so with confidence and clarity. Low attaining pupils are generally competent readers. Standards of writing are mostly above average. Pupils use precise and correct terminology in science and take careful notes in mathematics. Pupils listen carefully and attentively, respecting the views and opinions of others. Speaking skills are mostly above average. High attainers speak particularly well. Standards of numeracy are average overall. Pupils measure accurately in science and in design and technology and use the correct units. Their facility with number is such that they are able to progress soundly in all subjects. Overall standards in the use of information and communication technology are above average.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Pupils' attitudes to learning and their enthusiasm for school, their behaviour in lessons and their relationships with one another and with staff are mostly very good and not infrequently excellent. Pupils behave well around the school and are keen to take up opportunities that help them to grow in maturity. Their attendance is also good. Attitudes and behaviour were very good or excellent in two-fifths of all lessons and good or better in four-fifths; they were unsatisfactory in only four lessons.
10. Pupils have a very positive approach to learning. They are overwhelmingly proud of their school and their levels of attendance, which are slightly above those usually found in schools of this size and type, are proof of their commitment to the school's aims and values.
11. Pupils always come to lessons well prepared to learn. They are well motivated and keen to do well, especially those in examination groups and in the sixth form. They are usually well organised, bringing the right equipment and showing an awareness of what is expected of them. During lessons they invariably remain sharply focused on their tasks. Behaviour in lessons is good and pupils pay close attention to the teacher and, therefore, make very good progress. They listen carefully, persevere with their activities and make sensible and thoughtful contributions to class discussions. They express their views in lessons with confidence and willingly explain their work to visitors.
12. Most pupils get on well together and enjoy very good relationships with their teachers. When asked to work in pairs or groups they listen respectfully to the views or suggestions of others and agree their next course of action in the light of tolerant discussion. For example, in a Year 10 drama lesson, groups refined and developed their performances through careful consideration of the suggestions of each member of the team. Pupils are trustworthy and are allowed to work unsupervised on occasions, when using computers at lunchtime for example.

13. Behaviour in and around the school building and grounds is almost always good. Pupils are not distracted by the difficult conditions that exist while the buildings are being completed. They move sensibly around the site and cope well with the limited space in the dining hall and the difficult access to some areas. The new buildings and furniture are well cared for and litter is not excessive. There are occasional examples of immature behaviour, when some pupils can be over-familiar in their approach to adults. In addition, the establishment of an internal exclusion unit demonstrates that behaviour does not always match up to the school's high expectations. There are rare occasions when behaviour is unsatisfactory, particularly in groups where several pupils have behavioural problems, but teachers largely cope with these situations well.
14. The number of exclusions is below average for a school of this size and type; the number is falling, thanks to the very effective procedures that are being introduced for monitoring behaviour and taking appropriate action to deal with problems. The newly established pupil support unit and the provision of work-related courses for potentially disaffected pupils are examples of the successful strategies the school uses to avoid the need for exclusion. Sometimes, when all other avenues have been exhausted, it is felt necessary to exclude a pupil for a fixed period. When that happens, proper procedures are followed and, in consultation with parents and appropriate outside agencies, the school makes suitable arrangements to support the pupil's return.
15. Pupils show their commitment to the school by their eagerness to take part in the wide range of extra-curricular activities and their willingness to take up posts of responsibility. The house system creates a wealth of opportunities for pupils to develop personal and social skills. Pupils, for example, represent their house in sporting activities or the performing arts by becoming sports captains or prefects or by contributing to the house newsletter. Pupils from all year groups are encouraged to become involved and the level of their responsibilities increases as they move through the school, so that they gain in personal maturity and self-esteem. This consciousness of their place as valued members of the school community also has a beneficial impact on their attitudes to schoolwork.
16. Pupils with special educational needs generally have positive attitudes to their work. Only a small minority with a very short attention span move 'off task' for short periods and require the teacher's attention to continue with their work. Pupils participating in the school's provision for those with dyslexia arrive on time, are keen, committed, behave well, are interested in the work and are proud of the progress they make.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. The overall quality of teaching is good. More than 97 per cent of lessons seen were at least satisfactory. Four-fifths were good or better and a third were very good or excellent. The three per cent that were less than satisfactory were mostly taught by temporary staff working outside their specialist areas.
18. The teaching of English was very good at all stages; that of mathematics and science was good at Key Stages 3 and 4. That in science was very good in the sixth form and mathematics teaching was satisfactory at that stage. The teaching of history in the sixth form was very good, as was much of that in religious education in Years 7 to 9.
19. One outstanding English lesson on the poetry of Ted Hughes with pupils in Year 11 began at and maintained a good pace and benefited from the teacher's crisp and challenging questioning. The low ability pupils were motivated and involved and produced work of a higher standard than might have been expected. A Year 13 biology lesson on the structure of the heart and the flow of blood succeeded because of the teacher's enthusiasm for and very secure command of the material; her thorough planning and positive relationships with pupils resulted in much progress and very good learning. A history lesson on European and World history post World War 2, also with Year 13, had many similar strong features, including the good use of an appropriate range of resources, and resulted in very good learning with pupils participating fully and reaching high standards.

20. Literacy is taught well and numeracy is taught satisfactorily. The school's thorough strategy for teaching literacy is seen with displays of key words in many rooms and teachers' insistence on the use of correct terminology, as seen especially in science and design and technology lessons.
21. The teaching meets the needs of all pupils very effectively; the vast majority achieve and progress well. The brightest and least able are challenged appropriately. Work is matched closely to pupils' individual needs; this is a strength of much teaching in English, design and technology and geography. Teachers have a good grasp of their subjects. This is a particular strength of sixth form teaching generally but is especially strong in science and history. A top set Year 11 science group responded very well to targeted questions in a lesson on elastic potential energy. The teacher's high expectations and lucid explanations enabled pupils to reach standards that were well above average.
22. Pupils with dyslexia are withdrawn from some classes to work in a special unit. The very good teaching in the unit enables pupils to make rapid progress. Teachers have an excellent knowledge of the needs of the pupils and match the teaching and activities closely to their needs. The pupils with special educational needs are taught with care and sensitivity, both in the specials unit and when they are alongside fellow pupils. Teachers in all subjects have a good knowledge of the pupils and make good use of the Individual Education Plans. In science the prompt, detailed and regular marking, with encouraging and informative comments, helps pupils with special educational needs to improve their work and understanding. The learning support assistants working in the classroom provide good support for individual pupils, often through a well-planned and effective partnership with the class teacher.
23. In one lesson in design and technology, the learning support assistant used her knowledge of the purpose of the activity to indicate the strategies that pupils with special educational needs could use and enabled them to make good progress. In one French lesson with pupils with short attention spans, the teacher's calm yet firm intervention and supportive encouragement enabled the group to conduct a survey of the likes and dislikes of their friends using their knowledge of French, and so make good progress.
24. The quality of teaching of personal and social education was good throughout the school. In Years 10 and 11 it was sometimes excellent. In Year 10, pupils discussed contraception and particularly an article on HIV and aids. The topic was handled sensitively and very good preparation enabled the lesson to move with good pace and good learning to occur. The community school nurse was involved and made a positive contribution to the quality of learning.
25. Teachers manage pupils of all abilities with great skill and patience, ensuring good learning at all stages. The teacher handled a lively lower ability French group in Year 8 skilfully in a lesson on vocabulary concerned with the cinema. She set high standards of work and behaviour and met with much success. Teachers rarely need to raise their voices and their non-confrontational approach contributes much to the very positive ethos for learning and gains the respect of the pupils. Teachers make lessons interesting and this enables pupils to concentrate well.
26. The teachers assess pupils very thoroughly and provide pupils with individual targets at all stages. Perceptive questioning enables regular checks on pupils' progress. This is common across the school but is especially good in English, science and history. Consequently, pupils have a good grasp of how they are getting on. The learning is particularly good in Years 10 and 11 and in Year 13.
27. The small amount of unsatisfactory teaching (in art, especially) arose in the main because the teachers, mostly temporary and part-time, were not specialists in the subjects they were teaching. They had too little knowledge of pupils' strengths and weaknesses, sometimes tolerated 'off-task' behaviour and were generally unable to ensure pupils learned or made progress.

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

28. The school is committed to providing a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum that meets the needs of all its pupils. Performing Arts college status has been achieved for September 2001 and the introduction and popularity of the advanced vocational course in performing arts reflects this priority. Overall, the quality and range of learning opportunities across the curriculum are sound. There are, however, many strong features but also some weaknesses.
29. The school provides a well-balanced curriculum in Years 7 to 9. Whilst there is sufficient time for all subjects to be taught effectively, the carousel arrangement for personal and social education causes interruptions to the teaching of drama and this hinders pupils' progress. Information and communication technology is taught to all pupils as a discrete subject in Year 7 only. Whilst a wide range of computer skills is used to good effect in Years 8 and 9, there is no thorough mapping of the National Curriculum requirements for information and communication technology. The school is aware of this and already has radical plans for a review of the curriculum.
30. A wide core curriculum in Years 10 and 11 ensures that pupils continue to participate in the main subjects. Pupils in Year 10 may study foundation level GNVQ in leisure and tourism and an intermediate level GNVQ in information and communication technology. There is a highly popular work-related curriculum option that involves attendance at a local college for half a day each week. The local college also provides significant enhancement to the food technology GCSE course by providing facilities to assist with large-scale food production.
31. Pupils taking science may choose the separate subjects of biology, chemistry and physics. However, whilst the opportunity to study two modern foreign languages is offered, the small numbers of pupils requesting this has meant that both French and German have never been available to all pupils. German is only offered to the more able pupils. There is a significant number of pupils disapplied from the modern foreign language curriculum from the start of Year 10. The reduced allocation of time in two of the option blocks has a particularly adverse effect on standards in music and in art and design. The placement of religious education within the carousel arrangement for personal and social education does not allow sufficient time for pupils to cover all the work set out in the Agreed Syllabus.
32. Despite the statutory requirement for religious education not being met, the curriculum in the sixth form has developed very well within a short space of time. Opportunities exist for pupils to study intermediate level GNVQ in leisure and tourism and advanced vocational course in performing arts. There are also A-level GCE courses in eight subjects in Year 13. A fuller range of AS level courses, including art and design, modern foreign languages and food technology, which are not available in Year 13, is available in Year 12. Media studies has made rapid strides in popularity. Current Year 13 pupils completed the GCSE examination in this subject successfully in a one-year course in order to move to A level in Year 13. The dynamic head of sixth form, who is also one of the media studies teachers, offers significant extra help to make this possible. Key skills elements in Year 12 are not taught as discrete lessons, but are mapped by the collection of evidence from subject areas. Good systems are in place for this with biology, sociology and information and communication technology departments particularly supportive. General studies is taught effectively, where pupils' timetables permit, by a dedicated team of teachers.
33. A strength of the school is the support available outside the formal timetable in almost all subjects. This support is available both in the form of revision sessions and subject clubs. There is a homework club. Extra-curricular provision of a wider ranging nature is also a strength of the school. There is significant participation in a multitude of sporting opportunities, including circuit fitness, badminton and trampolining, as well as the traditional team games. Music offers jazz and rock bands, as well as unaccompanied singing. There are separate performing arts clubs for younger and older pupils, as well as clubs for the environment and media studies.
34. Generally all pupils with special educational needs work in lessons with other pupils in the main school. In most subjects the system of setting or banding, based on ability, is effective. Additional support is effective and well organised. Support is provided in reading and computer activities during tutor time for 20 minutes before afternoon lessons on three days of the week. Those pupils with

dyslexia are withdrawn for high quality, intensive and very effective teaching of English, French, geography and history in Year 7, and English in Year 8. This programme is very well organised and of good quality. A small number of pupils with particularly severe behavioural difficulties are appropriately withdrawn from some lessons to the pupil support unit to work with a specialist teacher. This recently developed scheme is proving most worthwhile.

35. The Individual Education Plans are of good quality; they fully reflect the requirements of the statements of special educational need. Teachers make good use of them for matching work to the needs of the pupils. In Years 10 and 11, specific arrangements are made for groups of pupils to follow an accredited vocational course that includes additional experience of work related learning. Other pupils take advantage of the school's close links with the local college to participate in courses carefully tailored to meet their needs.
36. The curriculum for personal and social education is satisfactory. Personal and social education is taught throughout the school, on a carousel system, for one period a week by a team of specialist teachers. The carousel system includes sex education and relationships, drug education and citizenship. Drama is also included in Years 7 to 9 and religious education in Year 10 but time for the various components of this subject is too short.
37. Careers education begins in Year 9 when pupils are prepared for making option choices for Key Stage 4. Work experience takes place in Year 10 for one week only and the Education Business Partnership helps the school to find placements for pupils. There is too little time to follow up work experience. Pupils have more careers lessons in Year 11 and a formal interview with the careers officer. Pupils have access to a well-organised careers library and computer software supported by good quality materials. The school makes positive use of visiting speakers and support from the local careers advisers is excellent. Sixth form pupils are supported enthusiastically by the head of sixth form in preparation for their next stage of education.
38. The school largely ensures good equal opportunities provision. There is some underachievement among boys in some subjects at GCSE and some, though not all subjects, have strategies to try to combat this problem. The single sex groupings in several subjects are helping to raise the standards of boys and of girls. The school's curriculum attempts to raise pupils' awareness of the ethnic diversity of society outside the school and deals effectively with any incidents of a racist nature.
39. The school has a very wide range of successful links with organisations in the local community, which contribute positively to the learning experiences that are available for pupils. Through the Education Business Partnership different groups of pupils benefit from a variety of imaginative activities, such as problem-solving courses in a business environment and team building exercises, which help them to learn organisational and decision-making skills and to develop mature, responsible attitudes. The Education Business Partnership also organises industrial placements for teachers. Links with Newbury College include some part-time work-related courses for pupils at risk of losing interest in learning. These have been successful in motivating pupils to persevere with schoolwork. All the activities serve to broaden pupils' horizons and make them aware of the relevance of their school studies to the world outside and many result in the award of a certificate or a useful addition to their Record of Achievement.
40. There are also very strong links with the feeder primary schools and a local special school. Good transition arrangements make the move between phases easy for pupils, and many of the joint ventures are innovative and of mutual benefit to pupils of both schools. For example, drama pupils from Trinity presented their partially prepared performance to an audience from a primary school, who, in turn, wrote a review of what they had seen so that improvements could be made. Consequently the Trinity pupils were able to adjust their work to the needs of their intended audience and the primary pupils were able to practise their critical and writing skills. This is only one of numerous examples of good practice that characterise the liaison that exists between Trinity and other schools. In addition, opportunities are created for secondary pupils to work alongside primary children, for example, with computers or on the sports field, consolidating their own learning and contributing to their personal and social development.

41. At present a number of local groups make use of the school's facilities and the local environment is used in some subjects, including history and geography, to extend and enhance classroom learning. Other links with the local community are planned for the future, such as shared use of the performing arts and sports facilities when the buildings are completed in the very near future.
42. The school's provision for the spiritual development of pupils is satisfactory. Some subjects, notably history and religious education, make an effective contribution to pupils' awareness of the varieties of beliefs and values held by individuals and communities. Most subjects make too little contribution to this provision. Pupils are given opportunities to explore emotions, reflect on their own values and are alerted to the non-material dimension of human beings and how beliefs and values inter-relate with behaviour and social customs. A Year 9 lesson on meditation illustrated these opportunities well.
43. The school offers all pupils at least one experience of collective worship each week and includes a 'Thought for the Day' on the pupil bulletin. The quality of the assemblies observed was only satisfactory. The school is not meeting its statutory obligations for collective worship in full and some subjects miss opportunities to contribute to pupils' spiritual development.
44. The provision for pupils' moral development is good. The school's aims, code of conduct, anti-bullying statement and system of rewards and sanctions provide clear guidelines for positive behaviour. Most pupils know what constitutes acceptable behaviour. In several subjects pupils have opportunities to explore the moral aspects of such themes as the value of the individual, racism, sexual relationships, slavery and anti-semitism. The school's positive behaviour strategies are supported by its very effective pastoral provision. Several subjects do too little to alert pupils to moral issues.
45. The provision for pupils' social development is very good. All subjects offer pupils opportunities to develop and practise basic social skills. The school's pastoral arrangements contribute well towards pupils' social development. The majority of pupils co-operate well in class, on visits and in musical, dramatic and sporting activities. Pupils have varied opportunities for taking responsibility such as becoming prefects or assistant librarians, participating in the school council, helping with paired reading, reporting to governors, contributing to assemblies and acting as house officers and team captains. Pupils have opportunity to contribute to community life by visiting local primary and special schools to work with pupils and to visit senior citizens. Many pupils engage in activities to raise money for charities such as the British Heart Foundation or Comic Relief, for which senior pupils have produced and marketed a videotape. In religious education and personal and social education pupils learn about the rights and responsibilities of family life and citizenship.
46. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. In several subjects and in the wide range of extra-curricular activities, pupils learn about British culture, past and present. They gain first hand experience of European cultures by visits to France, Germany, Holland and Italy. The history department's visit to the battlefields of Flanders made a memorable impression on pupils. Pupils have benefited from visits by musicians and recently by black jazz musicians who performed and worked with groups of pupils. Visits to theatres, museums, art galleries and cultural and historical venues are a feature of the extra-curricular programme. In some subjects, pupils learn about non-European culture such as Chinese art, slavery in America, the contribution of coloured Commonwealth troops in world wars, features of life in Japan, Kenya or Brazil, poetry by black authors and the inter-relationship between beliefs and culture in four world religions. The school could do more to increase pupils' appreciation of ethnic minority cultures by, for example, extending the programme of visits to ethnic minority centres or inviting to school visitors from such centres.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

47. The pastoral care for pupils is organised through an efficient tutor system in which the three heads of house have a key role. Its quality is very good and the monitoring of the pupils' academic performance is very successful. The school intends that tutors will remain with pupils throughout the school to provide them with continuity and security. In the short time the school has been in

existence, teachers have got to know their pupils well and parents and pupils report that they are pleased with the pastoral support. Pupils meet with their tutors for twenty minutes at the beginning of four afternoon sessions and most tutors use this time effectively. Tutors check pupils' planners regularly and there are opportunities for parents to comment on pupils' progress. Tutors and subject teachers set learning targets and pupils are clearly aware of the progress they are making and what is expected of them to improve. Pupils in Year 11 are being mentored to raise achievement in their GCSE examinations; these strategies are in the early stages of development.

48. The initial identification and assessment of the requirements of pupils with special educational needs are good due to the close relationships that are maintained with the contributory primary schools. Evidence is gathered to provide a sound baseline for assessing the progress of all pupils. Records are kept up to date and information is used very effectively to review and monitor the progress of individual pupils. The procedures for supporting pupils, including those with dyslexia, in taking school and public examinations are well thought out and effective. The school provides effective support for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties who follow a programme designed to meet their needs in the Pupil Support Unit with a variety of specialist staff from outside agencies. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into the life of the school.
49. Procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are good. There is no evidence of racism in the school and, although the school accepts that some bullying occurs, it is firmly dealt with. Pupils and parents confirm this. The school monitors attendance effectively and tutors and heads of house involve parents when necessary. There is a clear code of conduct for behaviour in the school and pupils are aware of the sanctions should it be abused. This is reflected in the very positive ethos in the school and pupils report that they are proud of their school.
50. Procedures for child protection are in place and support from the social services is good. There is a clear policy for health and safety and procedures are documented in the staff handbook. Risk assessment is in place but in need of updating in some departments. Arrangements for first aid are good and a number of key staff have been trained in this.
51. In almost all subjects, day to day marking of classwork and homework is thorough and offers helpful advice to pupils on how to improve their work. The work set is relevant to the pupils' needs. Very good records are kept of all test results. These records are used in planning the curriculum and in deciding on the best teaching group for each pupil. Pupils are well informed about their results and progress; they know their current levels and have clear targets at which to aim.
52. Teachers are knowledgeable about the requirements of the National Curriculum and of public examinations. They match their tests and marking to these targets so that pupils can receive the most appropriate help in moving towards their individual goals. Detailed records are kept so that clear comparisons with national and local averages can be made and parents can be kept informed of their child's progress.
53. Pupils with special educational needs are assessed against their individual targets with the guidance of specialist teachers so that an accurate record of their progress can be maintained. The progress of very able pupils is also tracked against the targets towards which they should be moving.
54. Form tutors are taking an increasing role in the monitoring of their pupils and share detailed information with parents. Procedures for assessing, monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are very good.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

55. The school is well supported by most parents, who are happy with what it provides and with the progress that pupils are making. They believe that teaching is good and pupils are expected to work hard. The small number of parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting were pleased with the way the school keeps them informed and felt comfortable in approaching staff with queries or problems. They believe that provision for pupils with special educational needs is exceptionally good.

56. Only 17 per cent of parents returned the pre-inspection questionnaire. Most of their responses were positive, but a significant number do not feel that amounts of homework are appropriate, do not feel well informed about pupils' progress and do not think that the school works closely with them. The inspection team agrees with the positive views expressed by parents and finds the criticisms largely unjustified. Homework is set regularly according to the planned timetable that is contained in the prospectus for parents to see. Most pupils agree that amounts of homework set are about right and that most teachers follow the timetable. The school has a number of ways of keeping parents informed about pupils' progress. There is an annual consultation evening, where parents can discuss individual pupils with teachers, written reports are sent home for parents to read and an 'open door' policy allows parents to arrange appointments with staff to discuss specific issues.
57. The quality of school reports is good and is constantly under review. Reports are informative and individual. They give parents a good account of what their child knows, understands and can do and set clear targets for improvement. A recent survey of parents of Year 9 pupils showed general satisfaction with the content of reports and very few suggestions for changes.
58. General information for parents about the school's curricular and pastoral arrangements is detailed, helpful and written in a friendly, readable style. The prospectus and regular newsletters provide useful basic information. They emphasise the importance of the school's relationship with parents and encourage parents to become involved in activities, to support pupils' learning and to ask for any assistance they feel they need. There are clear guidelines about how and when homework is set. The governors' annual report to parents is informative and covers all issues that are of interest to parents. In addition, the school has a regularly updated computer website, which allows parents to keep abreast of developments, as well as seeing for themselves what pupils are achieving in school and in their extra-curricular activities.
59. Parents' own involvement in school activities is less prominent. Many parents keep track of what pupils are learning by reading and signing planners, and some parents use these effectively as a means of communicating with teachers. Although major music and drama productions and other showpiece events involving pupils are always very well supported, staff have been disappointed at the number of parents who attend consultation evenings and curricular meetings and are working to establish the reasons for this apparent lack of interest. The department for pupils with special educational needs maintains good and close links with parents who regularly attend annual review meetings. A small, but active, Friends of Trinity Association works hard to arrange social and fund raising events, but these are not always well supported. The school has plans to develop its relationship with parents and to encourage them to become more involved in school life.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

60. The school is strongly led. The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are excellent. The headteacher shows vision and energy in the way she enthusiastically goes about her job. The deputy heads and the school manager are also very able and committed to improvement. Significant progress has been made in just 18 months because the senior management team, supported by a capable and very competent governing body, has a clear sense of purpose and works with force and commitment. Standards are rising in the majority of subjects and appropriate action is being taken in areas where standards are not yet good enough, art being the key example. The school has already gained the Investors in People award, reflecting the successful start made in establishing the new school. A successful bid for Arts College status is effective from September 2001. The massive building projects are on time.
61. The school's aims are clear and are matched well by the governors' targets. The governors' role in shaping the direction of the school is excellent. The school's aims are largely met. For example, the community spirit that it strives for is clearly present, although the parental dimension of this is not yet strong enough. The encouragement of the pupils' personal and social development is a clear success, being based (as the aims suggest) on mutual respect and responsibility for each other. The school's many other successes include high quality relationships at all levels and the full inclusion of all pupils, whatever background or ability, in all aspects of its work.

62. The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching are progressing satisfactorily. The move into a new school, the creation of a new sixth form and the coming to terms with the new sixth form curriculum have meant that some heads of department have not been able to devote time to monitoring the teaching in their departments. Nonetheless, most heads of department are strong managers, leading their teams effectively. Senior staff are in no doubt about the strengths and weaknesses in the teaching. Weaker teachers are supported and many staff benefit from the visits of educational consultants whose work has helped raise standards of teaching in the main. The arrangements for 'performance management' are effective.
63. The school's development planning is good. The initial plan, written when the school was embryonic, has been fully evaluated. New plans reflect the changing needs of the school. For example, it has already been decided that a curriculum review is needed and this is currently taking place. The departmental development planning is mixed; much is good, some (mathematics for example) is of lesser quality because it does not identify clearly enough what needs to be done to raise standards. The requirements of the pupils with special educational needs are given a high priority in school development planning.
64. There is a shared commitment to improvement. The morale of staff is high and all work together with a common goal. There is much evidence of improving standards and the strong and active governing body and sub-committees monitor the school's progress closely and sensitively. Governors have not, however, ensured that the statutory requirement that each pupil attends a daily act of collective worship is implemented or that all pupils have sufficient time for religious education. The ethos for learning is very positive.
65. The governing body has a very good understanding of the school's financial situation and is totally committed to using available resources to raise standards and provide the best possible education for pupils. Governors and the headteacher have set priorities and have made sure that funding has been allocated appropriately in accordance with these defined goals. Because this is a new school, it has sometimes been necessary to look flexibly at the use of resources, but spending decisions have been well matched to the school's educational priorities.
66. Spending is carefully monitored to make sure that targets are being met and governors receive regular reports from staff to help them evaluate the effectiveness of their spending decisions. While the headteacher and senior staff have responsibility for day-to-day expenditure, major items are always referred to the governors for approval. Specific grants are spent appropriately - for example, in providing professional training for staff and support for pupils with special educational needs. The recent Investors in People review confirms that governors and senior staff evaluate all aspects of their work, are committed to improvement and take appropriate action to achieve it.
67. The principles of best value are understood well and applied consistently to a very high level. Governors compare the school's achievements with those of other schools; they regularly consult parents, pupils and staff on new developments and carefully debate the reasons for proposed expenditure. The school manager's clear understanding of the school's needs and his wide professional expertise ensure that the school derives maximum benefit from available resources.
68. Routine financial control and administration are very efficient and effective and the school makes very good use of new technology to support its administrative systems and to analyse educational data. Taking into account the standards achieved by pupils, the overall effectiveness of the school's provision and its very efficient use of resources, the school provides very good value for money.
69. The arrangements for supporting the pupils with special educational needs are very good and meet all statutory requirements. Leadership of the department for special educational needs and also that of the Accelerated Education Resource unit for pupils with dyslexia are very effective. The department has a clear sense of direction and planning and organisation are very thorough. The governing body and the senior management team provide very good support for the special educational needs co-ordinator, but the amount of timetabled time available to the co-ordinator for the completion of administration and organisational tasks is insufficient.

70. There are enough teachers to meet the demands of the curriculum in almost all subjects. Recent staffing problems in mathematics, German, and textiles have had an adverse effect on the quality of teaching and standards; these have been largely resolved. However, they persist in art arising from long-term absence and difficulties in recruitment. The pupil to teacher ratio is more favourable than that in most secondary schools. The proportion of time teachers spend teaching is, however, higher than that in most schools of this size.
71. There is a very competent librarian and enough technical support except in design and technology. The quality of support is good. The hard-working and capable clerical, administrative and site staff provide effective support for the smooth day-to-day running of the school. The department for pupils with special educational needs, including the Accelerated Education Resource unit, has a committed, knowledgeable, caring and hardworking staff and has the capacity to raise the standard of the provision still further. The number of support assistants working with pupils with special educational needs is, however, not sufficient, especially in classes where there are large numbers of these pupils.
72. There has been a considerable amount of training of staff in the past 18 months. The planned use of external advisers has been very effective in some faculties in helping improve the quality of teaching. Much training takes place on closure days, successfully addressing whole school and departmental needs. Recent ones considered assessment procedures and the development of literacy skills and evidence of their success and usefulness was witnessed in lessons and work seen. A performance management policy has been established and teachers have been observed teaching in many faculties. The comprehensive programme of induction for newly qualified teachers is much appreciated by them. The trainee teachers from the local university department are well supported and they are introducing fresh ideas and approaches.
73. The school is situated on an attractive site with many mature trees. The Elizabethan mansion in the grounds of the school, although not used by the school, nevertheless adds to the ethos and attractiveness of the environment. A large amount of new building has extended the existing classroom and specialist accommodation over the past 18 months. The school has some excellent new buildings for English and the humanities and the existing buildings are currently being refurbished to upgrade, improve and extend the accommodation. The performing arts area, due to open within a few weeks, promises to provide superb accommodation for drama and music. New science laboratories and classrooms for mathematics are about to be opened. This will allow mathematics, drama and music to leave their present unsatisfactory temporary accommodation.
74. The library, an imaginatively-designed area, is both a practical and an uplifting area in which to work. The school has recently refurbished the gymnasium and created a fitness room. There is an attractive, though not large, social and work area for the sixth form within the library building, but there are no indoor social areas for pupils in Years 7 to 11 other than for prefects. Access to the new buildings for people with physical disabilities is excellent, but that to parts of the older buildings is less good. The dining room and the hall are too small for the number of pupils in the school.
75. There are ample resources for learning and the spending on these is above that in similar schools. There are very few subjects where the supply of learning resources is unsatisfactory. History is especially well resourced and English, geography and physical education are well resourced. Some of the equipment used in textiles and food technology is ready for replacement. The new, attractive library is a particularly good resource with a reasonable range of fiction and non-fiction books. The number of books, however, falls below that recommended. The provision of computers is better than in most schools; machines are used well, are well maintained and are up to date.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

76. In order to improve the quality of education provided, the governing body and senior staff should now:
- i. raise the standards in art by resolving the staff recruitment problems and ensuring the quality of teaching improves (see paragraphs 2, 3, 4, 27, 70, 107 and 110);
 - ii. ensure that there is enough time for religious education at all stages and that the teaching of religious education, drama and personal and social education benefits from improved continuity (see paragraphs 29, 31, 32, 36, 64, 87 and 181);
 - iii. improve the provision for pupils' spiritual development by encouraging all subjects to make a contribution to this and ensure that all pupils attend a daily act of collective worship (see paragraphs 43 and 64); and
 - iv. involve parents more in their children's education by adopting strategies such as finding out what parents expect of the school, providing meetings to describe the curriculum and inviting parents in to school during the day (see paragraphs 56 and 59).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	167
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	77

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
7	26	46	18	2	1	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	795	90
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	67	0

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	60	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	250	3

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	24
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	39

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.0
National comparative data	8.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.1
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. Please note: The school opened in September 1999 so the first results are for 2000.

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	89	65	154

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	44	45	52
	Girls	50	35	34
	Total	94	80	86
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	62 (n/a)	53 (n/a)	56 (n/a)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	30 (n/a)	28 (n/a)	22 (n/a)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	47	52	41
	Girls	42	35	31
	Total	89	87	72
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	59 (n/a)	57 (n/a)	47 (n/a)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	36 (n/a)	29 (n/a)	12 (n/a)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (28)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	63	70	133

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	25	50	59
	Girls	30	67	69
	Total	55	117	128
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	41 (n/a)	88 (n/a)	96 (n/a)
	National	47.4 (46.6)	90.6 (90.9)	95.6 (95.8)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	36 (n/a)
	National	38.4 (38.0)

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

Attainment at the end of the sixth form- there were no Year 13 pupils in summer 2000

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	7
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	3
Any other minority ethnic group	4

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	1	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	45	2
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7– Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	56.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7– Y13

Total number of education support staff	18
Total aggregate hours worked per week	428

Deployment of teachers: Y7– Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	80
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Average teaching group size: Y7– Y11

Key Stage 3	22.1
Key Stage 4	19.2

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	1,518,370
Total expenditure	1,429,955
Expenditure per pupil	1717*
Balance brought forward from previous year	N/a
Balance carried forward to next year	88,415

**figures are Sept - April, not full year.*

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	885
Number of questionnaires returned	150

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	36	50	10	4	0
My child is making good progress in school.	47	51	1	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	18	63	10	3	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	55	14	6	1
The teaching is good.	35	60	1	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	32	48	17	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	43	50	4	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	57	39	1	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	25	52	16	4	3
The school is well led and managed.	37	51	4	3	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	32	60	6	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	30	47	6	2	15

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

ENGLISH

77. Pupils' overall standard of attainment of 14-year-olds (the end of Key Stage 3) is in line with that found nationally. In the national tests in 2000 the percentage of pupils reaching at least level 5 and level 6 was in line with the national average. Girls did marginally better than boys when compared with their respective national averages. Results were below average when compared with the performance of pupils in schools with a similar percentage of free school meals. However, this measure of 'similarity' is unreliable, as it does not reflect the below-average socio-economic circumstances of pupils coming to the school. With levels of literacy below average on entry, standards at the end of Key Stage 3 demonstrate clear progress and good achievements.
78. The general standard of attainment of 16-year-olds (the end of Key Stage 4) is above that found nationally. In the GCSE English language in 2000 the percentage of pupils achieving grades A* to C was well above the national average. Boys' results were significantly higher than the national average for boys. In English literature, results were above average, with boys' performance well above their own national average. Pupils do better in both language and literature than they do in most of their other subjects. These results at the end of Key Stage 4 show continued and positive progress bearing in mind pupils' standards on entry. Pupils continue to achieve well at this stage.
79. By the end of the sixth form course, standards are above those normally seen. There were no A-level examinations in 2000 but the current Year 13 pupils are achieving high standards.
80. Almost all pupils listen attentively with good standards of comprehension. They work effectively together in pairs and small groups. The quality of speaking is higher than that commonly found. Most pupils express themselves fluently, audibly and confidently. A significant majority of pupils use the spoken form of standard English by the end of Key Stage 3. Regardless of their overall level of attainment, pupils generally answer questions eagerly and clearly. In a media studies lesson, pupils in Year 11 commented relevantly, articulately and with sensitivity about extracts from the film *Saving Private Ryan*. When discussing a novel, pupils in Year 13 spoke with maturity and understanding about complex levels of meaning and were willing to develop ideas at length in their critical response. The quality of reading aloud varies greatly but, although some pupils lack continuity and audibility, the great majority read with a good variety of pace, pitch and expression. The best examples show a feeling for character and emotion.
81. The general standard of reading is close to that found nationally by the end of Key Stage 3 and above that at the end of Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. High priority has been given to the improvement and development of reading in Year 7 and Year 8 when pupils benefit from regular paired reading with older pupils. The excellent library is intensively used and provides boxes of support reading in classrooms. The number of loans to pupils in Year 7 is far greater than that normally found. Time is set aside during some periods for silent reading. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils study a wide range of literature and develop their critical appreciation of such elements as character, plot and themes in such great works as *Macbeth*. In their response to the poetry of Christina Rossetti, pupils in Year 12 showed good control over the appropriate language of literary criticism in their perceptive and sophisticated discussion of a particular poem.
82. The general standard of writing by the end of Key Stage 3 is somewhat higher than that found nationally and, by the end of Key Stage 4, is well above average. In Years 7 to 11, pupils present their work carefully and draft their writing effectively, often using word processing to assist them. In Year 7 all pupils submitted extended narrative pieces in a competition on the theme of an heroic quest or adventure. Some of the best stories were of a standard well above that expected (National Curriculum level 7) and many showed successful use of language to create interest, tension and excitement. In Years 7 to 9, pupils enter for such a competition and great interest and enthusiasm is generated. As well as in this major narrative assignment, by the end of Key Stage 3, most pupils write effectively for a range of purposes and audiences with especially good work in using the

language of persuasion. This progress is maintained in Years 10 and 11. As they approach A-level examinations, pupils in Year 13 produce extended pieces of writing which draw upon a wide range of reading and which are of outstanding quality. Such essays are carefully researched, thoroughly planned, skilfully crafted, fluently expressed and accurate in detail. In all classrooms much interesting and lively writing is attractively displayed, with some of the best being pupils' poetry.

83. The standard of behaviour is always good and often very good throughout the school. All pupils are well motivated and eager to learn, sustaining concentration well. Many clearly enjoy their work. Relationships within the classroom are positive and purposeful. Pupils work well together and respect the views and opinions of others. As a direct result of the consistently high quality of teaching, pupils co-operate whole-heartedly and are keen to do well. This very positive attitude is a great strength of the department. By the time pupils reach the sixth form, such is their confidence and maturity that they approach their learning in an adult way.
84. The quality of teaching throughout the school is always good and is very good overall; some is excellent. Teachers' knowledge of their subject is very good, with outstandingly high academic standards in sixth form teaching. Planning and preparation are very thorough and detailed attention is given to specific training in answering examination questions. Teachers have very high expectations and a wide range of teaching methods is skilfully adapted to draw the best out of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are taught with great skill and sensitivity and so learn well and make good progress. All teachers use questioning effectively to enhance pupils' learning. Lessons contain a lively mixture of language activities. Consequently, learning is good and amounts of work produced are large. Relationships are relaxed and yet most lessons are conducted at pace with pupils constantly challenged. Written work is marked consistently and conscientiously with much positive comment. Very detailed records are kept of pupils' progress and clear targets for improvement are set.
85. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. The department reviews progress regularly and the decision to form some single sex groups had a clear influence on the good results in the GCSE in 2000, with boys doing particularly well. Departmental documentation is very thorough and informative. The inclusion of media studies as an optional examination subject at GCSE and A level has broadened the curriculum. A wide range of extra-curricular activities is offered, including regular theatre visits. All staff share a clear sense of vision for the subject and work together efficiently as a direct result of the excellent management and leadership of the head of faculty.
86. Through the hard work and commitment of the head of literacy, all departments have a relevant literacy policy. Awareness and good practice are somewhat ahead of that in many other schools. Extensive in-service training has helped to create consciousness of the importance of literacy in the learning of all subjects. The quality of listening skills in all subjects is better than that usually encountered. For example, in mathematics and physical education pupils are very attentive and in geography pupils evaluate their oral work effectively. The use of discussion and talk as an essential tool for learning and reinforcing understanding is practised in many subjects but is still not fully developed in some areas of the curriculum.
87. The great majority of pupils read well enough for them to understand textbooks and other materials. In all departments, very good use is made of the display of key words. In history and religious education, pupils are encouraged to read widely for research and to broaden their understanding. Pupils in Year 10 and Year 11 make too little use of the excellent library.
88. The general quality of the presentation of written work across the curriculum is better than that found nationally. Pupils take good working notes in mathematics. In history there is much very good extended writing and there is good practice in geography and religious education. As yet, insufficient use is made in most subjects of the drafting of writing except through word processing.

DRAMA

89. Drama is taught in the performing arts faculty. Pupils do not have regular lessons in the subject throughout the year so their experience lacks the continuity essential to the development of the

skills required for success in drama. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils achieve standards somewhat below those found nationally. Oral work is above average, as it is generally in the school, but pupils' movement and control over body language are below average. Pupils also lack awareness of the position of the audience. Pupils listen attentively but are not fully familiar with studio discipline. One group in Year 8 presenting prepared tableaux showed strength in the grouping and focus of their work. The whole class gave sensitive appraisals of presentations. This group showed the benefit of good teaching from a sequence of lessons. Pupils use the terminology of the subject confidently. Teaching is good and sometimes very good, especially considering the constraints of temporary accommodation. At the end of Key Stage 4, for their work for assessment for GCSE, pupils showed some lack of pace and urgency in preparation for a timed practical test. They work comfortably together and speaking and listening skills are good but there is a wide range of attainment in other aspects of communication. GCSE results in 2000 were below average. Excellent new accommodation is soon to be available. The acting head of department has achieved much in a short time and pupils enjoy drama.

MATHEMATICS

90. In 2000, pupils aged 14 obtained results in the national tests that were below the national average and very low in comparison with results in similar schools. However, the measure of 'similarity' is unreliable, as it does not reflect the below-average attainment and socio-economic circumstances of pupils coming to the school. Pupils aged 16 obtained GCSE results that were significantly below the national average. Standards seen in lessons, however, were much higher than these for both age groups and were in line with national averages at age 14 and age 16 but below average for 18-year-olds.
91. By age 14, higher attaining pupils have a very good grasp of probability. They solve simultaneous equations confidently by algebraic methods and have a good understanding of how to obtain the formulae for linear graphs. They make good use of this skill to check the solutions of simultaneous equations graphically. Average attaining pupils have a good understanding of the concepts of both square roots and cube roots and use both basic and scientific calculators effectively to obtain these. However, a minority of pupils still confuse square roots with halves and cube roots with thirds. Below average attaining pupils know that there is a constant relationship between the diameter and circumference of a circle by measuring different circular objects. Pupils are working at attainment levels in line with national averages and generally achieve higher standards than expected.
92. Higher attaining pupils at age 16 understand the relation between the angle at the centre of a circle and the length of arc. They know that vectors have magnitude and direction and the best appreciate the concept that any journey between two points by different routes is the same vector. Average attaining pupils understand geometry well and apply their knowledge of, for example, loci to real life problems. However, a significant minority find difficulty in determining the upper and lower limits of measurements given to the nearest unit. Below average attaining pupils understand the equivalence between percentages and fractions. Overall, pupils at this age attain in line with the national average in mathematics and numeracy; their achievements are good. The very highest attaining pupils are mostly boys and they are extremely eloquent in explaining concepts. The gifted and talented pupils progress well at each key stage, as do pupils with special educational needs. At age 18, the attainment of the small number of pupils is clearly below the national average but their achievements are appropriate to their prior attainment.
93. Pupils are keen to learn and attitudes to learning and behaviour are good. Pupils are well aware of their attainment levels and show respect for each other, their teachers and property. In one excellent lesson, two teachers used a wide variety of resources related to pupils' own experience. This motivated the lowest attaining pupils in Year 8 to help consolidate the concept of fractions. Pupils were asked to half fill a jug with a drink and were asked about sharing a pizza with friends. Equally important, however, was the responsibility that the teachers gave pupils over their own learning by allowing them to choose work cards from within a suitable matrix. Teachers used a system of giving house points as rewards for success that was clearly understood and accepted by all the pupils. Oral praise was used very effectively. Most pupils are respectful, attentive and keen to persevere. In an excellent Year 10 lesson, average-attaining pupils used graphic calculators

effectively to trace graphs and hence determine the number of solutions to quadratic, cubic and quartic equations. The teacher structured the lesson extremely well with clearly progressive, practical and stimulating activities. The high quality questioning skills made pupils think for themselves and the nature of the activity allowed them to check their own success.

94. Teaching and learning in Years 7 to 11 are both good. More than a third of the teaching was very good; some was excellent and none unsatisfactory. Teaching and learning in the sixth form are satisfactory. Well-planned, interesting activities allowing time for practice and reflection are typical of the teaching in Years 7 to 9. Although computers are not used often, because of temporary problems with access, teachers show imagination with other resources. Graphic calculators are used effectively in graph tracing to help the highest attaining pupils in Year 7 visualise the number of solutions to quadratic equations. The use of two card robots, one which understood left and right and another which understood compass points, both motivated and helped lower attaining pupils in Year 7 understand directions. In data handling, higher attaining pupils in Year 9 used local directories to learn by experience that samples are often biased as most telephone numbers in the area begin with the digit 9. Strategies to improve numeracy, however, and standards of numeracy are only satisfactory. Almost all teachers plan well to maintain pupils' interest with a suitable blend of demonstration and time to develop techniques and thinking skills. On the few occasions when teachers relax their high levels of expectation or do not set suitable time targets, a minority of pupils lose interest. The good progress of pupils with special educational needs is due to the sheer determination of the teacher of the lowest sets, there being too little learning support available. The teaching of the small number of pupils in Years 12 and 13 is satisfactory or occasionally better; only those in Year 12 show the motivation to succeed. They are taught well to use information and communication technology effectively to investigate graphs of functions.
95. The management of the department is good. Morale has been maintained in difficult circumstances, including extensive staff absence and being in temporary accommodation away from the main school. The head of department, who is an outstanding classroom teacher, has analysed data thoroughly to set challenging yet achievable targets for all pupils, thus motivating teachers to insist on high standards. The introduction of loose-leaf files for all pupils has been a great success in motivating pupils and making ongoing assessment easier for both pupils and teachers. However, the department needs to raise its profile by receiving its share of able pupils into the sixth form and good practice in teaching styles should be shared formally.
96. Standards of numeracy at age 14 are average. Pupils measure accurately in science. They draw suitable graphs and interpret them meaningfully. At age 16 numeracy skills are generally average and sometimes above average. Pupils use graphical skills in GCSE physical education to plot the results of questionnaires and in geography to analyse a variety of statistical data. In design and technology, they use pie charts to illustrate effectively the results of questionnaires and calculate cutting speeds accurately. In information and communication technology, pupils apply formulae to spreadsheets meaningfully and in modern foreign languages they learn numbers with ease. At age 18 standards of numeracy are average or better. In media studies, pupils complete a statistical survey of readership with confidence and accuracy and pupils in science use formulae competently.
97. Whilst standards in numeracy are average, strategies for improvement are not yet in place. Some activities in mathematics show imagination but a wider range needs to be developed in consultation with teachers from primary schools. A whole school numeracy policy needs to be developed, informing each department of the strategies needed to improve numeracy relevant to their subject area.

SCIENCE

98. Pupils attain standards that are above average by the end of each of Years 9 and 11. Post 16 pupils in biology (the only science offered at this level this year) attain standards that are in line with those expected for the AS course. The results obtained in the national tests for 14-year-olds in 2000 were close to the national averages. Boys performed slightly better than girls. The GCSE results in 2000 were significantly below national averages. Girls performed better than boys, particularly with regard to the proportions gaining A* and A grades. Boys did not do as well in science as in their other

subjects, whereas the girls did better in science than in their other subjects. Both the national tests at 14 and GCSE results were well below those of schools with similar proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals.

99. Pupils enter the school with below average levels of attainment in science and make good progress. By the end of Year 9, they have a good knowledge and a secure understanding of the subject matter. Higher attaining Year 9 pupils work out and balance equations for chemical reactions. Most pupils have a sound understanding of the digestive process and can identify acquired and inherited human characteristics. Lower attainers draw and interpret electrical circuit diagrams and plot bar charts. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 continue to make good progress.
100. Some pupils in Year 11 are taught in single sex groups and this helps their learning. Both boys and girls consider they are doing much better in these groups than they were doing in the mixed ones last year. In one lesson the group of all girls very quickly consolidated knowledge and understanding of cells and types of variation, working extremely hard throughout. The corresponding group of boys in their lesson had similar excellent attitudes and successfully planned an investigation as part of their assessed course work. Higher attainers in Year 11 competently apply inheritance rules in explaining the occurrence of certain diseases. Most pupils describe the uses of radioactive substances and some understand radioactive decay. Lower attainers accurately plot distance-time graphs and interpret them in simple terms. Skills required in practical investigations develop well throughout. Year 7 pupils soon learn how to observe and measure accurately and record appropriately. Planning, analysis and evaluation skills develop to at least expected levels with older pupils. Pupils have the numeracy skills to enable them to process their experimental results. Information technology skills are well developed. Pupils respond well to the emphasis placed by teachers on development of literacy skills and they use correct terminology increasingly.
101. Sixth form pupils following an AS course in biology are making very good progress and take increasing responsibility for their own learning. In one lesson they competently accessed the Internet to obtain information on genetic engineering and related ethical and moral issues in preparing a presentation for delivery to other post-16 pupils not studying sciences.
102. Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning and want to succeed. Attitudes are excellent in the sixth form and in the groups where boys and girls are taught separately. Pupils almost always settle in lessons quickly and are well behaved and attentive. They willingly and confidently respond to the teachers, applying their knowledge and understanding well. They cooperate very well in groups, discussing sensibly and working safely and productively without constant close supervision.
103. The quality of teaching is good overall. It is always at least satisfactory and very good or excellent in over one third of lessons. It is consistently very good in the sixth form. Teachers know their subject well and make it comprehensible to pupils of all levels of attainment, often by using examples to which pupils readily relate and sometimes by using simple short demonstrations. A group of lower attaining Year 11 pupils soon grasped an understanding of wave behaviour in water when the teacher projected the movement of water in a ripple tank on to a screen. Pupils benefit greatly from the good knowledge that teachers have of examination board requirements. Teachers know their pupils extremely well and most make full use of this knowledge in skilfully questioning, drawing out information and checking understanding. Occasionally some teachers do not fully exploit this good knowledge and questioning is not sufficiently targeted on individuals to focus them.
104. Lessons are well planned, often having a range of activities, and provide appropriate continuity from one topic to the next. Objectives are made clear at the start and are often written on the board. During end-of-lesson summaries some teachers carefully check the progress made. Relationships are usually good with much pupil-teacher interaction. Praise and encouragement successfully promote motivation and fulfilment of teachers' expectations. Teachers adopt a lively and enthusiastic approach and exposition is informative. Group working is usually well organised but in one lesson groups were too large, resulting in individuals not being fully involved. Class management is usually good and pupils are kept busy throughout. Lessons are usually conducted at an appropriate pace but in one it was too quick with the teacher not allowing the pupils to complete the task before moving on.

105. In an excellent Year 11 lesson pupils very quickly settled and paid full and immediate attention to the teacher. Objectives were made clear and the teacher skilfully targeted questions to recall work done previously. Practical procedures were discussed and the teacher emphasised the need for accuracy. Lively informative exposition and a short demonstration helped the pupils understand. The pupils were then fully engaged in a class practical. They cooperated very well in pairs discussing sensibly, showing initiative and quickly obtained a set of accurate measurements. The teacher moved round groups, asking challenging questions. Pupils displayed their results graphically and analysed and evaluated them. A quick summary by the teacher checked that pupils had met the objectives and pupils left at the end of the lesson with a real sense of achievement.
106. Teachers are careful to ensure that pupils with special educational needs make the same good progress as others. They are taught well in smaller groups and given suitable tasks. Teachers are well aware of the difficulties of individuals and give them extra help whenever possible. In some lessons there is extra effective support. Teachers discuss the lesson with support assistants in advance. Gifted and talented pupils are identified and taught in separate groups. They also make good progress. Pupils are kept well informed of their progress with regular marking and assessments. Homework tasks are purposeful and much good use is made of past examination questions. Tasks are being introduced which provide opportunities for pupils to show initiative and develop research skills.
107. The curriculum is enhanced for younger pupils by means of lessons designed to accelerate the development of thinking skills. Success of the method was much in evidence in the lessons seen. There are GCSE courses in single, double and the three separate sciences for older pupils. Assessment procedures are comprehensive and much use is made of the information gained, for example, in the setting of targets for individuals. The teachers are well qualified and there is a good balance of experience. The technicians are efficient and provide effective support. An enthusiastic, considerate and very competent head of faculty provides very good leadership and management. All work hard as a team with a united commitment to high standards and continuous improvement. An external consultant has advised the faculty and monitoring of performance takes place. Numerous changes of accommodation have taken place in the past year during building operations. This has resulted in many lessons being taught in rooms lacking the usual laboratory facilities. New laboratories and preparation rooms, all adjacent and on one level, are almost ready for occupancy.

ART AND DESIGN

108. In the year 2000 National Curriculum teacher assessments, the proportion of pupils who achieved the standard to be expected by the age 14 was well below the national average. The proportion of pupils who achieved grades A* to C in the year 2000 GCSE examinations was significantly below the national average and the A* to G results were well below average. Boys did less well than girls. No boys achieved higher than a grade C.
109. The standard of work seen in lessons, pupils' folders and on display was below average for pupils aged 14 and 16 (the end of both Key Stages 3 and 4). Attainment in the sixth form was broadly in line with expectations; most are reliably predicted to achieve the lower to middle grades in the AS and A-level examinations. Year 7 pupils made inventive and carefully modelled clay pinch-pots and progressed to a technically more challenging task based on castles. These showed a good understanding of how to build with clay and how to model and decorate surfaces with varied marks and textures. The Year 10 pupils made large, dramatic clay heads using first-hand observation drawings of their friends or members of their family. In a Year 12 lesson the pupils responded well to the teacher's good subject knowledge and planning as they worked on their box sculptures based on their learning about the artist Joseph Cornell.
110. The learning and progress of all pupils are unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 11 and continue to be adversely affected by the absence of properly qualified teachers. The effect of this is that pupils lack the knowledge, skills and understanding to be expected at each of the key stages. For example, although pupils are provided with folders in which to keep their work, the content of these is often thin, with many poorly completed or unfinished paintings and drawings. Pupils' sketchbooks show a dependency on copying from photocopies or magazines instead of drawing from first-hand

observational study. This means that drawing skills are poorly developed, as are, in many cases, skills of investigation and an understanding of how to develop ideas. Studies of artists' works from different periods and cultures vary in quality. There is some evidence of analysis and evaluation but there is much uncritical use of material which has been easily gleaned from sources such as the internet or copied from books and printed worksheets. In one lesson, some Year 8 pupils were able to talk about the artist Roy Lichtenstein but their subject vocabulary was limited and they could only describe their responses to the artist's paintings in very general terms such as 'he uses dots and bright colours'.

111. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are positive. They co-operate well with each other and they are motivated to learn. Behaviour in lessons is good when the pupils are taught well. Pupils are, however, underachieving because of a lack of continuity in teaching caused by the absence of teachers.
112. Overall, the standard of teaching is unsatisfactory, because of the current staffing problems. Teachers have also not paid sufficient attention to planning courses which take account of prior attainment and which provide a thorough grounding in the subject's basic skills with opportunities to consolidate these at appropriate stages. This is evident in the work of Year 11 pupils, and also in Years 12 and 13, where some pupils have imaginative and personal ideas but do not know how to go about executing them because they lack the knowledge of the technical skills that should have been provided in the previous key stages.
113. During the inspection, non-specialist teachers taught the lessons of two absent teachers; these included the head of department. In these lessons, pupils did not progress as they should because the teachers lacked the necessary subject knowledge and, in one lesson where teaching was judged to be poor, the ability to manage pupils effectively. The school is currently advertising for new staff. A very experienced, recently appointed temporary part-time teacher is already having a positive effect on learning. The school has also employed a well-qualified and very experienced teacher-consultant to assist the Year 13 pupils for one day a week after school. Measures taken by the school have ensured that sixth form pupils receive constructive advice along with clear targets to help them achieve their best work and so ensure that they fulfil the examination coursework requirements. The sixth form teaching and learning are satisfactory.
114. The learning of Year 11 pupils is unsatisfactory. There is a lack of maturity in their ideas and in their use of techniques and they are unaware of how to use the examination's assessment criteria in order to ensure that they are meeting the course requirements. In one Year 11 lesson pupils showed that they did not have sufficient understanding of how to use previous learning and visual research in order to prepare ideas for the examination paper which they had been given.
115. Leadership and management of the subject are poor. There is a lack of coherent planning, with no evidence in schemes of work based on knowledge of what pupils should be able to achieve. There is no departmental development plan and this too contributes to the low standards because the department is not clear about its priorities and what it wishes to achieve.
116. Although the art curriculum provides opportunities for a range of two- and three-dimensional work, these too have been limited because of the lack of continuity in teaching. The contribution of the subject to the spiritual and cultural awareness of all pupils in the school is too narrow because of the lack of good quality display to inspire and excite pupils as they come to lessons and move around the school. Accommodation for the subject is good, with the potential to be very good. However, because rooms are still in the process of refurbishment and because of a general disorder, they are not as inviting as they could be. Resources are adequate but are not being well looked after. Although there are some opportunities for the use of information technology in lessons and new computers have recently been delivered, the requirement for the use of these in art is not being met.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

117. In the 2000 National Curriculum assessments of Year 9 pupils' work, the teachers assessed standards as below the national average. Girls achieved much better results than boys. Results in

the 2000 GCSE were in line with the national average for all schools for both boys and girls. Results were best in food technology which were above average; one girl gained the highest A* grade and almost all pupils achieved a grade equal to, or higher than, results in their other subjects. GCSE results in resistant materials, graphics products and engineering compare well with the national averages. The poorer results in textiles technology reflect a significant staffing problem that has now been resolved.

118. Pupils' attainment is very varied on entry in Year 7, but is usually below the national average. Pupils' current overall attainment by the age of 14 is average. Most make good progress and achieve appropriate standards. By the end of Year 9, pupils have a secure understanding of good design practice for different purposes. They are familiar with the Internet for research, word process letters and send e-mails. Pupils' standards of English are good and they select relevant information to write detailed specifications for product designs and evaluation reports. They know the working properties of materials such as wood, plastic, metal, food and textiles. They use a wide range of tools, equipment, materials and components with some precision to produce quality products, for example, a moneybox designed to light up when coins are put in. They are familiar with modern techniques such as vacuum forming and computer-aided design and manufacture (CAD/CAM). They use their knowledge of healthy eating to create food products and show skill and creativity to produce textile items for a gift shop. Pupils make satisfactory progress in knowledge and skills in Years 7 to 9 by well-structured theory and practical work.
119. By the age of 16, pupils' attainment in designing is average overall but some attain above average standards. Pupils think critically and conduct independent research to a good standard when designing in the full range of subjects (systems and control, graphics products, engineering, food technology and textiles). They select and use materials and tools skilfully to achieve good levels of accuracy and finish. Links to industry and the community enhance course work. Higher attaining pupils use specialist language with accuracy and confidence - for example, to research a food product for a diabetic. Pupils of higher and middle ability plan in systematic detail to create designs, select options and evaluate them carefully in order to create, for example, product designs incorporating an electronic timer, or scale models for a holiday home or shop designs. Practical skills of lower attaining pupils are improving and they draw conclusions about their designs based on testing. Many pupils present their findings to a high standard using appropriate applications of information and communication technology. Pupils apply their knowledge effectively from other subjects such as English, mathematics and science in well-written evaluation reports. Pupils make good progress, many achieving more highly than would be expected.
120. In the sixth form, standards of work are in line with syllabus requirements in all courses. Pupils' work shows considerable breadth of thought, extensive investigation and experimentation for their designs with links from outside school, particularly industry. Standards of practical work are high; most pupils achieve well.
121. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and this is reflected in the good progress that they make in all years. Teachers and learning support assistants give skilled help to pupils as needed to overcome specific difficulties in their reading and writing, or help them to organise their work effectively. In a textiles lesson in Year 7, for example, pupils were helped to measure accurately and to use sewing machines confidently in order to create a greetings card. In a Year 10 lesson, pupils were helped to clarify ideas for drawing and modelling car designs by frequent discussion with the teacher and support assistant to achieve their best standards. Good displays of technical terms and units of measurement in teaching rooms are used to improve pupils' standards of spelling, literacy and numeracy.
122. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good. They enjoy their lessons and develop confidence quickly because they are given well-structured opportunities to think imaginatively and independently. Pupils concentrate well and collaborate sensibly in lessons to share resources safely. They know their individual learning targets and usually work hard in lessons to achieve them. Some less confident pupils in all years tend to seek help quickly before trying to solve problems for themselves. In Years 10 and 11, and especially in the sixth form, pupils enjoy taking responsibility for their work. Most expect to work hard and make good progress. This is reflected in the good examination

results. Some middle ability pupils, however, are easily satisfied with their efforts if the teacher is not firm enough. Pupils discuss ideas readily with teachers to improve their work and respond to teachers' detailed written comments.

123. The quality of teaching is good overall. It was never less than satisfactory. It was very good in one-third of lessons, with little variation across the school. Relationships are positive in all years. Teachers motivate pupils and set high standards. Examples of very good teaching were seen in systems and control, textiles and food technology. These lessons were well planned, with a good range of learning opportunities for pupils' individual needs, and enthusiastically and effectively taught. There is good attention to differentiated tasks for the most able pupils in food technology and textiles. The gifted and talented progress especially well in Years 10 and 11. There is a strong emphasis on achieving high standards in design practice and on the possibilities of creativity offered by a variety of materials, equipment and technologies. The clear explanations, the effective use of short-term targets, whole class discussion and individual questions help pupils of below average attainment to make good progress in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs are given carefully selected teaching materials and resources that raise their confidence and expertise. Homework is used well. Computer control work is limited by lack of appropriate equipment in textiles. Assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and is good in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form because teachers have a clearer structure and understanding of examination assessment criteria.
124. National Curriculum requirements are met. The department documentation is comprehensive and gives detailed guidance for teaching and contributes to good standards. Teachers in the department are very experienced specialists committed to high standards. Aspects of subject management have been hampered by the building work for the new school and its impact on accommodation. In Years 7 to 9, planning and assessment procedures do not assist teachers to determine pupils' levels of attainment and progress accurately in the National Curriculum. A good feature of the department is the strong links established with industry and the community. For example, there is a pilot programme with Newbury College Catering department to enhance course work for Year 10 GCSE Food Technology pupils. The facilities available at the College provide pupils with the opportunity to experience large-scale food production. These links also provide an opportunity for pupils to learn about college life and provide an insight into work in the catering industry.
125. The quality of technical support is good and the technician's time is well managed, but is insufficient for food technology and textiles. The department makes efficient use of its resources. Several rooms have been refurbished with modern equipment to improve standards of work but teaching areas are located in different parts of the school and this hinders the efficient sharing of resources, especially of access to information and communication technology.

GEOGRAPHY

126. When teachers assessed pupils' work at the end of Year 9 in 2000, results indicated that pupils' attainment was above the national average with girls achieving more highly than boys. The GCSE results in 2000 were significantly below the national average. The department analyses all of the examination results carefully and clear strategies have been implemented, with some success at age 16, to raise standards further.
127. Pupils' overall level of attainment at the age of 14 is in line with that expected nationally. Pupils have a sound knowledge of the subject. By the end of Year 9 they describe what landscapes, cities and environments are like. Higher attaining pupils use geographical models to describe the patterns of land use in towns and how they are changing. Throughout, pupils have a good understanding of different environments across the world. In Year 7, one group of pupils was using video information very effectively to explain how some plants are adapted to very cold climates. Pupils also have a good knowledge of the relationship between people and the changes in the landscape in which they live. In Year 9, one group of pupils clearly explained the causes and effects of an earthquake and the response of people to the disaster that occurred. In Year 11, pupils know clearly how river features, such as deltas, are formed and how they differ.

128. By the age of 16, pupils' overall level of attainment is in line with the national average. Pupils have good research skills and extract information from a range of resource material, read maps and use an atlas well. By the end of Year 11, pupils have a good understanding of geographical fieldwork enquiry methods in collecting and analysing data and drawing conclusions. Many pupils make good use of information and communication technology to word-process and produce graphs from the statistics they have collected. Overall, written work is of a good standard and is generally accurate and well structured with few spelling errors. Higher attaining pupils make good use of geographical terms. Oral work is above average. Pupils are generally confident, speak clearly and can sustain a discussion. During lessons they generally listen carefully. Pupils in the sixth form achieve standards that reflect those seen nationally.
129. Pupils with special educational needs generally complete work accurately and make good progress at all stages because materials, tasks and explanations are designed to meet their needs. The work of learning support assistants working in the classroom is very effective. The progress of the most able pupils, including the gifted and talented, is good as many of the tasks set enable them to use their skills to the full.
130. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the subject and the skills pupils require to attain higher standards. In one lesson with a class of Year 11 pupils, for example, the teacher clearly and precisely indicated how pupils with different levels of attainment could improve their writing skills and their answers to GCSE examination questions. Explanations are always given clearly and are well illustrated. Lessons are well planned and organised, so they generally start briskly and proceed smoothly. In a few lessons the opportunity to use visual material is insufficiently exploited. Teachers know the pupils well and skilfully involve all pupils in the work of the class, maintaining a good pace of working and ensuring that all pupils are working to their full capacity. Marking is sound and in line with faculty guidelines. Homework is set regularly and is purposeful.
131. Lessons are planned carefully, with a good variety of purposeful activities. In most lessons the objectives are made clear to the pupils, previous work is recapped, often through rapid and well-directed questioning, pupils complete tasks rapidly and the teacher reviews the lesson assessing the progress that has been made. In the best lessons pupils are challenged to think and use their knowledge in a new context. In one lesson, for instance, pupils in Year 7 were studying the climate and vegetation of the Mediterranean region. An effective review of the previous work was followed by a stimulating explanation developed through skilful questioning, gaining pupils' interest and involvement. Then pupils were challenged to use their knowledge to answer quick questions on the main features of a Mediterranean climate, enabling the teacher to assess their understanding of climate graphs. They then completed an exercise explaining how plants adapted to the conditions in the region. During the lesson, pupils reinforced knowledge and skills they had learnt previously and made good gains in extending their understanding.
132. Pupils learn well. They assimilate information rapidly and persevere well with often lengthy written tasks requiring research such as producing brochures or informative writing about a country or region. Pupils are quickly involved in lessons; they listen carefully and generally maintain a good level of concentration. In Years 10 and 11, pupils have a realistic knowledge of their level of attainment and speak confidently and positively about their work.
133. Pupils are generally well behaved, arrive at lessons on time and settle to work quickly. They have a positive attitude to the subject, are keen and well motivated. When they have the opportunity to work in groups they co-operate effectively with each other, share responsibility and listen to the views of others.
134. The scheme of work for Years 7 to 9 is well structured and fully complies with National Curriculum requirements. There is only a brief outline scheme for Years 10 to 11 and for Years 12 and 13. This does not provide a clear indication of the progression of knowledge and skills or continuity through the course between each stage of learning. Good programmes have been developed and implemented for fieldwork and the use of information and communication technology in the subject. The procedures for assessment are very good, with regular assessment of pupils' progress using a

good range of assessment tasks, and they are used effectively to support the progress of individual pupils.

135. The department is firmly organised as part of the humanities faculty. Leadership is good. There is a well-defined sense of direction and the department is well organised with an energetic, well qualified and experienced staff, and a shared commitment to succeed. Accommodation is very good; it is new, bright and is enhanced with good displays of pupils' work that provide a departmental identity. Audiovisual resources are difficult to use as there are no blackout facilities. The quality and quantity of resources are good. The department has a committed and hard working staff and, with vision and rigorous implementation of policies, can succeed in raising standards still further in the future.

LEISURE AND TOURISM GNVQ

136. Pupils can opt to take the General National Vocational Qualification in leisure and tourism to Foundation Level in Years 10 and 11 and to Intermediate Level in Year 12. Pupils make good progress as they work through the course, responding positively to the good quality of teaching, although standards in Year 11 fall a little below course expectations. Teachers are well prepared and organised and quickly establish a good working atmosphere. Lessons are well planned as part of a sequence with well-structured and relevant activities. Explanations are clear and pupils know exactly what is expected of them. In one lesson, pupils in Year 10 were producing a publicity poster for a leisure activity for which they had already produced a publicity brochure. They made good use of previous learning in the design of the poster and the teacher worked hard to support and encourage their use of appropriate skills, ensuring that the pupils made good progress.
137. Pupils are well motivated and are keen to produce worthwhile work. A significant majority work independently of the teacher and have the confidence to ask for support when they feel they need advice. The course is well organised and there is a clear and well-written handbook. The scheme of work is clearly structured and thoroughly thought out. Procedures for assessment are effective.

HISTORY

138. Teachers assessed their pupils as being well above the national average by the end of Year 9 in 2000. A higher proportion of both boys and girls than usually seen reached the highest standards. In 2000 the proportion of pupils gaining GCSE A* to C grades was above the national average. Boys performed particularly well; the percentage of boys gaining grades A* to C was well above the boys' national average and a larger proportion of boys than girls gained grades A* to C. The percentage of pupils gaining A and A* grades was, however, below average.
139. By the age of 14, pupils' attainment overall is above that expected nationally. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 grasp the causes of past events and explain successfully the reasons for actions taken by people in the past. They use a range of sources well to explain and describe the past. Pupils in Year 7, for instance, used a replica version of the Bayeux Tapestry to tell the story of the events of 1066. Work by the highest attainers shows good understanding of the motives of people in the past and an appreciation that many people in the past had different views and values from those of people today. Most pupils use the Internet successfully for independent research, although some, especially the lower attainers, tend to simply print out information and include it in their topics, rather than make good use of what they find. The higher attainers write well at length, producing extended pieces of writing of above average quality.
140. By the age of 16, pupils reach an overall standard that is in line with the national average. Pupils taking GCSE have good knowledge and understanding of their work. Pupils in Year 11 understood the origins and impact of the Cold War in Europe after 1945. Most explained successfully the message implied in a political cartoon of the period, although many had difficulty in assessing the reliability of the cartoon as a piece of historical evidence. Work-files from higher attainers contained good quality essays putting forward a view backed up by valid historical evidence and an understanding that events in the past usually have many and varied causes. Lower-attaining pupils in Year 10 explained satisfactorily some of the problems of the Weimar republic, but most found

distinguishing between fact and opinion in sources very difficult. For some pupils, who show sound understanding in their oral responses, low literacy levels restrict their progress and prevent them from completing the good written answers needed to do well at GCSE.

141. Pupils in the sixth form reach overall standards that are above that expected nationally. Coursework in the sixth form is of a high quality, demonstrating very effective independent research, coherent arguments substantiated by a wide range of evidence, and well-supported conclusions. Pupils in Year 13 showed good understanding of the issues surrounding the Suez Crisis of 1956 and of related aspects of the Cold War period.
142. Most pupils show interest in, and commitment to, their work. Attitudes to learning are very good. Many clearly want to achieve good standards, and work hard in order to do so. Most pupils in the GCSE examination classes rise well to the challenge of work which some find difficult. As a result, most pupils make good progress in acquiring new knowledge and understanding. Pupils listen carefully to their teachers' instructions and most concentrate well on their work. The behaviour of the vast majority is very good. A very small minority are too ready to be distracted or to distract others. When asked to work in groups, pupils do so with good cooperation and support one another well. This was seen especially in work on the Bayeux Tapestry by pupils in Year 7. Pupils with special educational needs achieve appropriate standards and make good progress at all stages. Most pupils achieve well. The gifted and talented progress well throughout.
143. The consistently effective teaching is a strength of the department. It is good overall, occasionally very good and rarely less than satisfactory. Teachers know their subject well at all levels and communicate it effectively. As a result, pupils acquire good knowledge and understanding about the past. Lessons are well planned, taking good account of the pupils' abilities, and usually proceed at a brisk pace. The very small amount of unsatisfactory teaching, taught by a temporary non-specialist, was the result of a lack of sufficient structure to enable pupils to carry out the task set adequately.
144. Teachers have appropriately high expectations of pupils and set suitable work that challenges the highest attaining pupils and allows them to work at a high standard. In a lesson on various claimants to the English throne in 1066, pupils in a top set in Year 7 were asked to suggest the skills and characteristics needed to have a good claim to be king. This gave pupils a good opportunity to consider the relative worth of the actual claimants. Whole-class discussion on the Suez crisis with Year 13 was well managed and directed by the teacher, who ensured all pupils participated and contributed. Teachers encourage pupils to use information and communication technology for research, both in class and for homework, and many pupils word-process their work to a good standard.
145. An appropriate variety of teaching methods, including individual study, work in pairs or groups and whole-class discussion, ensures that pupils have good opportunities to learn in a range of different ways. A series of slides, some taken by pupils during their school trip to the World War 1 battlefields and other photographs taken during the war, was used well to deepen pupils' appreciation of the conditions in the trenches. Pupils who had been on the visit were asked to explain their pictures and, if possible, describe their feelings about what they had seen. The creation by pupils in Year 9 of boxes containing artefacts and other items related to the First World War period has stimulated considerable interest and enthusiasm. Lessons are often broken into a series of short activities, interspersed with feedback sessions, in which teachers check pupils' progress. Teachers clearly expect their pupils to work hard and behave well and a firm but friendly approach results in respect and a willingness to work from the majority of pupils.
146. The subject meets the statutory teaching requirements at Key Stage 3, although there is relatively little time given to the study of British history between 1750 and 1900. The department is very well led and managed. There is a strong ethos for learning. There is a clear commitment to maintaining the attainment in public examinations, especially that of boys. The work of the department is carefully evaluated. This can be seen, in particular, in the reviewing of the schemes of work. The department makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The number and range of textbooks is very good and the department has access to

very good information and communication technology facilities within their new, attractive and stimulating accommodation. The department uses fieldwork and the local environment effectively to broaden pupils' experiences. Visitors from groups such as the Sealed Knot help to bring history to life for the pupils and do much to stimulate the interest in, and enthusiasm for, history among a great many pupils in the school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

147. No pupils were entered for the 2000 GCSE examinations. In lessons and work seen during the inspection, the attainments of 14 year-old pupils is at the level expected. This judgement reflects the teachers' assessment last summer. Pupils enter the school with varied previous experience but most pupils are familiar and confident users of the word-processing application by the age of 14. They can access the program and, when entering the text, use a variety of different fonts, employ the 'cut and paste' facility for editing and save and print their work. In order to make their document more attractive and interesting they place graphic images from the art gallery and alter the size to fit their publication. Pupils have a good understanding of a media presentation. They use the Internet well, know where to search for information and download graphics and text and place in a program of choice. Pupils have too little understanding of the use a database and their understanding of the use of information technology in its wider context is narrow; many are unable to give examples of where it might be used.
148. Pupils' attainment by the age of 16 is at the standard expected. Pupils in the Year 10 examination group have satisfactory knowledge of the communication element and use the word-processing facility with confidence. They have a clear understanding of the use of a 'slide show' presentation, incorporating downloaded images and music from the Internet well. They are aware of the differing needs of presentation for a particular audience. Pupils have a basic understanding of the use of a spreadsheet and a few explain its wider applications. Knowledge of the use of a database is unsatisfactory. Pupils with special educational make good progress and benefit from additional in-class support and are fully integrated into lessons.
149. The attainment of pupils studying the A-level information communication technology course is above average. They have a good understanding of a variety of applications and use them effectively in their individual projects about the advantages and disadvantages of the use of information and communication technology in a small business environment. This knowledge is transferred well to give clear instructions to a new user on how to use the word-processing program, the advantages of being able to design their own customised templates for invoices, letter headings, compliments slips and the value of the use of the mail-merge facility.
150. Pupils achieve well at all stages. Those with special educational needs make good progress and the most able, including those who are gifted and talented, progress soundly in Years 7 to 11 and very well in the sixth form. Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They work sensibly, behave well and co-operate fully, both with their teachers and each other. The computers are treated with respect and pupils are trusted to work without close supervision on occasions, such as lunchtimes.
151. The overall quality of teaching is good; some teaching is very good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and this is well used to demonstrate procedures, resulting in a good level of learning and progress. Teachers have good management skills and deal well with potentially disruptive pupils without confrontation. This friendly but firm approach is contributing well to pupils' progress. Lessons are well planned to meet the needs of pupils, building on their existing knowledge, and there is challenging work for the higher attainers. Teachers circulate well during sessions, keeping pupils on track, using good questioning and skilfully guiding them onto the next phase of learning. In the better lessons, there is a good sharing of work amongst pupils. This was most evident when pupils had the opportunity to display their media presentations to the rest of the group. The outcome of this was that pupils had a clear understanding of a good presentation and made the necessary adjustments to their own work to improve. The quality of learning is good at all stages.
152. The subject is well led by the head of department who has a clear view for the development of the subject and the need to further develop the use of information and communication technology across

the curriculum. Good support is provided for teachers who are less confident or competent in a planned in-service programme. The department provides well for pupils, with opportunities to use the computer facilities during the lunch break and after school contributing well to their progress. The quality of resources is good and the subject is well placed for future developments.

153. The provision for information and communication technology across the curriculum is overall satisfactory but there are strengths and weaknesses. Some good examples of word processing were seen in religious education, history and English, with pupils drafting and redrafting work. The geography department makes effective use for research and data gathering work in Years 10 and 11. A good example of the use of a media presentation was observed in a modern language lesson. Good use was seen in music, using programs to support and develop composition. Use is less effective in mathematics mainly due to a lack of hardware in their immediate area but some examples of spreadsheets were seen and the results produced in graph form. Although use within science has been restricted recently, due to temporary accommodation, examples were seen of data capture and the logging of information. Good work was observed in design and technology using a good software program but development with control technology is not as well developed due to the lack of appropriate software. Most subjects make good use of CD ROMs and the Internet for research. The use of information and communication technology in art has not been developed and is unsatisfactory. Effective use is made of a learning program for pupils with special educational needs to support progress in mathematics and literacy.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

154. The standards based on assessments by teachers of pupils aged 14 last summer and those aged 16 in the GCSE examinations in 2000 were well below the national averages. The work seen during the inspection was, however, average overall for 14 and 16 year olds and pupils in Years 7 to 9 achieve especially well. Standards in the sixth form are below average and pupils do not achieve as well as they should at that stage. Standards in the subject are, however, rising and much high quality work was seen. Most pupils are making good progress.
155. In their first three years at the school, pupils of all abilities pronounce French well and readily understand what they hear from their teachers or in recordings of French speakers. Those in Year 7 understand the rapid speech of a French child talking about a room in her home, to the point where one pupil had heard a detail that had been missed by the teacher. Speaking and writing in French during these years vary in accuracy according to the aptitude of the pupils but the work of lower ability pupils was generally better than would have been expected. A group of Year 8 pupils, one quarter of whom had special educational needs, were quick to work out the meaning of words from the knowledge they already had. These pupils spoke confidently about their preferred types of films and scored well in an informal test on the topic.
156. German is studied in Years 8 and 9 by higher attaining groups. Most of these pupils understand the language well but their speech and writing are not always as accurate as might be expected. In both foreign languages, most pupils are working at levels in line with or above national expectations by the age of 14.
157. In Years 10 and 11 pupils preparing for GCSE are achieving appropriate levels, although some pupils in German are attaining less well than might be expected. These pupils write inaccurately and do not speak fluently, although they understand the spoken language and do well in listening tests. High quality work was seen in a top Year 11 French group and the gifted and talented pupils make very good progress. Pupils in this group communicated fluently and had a very quick understanding of aspects of the spoken language that are often difficult for non-native speakers, such as long numbers. Written work by these pupils was accurate and showed evidence of original thought.
158. There are no sixth form pupils studying German. Pupils in the first year of the French A-level course are not yet speaking with the fluency that is expected but they are making sound progress in their written work and their study of literature.

159. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are mostly good and sometimes very good. Most pupils approach their work with energy and enthusiasm. A group of Year 8 pupils greatly enjoyed singing with their teacher and, at all ages below the sixth form, pupils have fun with word or number games to enhance their learning and train their memory. A small minority of pupils hinder their own learning and try to hold up the learning of others by calling out, making loud and irrelevant comments or declining to do as they are asked. Progress in the sixth form is hindered by some pupils' self-consciousness in speaking.
160. All the teaching was at least satisfactory; most of it was good and one-third very good or excellent. The best teaching stems from very good class management ensuring that all pupils are concentrating on the lesson and joining in the activities. All teachers are fluent and confident speakers of French or German; one is a native speaker of French and another is a native speaker of German. In addition, there are two language assistants who are native French or German speakers. Homework is regularly set and marked to support what has been learned in class.
161. In the best lessons, teachers use a variety of resources – computers, books, tapes, and overhead transparencies – and communicate mainly in French or German, expecting pupils to do the same. Activities include role playing, writing, reading aloud, singing, listening to tapes and playing games, so that all pupils find something to enjoy, increasing their knowledge and building their confidence. In more than one lesson, pupils were disappointed when it was time to stop. In the less successful lessons, teachers allow a minority of pupils to dominate by speaking out of turn, shouting or generally calling undue attention to themselves. Many pupils ignore this behaviour and get on with their work, but some are deterred from speaking German or French and are not making the expected progress.
162. Teachers use computers well to increase the pupils' knowledge. Good quality software supports teaching and learning in lessons and pupils use their knowledge of information technology to present their work in a variety of original ways, attractively displayed in the language classrooms. The department is strongly led; the head of department and senior staff monitor teaching. Resources are plentiful and accommodation is good. Regular testing is carried out and meticulous records kept. Staff are well qualified. There is too little classroom support, especially for newly qualified teachers teaching classes containing a majority of pupils with special educational needs. Good teaching, a commitment to improvement and a strong extra curricular programme of visits and study support are laying the foundations for a department with a major contribution to make to the academic and cultural life of this new school.

MUSIC

163. Teacher assessments of 14-year-olds in summer 2000 showed that pupils achieved well above the level expected. The results in the 2000 GCSE examination were below the national average, although the proportion who achieved the A* to G grades was similar to the national average. There was no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.
164. By the time pupils reach 14 years, their attainment is at the level expected. Pupils have good rhythmic skills, maintain a steady beat when adding percussion accompaniments and are confident when performing in groups. Pupils sing tunefully and maintain good pitch. Most have an understanding of different styles of music. They recognise instruments that are being played and use the appropriate vocabulary when describing the music, using such words as dynamics and pitch with understanding.
165. Pupils' composition skills are not as well developed as their performance skills. Many start with a low level of understanding of composition in Year 7. However, pupils progress well in the main and, by the time they reach 14 years, they have developed knowledge of primary chords and recognise the difference between a major and a minor sound. Higher attaining pupils are starting to use these effectively in their compositions that are beginning to have shape and structure but some gifted and talented pupils make more modest progress. Pupils in Year 9 use information technology programs to support composition work but this is underused in Years 7 and 8.

166. The attainment of 16-year-olds is at the level expected. Pupils have sound knowledge of the main historical developments, naming the different periods of music with understanding. They recognise the changes of instrumentation and the composers who contributed to these. Pupils perform competently on their individual instruments with confidence. Although pupils' composition skills are progressing satisfactorily, they are not as advanced as other aspects of the curriculum. This is partly because the time allocated for the subject is less than normally seen. Although considerable time is spent helping pupils to develop their skills in extra sessions during the lunch period and after school, their creative development is still below the level expected. These additional sessions make heavy demands on teachers' time and so restrict the range of extra-curricular activities that the department would like to offer to pupils. Information technology programs are used well to support work on composition.
167. The attainment of sixth form pupils is well above average. All the pupils are committed musicians and are very good instrumentalists, performing with confidence to a high level. The most able make very good progress. They have good knowledge of historical developments; they discuss these and the contribution that composers have made. Their good harmonic knowledge is contributing well to their creative work. Pupils have composed in a variety of different styles with a clear understanding of the development and structure of a composition. Pupils make good use of information and communication technology music programs to support composition.
168. Pupils' attitudes to the subjects are good and behaviour, in the vast majority of lessons, was good. Most pupils participate well, enjoy their work and try hard. They work well, both independently and in groups. Behaviour sometimes falls below expectations and hampers progress in Years 7 to 9. Sixth formers' attitudes are exemplary and their mature approach to learning helps them progress well. The pupils with special educational needs make good progress at all stages.
169. The overall quality of teaching is good at each key stage, although one Year 8 lesson was unsatisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge and this understanding is used well to demonstrate styles of music, leading to a good level of learning. Lessons start briskly, have good pace and are well planned with a variety of activities that build well on pupils' understanding. Better lessons have clear explanations about the aim of the session together with well-defined tasks and targets to be achieved. Teachers circulate well during practical lessons giving guidance to pupils on how to improve their creative work and performance, resulting in good progress. Learning is better when extra help is available. This was most noticeable in a Year 11 group. Here the additional teacher was able to work with a small group of pupils, helping them improve their individual performance with a piano accompaniment. Teaching was less than satisfactory when the objective of the lesson and the tasks to be achieved during the session were not clearly explained to pupils. The outcome of this was that progress and learning were slow. This was also partly due to the unsatisfactory behaviour of a significant minority of pupils. Learning is good at Key Stages 3 and 4 and very good in the sixth form.
170. The head of faculty has a clear vision for the future development and with the prospect of new accommodation and additional information technology resources the subject is well placed for the future. Despite the additional time that teachers are giving to pupils to develop composition, there is a good range of extra-curricular activities. These are well supported by pupils and contribute well to their performance skills and musical development. Pupils have the opportunity to experience live music from visiting musicians. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about these occasions.

PERFORMING ARTS

(SEE ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ABOVE ON DRAMA IN PARAGRAPH 89 AND BELOW ON DANCE IN PARAGRAPH 176)

171. The standard of attainment for pupils on the GNVQ performing arts sixth form course is higher than is normally seen. Pupils perform using a variety of styles of music, performing and delivering songs to an audience with meaning and sincerity. Pupils have good instrumental skills and perform with confidence. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into lessons and make good progress.

172. The quality of teaching for the GNVQ performing arts is of a very good standard. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, use good questioning to make pupils aware of strengths and weaknesses in performances and offer suggestions on how pupils could improve their work. Teachers have a good understanding of the requirements of the course and use their knowledge well to plan appropriate individual tasks in lessons that have good pace and where pupils are fully involved in the decisions of group and individual performances. The management of the subject is very good.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

173. Teachers' assessments of 14-year-olds in summer 2000 indicated that pupils' attainments were close to the national average. The results in the GCSE examinations in 2000 were significantly below the national average. All pupils, however, achieved a pass, with boys doing better than girls. The current GCSE course is in its first year and is taught within the performing arts faculty.
174. Pupils arrive at the school with a low level of skill and narrow experiences, particularly in gymnastics and games. By the age of 14, pupils' standards remain below those expected in most aspects of the subject but most pupils achieve well, nonetheless. Pupils have a good knowledge of the large muscle groups and understand the need for a warm-up before vigorous activity. In Year 7 many pupils lack knowledge of football and have a low level of skill in passing and control of the ball. In gymnastics in Year 8, pupils do not link sequences with control and have a below-average understanding of space awareness. Their competence of a range of rolling and balancing activities is below average. In Year 9, standards in trampolining are in line with those expected as pupils link a routine together with good control. Pupils have a good understanding of safety.
175. By the age of 16, pupils' standards are in line with those expected in most activities and most achieve more highly than would be expected. The more able pupils produce written work of a high standard and presentation skills are very good. These pupils make good use of word processing skills and the Internet to enhance their presentations. In the practical aspects of the GCSE course, pupils in Year 10 have insufficient knowledge of the game of hockey and are unable to play the game with understanding. In practice they can block a tackle effectively when working with a partner and many show competent dribbling skills. In Year 11 pupils have good knowledge of how to treat a range of sports injuries and understand the circulation of blood in the body. They know the structure of the heart and its component parts.
176. In dance, pupils in Year 10 demonstrate good technique in the GCSE course and choreograph a sequence with a clear understanding. Standards are, however, no higher than those expected. Using a stimulus of still photographs, pupils were challenged to plan a sequence using their knowledge of different levels of stillness and of balance; they showed good control and timing. The quality of their work was higher than expected, taking prior attainment into account.
177. Pupils' attitudes to the subjects are excellent and their behaviour is very good overall. Pupils are enthusiastic in their lessons and many work hard. They listen intently to instructions and work co-operatively with a partner and in groups. Pupils studying on the GCSE course demonstrate a mature and responsible attitude to their work. Pupils with special educational needs are integrated into the all lessons and they make satisfactory progress. The gifted and talented pupils make good progress.
178. In Years 7 to 9 the quality of teaching was good overall. One lesson was unsatisfactory - the management of a Year 9 group was not forceful enough and pupils were off task in this fitness lesson. The concentration and poor behaviour of some pupils did not help the lesson to flow. Teaching in Years 10 and 11 was good; a little was very good. In the best lessons, planning is good and indicates appropriate objectives. Planning does not always consider specific activities or support for pupils with special educational needs. Pace to lessons is always brisk and teachers manage classes effectively. In dance lessons, teachers' expectations are high in the GCSE group. Teachers possess good subject knowledge and their relationships with pupils are a strength of their teaching. All teachers are enthusiastic and they are committed to providing a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Learning is good at all stages; pupils are very interested in their work.

179. The inter-house sports competitions provide opportunities for a large number of pupils to take part in competitive sport. School teams are successful in a range of sports and a number of individual pupils have achieved representation at regional and county level.
180. The curriculum is broad and balanced, although there is no dance taught in the school in Years 7 to 9. Pupils studying on the GCSE course do not have access to a core physical education programme, which would ensure coverage of the National Curriculum programmes of study. Some units are taught at Key Stage 3 for six weeks only in each year group and this is insufficient to allow progression and consolidation of learning to take place effectively. The school has been successful in obtaining the prestigious Sportsmark award.
181. The quality of leadership in the department is very good. The head of department is hard working and committed to raising standards. Specialist teachers, including a proficient newly qualified teacher, ably support her. Assessment procedures and reports to parents are of good quality and informative and all pupils have a clear understanding of their progress. Monitoring of teaching does take place but the procedures to improve teaching are not yet finalised. Facilities have recently improved and are continuing to do so. The playing fields are poorly drained. Resources are good but the department would benefit from extending their apparatus for gymnastics.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

182. By the age of 14 the standard of pupils' work is in line with expectations. Most pupils achieve more highly than would be expected, based on their prior attainment. Many pupils have a sound basic knowledge of four world religions and use technical vocabulary confidently. They know about such topics as the founders of faiths, festivals, food, rites of passage, holy books, symbolism and denominations within Christianity. Many recall factual information and extract ideas from a variety of resources such as books, videotapes, pictures and popular songs, as seen in a Year 9 lesson on different types of suffering. Pupils also explain some of the similarities and differences between different groups within the same religion, such as the differences between the Church of England and other churches in buildings, leaders and worship, as seen in a Year 8 lesson. Pupils have difficulty in talking about their own beliefs and values and sometimes they confuse beliefs and practices in different religions. In Years 7 to 9 pupils with special educational needs progress well and acquire satisfactory levels of knowledge and understanding, but they often have difficulty in expressing their ideas in writing. Higher attaining pupils produce some written work of high quality and generally presentation is good.
183. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about standards of 16-year-olds. The content of the Year 10 programme of study, leading to a newly introduced short course GCSE, is very appropriate and follows smoothly from the Key Stage 3 programme. Pupils are studying religious and moral issues such as the nature of good and evil, the problem of suffering, the value of the individual, family, marriage, racism and war and the Christian responses to these. Non-GCSE pupils also study similar topics. No religious education is offered in Year 11 and currently a more slender programme is offered in the sixth form. From the end of Year 10, the school does not meet statutory requirements for the subject, as set out in the Berkshire Agreed Syllabus, 2000. The progress of pupils in Years 10 and 11 is diminished by insufficient time and by lessons being within a personal and social education carousel framework that fragments the work.
184. The attitude of most pupils to learning is good. Pupils generally listen to the teacher and to each other. Many show their interest by concentrating on tasks and working co-operatively in groups. Stimulating learning resources, challenging questions and tasks are effective in rousing pupils' interest, as seen in a Year 9 lesson on Buddhism where video material and pictures provoked pupils' interest and strong emotions at the squalid living conditions resulting in human misery. Learning takes place in an orderly atmosphere that is conducive to work and many pupils are keen to do well.
185. The teaching is all at least good and much is very good. Teachers have a very secure knowledge of their subject, plan their lessons effectively and expect pupils to behave well and work hard. A variety of methods was used to stimulate pupils' interest and extend their understanding, such as questioning, discussion of concepts and symbols, story-telling, playing a videotape, encouraging

pupils to work in pairs and share experiences. In a Year 7 lesson, pupils successfully worked in small groups, recounted happy and sad experiences and shared ideas with their peers as a way of gaining insight into how Siddattha's experiences affected him. A low attaining group of Year 9 pupils was successfully encouraged to spend 10 minutes in contemplation when studying Buddhism. Most lessons move at a brisk pace and contain appropriate tasks. Time was often well used, except in one lesson where there were several minor interruptions, which the teacher resolved in a quiet and effective way. Teachers have a good rapport with many pupils; they create a positive learning environment and try to raise pupils' self-esteem. Homework is a purposeful activity and is carefully marked, with helpful comments added. Assessment data is used effectively in the planning and evaluation of learning. Teachers encourage pupils to use information technology and some good examples of word processing were seen. All pupils have opportunities to practise and develop their literacy skills.

186. The head of department gives sound academic and professional leadership. Staff show a uniform commitment to raise standards. The department provides a balanced and coherent curriculum based on the recent Berkshire Agreed Syllabus. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Classroom displays of pupils' work contribute to a stimulating environment. The ethos in the department is good and supportive of the aims of the school. The programme of visits and visitors needs to be developed further to include a wider range of religions to enhance pupils' understanding of minority religions and cultures in British society. The allocation of time and the arrangements for the teaching of the subject in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form need to be improved.