

INSPECTION REPORT

THE CAUSEWAY SCHOOL

Eastbourne

LEA area: East Sussex

Unique reference number: 131669

Headteacher: Peter Barton

Reporting inspector: Clare Gillies
20597

Dates of inspection: 11 to 14 June 2001

Inspection number: 230044

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of students:	11 to 14 years
Gender of students:	Mixed
School address:	Larkspur Drive Langney Eastbourne East Sussex
Postcode:	BN23 8EJ
Telephone number:	01323 465700
Fax number:	01323 740097
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Steve Thornett
Date of previous inspection:	N/A

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20597	Clare Gillies	<i>Registered inspector</i>	Geography.	School's results and students' achievements; How well are students' taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9388	Anthony Munday	<i>Lay inspector</i>	Personal, social and health education.	Students' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for students? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
18950	Carmen Rodney	<i>Team inspector</i>	English.	
3643	Derek Jones	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics.	Efficiency.
20243	Derek Benstock	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science.	Staffing.
18261	Anthony Hill	<i>Team inspector</i>	Art; Special educational needs.	Equal opportunities.
20588	Ian Hodgkinson	<i>Team inspector</i>	Design and technology; Information and communication.	
10895	David Wasp	<i>Team inspector</i>	History; Religious education.	Spiritual, moral, social, and cultural aspects of the curriculum.
12110	Roger Bailess	<i>Team inspector</i>	Modern foreign languages; Spanish.	
19532	Elizabeth Charlesworth	<i>Team inspector</i>	Music.	How good are curricular and other opportunities ? Assessment.
18888	Jan Boulton	<i>Team inspector</i>	Physical education.	Accommodation and resources.

The inspection contractor was:

*Westminster Education Consultants
Old Garden House
The Lanterns
Bridge Lane
London
SW11 3AD*

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London
WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The Causeway school, planned as a new 11 to 16 comprehensive on the edge of Eastbourne, opened in September 1998 with 140 students in Year 7. Now there are 436 students in Years 7 to 9. Over the next two years the school will grow as students move into Years 10 and 11. By September 2002, close to 190 students will enter Year 7. The admissions number has therefore increased and the school has gained in popularity; there are waiting lists for all years. Over 100 students take free school meals (above average). Almost 99 per cent of the students are white. Eleven students speak English (fluently) as an additional language. Although the number of students on the register of special educational needs is above average, the number of those with statements is average. The community served by The Causeway school has a relatively high level of social need. Standards of attainment on entry have gone up since 1998 when they were below average, to average in 2000. The school shares a site with Hazel Court, a secondary school for students with severe learning difficulties. Students from Hazel Court attend selected lessons at The Causeway school and participate in some joint and extra-curricular activities. Students from both schools benefit from this arrangement - the first purpose built shared site of its kind in the United Kingdom. Both schools have very good accommodation although The Causeway school is far from finished.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The Causeway school is a good and effective school. Progress and achievement are good overall. Below average standards in Year 9, notably in English, mathematics and science, reflect these students' attainment on entry to the school. In several other subjects standards are average. In Year 8 standards are higher. Teaching is good. Leadership and management are also good. The school receives an above average income per student but this, and all other factors, have to be considered in the context of the unusual situation that the school is still growing in every sense; it provides good value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- Standards are above average in English, art, geography, history, Spanish and religious education in Year 8. Overall, students achieve well and make good progress.
- Teaching is good. During the inspection it was good in almost 50 per cent of lessons and very good in a further 20 per cent.
- The school supports and monitors students' personal development very well.
- Students with special educational needs and those with challenging circumstances receive very good support and guidance. The links with Hazel Court school and primary schools are valuable.
- The school guides students' social and cultural development and awareness very well.
- Governors support the development of the school well and they have a very good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. They, the headteacher and all members of staff, share a commitment to create an exciting new school which will keep improving standards and evaluating how it is doing.
- Marking and assessment in several subjects is particularly good. The four-tier curriculum* is effective in meeting the different learning needs of students.

**(Work in lessons is planned at four levels: basic, standard, higher and advanced).*

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- The measurement and control strands of the statutory ICT National Curriculum which are not met in full.
- Behaviour in a very few lessons and tutor sessions, and the lack of consistency in how teachers and senior and middle managers deal with incidents of misbehaviour.
- The 20 minute tutor time: its use and purpose.
- Parental involvement in the life of the school.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

As the school is only three years old there is no previous inspection report.

STANDARDS

Achievement describes the progress students have made since they came to the school.

No national results were available during the inspection as Year 9 students had only just done the National Curriculum tests (for which the school had set itself challenging targets).

Although present standards are average overall they are different in each year group and variations exist between subjects. Based on work seen in lessons, discussions with students and examination of their books, standards at the end of Year 9 are below average, reflecting these students' attainment on entry to the school. In Years 7 and 8 standards are higher.

Overall students learn well, so achievement is good.

The 140 Year 9 students who started when the school opened now attain below average standards in all subjects apart from geography, history, Spanish and religious education (where standards are average). These are all better standards than when they entered the school; they have made sound progress in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, information and communication technology (ICT) and music and good progress in all other subjects.

Attainment and achievement are never below average in Years 7 and 8. In Year 8 standards are above average in English, art, geography, history, Spanish and religious education; in Year 7 they are above average in art and Spanish. In both years students learn well in the majority of subjects - achievement and progress are satisfactory in mathematics, science, design and technology and ICT and good in all other subjects.

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The great majority of students enjoy coming to school and most of their lessons. They particularly appreciate and respect the high quality of the accommodation and resources. They join in activities after school with enthusiasm.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory overall but in a few classes and tutor sessions small groups of students misbehave and make it difficult for the majority to enjoy lessons and make progress. The great majority of students behave sensibly between lessons and are welcoming to visitors.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The school does a great deal to monitor how students are doing in their general development. Many outsiders contribute much and give helpful support to individual students who have problems coping with school life.
Attendance	Average. The school meticulously contacts parents on the first day a student is away. Attendance in the present academic year is significantly lower than last year.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of students:	aged 11-14 years	aged 14-16 years	aged over 16 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	N/A	N/A

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.

All teaching was satisfactory during the inspection. It was good in almost 50 per cent of lessons and very good in a further 23 per cent. It was excellent in one English lesson. Learning in lessons closely mirrored the quality of teaching. Over 50 per cent of teaching was very good in art, history and religious education. In the same subjects, plus design and technology, English, geography, Spanish, music and physical education it was good in over 70 per cent of lessons. The quality of teaching does not vary significantly between years. Teaching is satisfactory in mathematics and science. Literacy and numeracy are taught to a

satisfactory level and several subjects apart from English and mathematics contribute significantly to the development of these basic skills. The needs of all students are met well overall (by the four-tier curriculum and the most effective help given by learning support assistants).

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The four-tiers of work built into all schemes of work and lesson plans help all students to achieve at the right level. The visit to Spain in Year 7 is very worthwhile as are activities in music and sport and visits to museums and the theatre. The measurement and control strands of the statutory ICT National Curriculum are not met in full.
Provision for students with special educational needs	Very good. Subject based learning support assistants give students most effective support so they make as good progress as others.
Provision for students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good, particularly for social and cultural development. Strong features include: interesting assemblies, the content of religious education and personal and social education lessons, charity work, a good variety of visiting speakers, effective widening of students' horizons and links with Hazel Court school.
How well the school cares for its students	Good. Students are well looked after and staff know them very well. Students can easily get informal help and advice during the day. Special programmes, such as Wise Up, are particularly helpful and appreciated by the students. Regular assessments in all subjects give form tutors a good overview of students' progress.

Data about attendance at meetings suggest that the majority of parents do not respond to the school's efforts to work closely with them. For example, very few parents attended a recent meeting about changing the timing of the school day. Other evidence shows that parents could support their children's work and participation in school life more. Parents receive a newsletter every two weeks and regular information about how their children are progressing.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher is driving the growth of the school forward with energy, vision and commitment. Within the management structure a mixture of strengths and weaknesses exists, but the latter are reduced each year as more teachers, especially specialist subjects leaders, are employed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are supporting the development of the school well and they have a very good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. The sub-committees are now working effectively, so that the full governing body is concentrating on the major issues related to the last two years of the school's growth.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. A culture of self-evaluation is well established. At the end of each year all subjects review what they have achieved and how students are progressing. Reviews of most subjects were undertaken by outside advisers during the early part of 2001.
The strategic use of resources	All funds are used correctly and effectively and the principle of best value is applied well. The school spends some of its own funds to support students with special educational needs and those in particular circumstances who need extra guidance and advice.

The accommodation is very good and much of it is very attractive. As it is not yet complete, there are weaknesses, especially for physical education. The school has coped as well as possible with the growth in the student population, appointing about 12 new teachers each year.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students like school. • Students are making good progress. • The school expects students to work hard. • Teaching is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour. • Want to be better informed about how their children are getting on. • The school does not work closely enough with them.

Only thirteen parents attended the parents' evening and fewer than 20 per cent returned the questionnaire.

The inspection team confirmed all the parents' positive views and noted the very few incidents of misbehaviour. The school sends home frequent assessments about students' progress, so possibly it is the clarity or format of these that parents are referring to. Parents have a limited amount of time to talk to teachers at parents' evenings but they can always make separate appointments if they want. Parents' evenings will become easier as the number of teachers increases. Attendance at meetings suggest that the majority of parents do not respond to the school's efforts to work closely with them - very few attended a recent meeting about changing the timing of the school day.

PART B: COMMENTARY

The school has a four-tier curriculum. All schemes of work and lessons are planned at four levels: basic, standard, higher and advanced. These are linked to National Curriculum levels in Years 7 to 9 and GCSE grades in Years 10 and 11.

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

Statements about standards and attainment are related to national averages and expectations. Achievement describes the progress students make from where they started when they entered the school. Thus good achievement does not necessarily mean that standards are above average, but that students have made at least as much progress as might be expected.

By the end of Year 9 students are expected to reach at least National Curriculum Level 5 in English, mathematics and science national tests. Level 6 and above are referred to as the higher levels. Average points scores reflect attainment at all levels. As students at The Causeway school sat these tests just before the inspection no results were available. The average points score for similar tests taken at the end of Year 6 in primary school tests were examined to judge students' levels on entry.

1. Between 1998 and 2000 students entered the school with point scores in the National Curriculum assessments at age 11, which were well below average, particularly in English and mathematics. Related to schools with a similar uptake of free school meals these point scores were well below average in 1998 (the current Year 9), below average in 1999 (Year 8) and average in 2000 (Year 7). Overall, students learn well (particularly in Years 7 and 8) so their progress and achievement are good. There are no significant differences in performance between boys and girls.
2. Although present standards are average overall they are different in each year group and variations exist between subjects. Standards in lessons seen during the inspection were average in 58 per cent of lessons and above average in 18 per cent. The lowest percentage of average attainment was in Year 9 and the highest percentage of above average attainment was in Year 8. The school has noticed that Year 8 have made consistently good progress so far, so it is not surprising that this year group attained the highest percentage of above average standards observed in lessons during the inspection. Examination of students' books, which contained almost a full year's work, confirmed what was seen in lessons.
3. The 140 Year 9 students who started when the school opened now attain below average standards in all subjects apart from geography, history, Spanish and religious education (where standards are average). These are all better standards than when they entered the school; they have made satisfactory progress in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, information and communication technology (ICT) and music, and good progress in all other subjects. As shown above their attainment on entry to the school was lower than in the next two years - their Year 6 average points score for the national tests was 24.3 compared to 27.3 in the present Year 7 (2000 national 27.9).

4. Attainment and achievement are never below average in Years 7 and 8. In Year 8 standards are above average in English, art, geography, history, Spanish and religious education; in Year 7 they are above average only in art and Spanish. The seeds of improving attainment are sown in Year 7. In both years achievement and progress are satisfactory in mathematics, science, design and technology and ICT and good in all other subjects.

5. In **English** higher attaining students articulate their ideas clearly and speak with assurance. They read complex texts well (such as *Animal Farm*, *Macbeth* or an article on chemical pollution) and write convincingly (using a range of sentence structures and accurate punctuation) and use sophisticated vocabulary when analysing texts. Although all students portray characters and emotions well in drama lessons, average and lower-attaining students find it difficult to alter their speech to talk formally. Their writing contains grammatical punctuation errors, as their proof-reading skills are weak. In other subjects the quality of students' **literacy** skills is variable. In geography, history, and the occasional tutor session, teachers develop speaking and listening by well-directed discussions. The majority of subjects display key vocabulary, a few suggest ways to write clear notes and computers are used effectively for spelling and grammar checks.

6. Higher-attaining students in mathematics occasionally underachieve because they do the same work as other students and do more of the same if they finish early, rather than moving on. They do not use advanced statistical techniques and ratios to tackle problems. Lower-attaining students improve their basic number skills when they use the *Successmaker* program on the computers and other programs stimulate their thinking skills. When mathematical terms have been explained carefully, students use them confidently. Students' **numeracy** skills are secure enough to cope with work in other subjects, especially geography, history and ICT, which specifically focus on them. Students do not interpret everyday statistical data with confidence in design and technology and science but special lessons in Year 7 science are helping students to analyse data from experiments.

7. Year 9 students have a reasonable understanding of the basic concepts in all three **science** disciplines but many lack the depth of knowledge to attain high levels in tests and find it hard to adapt their understanding to unfamiliar problems. When writing up experiments they, and other younger students, do not focus enough on accuracy or detail. Students in Years 7 and 8 are making sound progress and their investigation skills are improving steadily. At an average level, most have a secure understanding and knowledge of the science they have covered. Lessons which focus on thinking skills and analysis and interpretation of numbers are certainly helping to motivate Year 7 students.

8. Students annotate their sketchbooks well in **art**, download examples and information about artists from the Internet and then write good notes. Their drawings are good, whether from observation or imagination. They understand the importance of tone and texture and experiment well. Modelled masks are well made, influenced by strong ethnic patterns or architectural gargoyles.

9. Students mostly work with reasonable precision when cutting, shaping and joining materials and ingredients in **design and technology**. Particularly in Years 7 and 8 they use a range of tools, equipment and utensils confidently to make good quality products in electronics, food, plastics and textiles. Many lack the technical skills necessary to draw good plans and drawings and they do not consistently connect and explain the links between the whole design process clearly.

10. Students have good basic skills using computers: word processing, cutting and pasting images and text between programs and communicating by email (with a Spanish partner school particularly). They work independently and sensibly. In many subjects they download information from the Internet and in art they use a digital camera and scanner to inset images on screen. They have very limited experience of other elements of **ICT** such as spreadsheets, measurement (data loggers for example) and control. These gaps should be addressed in September.

11. Standards in humanities are a strength of the school. Students have particularly good enquiry skills in **geography**, as this approach is introduced in Year 7 and developed well in later years. Their knowledge of world locations and population numbers is weak, though their map reading skills are satisfactory. They present data using a wide range of graphs and interpret statistics sensibly. They use **historical** information well and write in an effective variety of styles, to describe reasons and causes for events or to describe major developments. By the end of Year 9, most students debate spiritual and moral issues with confidence, for example on Christian responses to evil and suffering. They have a clear understanding of the basic tenets of several major world **religions**.

12. Listening to **Spanish** tapes, students pick out key details successfully. The good range of vocabulary they learn in Year 7 is reinforced by the residential trip to Spain. In the majority of lessons they mainly speak in Spanish and follow instructions in the language well. Reading and writing standards are average although higher-attaining students tackle challenging topics such as the effects of pollution.

13. Students know the basic elements of **music** but very few learn instruments - for many their performing skills do not match their composition and creative intentions, particularly when they cannot maintain a steady pulse. They regularly listen to recordings and most recognise the different groups of instruments, but few can name individual ones. Many join in extra-curricular activities which include a large vocal group, a steel band and rehearsals for a production of 'Titanic'.

14. In primary schools students have little experience of athletics, fitness activities, gymnastics and basketball, but students in Year 8 (only a minority in Year 9) prepare themselves for **physical education** lessons by exercising well and most boys and girls run with considerable stamina. In all years they lack knowledge and confidence to analyse their own and others' performance, although younger students appreciate how to transfer and modify skills as they tackle more advanced athletics.

15. In all subjects students with **special educational needs** make just as good progress as others. This is because learning support assistants are linked with individual subjects. They interpret the work helpfully, make suitable adaptations and offer practical and informed advice. The volume of work produced by these students is often impressive. They are encouraged to

achieve well and several do so in subjects where they have particular aptitude or skills. The school has no formal records of students who are **gifted** although its meticulous assessment records highlight those who have the potential to do well in individual, or several, subjects. Students **talented** in sports are well supported and encouraged.

Students' attitudes, values and personal development

16. All students have good attitudes to learning. Eighty-eight per cent of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire confirmed their children's enjoyment of school. Many conversations with students during the inspection endorsed the parents' view. In most lessons, students work steadily, although not always quietly. They listen to their teachers, and respond cheerfully to new concepts and challenges. Students confidently discuss their work and targets with visitors and they are proud of their achievements. Students in all year groups make good use of the books and computers in the school library.

17. Most students enjoy answering questions and joining discussions. They work well in groups, sharing resources and often exchange ideas vigorously. In personal, social and health education lessons seen during the inspection, students in Year 8 quickly prepared and acted scenarios on the theme of 'saying no to drugs'. In small groups in a Year 7 poetry lesson, students enthusiastically discussed and re-connected jumbled couplets.

18. Behaviour is satisfactory overall. Students are generally sensible in the open areas of the school, on the playing field and in the canteen, particularly when supervised by senior teachers. The majority of students are polite and friendly with each other and with teachers. Most students conform to the school's expectations of behaviour, and most accept sanctions as reasonable and even-handed. The number of students excluded temporarily for misbehaviour is below the average for similar schools. When students are excluded they are well supported when they return to school. A few students are currently excluded for fixed periods, and the number excluded permanently since September is very low.

19. However, most subject and tutor groups include a few students who are potentially disruptive. Where teachers are skilled in defusing potentially poor behaviour, students participate fully in lessons. Where behaviour is not managed well, disruptive students obstruct the progress of lessons and progress is held back. Inspectors observed seriously unacceptable behaviour and attitudes in only five other lessons (three in Year 9) and a few tutorial sessions during the inspection. Supply teachers had to work very hard to settle some students down to work.

20. A few parents observed that behaviour is not as good as it was when the school opened and the inspection team agree that this should be addressed before the school grows any larger. A small number of parents also expressed concern about incidents of bullying, but no bullying or aggressive behaviour was observed during the inspection. Students confirm that bullying is not generally a problem, and that members of the senior management team and teachers with tutor groups deal quickly and effectively with most incidents. Occasionally, senior managers intervene directly to mediate when conflict between students causes tensions between families.

21. The personal development of students is good. They have access to sensitive and very effective pastoral support, and they feel secure in school's happy, bustling atmosphere. They show initiative, and accept responsibility in lessons and extra-curricular activities. Some volunteer for library responsibilities. Most students are compassionate, thoughtful and respectful. They share the caring attitudes demonstrated by staff, particularly in their regard for Hazel Court students who successfully join in some lessons and activities at The Causeway school. In one lesson during the inspection, some higher attaining students spontaneously helped others who were struggling and, in another, the whole class waited kindly and patiently as a student with special educational needs hesitantly expressed his ideas. Relationships are very good between students of all ages, and are usually very good between students and adults. Only a very few students are openly disrespectful to a few teachers, especially those who are not permanent members of staff.

22. The school council is a focus for student initiatives. Each tutor group is represented by a member elected by the group, or proposed by the tutor if there are no volunteers. The council has organised the design and production of uniform blouses and sweatshirts for Years 10 and 11. Council members attend meetings enthusiastically but believe that they could have greater input into school life. Students in all year groups perform confidently, and many are involved in the musical production of Titanic. Students take exceptionally good care of the school buildings and equipment. The older parts of the building, opened three years ago, are visually as good as new.

23. Attendance is currently satisfactory, although slightly below the national average for similar schools. Attendance was significantly better than average in the academic year 1999/2000. As the school expands, the percentage of students attending regularly is decreasing. If the current trends continue, attendance will be below average in the year 2001/2002. Similarly, the numbers of fixed period exclusions and unauthorised absences are rising. The percentage of unauthorised absences is now above the average for similar schools. Most students arrive punctually for morning school. Registration periods are efficient, and most lessons at the start of the day begin promptly. Subject teachers call registers at the start of lessons, and some enquire carefully about reasons for absence.

HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?

24. All teaching was satisfactory during the inspection. It was good in almost 70 per cent of lessons, including 23 per cent when it was very good. It was excellent in one English lesson. Learning in lessons closely mirrored the quality of teaching. Over 50 per cent was very good in art, history and religious education and in these subjects, plus design and technology, English, geography, Spanish, music and physical education it was good in over 70 per cent of lessons. The quality of teaching does not vary significantly between years.

25. Teachers use their good **subject knowledge** effectively in many lessons:

- clear explanations using a number of well chosen passages to discuss writing styles in English;
- very well managed design and technology demonstrations, so that practical sessions set off at a cracking pace;
- probing and thought provoking questions in the humanities which encourage

- students to think for themselves;
- high quality demonstrations in physical education which develop students' techniques well;
- music teachers' enthusiasm and expertise being a source of inspiration for students;
- very good demonstrations of new techniques in art, so that students succeed and use them confidently;
- fluency in Spanish so students speak it most of the time in lessons.

26. English and mathematics teachers make sure that students acquire the **basic skills** of literacy and numeracy to cope with all their other subjects and they are particularly well supported by geography, history and ICT. Key words are displayed in many classrooms. The development of basic computer skills is covered well in ICT lessons although no subjects yet use spreadsheets at more than a simple level.

27. In general students are receptive to acquiring new **skills, knowledge and understanding** although they do not display great enthusiasm in science and mathematics lessons. Their **creative** effort is seen by how many of them sing in the vocal group or play in the steel band. They apply themselves diligently in art lessons and are encouraged to follow their imaginations and own ideas. They portray emotions and characters without embarrassment in drama. Many attend the design and technology clubs and it is in these that individuals have produced work of exceptionally high standards. Many students, particularly boys, mention physical education as their favourite subject and they put much **physical** effort into their lessons and practises.

28. When provided with time limits for tasks, students are extremely **productive** and keen to work at a good **pace**. In several lessons where teaching was good, students were quite clear that they had only a fixed number of minutes before they had to report back or complete rough notes. Where students miss out on learning is when they ignore the helpful comments that teachers write about their work. In geography, for example, corrections are not done and gaps remain.

29. Teachers generate the right atmosphere and convey that they have **high expectations** when they generate work which is carefully matched to students' different abilities and progress. All students are then kept busy and have a sense of achievement. The four-tier curriculum addresses this very well in many areas, particularly in English, the humanities and Spanish, but less rigorously in mathematics, science and design and technology.

30. Teachers' **planning** and the **content and methods** of delivery they use in lessons are generally good. Students usually sense whether a lesson has a clear structure and respond by concentrating well if it does. Schemes of work and lesson plans are excellent in art and very good in English, the humanities, ICT and Spanish. In these subjects non-specialist teachers cope well because they follow the helpful and clear guidance. One vital teaching skill is to ask the right questions and know how to respond to the answer. Mathematics teachers explain points well but they do not encourage discussions to emphasise and reinforce understanding. Lower-attaining students do not practise new calculations enough, but higher-attaining students sometimes do too much of the same work, unnecessarily. A further weakness is that mental mathematics is not a regular feature of lessons. When teaching is only satisfactory in

science it is because teachers do not direct well-prepared, stimulating questions and occasionally fail to focus inattentive students. In such lessons students' progress is less than it should be. Simple replies are accepted rather than the teacher following them up (to extend students' knowledge and see exactly what level of understanding they have).

31. Several teachers are skilful at knowing how to encourage students to work on their own to develop their **independent learning skills**. In physical education, students in Years 7 and 8 know how to prepare themselves for exercise because teachers stress and explain the importance of warming-up and stretching properly. Students are shown how to develop arguments in history and to be critical of their own work. In geography students have to seek answers from material provided, rather than being given them by the teacher. Teachers expect students to research and download information from the Internet and they do this successfully in many subjects. In English students are shown how to annotate texts, skim read, make notes and summarise arguments – all valuable skills.

32. Teachers have organised, collected or generated themselves many very useful and original **resources**, all of which stimulate learning:

- well-prepared task/homework and information booklets (always related to the four-tier curriculum) in geography;
- board games and popular songs in history;
- quizzes and humorous tape recordings in Spanish;
- a very good range of electronic and percussion instruments in music;
- interesting artefacts and topical reference sheets in religious education;
- exemplary displays in science;
- digital and video cameras - used most effectively in art and science;
- Additionally teachers prepare materials specifically for visits to locations in the local and wider area, so that students not only enjoy these extras to the curriculum, but they learn as well.

33. Most teachers have good and positive relationships with students and **manage** them well. Art teachers create a relaxed but industrious atmosphere by firm control which students accept, so that they all make good progress. Behaviour is managed very well in many other subjects, but teachers are not consistent in the standards they set so that a few students do become disruptive. Not all students are in the habit of listening whilst others suggest answers, and minor examples of ignored chatter were noticed in several lessons. Unsatisfactory behaviour is often generated by the way work is introduced: in several science lessons students were not always clear how practical work was to be carried out, as it was not explained slowly enough. In a few mathematics lessons a lack of clearly defined objectives confused some students. In both subjects a few students became restless.

34. The picture about **homework, marking and assessment** is mixed although it is sound overall. These have a direct impact on how well students understand the standards they achieve. Marking is meticulous in English, particularly thorough and informative in the humanities but gives too little guidance about how to improve in science. Most subjects keep detailed records of the levels students attain in homework and regular assessments; the

humanities write helpful targets for students to aim towards. Design and technology assessments do not distinguish between standards in the separate skills (which are common to them all) – so that records do not highlight which particular skills need the greatest attention.

35. Teachers encourage **‘gifted’** students. Individuals who are **‘talented’** in music, physical education, design and technology and art are usually spotted and encouraged to reach their potential, but the school has no ‘gifted and talented’ policy, therefore arrangements are somewhat ad hoc. With work written out for the four-tier curriculum, students are challenged to consider for themselves what level they should tackle - this really helps them to appreciate **their own learning needs** and clearly shows them what is required to achieve a higher standard.

36. *Successmaker* is used most effectively to develop the literacy and numeracy skills of lower-attaining students and those with **special educational needs**. Its use is incorporated into the English and mathematics’ schemes of work. Students use the programme before school and during the lunch hour and they receive helpful support from the learning support assistant, who also provides technical guidance in the computer room.

37. Individual education plans for students with statements of special educational needs are based on the annual review findings and recommendations. Targets are not always broken into small enough sections which students can understand clearly, and measure and achieve, within a manageable and encouraging amount of time. The special educational needs co-ordinator is considering setting up combined targets for several students who work in the lower-attaining groups in mathematics and English.

38. Learning support assistants are assigned to subjects and take on much responsibility, preparing materials for students on the special educational needs register. They also give ‘hands on support’ to those students, as and when needed in the classroom. This provides a very good support for learning and helps students with special educational needs to make as much progress as others. During the inspection, inspectors observed several examples of teachers and learning support assistants working well together; students make very good progress.

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

39. The curriculum is good, offering an interesting range of opportunities for all students. Statutory requirements for careers and sex and drugs education (through the personal and social education programme) are met. Because the school does not yet have its full complement of computers the control and measurement strands of the National Curriculum for ICT has not yet been taught. The time allocated to physical education is low and this does not allow for the full programme of study to be completed in depth. In the early days the school did not have any sports facilities on-site and although the situation has improved it is by no means ideal. Drama (popular with students) is taught in all years and is offered for GCSE (as is physical education).

40. One of the most innovative features is the four-tier curriculum, whereby all schemes of work lesson plans and aims include work at basic, standard, higher and advanced levels to match students' abilities and needs. These are linked to National Curriculum levels in Years 7 to 9 and GCSE grades in Years 10 and 11. For those students with special educational needs the experienced subject-based learning support assistants alter work further as required. This might just involve enlarging text for a visually impaired student or mean simplifying basic worksheets so that progress can be assured. Teachers subtly negotiate with students so that they select the right level. This approach has generated in students a healthy respect and acceptance that they all have different talents and abilities. Years 8 and 9 are split into two bands both containing the full range of abilities. Mathematics and science create teaching groups based on prior attainment within these bands, but evidence suggests that the range of ability in mathematics classes is still too wide for teaching to stretch all students to reach their full potential.

41. Since the school opened Year 7 have visited Spain for a week. As the school has grown, fewer students have chosen not to go but they have always pursued worthwhile activities. During this week in 2001, Year 8 produced their own stage show, 'Gel' and Year 9 followed a study skills course in preparation for their national tests. The Spanish trip includes a visit to archaeological remains and the Salvador Dali museum. By studying themes across several subjects students gain a more rounded view. In school, the India project embraced food, religious education, textiles, geography, ICT and music. Visitors to the school, such as a survivor of the Holocaust, give students first hand knowledge and experience of significant events. A GNVQ course in ICT was introduced in Year 9 to be taken over three years. Some lower-attaining students are finding this course quite challenging. The same course is being run for parents.

42. The range of extra-curricular activities is good, adding to the visits students make as part of the curriculum. A design and technology group won first prize in an East Sussex competition 'Designing a radio-controlled vehicle'. Towards the end of the Summer term 2001 Year 9 will stay at Blackland Farm to take part in a course to help build confidence and prepare them for their GCSE work. There are theatre visits to the Globe and local theatres as well as a joint Shakespeare festival with other Eastbourne schools. Students take part in technology competitions and this year the 'Chef of the Year' at an Eastbourne hotel was won by Year 8 and 9 students.

43. Opportunities for music making are limited, largely because there are as yet only a few instrumentalists, but there is a vocal group which students from Hazel Court attend. The Steel Band meets nearly every week and gives concerts locally. As well as an athletics club after school, there are inter-form sports competitions. The art club is used for clay work and to give help to students who have difficulty doing homework at home. Students visit the Victoria and Albert museum, the Science Museum and local galleries. The Seekers club, organised by the communications directorate leader, brings together the humanities to arrange interesting visits on Saturday mornings, for example to the Dome and to Hever Castle. The arts and technology directorate leader runs a Children's University on Saturday mornings.

44. Provision for careers education and guidance is good. Students in Year 9 have completed 'Looking Ahead' as their first introduction to careers, before choosing their subjects for GCSE. A careers adviser is attached to the school and a permanent member of staff has been appointed from September. An interesting plan exists to expand the school's careers service to offer advice to adults. Such an initiative reflects the school's determination to serve its local community well.

45. Various initiatives made by the school during the last three years are bearing fruit so that good links have been established with the local community. The County Music Service has arranged concerts in school and is keen to promote instrumental playing through the peripatetic service. 'Wise Up' for teenage girls and 'Street Wise' for teenage boys, both help students to discuss issues that concern them. The school has contacts with a local light engineering firm, the Magistrates Court and a local haulage company, each of which has organised competitions which the school has taken part in. The 'Genesis' competition, involving essay writing, is only open to Year 10 students but The Causeway school has been allowed to enter its oldest students – two have won trips to Los Angeles.

46. The school has very good links with local schools. Many ventures are undertaken with Hazel Court students, such as the joint work with artists in residence. It is intended to extend these mutual benefits next year when students following the ASDAN course in child development will work with Hazel Court students as part of their work experience.

47. Recently a citizenship project has started with West Rise Primary School. Year 6 students from several primary schools experience science, ICT and physical education lessons and bridge sessions in mathematics at The Causeway school. Liaison with other secondary and higher education institutions, to share ideas and facilities, is well established. This is particularly valuable when a teacher is the only specialist in a subject.

48. Provision for students' spiritual development is good. The school complies fully with the requirements for a daily act of collective worship. A well-planned programme of assemblies is enriched by a variety of visiting speakers and members of local religious groups. A recent training day on the spiritual dimension of school life raised teachers' awareness of this dimension of their work. Tutor time sessions rarely include reflection on spiritual or moral issues as these periods are mostly used for social and administrative purposes. Religious education makes a very powerful contribution to students' spiritual development with a clear focus on personal reflection and full discussions on values and beliefs.

49. The school also makes good provision for the students' moral development. An effective system of rewards and merits celebrates achievement. Firm but fair disciplinary procedures help students to distinguish right from wrong. Issues of bullying and drugs education are dealt with effectively and there are numerous initiatives to sustain the moral development of students, such as the charity work undertaken by the school council, including support for a school in Uganda. Teachers provide very good role models throughout the school and moral growth is further extended when students interact with those at Hazel Court school. Students' moral development is also nurtured well in lessons, notably in religious education, personal and social education, history, English, art and mathematics.

50. Provision for students' social development is very good. The active school council encourages students to take responsibility although it will need further development as the school roll increases. Other opportunities for students to take responsibility are provided through the Active Citizenship project with a local primary school. The vertical tutor group system encourages students from different year groups to mix freely. The school provides a very safe and harmonious atmosphere. Relationships between students are a particular strength and the Circle of Friends and Community Wise initiatives are important contributions to this aspect of school life.

51. In addition to residential trips, students' social skills are promoted through a very wide range of lunchtime and after school activities, including sports clubs, computer clubs, the humanities' Seekers club and the arts and technology directorate's Open University. In lessons which emphasise group work and participation, there are many opportunities for social development and for students to take personal responsibility.

52. Students' cultural development is also very good. A highly commendable programme of visits, exchanges, visitors to the school, and other activities widens students' horizons. Prominent among these is the annual Year 7 visit to Spain (including students from Hazel Court) in which 85 per cent were involved last year. This initiative provides a rich cultural and social experience for all concerned. Many students enhance their cultural development by taking part in local and national competitions, such as UK Maths Challenge, The Magistrates' Court competition, and the Genesis Young Achievers' award. Indeed, in many of these competitions, students from the school have achieved notable successes.

53. Cultural awareness is also fostered through many clubs and activities and music and drama productions. In subjects cultural development is fostered particularly well in English, Spanish and art. Students celebrate the cultural diversity of British society and that of the wider world through cross-curricular work, such as the project on India which links food technology, textiles, geography, art, religious education and music. Religious education also significantly contributes to raising students' awareness of race, religion and ethnicity issues.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?

54. The school has good systems to care for students and help them to learn in a calm, relaxed and purposeful environment. Good procedures are established for child protection and making sure students' welfare is a top priority. The school follows local authority guidelines for child protection. The senior teachers responsible for child protection are known to all staff and have received training recently. Teachers, learning support assistants and administrative assistants understand child protection issues and are trained in everyday procedures. The school handbook alerts them to signs of mental or physical abuse.

55. The school has adopted the local authority's health and safety policy, including procedures for the safety of students on site and during out of school visits. The current building works are very well isolated from the areas used by students. Very good health and safety practice is supplemented by regular risk assessments. Good supervision ensures students' safety at break times and lunchtimes. Several members of staff are qualified in first-aid, and all staff are sensitive to the needs of students, particularly those whose home situations or learning difficulties generate problems requiring focused support. The school buildings are commendably clean and well maintained, and the site is free of vandalism, graffiti, and litter.

56. Very good procedures are established for monitoring students' personal development. A very good induction programme prepares primary school children for transfer and supports them fully until settled in Year 7. Many primary school students visit the school for drama productions and concerts and use the science and computer facilities. Primary headteachers are complimentary about these contacts. Group tutors, the senior management team and subject leaders know all students individually, and develop close and friendly relationships with them. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are accessible and reassuring, and additional informal support is provided by a student care co-ordinator, a full time behaviour support worker, the school nurse and other support staff from outside the school. Students benefit from the counselling and support provided by the school and they make good progress towards their behavioural and learning targets. The teacher for students with specific learning difficulties offers a well planned and managed programme that builds effectively on support given at home.

57. Most tutor groups contain less than 25 students, drawn from all year groups. Students of all ages mix amicably and tutors make sure that new students are integrated quickly. Relationships are mostly good in the daily twenty-minute tutor group sessions, although instances of poor behaviour were seen. Tutors carefully monitor student planners, and maintain a file for each student, which records personal development and examples of best work. Students may add work or merits to these, but the school has yet to establish a system of records of achievement.

58. The use of tutor time is wide ranging and occasionally unproductive. A couple of tutors have established a programme showing the focus of each session (such as reading one day and checking planners on another) and another has organised reading a book aloud, which the majority of students find enjoyable. Other tutors let students drift aimlessly, and a few admit they are bored. Whilst some social relaxation is reasonable the use of this time should be

similar between groups and a worthwhile experience. The literacy packs introduced just before the inspection are the same for all ages and many students do not treat them seriously. No evidence was seen that tutors mark the work or make comments on what could be done better.

59. The five students from ethnic minority groups are very well integrated into the life of the school. Students with special educational needs are very well supported. Teachers (and many students) are sensitive to their particular needs. Individual education plans and any particular curriculum arrangements are circulated to all staff. An excellent range of specialist visitors give focused support as necessary. The tutorial and behaviour support services provide staff to work with students whose behaviour and learning is causing concern. On rare occasions students have successfully attended the local authority student referral unit for part of the week.

60. Systems for monitoring and promoting attendance are good. Tutors monitor group attendance, and notify directorate leaders if a student is absent without explanation, or is regularly absent. The educational welfare officer visits the school each week, and rigorously investigates prolonged absences. The computer-based registration system conforms with legal requirements, and gives the school office immediate confirmation of attendance in all tutor groups. Each morning, the office administrator telephones the homes of students who are absent from school without explanation. Full attendance by individual students, in a term or year, is rewarded with certificates.

61. Although procedures are good and attendance is satisfactory, further measures are necessary to achieve stability at current levels. Directorate leaders are responsible for mixed-age tutor groups, and do not monitor attendance by year group. Consequently they do not know attendance levels in year groups, or if year group attendance changes significantly as students move through the school. Attendance targets are not set for tutor groups.

62. A good, brief policy for behaviour, standards and discipline emphasises the importance of consistency and routines, and contains useful advice for teachers. Most teachers are adept in using praise, commendations, threats and sanctions to maintain standards of behaviour. However, a number of teachers, whose skills are otherwise satisfactory, require additional training in behaviour management. In all year groups, persistent disruption of lessons is often countered with 'time out' for one or more students: a period of isolation outside the classroom. The duration of this sanction is not detailed in the behaviour policy. Some teachers quickly invite students to return to the classroom. Others use time out as an unsupervised cooling-off period. Support from senior and middle managers is variable, and, occasionally, teachers feel students are returned to lessons too soon. Overall, the use of time out is unsatisfactory, and may reinforce disruptive behaviour.

63. Brief rules for behaviour are displayed in all classrooms. Students are aware of the 'Four C' alliteration: courtesy, consideration, care and control. They know the consequences of poor behaviour. The school functions well as a happy and orderly community. Only two students have been permanently excluded from school, both joined in Year 8. A reintegration programme, including counselling from a behavioural specialist, supports students returning

from fixed period exclusions. The few incidents of bullying are meticulously recorded, and are countered by discussion with all students involved and, where necessary, by counselling of victims and perpetrators and their families. The governors and staff have not yet agreed a policy on the use of force by staff, or a system for noting incidents of restraint of students.

64. A good personal and social education programme includes guidance on self-awareness, relationships, healthy living and related issues of smoking, alcohol use and drug use. Residential courses all include elements of guidance about self-awareness, working as a team and relationships. A specialist youth worker provides a Wise Up programme for girls and Street Wise programme for boys. Specific students in Years 8 and 9 are invited to attend and they find the course interesting and helpful. The healthy living approach is witnessed in the food offered in the canteen and the fact that students can drink water at any time during the day.

65. Arrangements for assessing students' attainment and progress are good. Every subject conducts assessments five times a year and reports National Curriculum levels. Use of the four-tier curriculum is particularly good in English, geography, history and religious education. These subjects design a wide range of interesting assessments, which are valuable, as they both test and stimulate learning. Marking is very helpful as it supports excellent targets and evaluation sheets; students know very clearly how well they are doing and what they should do to improve. In Spanish, a helpful portfolio of work illustrates the National Curriculum levels. In art, sketchbooks are well monitored and work marked to school-based levels, including students' own evaluation.

66. Teachers use assessment information well to plan and alter their schemes of work and lessons. If assessments show that changes would improve learning and progression, then units of work are shifted from one part of the year to another, or even into another year. The ICT GNVQ, being taught over three years from Year 9, will not be available in the future; some lower-attaining students have found it quite challenging. It was an interesting experiment and the school remains keen to give students a useful qualification in their computer skills. Indeed, part of the mission statement includes reference to "promoting a culture which is scientific, technological and vocational".

67. Form tutors are central to monitoring academic process and these arrangements are good. Assessment results are collated given to tutors and then form the basis of reports to parents. Tutors meet students during the school day to set targets and to discuss areas of concern. Parents are also invited to attend, in addition to the parents' meetings held in the evenings.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

68. Parents' views of the school are favourable, and are endorsed by the inspectors. At a pre-inspection meeting attended by an unrepresentative number of parents, views of the school were generally positive, and were confirmed by responses to questionnaires and by discussions with parents during the inspection.

69. In questionnaire responses, significant numbers of parents disagreed with positive statements about students' behaviour; information from the school about their children's progress; and contact with the school. The inspectors agree that behaviour is sometimes unsatisfactory, but they judge it satisfactory overall. They judge the quality of information for parents to be good overall. They agree that the partnership between parents and the school is sometimes unsatisfactory, but this is often the result of parents' indifference to school initiatives. Only 13 parents attended a recent meeting about changing the timing of the school day and a few parents do not support the school over behaviour and uniform.

70. Some parents have questioned the validity of figures produced by the school's computerised system for registering attendance. The system conforms with legal requirements, and allows office staff to respond almost instantaneously to student absences. Alleged flaws in the system are likely to be attributable to keyboard errors. Benefits to the school, and to students and parents outweigh these occasional errors, and parents' challenges to absence figures are always fully investigated.

71. The school's links with parents are satisfactory, and are beneficial to students' attainment, progress and personal development. Although many families choose not to participate in the school's work, they have good access, if required, to form tutors, subject teachers and members of the senior management team. The prospectus and year group booklets suggest how parents may support their children in school.

72. The quality of information for parents is good. Parents of primary age children are well informed about the school. A thoughtful and detailed induction programme prepares children for transfer and supports them fully until settled in Year 7. The school prospectus and the 2000 governors' annual report conform generally with legal requirements, and the prospectus contains much useful additional information for parents. A newsletter published on alternate Wednesdays is informative about events and dates, but is not visually stimulating, does not include students' work and contains only limited celebration of students' achievements and successes. Different handbooks are produced for each year group.

73. At annual consultation evenings for parents, teachers give clear information about students' progress and standards of work. Parents are also invited to participate in a target setting day for students in the autumn term. Annual subject reports to parents are good. Reports indicate strengths and weaknesses, and show clearly how achievement may be improved. Additional reports at the end of each term and half-term include subject grades and occasional comments by subject teachers and the form tutor.

74. Parents' contribution to children's learning at school and at home is satisfactory. Most parents supervise homework, sign planners, and encourage their children to conform with school rules. However, few parents respond to the school's invitations to contribute their skills to the curriculum, or to help organise extra-curricular activities. The Causeway Association, a small committee of parents and friends, organises social and fundraising events, and contributes each year to the school's budget. Recent purchases have included a CD player, scenery for a drama production, board games and numerous prizes and small items. The committee works hard for the school but does not receive support from the majority of parents. The school has not nominated a senior manager to have direct responsibility for partnership with parents. Overall, the impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is unsatisfactory.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

75. The headteacher brings a wealth of experience to his demanding role of creating and running a school simultaneously. He is driving the growth of the school forward with energy, vision and commitment and his leadership ensures the school has a clear educational direction. With the strengths outweighing the weaknesses, leadership and management are good. Particularly striking is teachers' commitment to the school and their clear enthusiasm and determination to keep improving all aspects of teaching and learning. The senior management team consists of a deputy head, a business manager and three directorate (faculty) leaders. The latter's roles are considerable as they oversee pastoral care for one-third of the students, have line management responsibility for between three and five subjects each, whole-school responsibilities and, until the school is fully staffed, they each lead a subject as well.

76. The contribution of staff with management responsibilities is satisfactory overall. As further subject leaders are appointed, the directorate leaders will have more time to line manage and evaluate all areas of students' progress. Up till now they have not managed to fulfil all these roles consistently: not visiting tutor times enough (to see what is happening), not monitoring evolving departments (such as physical education) or not checking that newly qualified teachers seek help when needed (such as science). At the moment leadership of subjects varies, from excellent in geography to less than satisfactory in physical education. This range is partly explained by the evolving nature of the teaching force, which will increase by over twenty teachers during the next two years.

77. It would have been financially impractical to have specialists in all subjects when the school opened. The governors and headteacher are fully aware of areas where a lack of expertise and stability, and difficulty filling positions, have hindered students' progress. They have coped as well as possible with all issues related to staffing. Several teachers who are relatively new to the profession, and to The Causeway, have been appointed as subject leaders in September. The senior management team makes a big effort to welcome new teachers at the beginning of each academic year. Those who are newly qualified are given much support and advice. The school encourages teachers to attend courses for their professional development.

78. The special educational needs co-ordinator has managed the development of the provision for these students very effectively over the past three years. She has developed valuable links with local authority and independent support services. The learning support co-ordinator has worked closely with the special educational needs co-ordinator, so she is well-prepared to take on the this role in September. The learning support assistants, technicians and administrative staff contribute much to the smooth running of lessons and school life.

79. A culture of self-evaluation is well established and members of the senior management team have observed many lessons (though some have observed more, and more effectively than others). At the end of last year, all subjects reviewed in great detail what they had achieved, analysed how much progress students had made and considered their next priorities. Directorate leaders pulled these observations together in a quite large document. Reviews of most subjects were also undertaken by outside advisers during the early part of

2001 and further plans were written. Now that most subjects have schemes of work in place, GCSE syllabuses have been chosen, systems for analysing attainment are in place, and the end of building works is in sight, teachers can focus on the quality of learning and how they address the few instances of poor behaviour.

80. Accommodation overall is very good but with several weaknesses. The quality and design of the building is stunning, light and airy with a large well presented, informative reception area. A pleasant and attractive courtyard in the centre provides seating for students. Hazel Court shares the reception, library, staffroom, canteen and sports facilities. Plans for wider corridors in the next building represent a notable achievement by the headteacher. Students with disabilities have access to all parts of the building because of the innovative design and the lift to the upper floor. Temporarily, the canteen and kitchen are located in portable huts so lunch arrangements are dictated by this lack of space. The quality of subject accommodation ranges from very good in English, science (large spacious well equipped laboratories) music and Spanish to unsatisfactory in ICT and physical education.

81. With just one computer room and limited machines elsewhere, the control and measurement strands of the National Curriculum for ICT have not been introduced. There is no gymnasium, the playing fields are uneven and rutted, the changing rooms are too small and the sports hall is the only specialist indoor facility and is not large enough to accommodate more than one group. These inadequate sports facilities (shared with Hazel Court) lack specialist facilities to support students with special educational needs. Limited office and storage space is a problem for many subjects, particularly physical education, geography and mathematics. None was provided in the original designs.

82. There are many very good stimulating displays (often of students' work), particularly in English, science, art and the humanities, including a variety of artefacts. When complete, the buildings under construction will rectify many of the issues raised in this report, for example the temporary dining arrangements. The headteacher, governors' site committee and site manager have worked tirelessly to improve the original building plans in order to best serve the needs of the students of both schools; their vision and determination are commendable. The attractive school library (which has 17 computers) is well used throughout the day. The librarian liaises with each subject, so the growing stock of books certainly reflects students' needs and the increasing number of new courses.

83. Overall resources are good and at least adequate in all subjects except resistant materials - the workshop lacks space and equipment to make possible quality work in a range of materials. Science and geography, particularly, have too few computers and it is difficult to take a whole class into the one ICT room because it is almost constantly in use. However, the next phase of building includes computer pods for several subjects. Teachers have produced and collected very good materials in history, English, geography, religious education and music. The latter includes stimulating ethnic materials and excellent instruments and electronic equipment. Resources for students with special educational needs are good, especially the *Successmaker* computer program and a spelling program. Many departments have scanners, digital cameras, televisions and videos, and these resources have a very positive affect on teaching and learning.

84. The governing body is committed to supporting the growth of the school and it works hard and carries out its duties well. Several governors have experience of being governors or working in other schools and they bring a good range of expertise to their deliberations. Members include for example an architect, a primary school headteacher, a local general practitioner and knowledgeable local education authority representatives. Governors are linked with subjects and a few have undertaken helpful visits. The performance management policy is well established and assessment of those teachers eligible to cross the threshold proceeded smoothly.

85. Governors debate the school development plan in detail but in future they want to have more say at an earlier stage. This document is rather long, as are some of the subject ones (a point noted by a visiting local education authority inspector). The priorities for development are well considered but the essential tasks which have to be done are not separated from more specific challenges - related to standards for example. It is admirable to link plans to the school's aims and objectives, but the impact is reduced because the numbering is different. An example of taking effective action to meet a specific target – to reduce the lunch hour and focus all extra-curricular activities after school - is reflected in the wide consultation that took place. Teachers have agreed to the new timing of the school day, which starts in September, including the arrangement whereby they will sit with students during lunch.

86. The chair of governors brings an astute awareness of the fine balance needed between the headteacher, determined to be progressive, and some members of the governing body, who wish to question and debate all his ideas at length. With the committees now discussing issues in greater detail, so that they present their findings to the full governors' meetings succinctly, the latter are more focused and effective. All financial matters go through the finance committee before going to the full governing body for a final decision. The governors' "critical" evaluation of initiatives is now better targeted at the essential big issues and related to their evolving vision of how the school will look when completed.

87. The majority of governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths (especially the benefits from the Hazel Court links) and weaknesses (dominated by the building works and the lack of parental involvement in school life) and the important issues and challenges for the next two years. They are shaping the direction of the school carefully and are pleased with their input, for example, into the school uniform and expectations for standards of behaviour. Governors understand their role in fulfilling their statutory duties and holding the school accountable for the standards achieved, therefore they receive informative analysis of progress, and feedback from monitoring of teaching. All statutory requirements are met, apart from the full ICT National Curriculum requirements (which will be in place by September).

88. The committee structure of the governing body is good and effective in maintaining control of the school's finances. The fact that building and equipping the school goes hand in hand with the growth of both staff and students has presented many problems. The outcome so far is good and reflects well on all concerned. The finance committee has policies in place which clearly and precisely set out procedures for all outgoings. Estimates of income and expenditure are in place to the year 2004, when a slight surplus is planned. The surplus at the end of the last financial year was larger than the original estimate due to the developing nature of the school.

89. The unit cost per student is above the median. Comparison with other schools as far as costs are concerned is difficult because the school is still under construction. Resources are good and class sizes not large – major contributory factors to the good teaching and learning. The very good accommodation has a positive influence on students’ attitudes to school life – many appreciate the clean and attractive state of their surroundings.

90. Funds allocated to the school for specific reasons are used appropriately. Those for special educational needs are used most effectively, the school adding to them from its own budget. It also spends wisely on well-focused guidance and advice for students in particular circumstances who need extra help to cope with school life. All this provision is very good and, as these students make good progress, this is money well spent. The deputy headteacher ensures that money allocated by governors for teaching resources is distributed to departments in line with their needs. The deployment of teachers has not been so far straightforward. Many teachers have had to teach subjects which are not their main specialism - a minor contributory factor to the lower attainment levels in Year 9. As the school grows these difficulties will ease.

91. Financial and school administration implement effectively the governors’ policies. The principles of best value are applied very well. This is a good outcome as administrative staffing changes could have interrupted the smooth financial control. Ordering and payments follow agreed procedures and are properly authorised. All the authority’s regulations are followed and school funds will be audited for the first time this year. Standards in all three years considered together are average. Students’ attitudes, the quality of education and leadership and management are good. The context of the school is unfavourable. Taking all these factors into account the school is effective and it gives good value for money.

92. The school’s aims and values are reflected well in its work. The school makes it very clear that courtesy, consideration, care and control are what all teachers, staff and students must display at all times. In general, it succeeds and it is fully aware that a few students find it difficult to behave as well as expected. It is determined to support them and to help staff to deal with them consistently and constructively (an issue in the following section).

93. It was an unusually fascinating experience for the inspectors to work in such an interesting, evolving school. They sensed the benefits generated by the shared site with Hazel Court school, the happiness many students experience being at The Causeway, saw that the school is working hard to contribute to and involve the local community and appreciated that it takes many years to establish an ethos and traditions. The school’s motto is particularly apt for a new school with a young staff: Quod Sevisti Metes - As you sow, you shall reap.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to develop the school further as it enters the last two year's of its growth, the governing body and senior management should:

- Complete the introduction of the National Curriculum for ICT by:
(*Paragraphs: 80, 81, 83 and 149-154*)
 - * checking that all plans will be in place by September;
 - * sharing good practice between teachers who have particular skills and expertise and those with less confidence;
 - * continuing to develop its use through all subjects, particularly those who have find access to computers difficult a present.

- Improve behaviour by:
(*Paragraphs: 16, 19, 20, 21, 33, 57 and 62*)
 - * making sure that all teachers deal with incidents consistently and agree expectations of standards for lessons, tutor time, assemblies and around the school;
 - * reviewing procedures for those students who are told to leave lessons because they misbehave;
 - * discussing ways of improving behaviour as a whole staff and having training about the various approaches and techniques available;
 - * sharing good practice between teachers;
 - * increasing the time that the senior management team devote to monitoring behaviour.

- Improve the use of tutor periods by:
(*Paragraphs: 57 and 58*)
 - * monitoring carefully what is happening now;
 - * deciding what the purpose of these sessions is;
 - * agreeing a pattern of what is to be done that all tutors follow;
 - * discussing with students what activities they find helpful and interesting.

- Persevere with efforts to involve parents in all aspects of school life by:
(*Paragraphs: 69, 71, 72 and 74*)
 - * reviewing the content and style of the newsletters and including more references to students' achievements and successes;
 - * following up why parents do not attend meetings.

In addition to the main areas for improvement, governors and senior management could consider including the following points for inclusion in their action plan:

School and subject development plans;

(*Paragraphs: 84, 85, 105, 114, 122, 135, 142 and 181*)

accommodation and curriculum planning in physical education;

(*Paragraphs: 178, 179 and 181-183*)

line management by the senior management team, (including tutor time and subjects)

(*Paragraphs: 58 and 76*)

and attendance.

(*Paragraphs: 23 and 61*)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed (teaching was not assessed in all lessons)	98
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and students	80

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	22	46	31	0	0	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 students

Students on the school's roll	Y7 to Y9
Number of students on the school's roll	436
Number of full-time students eligible for free school meals	116

Special educational needs	Y7 to 9
Number of students with statements of special educational needs	11
Number of students on the school's special educational needs register	99

English as an additional language	No of students
Number of students with English as an additional language	11

Student mobility in the last school year	No of students
Students who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Students who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.9
National comparative data	7.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4
National comparative data	1.1

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

Ethnic background of students

	No of students
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	4
Chinese	0
White	431
Any other minority ethnic group	0

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	7	1
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

**Qualified teachers and classes:
Y7 to Y9**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	26.7
Number of students per qualified teacher	16.3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

**Education support staff:
Y7 to Y9**

Total number of education support staff	17
Total aggregate hours worked per week	368

**Deployment of teachers:
Y7 to Y9**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	64.2%
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**Average teaching group size:
Y7 to Y9**

Key Stage 3	25.3
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Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	806409.00
Total expenditure	709572.00
Expenditure per student	2534.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	0.00
Balance carried forward to next year	96837.00

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	436
Number of questionnaires returned	81

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	35	53	10	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	46	44	9	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	15	58	19	4	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	20	63	11	2	4
The teaching is good.	35	53	7	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	30	46	21	1	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	52	30	10	7	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	37	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	27	41	22	5	5
The school is well led and managed.	37	47	7	4	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	27	56	12	1	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	51	11	0	7

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

Standards seen during the inspection, described in the subject paragraphs below, should be linked to the different attainment each year group had when students entered Year 7 (see paragraphs 1 to 3).

ENGLISH

94. In the first eighteen months after the school opened, students' attainment and achievement were affected by difficulties in recruiting and retaining specialist teachers. Consequently their English skills did not progress as much as they should. Year 9 students' attainment has improved considerably in the last year - it is now below average. Their progress and achievement have been satisfactory. Attainment in Year 7 is average and in Year 8 it is above average. Overall, students' achievement in Years 7 and 8 is good. A big drive on further raising standards includes the introduction of a number of initiatives such as spelling programmes, aspects of the National Literacy Strategy, a summer school and support classes.

95. Students listen attentively to the teachers' clear instructions and work well together in groups. Many contribute to question and answer sessions willingly. Year 8 students articulate their views clearly and speak with assurance, as seen in lessons when they read and analysed an article on chemical pollution. Although students make thoughtful contributions, they do not always express their viewpoints clearly; their answers are brief with ideas not followed up. Several Year 9 students do not alter their speech to talk formally, but their speaking and listening are markedly better in drama. They understand the importance of adapting their voice to portray a range of emotions and characters. In a Year 9 drama lesson students used clear diction and pronunciation to deliver their lines.

96. Higher-attaining students read well. They use personal research notes to understand the political, cultural and historical background of the texts they study. Students have good knowledge of *Animal Farm* and can analyse the use of persuasive language and talk about moral issues. They explained the use of 'rhetoric' and 'propaganda' when analysing how Orwell chose to describe the animal rise to power. Another example of higher-attaining students analysing their texts well was seen in Year 9 essays on *Macbeth*. Their reading and use of background information on the historical setting of the play showed a very good grasp of the themes and an ability to use sophisticated vocabulary to explain their interpretation of characters.

97. Progress in reading is good in all years as students enjoy reading aloud and derive much pleasure from volunteering to do so. They read literary and non-literary texts and use higher-order reading skills to skim and scan when identifying the gist of passages. This was well illustrated in Year 8 lessons, where students read a dense text on chemical pollution. They read the complex and unfamiliar vocabulary fairly accurately and, after close questioning, many could explain some complex terminology. Students appreciated the target audience and quickly summarised the main arguments. From Year 7, students begin to annotate texts, make notes and research authors and their works. They understand and use literary terms correctly - in a Year 7 lesson students worked on similes and metaphors before writing poems based on Clarke's 'I wanna be yours'. Students with special educational needs made good progress because they were given adapted and helpful materials. By the end of Year 9, average-

attaining students show a sound grasp of text and lower attaining students, through support and discussion, identify the key features in a text. While many average and lower-attaining students make good progress in their reading, they do not have an extensive vocabulary and their written responses are fairly basic.

98. Boys and girls enjoy creative writing and experimenting with words, particularly writing poetry. They do a wide range of writing and use the initial stages very well. They plan and structure their ideas and, therefore, most organise their writing well. Higher-attaining students' writing is good in all years: in Year 9 they make accurate notes and their writing is confident and organised. These students develop their ideas using a range of sentence structures and generally accurate spelling and punctuation. They have a sound understanding of how to adapt their writing to reflect different styles. Average and lower-attaining students express their ideas clearly and the basic structure of their sentences is correct but punctuation is not always accurate, vocabulary lacks sophistication and spelling patterns and sounds are not always recognised. Teachers must encourage these students to edit and proof-read with greater care as final pieces of work are marred by basic grammatical errors (inconsistency in capitals) and spelling errors ('stilling' for 'stealing' and 'sore' for 'saw').

99. Students have good and occasionally excellent attitudes to work. They accept responsibility for their learning and gain confidence selecting the four-tier task they want to try. Several lower attaining-students choose the standard tier, not wanting to settle for the basic one. Teachers nurture good learning because they show respect, support and care for all students; in drama they make sure that everyone has a role, however great or small.

100. Teaching is good in all years. It was excellent in one lesson and good in over three quarters - this includes one sixth which was very good. Teachers' good subject knowledge means that they give clear explanations and state explicit aims, so that students learn and make good progress. In a Year 9 lesson, the teacher used a number of passages, questions and explanations to give students a clear understanding of the features of different writing styles. Planning is very good because the schemes of work and lesson plans are clear and concise and a vast bank of teaching resources is matched to the needs of the wide ability range. All students are therefore well challenged to complete work for their level of attainment. This increases their confidence and means they control their learning when they strive to complete the higher-level tasks.

101. Lesson move fast and teachers ask good questions to hold students' interest and make them think for themselves. In the best lessons, teachers' enthusiasm and skills stimulate students to understand and to think creatively and quickly as they move from activity to activity. In a Year 8 lesson on argumentative writing, key skills and vocabulary were continuously stressed and great demands were placed on students to explain and develop their ideas, including students with significant learning difficulties (for example a speech impediment). Teachers make very good use of the learning support assistants who are fully involved in all activities. Good attention is given to developing students' evaluative skills in drama. Teachers comment well on students' class work and give guidance on how they might improve. Marking is meticulous.

102. In other subjects speaking and listening skills are often less than satisfactory. Year 9 students do not always articulate their opinions and views clearly. All students willingly take part in discussions and use technical vocabulary accurately but in Year 9 their responses are often brief. In history and geography well-directed discussions improve students' speaking and listening skills. Practically all students enjoy reading aloud and readily share their views about texts. In one successful tutor session, students read and discussed an *Adrian Mole* book. Every tutor group has a box of books but they are not used enough. Many rooms display subject specific vocabulary. Students are given glossaries and extended vocabulary in geography and in mathematics. In design and technology, students use key words to evaluate their work. They carry out research in art to gather information on artists and works of art.

103. Students use a range of appropriate writing styles across the curriculum especially in religious education, history and information and communication technology. In the latter they use a range of tools to improve their writing such as spelling and grammar checks. Students draft and re-draft their work in modern foreign languages but word patterns are not pointed out to them. They understand how to make notes and display very good annotating and note-taking skills in art and geography.

104. The school has recently appointed a literacy co-ordinator. Several subject teachers have received training and a number of initiatives are underway to improve students' literacy, for example, the summer school for incoming Year 7 students. Not all subjects have a policy and initiatives are not yet monitored and evaluated carefully. The aims of a very recent initiative, a literacy booklet to be worked through in tutor time, are not clear. As all students have the same booklet their individual literacy needs are not addressed. Students are not given any guidance, it is not a compulsory task and most tutors do not mark it.

105. The present subject leader, appointed in the second year after the school opened, is vibrant and enthusiastic with good leadership and management skills. With structures and routines in place a greater sense of direction is clear: high expectations, a shared determination to raise standards and close teamwork with clearly delegated responsibilities (from a young team new to the profession). All aspects of teaching and assessment are monitored regularly but teachers do not always receive precise and critical feedback. The development plan is lengthy, targets are not ordered and action to achieve them is not clear; a period of reflection could sharpen this document.

106. At present there are enough teachers and the newly qualified one is well supported. In September drama will be a discrete subject and planning is in place for this. The very good suited rooms have attractive displays of students' work and materials. Forward planning is good with preparations in place to introduce the GCSE course (already started in Year 9) and to incorporate the National Literacy Strategy in the schemes of work. Valuable links have been forged with primary schools, particularly to share ideas and information about developing students' literacy skills. Good use is made of ICT to develop students' reading and writing skills. The department has made great strides in the last 18 months since the new subject leader and two permanent members of staff were appointed.

MATHEMATICS

107. Standards at the end of Year 9 are below average. All students have made sound progress and their achievement is satisfactory. Standards in Years 7 and 8 are average. In all years average and lower-attaining students make at least as much progress as expected, as teaching is well matched to their abilities. In contrast, higher-attaining students could make better progress if teachers focused more on their particular needs. Often they do the same work and work at the same pace as others. For example, in Year 9 they have studied cumulative frequency in statistics but have not drawn cumulative frequency curves. They do not use sine, cosine and tangent ratios to solve problems or tackle advanced algebra. These students will have to move faster if they are going to attain the highest grades in their GCSE examinations in two years time. Several lower attainers in Year 9 do not know all the multiplication tables although they have a simple understanding of how to interpret statistics. Those students with poor attendance do not do homework regularly, so their standard of work suffers.

108. Most students get on with their work sensibly and listen well, but their concentration drops if they spend too long on tasks which exceed their concentration span. Lessons contain neither enough oral practice nor a variety of different activities. The result is a lack of interest and boredom. A significant number of students referred to this subject as low on their list of ones they enjoy. Teachers explain points well but they do not encourage discussions to emphasise and reinforce understanding. They do not always give lower-attaining students enough practice doing new calculations. In a Year 9 lesson that involved adding up twenty-five numbers, ways of tackling the calculations were mentioned too briefly for lower-attaining students to assimilate them, and no further practice was given.

109. Students with special educational needs make satisfactory progress (particularly drawing graphs in Year 8), partly because of the good help they receive from the learning support assistant. In contrast, higher-attaining students' progress is often held back - they do not need the basic tables practice observed in a Year 7 lesson, for example. When they finished early in another lesson, the extra work set was more of the same rather than the next step. Individual support for students is fragmented because each class includes a wide range of abilities and attainment levels, with the result that learning opportunities are lost. Nevertheless, Year 8 lower attainers multiply simple fractions confidently and higher attainers have a good understanding of co-ordinates and scales. Average attainers have a sound knowledge of algebra.

110. All students use the computer room for one lesson in six, which is good. The *Successmaker* program is used effectively for basic number practice for lower attaining students in Year 7. Other mathematical programs give Year 7 students good opportunities to think, for example, about the requirements for triangles to have the same area given one fixed side. The demonstration facility on the computers makes the teaching of basic key operations simple and efficient. This facility is not used enough to review briefly previous work at the start of lessons.

111. Nearly two thirds of the teaching seen was satisfactory and the remainder was good. With good subject knowledge, good planning and confidence in the direction and purpose of the session, lessons get off to a lively start. Mathematical words are introduced well and

students then use them correctly. This scenario does not happen often enough. In a lesson drawing straight-line graphs the word gradient was not used or defined rigorously, with the result that students did not learn as much as they should.

112. Not all subjects have a numeracy policy. History has one which is built into the schemes of work - a positive picture. Other subjects such as art, geography and physical education have no formal plans but they address aspects of numeracy well when needed. The mathematics staff are preparing well for the formal introduction of the National Numeracy strategy in September. Good cross-curricular references to mathematics are included in design and technology and ICT. When studying Italy in geography, students also analyse relevant statistics in their ICT lessons. In science there are special lessons to emphasise number aspects of the subject. The Year 7 strategy for handling information from experimental data is good. In geography graphs and diagrams are used frequently.

113. Both orally and in writing, students cope competently with numbers and measurement in art, design and technology, mathematics, physical education and science, but they do so with considerable confidence in history, geography and information technology. Calculators are used accurately and only when necessary in mathematics, science and geography. Spatial concepts are developed well in geography through photographs and maps, and in ICT by consideration of layout of presentations. Students make less than satisfactory sense of numbers and graphs in science. Students handle statistical information in everyday contexts well in information technology, geography and history but with less confidence in design and technology and mathematics.

114. Procedures for assessing students' attainment and progress and monitoring overall performance are good. Teachers maintain detailed records of students' levels, usually on computer, and these are updated regularly. The schemes of work are developing as the school evolves and assessment is used effectively to alter plans. The subject leader is keen and hardworking and has developed a good team spirit and a good clear educational direction. Teaching is observed but not rigorously enough. The development plan lacks priorities and contains too much detail. The majority of classes include students with too wide a range of prior attainment for teachers to realise the potential of all students. This contributes significantly to the underachievement noted, particularly by higher-attaining students. Governors and the senior management team have not debated the significance of such groups enough.

SCIENCE

115. Attainment is below average in Year 9 and average in Years 7 and 8. Overall, students make satisfactory progress in all years. The work seen in lessons and in notebooks shows that most Year 9 students have a reasonable understanding of the basic concepts in all three science disciplines, but many lack the depth of knowledge that is necessary for higher levels in National Curriculum tests. Higher-attaining Year 9 students, engaged on an interesting forensic science module, used microscopes well and displayed a sound knowledge of tests for acidity and chromatography. In the next lesson their presentations about scientific evidence were taped on video (all were enthralled by doing this) and the teacher directed pertinent, quick fire questions, so that their learning was very good.

116. Higher- and average-attaining Year 9 students skilfully analyse soil samples and show a methodical approach to investigation work. In one lesson on the same topic, however the teacher missed opportunities to question a lower-attaining group about what they had learned from the results, so that their learning was not extended. A significant number of Year 9 students find it difficult to adapt their basic knowledge to unfamiliar problems. They are also uncertain about the reliability and meaning of measurements, seen in a lesson for lower attainers where students attempted to analyse results about voltage and current tests. A few were careless using apparatus because the teacher did not describe the procedures carefully and slowly.

117. In Year 7 lessons observed, at least half the students gained a good understanding about the formation of sedimentary rocks because the teaching included an interesting range of tasks and clear objectives for the four-tiers of work. Fossils were examined and the overhead projector was used effectively but a small minority of students did not concentrate fully during lessons, so that progress was satisfactory rather than good. Average-attaining students in Year 8 have a secure understanding and knowledge of the principles in plant reproduction because they are interested (examining resources such as flowers or testing for starch) and generally listen attentively.

118. Standards of literacy are satisfactory as most students produce complete and understandable work. However, many neither write in enough detail, nor provide accurate descriptions of their experiments. The use of correct scientific terminology is developing steadily, and students' skills for presenting data are also improving. Teachers are addressing numeracy by having lessons which specifically focus on thinking skills and the analysis and interpretation of numbers. Students rarely use computers in lessons (although this should improve in September) so their standards using ICT are variable – reflecting more on their experience outside science and at home.

119. Students' scientific skills develop at a satisfactory rate, especially when the tasks they are given closely match closely their abilities. Those with special educational needs often make good progress because they receive helpful instruction and support from the learning support assistant. Many students are enthusiastic to learn and understand, and particularly interested in experimental work but they do not seek to develop their knowledge with any real determination. Behaviour is generally good and most students use equipment and apparatus carefully and sensibly and collaborate well together in groups. On a few occasions, when a minority of students are not respectful to teachers, minor disruptions are caused, which hold back progress.

120. Teaching is satisfactory overall. During the inspection it was good in more than half of the lessons and very good in one. The four science teachers have a range of expertise and qualifications, although there is no physics specialist. Teachers mostly plan their work thoroughly so that students have an interesting range of activities, including a significant amount of practical work. Expectations are high, the pace of the lessons is often brisk, and a great deal of energy and enthusiasm goes into explanations and demonstrations. All teachers are aware of the targets and learning difficulties of students with special educational needs, but for many other students, and especially higher attaining students, work is not always well enough matched to their different levels of understanding.

121. When teaching is only satisfactory it is because teachers do not direct well-prepared, stimulating questions and occasionally fail to focus inattentive students. In such lessons students' progress is less than it should be. Not all students are in the habit of listening whilst others suggest answers and simple replies are accepted rather than the teacher following them up (to extend students' knowledge and see exactly what level of understanding they have). Behaviour is managed very well in some classes, but teachers are not consistent in the standards they expect, therefore a few students do become disruptive. Students' work is marked satisfactorily but it does not give them enough guidance about what they must do to improve it.

122. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. A directorate leader with a considerable number of other responsibilities has organised the subject since the school opened. In September this role will be taken on by a young member of the team who already has plans to accelerate developments in the schemes of work, the interpretation of assessment data, the use of ICT, the focus of the subject's development plan and to improve the skills of individual teachers. Detailed records of assessments (completed at the end of each unit of study) are not always analysed to determine alterations and developments of schemes of work and lesson plans. Accommodation is exceptionally good with bright laboratories and displays which are exemplary. Resources are modern and continually being extended to match the needs of the students: portable computers, more hardware and data logging equipment is organised for September.

ART

123. Teachers' assessments and inspection evidence show that standards at the end of Year 9 are below average, but they are better in Years 7 and 8 where higher-attaining students have well above average levels. This improvement has come about because the staffing is now stable. Students enter the school having had a variable, often unsatisfactory experience of art in their primary school.

124. Students settle well in Year 7 and learn the basic skills and processes of art and design through a broad and well-planned curriculum. By the end of Year 8 they have made very good progress as they are taught very well. The knowledgeable support of the learning support assistant is of particular benefit to students with special educational needs who make the same very good progress as others. Students are given the freedom to develop work following their own imagination, and they explore a good range of processes and media in their project work. They enjoy creating unusual surfaces to their folder covers, some piercing them to create a window onto their work, others using scrunched paper to raise interesting forms to embellish the cover.

125. Students annotate sketchbooks well and write good notes on the artists they study. The excellent evaluative comments that teachers make about their work helps them to adapt and improve their work as it develops. Students download information on artists from the Internet and scan images onto the computer, although they have not yet learned to make full use of software programs which manipulate scanned images. Observational drawing is particularly well taught in Year 7. Teachers challenge students to improve their drawing skills and they learn to apply tone and texture effectively.

126. Students use their imagination well in their drawings, using, for example, the bizarre imagination of the artist Pieter Breughel to stimulate their ideas. Higher-attaining students note the influence of Breughel on more recent artists such as Gaudi and Dali. The recent trip to Barcelona has clearly had a very positive impact on students' understanding of these artists. Students in Year 8 make rapid progress modelling masks, learning the basic processes of rolling, forming and joining by watching very good demonstrations. Higher-attaining students create strong ethnic patterns on their masks, using different clays to inset the patterns. Although lower-attaining students sometimes become frustrated and dissatisfied with their masks as they over work the clay, with support, they learn to rebuild their masks and use the joining techniques they have learned; they add amusing and interesting features to create very individual masks. Some pieces of work reflect the students' study of tribal masks, others are based on their study of architectural gargoyles.

127. The quality of teaching is consistently good and it was very good in four fifths of lessons seen. Lessons get off to a brisk start with question and answer sessions to check on learning and set clear, high expectations. Teachers are very firm with students and this means lessons progress without disruption, so that all students make at least good progress. The learning support assistant knows the students well and her familiarity with the subject means that she makes a very positive contribution to teaching and learning. This is particularly noticeable for those students with special educational needs. The very good relationships help to create a relaxed, but industrious atmosphere for learning that makes lessons enjoyable and productive. Any potential disruptions are defused quickly, so that they do not interfere with the progress of other students. The large majority of students are courteous to visitors and well behaved in lessons.

128. The subject benefits from strong, well-informed and committed leadership which has established and maintained high standards and high expectations of good behaviour and application to work. Observations from close monitoring of sketchbooks and homework, combined with analysis of data from tests, are used most effectively to alter schemes of work and lesson plans (to ensure, for example, that boys and girls achieve equally well). The subject's development plan is rather long to be a helpful working document. A good relationship has been established with Hazel Court school and a few Year 9 students work jointly on a project directed by Hazel Court's artists in residence. With an even stronger teaching team organised for the next year and planned upgrading of the accommodation and resources in the future, this subject will continue to be a credit to the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

129. Standards of attainment are average in Years 7 and 8 but below average in Year 9. In Years 7 and 8 in particular, students use a range of tools, equipment and utensils confidently to make good quality products in electronics, food, plastics and textiles. They make sensible decisions about which ingredients or materials to use in food and textiles and so create tasteful and attractive items which really suit their purpose – exemplified by the Indian cuisine and the bags made by Year 8 students. Students mostly work with reasonable precision in cutting, shaping and joining materials and ingredients together.

130. There are, however, weaknesses in design work across all years. Only higher-attaining students consistently show how their thoughts and ideas are developing; other students do not

always label or annotate their plans and drawings. Students lack the technical skills to draw to a high standard by showing different views, perspectives and three dimensions. In Year 9 in particular, students do not consistently connect the different stages of their design activities, as they refer too little to their investigative work to help refine and develop their products. Years 7 and 8 make such links more clearly, although the design folders and books in resistant materials give too much emphasis to descriptions of how practical tasks were completed, rather than explanations of why and for whom they were undertaken.

131. In more recent work, students' folders show improvement in some areas of presentation, with lively sheets of large (A3) paper filled with a variety of materials in textiles, for example. Students evaluate their work well: all make good use of the key words which teachers emphasise through each project, and lower-attaining students in particular benefit from well-structured worksheets, which emphasise how evaluation of products and activities can be done.

132. The standards outlined above reflect that all students achieve satisfactorily. Progress has not been helped by factors related to the building and development of this new school. There are too few practical working areas and a shortage of equipment. Both restrict students' learning, especially for designing, making and testing products with computers and for making items in metal. These issues have diminished over time and will soon be addressed by the building of a suite of rooms.

133. Teaching and learning in lessons are good. They were at least satisfactory in all lessons seen during the inspection, good in a half, and very good in a quarter. The teaching was at its strongest when teachers set out the lessons' objectives very clearly and how activities would move the students' product designs forward. As a result of this in Year 7 textiles, most students developed an advanced understanding of the importance of a design specification, how it is derived and how it should be used. A class of Year 9 students developed a good understanding of the importance of particular foods to particular people. Practical sessions are very well managed, well timed and with good structures, which at times lead to a cracking pace. Consequently, students enjoy their lessons and behave well. They co-operate well in pairs or groups such as in mini-enterprise activities.

134. Involvement in technology clubs is good. These yield some outstanding success in competitions and also help to develop further work done in class. Teachers do not however, have consistently high expectations of the quality of students' practical and design work. Teachers' planning of some units of work is pitched at too low a level of attainment – especially with regard to creating solutions to design problems. Particularly in Year 9, teachers have a tendency to move students on to additional tasks before they have finished work to high enough standards. Higher-attaining students, in particular, are too often encouraged to produce a greater quantity rather than a better quality of work: this extra workload demanded of advanced students actually reduces the quality of their work in some cases, as they rush to complete. Students with special educational needs, on the other hand learn well; teachers are aware of the extra help they require and the subject's learning support assistant provides effective guidance and support.

135. Leadership and management are satisfactory and the exciting building plans will soon address the key weaknesses in accommodation and equipment mentioned above. The technician is not qualified to use several pieces of equipment, so the subject leader spends a

considerable amount of time preparing materials. He has also been under considerable pressure planning for future developments so that he, and his team, have not considered ways to raise students' standards of work in enough detail. Assessments of students' work do not distinguish progress in the separate skills (research, development, communication, planning, making, testing and evaluation) which should be common to all areas of the subject. Hence teachers and students are not clear about which skills are most in need of improvement. The subject leader has not had enough time to monitor the work of the department as a whole and hence to sharpen up its development plan, by introducing strategies and success criteria.

GEOGRAPHY

136. Attainment is average overall but significantly above average in Year 8. Students are particularly good at enquiry-based work and thinking for themselves, as these skills are introduced well in Year 7, developed effectively, and tested and extended in several assessments. The fact that Year 9 students did not experience this emphasis in Year 7 partly explains their attainment being relatively lower for their age. Students do not find it easy to learn facts and do not revise well, as teachers have not emphasised these skills regularly. Students' knowledge of world location and places is weak because they do not look at atlases and globes often enough and so do not always know where case studies are located. Having recently studied Mount Etna, very few knew where it or Sicily was. They have a very limited concept about population, suggesting that there are about ten times as many people in China as in Eastbourne!

137. Map reading skills are average, higher-attaining students use six-figure references accurately and most lower attaining students can use four-figure ones. Achievement is good in all years because all students have made above average progress since they entered the school. The numbers opting to study this subject for GCSE show that many of them enjoy it, particularly when lessons do not involve any writing! Most respond well to group discussions about issues; for example, analysing the causes and effects of the Kobe earthquake, or considering the reasons why weather forecasts are so important to people like pilots or supermarket managers.

138. Seven tenths of the lessons were good, including a tenth which were very good. Contributing to the good teaching is the very high quality of schemes of work and lesson plans, which means that non-specialists teach with confidence and cover the ground well. Teachers know that students work best when lessons are broken up into several different activities (short video extracts certainly keep interest alive) but in a few lessons the last ten minutes were not especially productive. In contrast, students worked up to the last minute when they had to write a summary of what they had learned in the lesson. Teachers share their own enjoyment of the subject and praise students' contributions: "I'd not thought of that but it's a good idea". Students are encouraged to be selective with the evidence they cite in discussion and written work, and to think beyond what they see. Year 8 students' responses to a video on the Kobe earthquake exemplified this: "Where will they put all the rubble they have to clear?" and "Why didn't they get foreign aid and support straight away"?

139. The subject leader has produced excellent resources, particularly booklets which contain information, work, homework and study ideas for the four-tier curriculum and offer students choices about what they might do. Teachers' questioning skills are another strength - urging

students to see links, not accepting vague answers and responding with “Why?” or “So?”. Excellent, constructive marking of homework and assessments, with comments such as “Write down reasons for your conclusions” or “Can you suggest solutions?” helps students to know their targets. Comments in books are sometimes set out under headings, for example format, causes, effects and things to do, so students know exactly what is needed to improve. Unfortunately students frequently ignore what teachers write, so gaps remain, corrections are not done and advice on improving maps and diagrams is ignored. Teachers do not follow up their comments rigorously enough.

140. Students use the Internet well, to download maps and to investigate topical issues, such as flooding in Sussex. They do much individual research and teachers are fairly astute at noting whether students have put things into their own words or just downloaded passages from the computer. Teachers make sure students write notes clearly, suggesting bullet points in Year 7, colour coding physical and human factors, and praising short concise notes in Year 8 – this is very good. Students use geographical vocabulary correctly, as they are given helpful glossaries, and teachers mainly develop understanding as needed, such as explaining ‘dehydrate’ and ‘hypothermia’ (discussing weather in Year 7), and ‘interdependence’ in Year 9 (discussing trade). Students with special educational needs use basic or simplified sheets to help them and some achieve high levels, which shows that the work is well matched to their needs (block diagrams replacing maps for example).

141. Students develop their concept of space well, using photographs and maps, although the latter are not always well labelled and scaled. Students draw bar charts and field sketches in Year 7, add pie charts in Year 8, and a variety of advanced graphs such as triangular ones and scatter diagrams in Year 9. This shows excellent progression. Occasionally points on graphs are joined when they should not be but students are encouraged to write what their graphs or data show, which is good.

142. Fieldwork is developing well and eventually all students will go out each year. The quality and range of assessment tasks is very good. The subject leader constructively uses the results to modify lesson plans and the order of topics covered each year. Many moral and cultural topics are examined, such as less developed countries, wealth distribution, trade and development, environmental issues and population distribution, but more could be made of these significant issues if lesson plans, rather than just the schemes of work, included debate about them. The subject’s development plan is too long to be really helpful. The directorate leader who organises this subject is an experienced geographer who has raised the profile of this subject most effectively since her appointment two years ago. Her leadership of the subject is excellent.

HISTORY

143. In lessons seen and in work analysed during the inspection, standards are average by the end of Year 9 and some students are attaining higher levels, particularly in Year 8. Students develop their subject knowledge and understanding quickly. They soon use historical sources well and learn to write in a variety of styles. Students in Year 8 have produced good written work on the causes of the English Civil War and in Year 9, there are some very good examples of extended writing on the development of the railways in the 19th century.

144. Students also organise historical information well, and, by the end of Year 9, higher-attaining students in particular produce structured arguments and show a clear understanding of historical techniques. There are, however, fewer opportunities for them to develop their skills in more depth through independent research. There is a commendable emphasis in all years on raising standards of literacy. As a result, lower-attaining students, and those with special educational needs make good progress. They are supported well in lessons and are provided with a wide range of materials to suit their individual needs.

145. The quality of teaching was very good in half of the lessons and good in the rest. The specialist teacher has a very sound and secure knowledge of history and gives good support to non-specialists who teach the subject for a small number of lessons. A notable feature of teaching is the way in which individual needs are catered for, and the very effective use of teacher generated resources helps students to develop their historical skills to the full. This was demonstrated well in a Year 7 lesson, during which students investigated the reasons behind the Crusades, using a board game, a popular song and an imaginative written task to stimulate their learning.

146. Lessons are planned thoroughly with clear aims and objectives, but there are few opportunities for students to reflect on their progress at the end of lessons. A variety of methods is used to promote learning, including group work, paired work and class discussion. Above all, there is very enthusiastic and lively teaching, which holds the students' interest and involves them all fully in classroom activities.

147. There are a few instances of immature behaviour and loss of concentration, but the vast majority of students clearly enjoy history lessons. They respond well to the challenges set by the teacher and are always willing to contribute fully in lessons. This was shown to very good effect in a Year 8 lesson, during which students investigated and debated the economic and political reasons for and against slavery, with considerable skill and maturity.

148. The management of the subject is very good, with a clear focus for the future. The monitoring of students' performance is rigorous and students are given very clear information on their progress by very helpful marking and target-setting. A commendable feature of assessment is the involvement of the students in commenting upon their own performance. A very worthwhile programme of visits and extra-curricular activities extends students' horizons. Display is also used very imaginatively to produce a rich visual experience as students enter the classroom. The subject makes a very strong contribution to whole-school issues, such as literacy and cross-curricular links. ICT is having an increasingly beneficial effect on the work of the department; it was used well in a Year 9 lesson on appeasement. Overall, this is a strong department with dedicated leadership and the undoubted potential to make further progress.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

149. Standards of attainment vary between years and between elements of ICT work. Year 9 standards are below expectations but those in Years 7 and 8 are in line with expectations, although with a balance of strengths and weaknesses in students' ability and competence to use different programs for different purposes. Students enter the school with a low level of

computer understanding and skills and, in comparison with other schools, a relatively low number have access to computers at home. Against this background, students have made adequate progress overall and achievement is satisfactory.

150. In all years, students have basic skills so they use computers confidently and independently, for example, locating files, searching for and exchanging information, and cutting and pasting text and images between programs and documents. In one lunch hour during the inspection students worked sensibly before the teacher arrived to offer support. This means that in several other subjects teachers set computer research homework, so that students prepare and present information in ways which improve the quality of their work. As English and mathematics use the computer room on a regular basis, much effective work is done in these subjects. Teachers insist on high standards of presentation and these are normally achieved. Students select sensible fonts and images and improve their written work by using spelling and grammar tools.

151. Students write in a range of styles to suit different audiences and readers. They use e-mail effectively, improving their modern foreign language skills for example when they write to students in a Spanish partner school. Few appreciate the value of, or understand enough about other specific programs - their knowledge of spreadsheet applications is elementary. Year 9 students are following a GNVQ course to be taken in Year 11, but the work has proved quite challenging for all but the higher-attaining students. Only a few individual students have programmed computers to control devices, because most have limited experience and understanding of how to do this. They use a digital camera and scanner to insert images into their artwork but have not yet manipulated images on the screen. Students have not used computers to measure and monitor changes in conditions or events.

152. Teaching and learning were satisfactory in three quarters of the discrete ICT lessons seen and good in the remainder. The subject leader skilfully plans units of work so that, whatever students' abilities, they all make progress. Students with special educational needs make mainly good progress, using well selected materials and programs; the learning support assistant supports these students well in Year 9. Work often links in to topics being studied in other subjects (for example interpreting statistics about Italy when they study the country in geography). Thus students appreciate how computers can help them to improve their learning and the quality of their work. Teachers mark work and portfolios thoroughly and clearly indicate students' progress, with evidence and marks drawn from a range of activities and subjects.

153. During the inspection one or two classes were not managed well, partly because of temporary staffing arrangements and because the computer room was being refurbished. Although work was well-prepared it was not introduced confidently, so students took a while to get going. When they were working at the computers and the teacher needed to address the whole class, several of them did not listen properly. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Work is assessed thoroughly, with standards linked to National Curriculum levels and students are told clearly where improvements need to be made. The subject leader has a clear vision for learning through ICT to be at the heart of future developments. She is in charge of two subjects and this, combined with staffing problems (dealt with as effectively as possible) has reduced the amount of time she has to monitor teaching. An ICT teacher has been appointed for September.

154. With effective technical support, the modern computer network functions well and students have ready access to computers when they need to use them for independent work. The statutory requirements of the National Curriculum are not met in full because students have not learned to use computers to control equipment and to measure and monitor changes in events. This is partly because subjects other than English, mathematics and ICT cannot get access to the heavily-booked single computer room. Building and resources plans show that by September several other subjects will have access to computer pods and that science and design and technology should have enough computers, hardware and equipment to teach measurement and control properly. Students use the computers in the library intensively and occasionally they are used in lessons as well.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES (Spanish)

155. By the end of Year 9 many students attain standards a little above average. Students with special educational needs reach good levels in relation to their prior attainment. However, in recent months some of these classes have been affected by changes in teachers. During the inspection the subject leader was on maternity leave and students were not always co-operative with supply teachers. Thus differences in standards exist between classes and some have significantly lower attainment than others. In Year 8 standards are above average. Achievement overall is good in all years.

156. Most students develop good listening skills by the end of Year 9. They confidently follow instructions given in Spanish and concentrate well, so that they fully understand what is going on. This good level of progress and learning happens when teachers speak Spanish for most of the lessons and always expect students to do so too. Students in a Year 8 class listened to a cassette recording and successfully picked out key details. Using a grid, they recorded at least eight details from a good speed conversation involving four people describing their morning routines and what they eat. All students achieved well on this task. Those with special educational needs benefited from carefully designed worksheets which gave them a good chance of success with extra help to understand the cassette. In Year 9, several students had difficulty following the teacher's Spanish so they lost interest. They were presented with too much new language at once, too fast.

157. Most students' speaking skills develop well. This is particularly true in Years 7 and 8 because of regular practice and plenty of opportunities for them to speak Spanish. Students know a good range of vocabulary about food and drink and they like using it – obviously drawing on the things they drank and ate on the Spanish trip! Their attitudes to oral work are good and they are not hesitant to speak. They volunteer answers because the teacher creates a positive atmosphere and makes encouraging comments. Weaknesses in accurate pronunciation and accents in Year 9 result from a lack of motivation and concentration in classes where there have recently been several changes of teacher.

158. A particular strength in many lessons is the way students develop their ability to build up longer answers in Spanish. This is because teachers use the overhead projector and visual aids effectively, such as a clock face to help students to add details to their description of

daily routines – not just what they did but also where and when they did it. Students make an effort to get their pronunciation right. Teachers insist on this by correcting errors regularly and giving the whole class opportunities to repeat in Spanish. Students very much enjoy this approach and boys participate just as well as girls.

159. Standards in reading are satisfactory. Students in Year 8 understand the key details of short passages, for example about the daily life of a Spanish boy. In Year 7 students with special educational needs understand simple questions and statements because of good planning. Teachers produce simple sentence cards that have to be matched up in the right order.

160. Written skills develop well from Year 7 and by the end of Year 9 some carefully presented, humorous and accurate work is produced. Short written sentences in Year 7, usually with accurate spelling, grow into longer passages in Year 9. Here students produce letters to pen-friends, and descriptions of their families, towns and bedrooms using the future and past tenses. A particular strength is how higher-attaining students write about a broader range of topics: environmental issues for example, using a good range of vocabulary to describe pollution and its effects.

161. Teachers present new language little by little in a carefully structured way so students master writing skills well. A good example was seen in a Year 9 lesson about the qualities young people value in a friend – quite a difficult area of language to teach. The session started with a brainstorm of new language by students, with the teacher recording their responses and presenting key phrases and questions on the overhead projector. This built up students' confidence and led to good quality written work. Key words and phrases are attractively displayed in classrooms. Students use these to check the accuracy of their writing and to develop their literacy skills.

162. There is a range of strengths in teaching: it was good in nearly three quarters of lessons, including nearly a fifth when it was very good. Teachers usually insist on good behaviour and most students respond positively and co-operate well in pairs working on Spanish dialogues. A great deal of care is taken in planning lessons to provide work that helps all students to achieve well - those with special educational needs make particularly good progress because of this. Occasionally however, when individuals are asked questions around the class students become passive and do not participate actively.

163. Most lessons contain a good variety of activities – quizzes, humorous tape recordings and mime. Students' motivation would increase still further by using videos, games and songs as well, to add more fun and enjoyment. In some lessons, Spanish is spoken at too complex a level for students to understand and they become demotivated. Overhead projector pictures and language are sometimes not clear and need to be simplified. In these classes behaviour is less good and there is some unfocused chatter, particularly by boys.

164. Visits and links with Spain make a most important contribution to learning. Year 7 spend a week in Spain (becoming very popular, over 80 per cent went in 2001). They see the relevance of what they learn and have a go at speaking, buying things in shops and

understanding what is going on around them. Students' develop their numeracy skills using Spanish currency and calculating exchange rates. In Year 9 an exchange with a Spanish school is supported by an email link which develops students' computer skills; they appreciate using them for real communication.

165. The Spanish department is very effectively led, with real commitment and enthusiasm. The scheme of work is excellent, the teaching programme extremely well managed and attainment and progress analysed carefully. Establishing consistency between teachers is being developed well. The department is now in a good position to broaden the range of its teaching activities so that students develop into still more enthusiastic Spanish speakers.

MUSIC

166. By the end of Year 9 attainment is below average, but work by younger students, who are working on several different projects, is close to the expected standards. Because some classes in Year 9 have had three teachers in as many years, their learning has been hindered and their self-esteem is low: one of the factors in their relatively lower standard of attainment. These students know the elements of music and how to use devices such as ostinato, drone and rhythmic patterns in compositions. Despite good intentions, their performances are hampered by weak musical skills: their inability to relate to a steady pulse for instance, means that ensembles sometimes break down.

167. One class is working on Protest songs. They have written words about pollution and social and family breakdown, which show genuine concern and thoughtfulness. Because they have not learnt how to match words and rhythm and have weak singing, their good intentions are not realised. By contrast a group of girls have made up and can sing a moving song about a girl leaving home although they are not able to develop this to the expected standard.

168. Year 8's Indian compositions, part of the school's India project, combine Tala and Raga to create an authentic sound. One boy with a high level of special educational need used the basic Raga to improvise an evocative melodic line. In all three years students listen to recorded music to test their ability to recognise musical features. Everyone can recognise instrumental families but only the more discerning identify individual instruments. In evaluating their own and others' work, they use technical language but not with consistent accuracy. There is no difference in the rate of progress made by students with special educational needs and their peers. A few students with exceptional musical talents have been identified.

169. Given that students arrive at The Causeway having had little opportunity to develop musical skills, their achievement is good. Many are beginning to understand the complexities of music and are working hard to develop skills which will allow them to realise their ideas. The four-tier curriculum gives a clear framework, and because students know what is expected most work hard to achieve their highest level. Because students are kept busy they have little excuse to misbehave. When they are given clear instructions they work well in groups, often at some distance from the main music room. They discuss ideas, try things out and attempt to improve their work creatively.

170. Only 20 students learn a musical instrument in school and without that extra measure of experience, groups rely heavily on the teacher to help them sort out their problems. A production of 'Titanic' is in preparation and students are keen to attend rehearsals for this. Students are equally enthusiastic about the vocal group of 100 students and the steel band, but neither of these met during the inspection, so it is not possible to comment on their quality. Thirty students from Year 9 have chosen to continue music next year, a much higher proportion than is found normally.

171. Teaching observed in class and instrumental lessons was always satisfactory. It was good in two thirds of the lessons, including one when it was very good. Teachers have good relationships with their students and know them well. Sensitive teaching nurtures their pride and self-confidence by encouraging and celebrating successes. The teachers' own enthusiasm for music leads to well-planned lively lessons with activities that allow students to do their best.

172. The four-tier curriculum is used very effectively to plan work at different levels, as well as to assess how well students are performing. This works best when the lesson objectives are broken down and presented clearly to the students. When Year 9 students came back from working in their groups, they could perform a short jazz piece and evaluate the level of work. However, in one or two lessons, planning did not state clear expectations, the lessons lacked pace and a tight schedule, with the result that several students did not put as much effort into their work as necessary and they underachieved.

173. Since the school opened the deputy head, a musician, has led the department. Under his guidance modifications were made to the music accommodation and a very good range of electronic and percussion instruments was bought. The original scheme of work is no longer being followed, as it was not designed specifically for The Causeway School. A newly qualified teacher, who does most of the teaching, is developing modules of work which are building into a good scheme. These will form the basis of lesson planning when she takes over as subject leader in September. Their impact can already be felt in the good progress students have made this year. The school works closely with the County Music Service, which is as keen as the school to see more students learning instruments. So far the take-up has been low, even though financial support is offered. The Music Service plans to give more support by being present at the new Year 7 meeting with parents. The 20 or so who do learn are also invited to audition for the East Sussex bands and orchestras.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

174. On entry to the school, students' attainment is below national expectations because they have little experience of dance, gymnastics, basketball, athletics and fitness activities. Year 8 students have made good progress and their attainment has risen to be in line with national expectations. In all years students lack confidence to analyse the performance of others and to give constructive feedback. This area of learning is being addressed by the specialist teaching but strategies are not yet sufficiently varied or rigorous. Several individual students achieve high standards in district and county competitions in gymnastics, athletics, football, hockey, swimming, badminton and basketball. The attainment of these students is well above the national average and they benefit considerably from the extra-curricular opportunities offered by the department.

175. Year 8 students warm up and stretch out effectively and understand the importance of these activities. When learning how to pace their middle distance running in Year 7, the majority of boys and girls run with plenty of stamina. They perform a standing discus throw with the correct technique and when performing the long jump boys and girls show speed and accuracy in their take off. Students in Year 8 readily transfer skills they have learnt in Year 7, when performing the triple jump for example. They modify and refine their skills in order to improve their performances. Students of higher ability show quick and accurate fielding when playing rounders and the lower-attaining students support the base players with a good understanding of fielding strategies.

176. Students in Year 9 have too little experience and knowledge of athletics and health related fitness. They do not understand how to exchange the relay baton effectively within the recognised rules. Most have good speed and stamina but their technical understanding and skill acquisition is weak. The majority cannot warm up and stretch out effectively and independently. These attainment levels are the result of their being no onsite facilities for physical education when these students were in Year 7. During Year 9 they have made satisfactory progress but their attainment remains below that expected for their age.

177. The quality of teaching overall is good and this promotes good learning in the majority of lessons. All teaching is satisfactory, nearly three quarters is good, including almost a third which is very good. Both teachers review previous work and share lesson objectives with students. This is a particularly successful strategy, which helps students of all abilities to build on their existing skills. Year 8 students for example, transferred their understanding of the long jump run up to the triple jump. All lessons include a health and fitness introduction in the form of pulse raising and stretching, and the best teaching gives students the opportunity to acquire new skills, to select and apply them and to evaluate their own work and that of others.

178. Teachers have very good subject expertise. They are able to give high quality demonstrations providing students with visual images which inspire and promote learning. Teachers often extend students physically and encourage their thinking skills by good focused questioning. In a few lessons, activities were not organised clearly so students were confused as to the intended outcomes. When evaluative tasks were set, teachers did not give students enough guidance. The department does not consistently focus on literacy skills. Key words are not always emphasised or displayed. More opportunities to use technical vocabulary would provide a good base for the theoretical aspects of the GCSE course starting in September.

179. In two lessons students were encouraged to improve their numeracy skills, estimating distances in a discus lesson and using stop watches to pace stride patterns. ICT is not yet included in department planning. Teachers make every effort to ensure the progress of all abilities of students: they divide groups into lower and higher attaining students, they use a variety of equipment, they match tasks to students' ability. These strategies ensure that all students are challenged by demanding yet achievable tasks, for example, students are not left running around the track when the majority of the group has completed the task.

180. Relationships between teachers and students are very good. Combined with the students good behaviour and enthusiasm for the subject, learning is effective. The very positive attitude of students is reflected by the numbers who have opted to take the subject at GCSE level next

year, and in the numbers who attend extra-curricular activities. The attitudes of a few boys in Year 9 are very negative. Their language is poor, they lack respect for their teachers and their lack of concentration results in low levels of knowledge and understanding.

181. At present the subject is led by a directorate leader who has responsibilities for four other subject areas and, although a physical education specialist, she does not teach the subject. Efficiency is affected by this lack of everyday, hands-on leadership, which results in the poor organisation and cohesion of the department. Planning lacks educational direction. Assessment procedures are developing to reflect the new National Curriculum levels. Recently an individual student profile has been devised which records attainment in all strands of the National Curriculum. At present students are unaware of the criteria, the levels and what they need to do to improve their performances.

182. The subject leader has not formally monitored teaching this year and the following documentation is not yet fully in place: curriculum plans showing the time allocation and programmes of study, risk assessment, assessment criteria, cue cards which support evaluative tasks and detailed schemes of work. The latter are not in a common format and lack detail, for example, in indicating possible teaching methods or highlighting opportunities to teach information technology, literacy and numeracy. A curriculum map is required urgently, so that students can see their planned activities and teachers can build on their previous experiences.

183. When the school had no facilities, teachers' time and energy was channelled into using off site provision and too few records were kept. The time allocated to physical education is too low for students to reach their full potential and there are not enough specialist facilities to raise standards. There is no gymnasium, playing fields are uneven and rutted, the very small changing rooms can only accommodate one group, the hall is shared with drama and assemblies, and the sports hall is the size of two badminton courts. These facilities are shared with the Hazel Court students and the dual use is not always clearly organised. Plans to extend these facilities in the future would have a most positive impact on learning. With good leadership there is the potential to move the department forward, to build on the new facilities and good teaching and to respond to the enthusiasm shown by the majority of students.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

184. Standards are in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus by the end of Year 9, but are higher than that for many students in Year 8. Students make good progress in religious education from the outset. Many students enter Year 7 with a limited knowledge and understanding of the subject but they soon develop a clear understanding of the basic tenets of Christianity and other major world religions. From this secure foundation, they develop their subject skills rapidly.

185. By the end of Year 9, most students are able to debate spiritual and moral issues with confidence and many also demonstrate the ability to produce extended written work on such topics. In this context some very thoughtful, mature and well-organised Year 9 extended writing was seen on the Holocaust. All students discuss and debate historical issues well and higher-attaining students in particular show considerable skills in their writing. Lower-attaining students, and those with special educational needs make good progress and their

individual needs are met well by the effective use of the learning support assistant and a wide range of learning materials.

186. Teaching was very good in three quarters of the lessons and good in the rest. The subject leader has an excellent command and knowledge of the subject and gives very effective support to the non-specialist who teaches religious education. Lessons are planned thoroughly, so that students know precisely what they are expected to do. They are also given ample opportunity to reflect on their achievements at the end of each session. Classroom organisation is very strong and there are high expectations of all students. This gives them the confidence to air their opinions and raise important issues, as was demonstrated very well in a Year 9 lesson in which all students were fully involved in discussion and written tasks on the topic of Christian responses to evil and suffering.

187. In all lessons, students are encouraged to become active learners and a brisk pace is maintained which lends an air of rigour and purpose to classroom activities. Enthusiastic teaching also adds impetus to the learning process and, as a result, there is a strong rapport in the classroom between teachers and students. Behaviour is good and nearly all students show very positive attitudes to their learning. They listen well, work hard and take part enthusiastically in class activities. This was seen to very good effect in a Year 7 lesson, during which students examined the relevance of Bible stories today through group work, using contemporary newspaper articles on moral issues.

188. The management of the department is very good and some recent staffing problems have been overcome successfully. There are rigorous and comprehensive procedures for monitoring students' progress and the involvement of the students themselves in this process is to be commended. Very strong links are being forged with local religious communities and there is a wide range of learning materials and artefacts to support students' learning. Classroom displays are used most effectively and the subject makes an excellent contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students throughout the school, particularly in the area of raising multicultural awareness. In order to build on this very positive picture, students would benefit from more opportunities to visit sites of religious interest. At present, there is limited access to the use of ICT within the department, but there are clear plans for future development in this area.