

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST AUGUSTINE'S ROMAN CATHOLIC
SCHOOL**

Scarborough, North Yorkshire.

LEA area: North Yorkshire

Unique reference number: 121714

Headteacher: Mr R. J. Cannon

Reporting inspector: Mrs V. Lynch
1475

Dates of inspection: 19th – 22nd May 2003

Inspection number: 249221

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

© Crown copyright 2003

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	11 - 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Sandybed Lane Stepney Hill Scarborough
Postcode:	Y012 5LH
Telephone number:	01723 363280
Fax number:	01723 500490
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J. Moat
Date of previous inspection:	April 2001

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1475	Val Lynch	Registered inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? How high are standards How well are pupils taught?
19743	Ann Taylor	Lay inspector	Inclusion	Attitudes, behaviour, personal development How well does the school care for its pupils and students? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
12568	Chris Morris	Team inspector	English	
30576	Peter Bannon	Team inspector	Mathematics	How well is the school led and managed?
30596	Jack Brown	Team inspector	Science	
12721	David Riddle	Team inspector	Design and technology	
18854	Malcolm McGregor	Team inspector	Art and design Information and communication technology	
8070	Joe Haves	Team inspector	Geography History	
11838	Derek Cronin	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
8329	Gillian Salter Smith	Team inspector	Physical education	
22504	Sue Jones	Team inspector	Music	How good are curricular and other opportunities?

The inspection contractor was:

TWA Inspections Ltd
102 Bath Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL53 7JX

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	10
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	19
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	21
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	23
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	25
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	31

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Augustine's school is a comprehensive school for pupils aged 11 to 16, serving the Catholic community within a 25-mile radius of Scarborough. It also accepts pupils from families of other faiths, the main requirement being a faith allegiance. With 394 pupils on roll the school is smaller than most secondary schools. Year groups are consequently small which means that the results of one or two pupils can make a significant difference to results in test and examinations. The school is oversubscribed, which is putting pressure on accommodation originally intended for 200 pupils.

When pupils join the school in Year 7 standards are above average. A higher than average proportion of pupils have achieved test results that are better than what is expected for their age. However, in the current Year 7 there is also a higher than average proportion of pupils who have not reached the expected standard in English. The proportion of pupils on the special educational needs register is average but the proportion of pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need is below average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is average. It is rare for the school to have pupils for whom English is not their home language.

Since the previous inspection the school has developed partnerships with other local schools in order to extend the opportunities it can provide for its pupils.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an improving school with significant strengths but also areas that need further work. Standards at the end of Year 9 are good. Standards at the end of Year 11 are not yet good enough but are better in Year 10. The school therefore is not yet providing satisfactory value for money. Teaching, overall, is good. Over the last two years the governors, the new headteacher and staff have focused on what they all need to do to raise academic standards while maintaining the caring Catholic ethos of the school.

What the school does well

- Pupils' attendance is good; they are enthusiastic about coming to school and the work they do.
- There are very good relationships between pupils and their teachers based on mutual respect.
- Teaching is good and is very good in art and music.
- The governing body are well informed and have a very good understanding of their role.
- The senior team has rightly prioritised the improvement of teaching and learning as the key to raising standards.
- There is a wide range of well-attended activities outside lessons.

What could be improved

- GCSE results, particularly those of higher attainers, are still not as good as they should be.
- The arrangements to support pupils with special educational needs do not provide enough opportunities for them to improve their difficulties in literacy.
- Despite the school's best efforts and a new building programme, accommodation remains unsatisfactory.
- Computers are not used effectively to support learning in subjects across the curriculum.
- In many subjects the 50-minute lesson is not long enough to achieve all that is planned.
- Best practice in marking and assessment is not consistent across subjects.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 2001. Since then, results in tests at the end of Year 9 have improved but GCSE results have deteriorated. There have been considerable changes in staffing at the school and staffing has only stabilised this year. There have been good improvements in teaching and learning, in monitoring pupils' progress and in improving the effectiveness of management. The impact of these

improvements has yet to be seen on results in Year 11. Aspects of accommodation have improved but will not be satisfactory until the building programme is completed. The governors and the headteacher are providing effective leadership to improve the school.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
GCSE examinations	C	B	D	D	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E

Standards at the end of Year 9 are above average and are better than those in similar schools. Results in English are better than those in mathematics and science. Results in national tests are improving in line with results nationally. Standards of work seen in Years 7 to 9 confirm the standards reached in national assessments. Teachers' assessments in all other subjects are above average. During their first three years at the school pupils achieve as expected.

GCSE results were below average in 2002 for the first time in the last five years. The drop was significant following a substantial improvement in 2001. Girls' results were better than boys but both were below average. Results in 2002 were particularly low in science, English literature and geography. Results in English and mathematics were also below average. Pupils are still not getting the higher grades of which they are capable, with the exception of German. Pupils do not do as well as they should on the basis of their test results at 14. Although the school anticipates that GCSE results in 2003 will be better than they were last year, data provided by the school indicate that these results will still not be as good as they should be. The work seen in Year 10 is better than the work seen in Year 11 so the actions that the school has taken, particularly in monitoring pupils' progress to identify underachievement, are beginning to have a positive impact. Standards are low in English and maths in Year 11, and in geography and ICT in both Years 10 and 11. Pupils are not yet achieving as much as they should in these subjects and in science.

The school did not reach the targets it set for test results at the end of Year 9 or for GCSE results. Results reflect the underachievement identified at the time of the previous inspection. The school predicts that this year's results will be close to their target and inspection evidence supports this.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes to learning. They particularly appreciate the benefits of being in a small school. Pupils work hard and are keen to get involved in school activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is generally good and pupils have a clear understanding of what is expected of them.
Personal development and relationships	There are very good relationships within the school. Pupils work well together and older pupils look after the younger ones well. Pupils with special educational needs grow in confidence and self-esteem.
Attendance	Attendance is good and above average. Both authorised and unauthorised absences were better than the average for secondary schools.

Pupils' attitudes and values are exceptionally positive and contribute to a very harmonious school community.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is good in all years and has improved considerably since the previous inspection. It is very good in art and music. In most other subjects, including English, mathematics and science, teaching is good. In design and technology, French and German in all years and in geography in Years 10 and 11 teaching is satisfactory. All teachers have a very good understanding of their subject and most can therefore generate enthusiasm in their pupils. This is a significant factor in ensuring that pupils are interested in their work and very often behave well and work hard in lessons. The improvement in teaching is largely due to the way teachers have improved their lesson planning. All teachers are clear about what they want pupils to achieve in a lesson. They then chose a variety of appropriate activities to help pupils learn. The best teachers use time effectively and generate a pace to learning. Very good relationships in lessons help pupils to be confident in contributing to discussions

There is good, albeit inconsistent, teaching of literacy in most subjects. Many teachers ensure that they develop pupils' literacy skills, although they do it without the benefits of a comprehensive literacy policy to guide them. The teaching of numeracy is good where it takes place and supports the work done in mathematics.

Teaching of pupils with special educational needs in subject lessons is often good. Most pupils benefit from being in smaller groups. Teachers know pupils well and can therefore target the right sort of questions and provide the right sort of support. This strategy also works in many cases for more able pupils. However, not enough work has been done to meet the need of the more able through identifying exactly what they need to be taught to reach the highest levels in GCSE examinations.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory: A good range of subjects is provided but there is a lack of vocational courses in Years 10 and 11. Extra-curricular activities are very good and a strength of the school.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Unsatisfactory: pupils benefit from good teaching in subject lessons alongside their peers but do not get enough focused help and support to overcome their difficulties in reading and spelling.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Good: the school provides very strong moral guidance. Provision for spiritual, social and cultural development is good. Opportunities for preparing pupils to live in a multicultural society have improved.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good: pupils are well known and benefit from the family feel to the school. Procedures for monitoring pupils' progress are satisfactory.

Parents are very supportive of the school and hold it in high regard. The school has a good relationship with parents. However, reports to parents about their child's progress continue to be unsatisfactory because they do not provide enough information from teachers on the progress pupils are making. The school does not meet statutory requirements to provide careers education in Year 9 and citizenship in all years. Good links with the community contribute positively to pupils' learning and the school's links with sixth form colleges, other secondary schools and partner primary schools are good. Although there is now much more checking of pupils' academic progress, tutors are not as involved as they might be in identifying underachievement and supporting pupils in their tutor groups.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good: the headteacher, with the support of his senior team and staff, has focused on the correct priorities to improve standards, while maintaining all that pupils and parents value about the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good: governors are fully involved in decisions about the future development of the school. They know what the school does well and how they want it to improve. They have a very good working relationship with the headteacher.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good: the school has focused on monitoring and improving teaching and learning and the local education authority has monitored the progress that the school has made in relation to the key issues at the previous inspection.
The strategic use of resources	Very good: the senior team and the governors' finance committee are exemplary in the way that they make decisions about expenditure.

Staffing is good. There is a good match of teachers to meet the demands of the curriculum, although in design and technology the department is a teacher short. Accommodation overall remains unsatisfactory. The quantity and quality of resources to support the curriculum are satisfactory. The school has increased the number of computers it has. The library provides a limited but very good selection of fiction books. The special educational needs team does not have enough resources to support the development of pupils' basic literacy skills.

The governors and the senior management team have had to tackle a number of staffing issues. The headteacher has wisely been very prescriptive, particularly in improving teaching. Because of this approach middle managers have not had the opportunity to develop their skills of monitoring and evaluation nor to share their best practice. The school is small and currently some members of the senior team are carrying too many responsibilities, which limits their effectiveness in some areas. Both the governors and the senior team have a good understanding of the principles of best value and apply them in their work.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils make good progress. • The school is comfortable with parents raising questions or concerns. • Teachers have high expectations of pupils. • The school helps pupils to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework that is set. • The quality of the information they get on how well their children are progressing. • The way the school works with parents.

Overall parents have a very positive view of the school. The inspection confirms many of these positive views. Although parents think that pupils make good progress, currently progress is as expected and for some higher attaining pupils it could be better. Inspectors judge the arrangements for homework to be satisfactory and in line with that seen in many secondary schools. The schools' own research suggests that there are inconsistencies in the way homework is given out. Inspectors agree with parents that the quality of information they receive about their children's progress, particularly in pupils' annual reports, is not good enough. Teachers' comments are too much about attitudes rather than what pupils can do or have achieved. A number of parents would like to see the school working even more closely with them. Inspectors found that the school is doing a lot to involve parents and that many parents respond positively and appreciate this.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. When pupils join the school at the age of 11 their test results are above average in English, mathematics and science. These good standards are maintained in Years 7 to 9 with test results at the end of Year 9 remaining above average. Over the last five years GCSE results, although good in 2001, have not been as good as they should have been, taking account of the good standards pupils had achieved by the ages of 11 and 14 years. In using national data to make comparisons it is important to note that year groups are small. This means that the results of two or three pupils can make a significant difference to results in tests and examinations.

Test results at the end of Year 9

2. Overall, test results at the end of Year 9 are above average and have been for the last three years. They are improving in line with results nationally. Results in English are better than those in maths and science. Test results, particularly in English, are also better than results in similar schools. In the past, boys' results have been above average but in 2002 their results dipped to being average. Girls' results remained above average. Higher attaining pupils did well in English and maths, but teachers' assessments indicate an underestimation of these pupils' standards in English and science. Teachers' assessments in all other subjects were above the national average, significantly so in art, French, German and information and communication technology. In French, German and information and communication technology, work seen indicates that teachers' assessments were too high in these subjects.

GCSE results at the end of Year 11

3. GCSE results were slightly below the national average in 2002 for the first time in the last five years. The drop was significant, following a substantial improvement in 2001. Results were well below those in similar schools. Although girls did better than boys, both were below the standards reached nationally. In 2001 boys did better than girls. Results in 2002 were particularly low in science, English literature and geography. Results in English and mathematics were also below average. Pupils are still not getting the higher grades that they should get in all subjects, with the exception of German. Pupils do not do as well as they should have done on the basis of their test results at the age of 14 years. The school recognises this and has acted upon it. The school anticipates that results in 2003 will be better than they were last year, but the information provided by the school indicates that results in 2003 will still not be as good as they should be. The work seen in Year 10 is better than the work seen in Year 11 so the actions that the school has taken, particularly in monitoring pupils' progress to identify underachievement, is beginning to have a positive impact.

Standards of work seen in Years 7 to 9

4. The standards of work seen in Years 7 to 9 confirm the standards reached in the national assessments at the end of Year 9. They are good in English, maths, science, art, geography and history. Standards of work seen in design and technology are satisfactory but indicate over estimation by teachers who judge standards to be good. Overall, achievement is satisfactory across the ability range. Achievement is good in science, art, geography, history, German, music and physical education. In these subjects, with the exception of German, because no pupils with special educational needs study this subject, pupils with special educational needs also make good progress. The progress of pupils experiencing difficulties

with reading, writing and spelling is too slow because there is no targeted intervention programme or an effective literacy policy. Pupils identified by the school as gifted or talented make good progress in English, art, geography, history, music and physical education. They make unsatisfactory progress in information and communication technology because of the low level of challenge in lessons. There were no apparent differences in the standards of work of boys and girls.

Standards of work seen in Years 10 and 11

5. Standards of work seen in Years 10 and 11, overall, are below what is expected nationally. However, they are better in Year 10 than they are in Year 11. Standards in both years are very high in art, French and German and pupils achieve well in these subjects, particularly those that are talented. Standards are low in English and maths in Year 11 and in geography and information and communication technology in both years. Pupils are not yet achieving as much as they should in these subjects and in science. In all these areas there have been staffing issues that have affected both staff morale and pupils' progress. Overall, pupils in Year 11 have not made enough progress. There are indications that pupils in Year 10 are achieving as well as they should. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in small groups with good teaching and achieve well in maths, science and history. They make unsatisfactory progress in geography. Higher attaining pupils make good progress in science, art, music, physical education and history in Year 10. They make unsatisfactory progress in English and information and communication technology. In Year 10, although boys underachieve in English at the end of Year 9, there are no significant differences in the work of boys and girls.

Progress made by pupils with special educational needs in relation to their targets

6. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in all years and in all subjects because they are in small groups and often experience good teaching. Many gain GCSE accreditation in a good number of subjects. They do not make enough progress in overcoming some of their difficulties with literacy because not enough time is given to this in their early years at the school. There are few resources and no accommodation for them to be withdrawn for short periods of intensive work.

Standards of literacy to support learning

7. Standards of literacy are sufficient to support learning in all subjects. In both science and maths, pupils are able to participate in good discussions and very good standards of oral work occur in history in Year 9. Pupils have the technical ability in writing to cover the syllabus requirements adequately and in geography and history produce good writing in a range of tasks. Science essays also contain evidence of good writing skills.

Standards of numeracy to support learning

8. Standards of numeracy are good in Years 7 to 9, satisfactory in Year 10 and unsatisfactory in Year 11. This is partly because Year 11 entered the school with standards only just above average, whereas later year groups were stronger. However, the main cause of the improvement for younger pupils is the sharper focus on numeracy skills in primary schools and in this school. In geography, the best Year 7 pupils can use six-figure grids accurately in map work and even the weakest are secure with four figure grids. The most able can use compass bearings well. In science, all pupils use graphs and tables effectively. Calculations are carried out accurately to inform these tables and graphs. In mathematics, younger pupils have a good

grasp of number concepts, but pupils in Year 11 are less good at mental multiplication and subtraction.

Standards in information and communication technology to support learning

9. Standards of information and communication technology are broadly average by the end of Year 9. All pupils have information and communication technology lessons in Years 7, 8 and 9 which ensure that skills in the use of a range of software develop satisfactorily and pupils confidently use the school network to support their learning. Standards are good in music because pupils make regular use of electronic keyboards to develop their compositions. In religious education, standards in presenting information are good. Although some good examples of the use of computers were seen during the inspection the development of information and communication technology to support learning across subjects of the curriculum is underdeveloped, particularly in Years 10 and 11. Those pupils who do not follow a course in information and communication technology do not have enough access to computers in lessons and therefore do not extend their skills significantly.

Achievement of targets

10. The school did not reach the targets it set for test results at the end of Year 9, particularly in English where the attainment of boys was a significant factor. These targets were appropriate based on pupils' attainment when they joined the school. The school did not achieve its statutory targets for GCSE results. These targets were also appropriate and the results reflect the underachievement identified at the time of the previous inspection. The school predicts that this year's results will be close to their target.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Pupils' attitudes are very good and they enjoy coming to school. Their behaviour is good and relationships in the school are very strong. These particular strengths of the school have been successfully maintained over the years. Pupils like their school and several of them, during conversations with inspectors, particularly mentioned its smallness and how everyone knows everyone else. When asked, they said they were happy to recommend St Augustine's to their friends.

Attitudes

12. Positive attitudes to learning were clearly demonstrated in a Year 11 English revision lesson, where attendance was voluntary but at least half of pupils had made the effort to come along. This could have been a very difficult lesson for all concerned, as the teacher had never met the pupils before. However, within minutes, the teacher's quiet and confident introduction to the lesson, analysing how poets explore feelings of difference in other cultures, inspired them to respond. They asked her to provide an example to illustrate what she meant and were then able to settle to the task, confident that they knew what they were doing. The teacher's very positive approach to these pupils and their willingness to ask questions, discuss issues and debate meant they made very good gains in their learning.
13. Pupils with special educational needs work hard and are very positive about school. Other pupils show them care and support them. Pupils who lack confidence and self-esteem are encouraged towards a more positive self-perception. In Years 10 and 11 a relatively high proportion of pupils have difficulty attending school full time but benefit from the arrangements that the school makes for them to continue their learning.

Behaviour

14. Behaviour is generally good and allows pupils to learn and teachers to teach. Pupils will behave well even when the quality of the lesson is not as good as it should be. Teachers have noticed behaviour deteriorating in recent times, particularly in relation to a small minority of pupils in Year 8. Certainly staffing difficulties have meant many changes of teachers, which has been disruptive for pupils. However, during the inspection there was no hint of any significantly poor behaviour either in class or around the school. Although Year 10 pupils were in their first week of prefect duties, younger pupils were generally doing as they were asked as prefects carried out their supervisory duties.
15. Pupils who have difficulties with behaviour benefit from being in a small school where very caring teachers know them well. Recently a further 10 per cent of pupils were identified as having behavioural issues and put on the special educational needs register. This does not match with the behaviour seen during the inspections. This would indicate that some pupils are inappropriately placed on the register. Not enough work has been done with teachers to identify strategies for dealing with incidents of unsatisfactory behaviour in lessons.
16. Oppressive or bullying kinds of behaviour are rare and pupils say that any incidents are generally handled well by senior staff. Year 11 pupils linked to Year 7 classes also help to sort out minor issues of bullying or falling out for their young charges. The numbers of pupils excluded from school remains extremely low.

Relationships

17. Relationships are very good and pupils make very significant progress in developing their social skills. Their willingness to work together in groups is especially strong, particularly in science and English. There are high levels of respect for the Catholic faith, particularly evident during assemblies and the end of term Mass.
18. Pupils contribute enthusiastically to the life of the school and community, especially in music, drama and dance. In fact, the dance group has been organised by pupils themselves. A group of girls have recently been fundraising for the trip to Lourdes by selling biscuits at break time. The school council, only recently re-started, is not yet playing a key role in helping pupils exercise their views or become involved in decision making.

Attendance

19. Attendance rates are good and above national averages. Pupils' attendance has fallen very slightly compared to last year's figures, although it still remains relatively high. The proportion of pupils absent without good reason is very low because the school is good at making sure parents write in to explain. Considering the distances some pupils have to cover, punctuality to school in the mornings is very good.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

20. Teaching is good in all years and has improved considerably since the previous inspection. The proportion of lessons that were unsatisfactory has been considerably reduced because good appointments have replaced staff who have left. The proportion of lessons that are good or better or very good or better has increased because all teachers have worked hard to improve the way they plan their lessons.
21. Teaching and learning are very good in art and music. It is good in all other subjects, including English, mathematics and science. All teachers have a very good understanding of

their subject and most can therefore engender enthusiasm in their pupils. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good. These two features are significant in ensuring that pupils are interested in their work, behave well and work hard in lessons.

22. A format for planning lessons has been introduced across the school that requires teachers to think about pupils' different abilities and plan activities for them all. This is working better for pupils with special educational needs than it is for higher attainers. Pupils with special educational needs are often taught subjects in small groups and this, together with teachers' knowledge about these pupils, means that they provide very effective support and encouragement. In mathematics, teachers benefit from the interest and expertise of one of their colleagues who has worked on planning for these particular pupils. Where pupil support assistants or special educational needs teachers work with pupils, their support is effective. Planning for higher attaining pupils often involves further activities that only they might do. In 50-minute lessons there is not enough time for these pupils to get on to these extra activities. Teachers have not given enough thought to how the needs of these pupils might be met through doing different work, targeted at the higher levels, rather than doing additional work. Higher attaining pupils make good progress in science, art, music, physical education and history because in these subjects teachers know who these pupils are and plan effectively to meet their needs.
23. There is good, if inconsistent, teaching of literacy in most subjects. Many teachers ensure that they develop pupils' literacy skills, although they do this without the benefits of a comprehensive literacy policy to guide them. Because there isn't an effective literacy policy teachers do not know how they might regularly and consistently help pupils with special educational needs with their difficulties in reading and spelling. Within most subjects there is too much variability in the ways teachers correct pupils' written work. The teaching of numeracy is good where it takes place and supports the work done in mathematics. This is mainly in science, geography and art.
24. The use and planning of information and communication technology to support learning across the curriculum are only satisfactory. Where information and communication is used it is well taught and has a positive impact upon learning. In design and technology, teachers make regular use of computers to support learning particularly in computer-aided design. In religious education, regular opportunities are provided for all pupils to use computers to find information, present their work and consolidate their skills and this enhances their learning. In English there is limited use but improvements are planned. Computers are underused in mathematics. In geography and history, although some pupils make use of word processing to present coursework, insufficient opportunities are planned for pupils to make use of computers. Limited opportunities are provided in science for pupils to record and analyse data and in modern foreign languages work planning and use vary between teaching groups. In some subjects, such as art, pupils are encouraged to use the Internet for research.
25. Assessment is an area that has developed since the previous inspection. However, this development has not been consistent across all subjects. In mathematics and music, teachers make good use of National Curriculum levels to assess pupils' work. In these subjects, pupils are aware of the standards that they have reached and know what they need to do to move on to the next level. In science, teachers also set targets for pupils so that they know what to do to reach the next level. They also ask pupils to assess how well they are doing.
26. Within the school there is good practice in many aspects of teaching and learning but these have not been shared. In physical education and music there is good use of questioning that encourages pupils to think more about what they are learning. Lessons in French and German have a good pace that keeps pupils interested. In science there is good practice in planning for and meeting the needs of higher attaining pupils. Similarly, in art talented pupils

can take their art GCSE examination early. As a result, higher attainers do well in these two subjects. Planning for higher attainers is not as good in mathematics, design and technology, geography and history. Marking and assessment are developing well in mathematics and science whereas it is a weakness in French and German, geography and English. In science, pupils are encouraged to be independent learners; in design and technology the opposite is true.

27. The school has a policy for teaching and learning which contains limited guidance on how teachers can meet the needs of different pupils. It is offered to teachers as guidance rather than what the school expects all teachers to do. There is no information in the policy about how it will be monitored and evaluated. Because monitoring of teaching has largely been done by the local education authority and the leadership group, subject leaders have not yet been involved in monitoring what happens in their subject lessons, particularly for more able pupils.
28. Homework is usually set according to the homework timetable but teachers do not always give pupils enough time to write homework in their planners. Not enough use is made of homework to promote independent learning and research. Pupils said that the best homework is when they are asked to do research, for example in science.

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

29. The school's provides a good range of subjects but there is a lack of vocational courses in Years 10 and 11. There are pupils who would benefit from these courses. The provision of extra-curricular activities is very good and a strength of the school. However, the school does not comply with statutory requirements to provide careers education in Year 9 and citizenship in all years. There are also weaknesses in the provision of information and communication technology in subjects across the curriculum and too little teaching time is allocated to mathematics in Years 10 and 11. The school has identified many of the areas that need improvement and has plans to further develop the curriculum.
30. Pupils with special educational needs follow the same curriculum as other pupils. In Year 7, pupils with difficulties in reading and spelling benefit from paired reading twice a week. In Years 8 and 9 there is a weekly reading lesson in English. However, there is no time for pupils to follow a systematic programme specifically designed to improve their basic literacy skills. This slows the progress that they make in Years 7 to 9.
31. In Years 10 and 11 there is a good range of GCSE courses. More able pupils in art can take their GCSE examination in Year 10 and proceed to a higher level course in Year 11. However, there is no opportunity for pupils to follow a GCSE course in physical education, which is a subject that pupils are good at. Lower attaining pupils can follow alternative accredited courses such as foreign languages in tourism and sports, recreation and leisure as well as GCSEs. They can also choose the guided individual studies course, which is designed to improve basic skills and support pupils with work they find difficult. While this course provides additional time for some pupils to complete their coursework, it lacks variety and structure in its activities and many pupils have difficulty concentrating in these conditions for 50 minutes.
32. In a number of subjects, including English, mathematics and science, the 50-minute lesson is too short. Teachers plan their lessons in line with national guidance but do not have enough time to fully complete all the activities. They have to reduce the time for pupils to work independently and rush the session at the end where they review learning.
33. The school has made good use of the local authority literacy consultant in developing the provision for literacy across the curriculum. A training day with an emphasis on non-narrative

writing has had an impact in many subjects and most teachers make regular use of key words in lessons. However, practice is variable and even where it is good in lessons it is frequently not included in subject planning or schemes of work. The school literacy policy was not developed sufficiently at the time of the last inspection and it is still unsatisfactory. Much greater guidance is required to ensure the many examples of good practice become part of an effective policy and, therefore, a formalised whole school approach.

34. Overall, provision for the teaching of numeracy across the curriculum is satisfactory. There is a whole school policy in place and a number of subjects require pupils to use numeracy skills as part of their learning. However, there has been no audit of numeracy in other subjects so the school does not have a view as to how well it is doing in this aspect. There has been little staff training to promote numeracy in subjects other than mathematics.
35. There is a wide range of well-attended extra-curricular activities including sport, art, English, music and modern languages. Gifted and talented pupils are shadowing the Carnegie book award by reading all the short-listed books. Successful Easter classes in English, mathematics and science were held over three days and attracted about three quarters of Year 9 and Year 11 pupils in the run-up to national tests and GCSE examinations. The English and mathematics departments also run 'booster' classes at lunchtimes and after school.
36. The arrangements for pupils' personal, social and health education are satisfactory. Much of the programme, which includes health, drugs and sex education, is covered in religious education lessons and in the seven extended tutorial sessions during the year. However, there is not enough time to cover the topics effectively and in enough depth. The provision for careers is unsatisfactory because it is not available to pupils in Year 9, which is requirement. In Years 10 and 11, careers education is part of the extended tutorial sessions. Pupils in Year 11 go out on work experience for two weeks and are prepared effectively for their placements during tutor times and assemblies.
37. The school's links with the community are good and make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils have access to a rich range of arts and science activities. Art pupils have been able to work with visiting artists. Singers have performed in the local parishes with adult choirs. In English, pupils have experienced drama through visiting theatre companies and poetry through the travelling poetry anthology roadshow. In science, pupils have enjoyed talks from scientists in different fields and the visit of the science bus. In addition to the benefit provided by local employers during work experience, pupils also meet representatives from the local business community during careers day.
38. There are good links with local sixth forms and colleges and partner primary schools. Some links have been made between departments and primary schools. Some teachers have taught in the primary schools and the school has organised information and communication technology and physical education days for Year 6 pupils. However, not enough work has been done to ensure that planning in subjects builds on pupils' learning in Year 6. The special educational needs co-ordinator has established good links with partner primary schools. She ensures that all teachers understand the needs of pupils joining the school.

Provision for pupils' personal development

39. The school continues to provide good opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Overall, this aspect of the schools' work has been successfully maintained since the previous inspection and cultural development has improved.
40. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual dimension. This is especially strong through the teachings of the Catholic Faith. The headteacher proudly described the

Leavers' Mass, held the week before the inspection, as pupils 'leaving with dignity'. In conversation with those Year 11 pupils, visiting for exams and revision classes, it became clear how moving the service had been for everyone involved. In contrast, spiritual development at the start of the day in tutor times continues to be ad hoc, with prayers or reflection on issues respectfully delivered by some and not by others. The school, as at the time of the previous inspection, does not meet the requirement for a daily act of collective worship. In art, pupils are encouraged to think deeply. In one lesson pupils were encouraged to express their inner thoughts on work by Chagall and aboriginal art on the theme of 'dreams'. In response, a pupil compared one picture as filling the page with dreams, like dreams fill the mind.

41. The way the school is helping pupils to develop strong moral beliefs is very good. This is complemented by good opportunities for pupils to develop socially. Very good relationships make a significant contribution to the schools' positive atmosphere. Religious education is a powerful vehicle for moral debates and issues such as prejudice, discrimination, the environment and marriage are faced head on. Lessons in English are another powerful influence, where pupils are regularly asked to consider moral and ethical issues. For example, teachers asked pupils to look at newspaper front pages to see how serious world events, such as the war in Iraq, were given less prominence than trivial or sensational stories.
42. There is a very strong sense of family within the school and of belonging. The house system, referred to in the previous inspection, now only exists for sporting purposes. To counteract the loss of mix between younger and older pupils, there are initiatives such as Year 11 pupils linked to Year 7 classes, which is working well. The giving of different responsibilities for pupils in other year groups is not so strong. The school council has not long been re-started and pupils are not yet playing a full role in decision making or influencing change.
43. The way the school is developing pupils' cultural awareness has improved and it is now good. One main reason for this is through contributions from art and music, which are now stronger subjects than they were at the previous inspection. In music and through drama and dance, there is a good repertoire of performances, both in and out of school, such as performances in churches and at the Eskdale Arts Festival. Ways to help pupils appreciate the multicultural nature of our society have improved, too. Provision of multicultural education is satisfactory. Involvement in a 'Diversity in Education' project has seen much work on the theme of 'Intertwined'. In textiles, representations of African, Indian and Chinese influences are strong. The library makes a good contribution to improving pupils' appreciation of other cultures. The librarian has a clear understanding of her role in educating pupils about the different peoples in society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

44. Procedures to ensure pupils' welfare and safety are firmly in place. The school was described in the previous inspection as offering a 'good level of care and support, appreciated by parents and pupils alike'. This is still the case today. Teachers are fully aware of and invariably sensitive to the personal and home circumstances of each pupil. Being relatively small in size, everyone is known to each other and there is indeed a family feel to the school and a clear Christian framework.
45. There are good child protection procedures in place. The designated co-ordinator is up to date with her skills and is experienced and caring. Staff new to the school are given good guidance on how systems operate and what to do if they have a concern. The co-ordinator realises that the child protection policy is not yet in the staff handbook, as at the time of the previous inspection, and plans to remedy this.

46. Arrangements for health and safety are satisfactory. There now is more rigour to procedures than at the time of the previous inspection. However, the school does not yet have its own health and safety policy and this is a relative weakness. There has been a recent health and safety check from the local education authority and systems for checking classrooms are to be introduced at the start of next term. The medical room is shabby. Due to the chronic lack of administrative space, it is currently doubling, inappropriately, as a kitchen area for drinks. New building plans, which include re-siting the medical room, will eventually overcome the poor provision. An adequate number of staff are trained to administer First Aid. However, the member of staff to whom most pupils initially report with illnesses or accidents has yet to update her certificate.
47. The procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are satisfactory. Changes in the way pupils were organised from houses into year groups made calculating and comparing attendance difficult. This is one reason why staff were unaware attendance had fallen very slightly compared to the previous year. The imminent move to a computerised system will make it easier for the school to interpret data and identify patterns. Unauthorised absences are carefully pursued to make sure they are authorised. There is a well-established working relationship with the Educational Welfare Officer who visits regularly and provides good support.
48. Procedures for monitoring and promoting behaviour are good. Parents at the parents' meeting particularly complemented the school on the high standards of behaviour. Staff have recently highlighted behaviour as an area to focus on and there has been recent staff training. The establishment of 'orderly lessons', which is a code setting out teacher's expectations for routines and practices, has helped ensure greater consistency in approach. Recently an additional 39 pupils with behaviour problems have been put on the special educational needs register. This reflects good monitoring of pupils' behaviour. It also, though, reflects a lack of systems to improve pupils' behaviour without recourse to placing them on the register.
49. The quality of teaching in the school has improved since the previous inspection and, because lessons are usually interesting, pupils enjoy them and behave well. Staff create a happy atmosphere which promotes good behaviour and self-discipline. Monitoring of behaviour through yellow slips and points remains thorough and because the school is small the chances of any pupils 'slipping through the net' are remote. The procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are good and any instances of bullying are firmly dealt with by the school. This is shown in the seriousness with which heads of year take the potential issue of bullying on school buses and their discussions about ideas to help resolve this.
50. The way the school monitors and supports pupils' personal development is good. Staff feel the change from a house to year group system has been a positive move. Heads of year have a closer focus on both pastoral and academic issues. Inspectors agree with this view. A relative weakness is the lack of careers education and guidance for pupils in Year 9.
51. Tutor time is not well planned. There is no clear programme of activities to follow, other than checking planners, many of which have not been checked or signed for some time. Often pupils are allowed to sit in groups and chat and time is wasted waiting for the bell. The time is not used appropriately for the school to meet the requirement for a daily act of collective worship.
52. The very strong ethos of care within the school enables many pupils with special educational needs to thrive and to develop confidence and self-esteem. Subject teachers, support teachers and staff know pupils well and use this knowledge effectively to build relationships that help pupils to learn.

Assessment

53. The school has made good progress towards improving its assessment procedures since the previous inspection. There is a new assessment policy in place that clearly identifies roles and responsibilities. The arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory. Teachers receive detailed data on pupils' attainment and use this information to predict future performance and to set National Curriculum or GCSE targets for individual pupils. Teachers are expected to help pupils to measure their progress by relating the grades awarded for their work to National Curriculum levels or GCSE grades. Practice is particularly good in mathematics and music but is underdeveloped in other subjects. Assessment procedures are not yet in place for citizenship.
54. The use of assessment information to guide curricular planning is satisfactory overall. Test data is used to put pupils into teaching groups and is used by teachers to check how well pupils should be performing. In English, mathematics, science, art and physical education, assessment information is used well to modify curriculum planning.
55. There is now an effective whole school system in place for monitoring and tracking pupils' progress across all subjects. This enables teachers to identify pupils who are under performing and who would benefit from additional support. Individual education plans are produced for each pupil with clear targets for improvement. At the moment these are for pupils in Years 9 to 11 but the school intends to extend the system to include Years 7 and 8. Form tutors are not as involved in the process of monitoring as they could be. A mentoring system is also being piloted with some Year 11 pupils. Learning mentors meet with pupils on a weekly basis to help them work out strategies and set targets that will enable them to learn more effectively.
56. Pupils who were on the special educational needs register in September have been carefully and appropriately assessed. Individual education plans have been put in place but they are unsatisfactory and do not support subject teachers in meeting pupils' needs. Targets and actions are sometimes confused. There is a mismatch between targets on individual education programmes used by support teachers for one-to-one work and targets on individual education plans. Individual education plans for pupils identified as underachieving are again of a different format and sometimes involve the same pupils. This is confusing for pupils, parents and teachers. There are no rigorous systems in place to monitor the progress that individual pupils with special educational needs are making in relation to their targets.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

57. Parents have a very positive view of the school and hold it in high esteem. They particularly appreciate the small school family feel, its strong Christian tradition of 'Faith Development', the school motto and the care it provides for their children. Its popularity is shown by the fact that the school is growing and continues to be over-subscribed.
58. Parents' faith and trust in the school has remained strong since the previous inspection. In turn, the school has maintained its supportive relationships with parents. The headteacher works hard to raise the profile of the school in the Catholic communities of Scarborough, Bridlington and Whitby. He has addressed parents and prospective parents after Mass and attends various community events so he can meet parents informally. The headteacher prides himself on being approachable and friendly. Parents feel this is a correct description.
59. The Leavers' Mass is a case in point that illustrates the strong home school relationships. Each pupil had a family member present to watch them celebrate Mass and share in their mixed emotions as everyone posed for photographs on the official last day of school. About half of all parents returned the parents' questionnaire, confirming high levels of interest in their

children's education. Nearly all replies were positive. There was also a good turn out for the parents' meeting, which was equally positive.

60. Parents agree that the school has high expectations of the work pupils do, they feel comfortable in approaching staff and agree it is helping their child become mature and responsible. They also feel their children are making good progress. Inspectors broadly agree with these views. Teachers' expectations of what pupils should be able to do are rising and are much improved compared to the previous inspection. However, there is still not enough challenge for more academically able pupils in Years 10 and 11.
61. Links with parents of pupils with special educational needs are very good. They are invited to annual reviews and their contributions are welcomed and valued. However, individual education plans are not explicit enough about what parents could do to help their children achieve their targets. As well as the more formal contacts, there are very good informal contacts that ensure parents know how their children are progressing.
62. A significant minority of parents who replied to the questionnaire expressed concerns about homework, information about their children's progress and the way the school works with parents. Inspectors judge that arrangements for homework are satisfactory and in line with that seen in many secondary schools. The school's own research suggests there are inconsistencies in the way homework is given out. They ask individual parents to contact them directly if there are concerns about pupils not getting enough, or too much.
63. Inspectors agree with parents that the quality of information about progress, particularly referring to pupils' annual reports, is not good enough. Reports remain unsatisfactory and this has been an ongoing weakness mentioned in the previous and first inspection. They contain comments from pupils and teachers but teachers' comments are too much about attitudes rather than what pupils can do or have achieved. Most of the content is taken up with course details, pupils' comments and personal aims. Year 11 reports are noticeably more focused and contain specific comments to aid improvement. Interim reports provide a more useful over-view of how pupils are progressing related to their target grades and give an indication of areas pupils need to focus on to improve.
64. Since the previous inspection, the school has introduced special parents' evenings, where tutors explain how parents can help their child at home, tailored to the needs of the particular year group. This is a good initiative, illustrating how the school is harnessing parental support to help raise standards. As parents can live up to 25 miles away, the school is pro-active and arranges transport for those living the furthest. Special parents' evenings are generally well attended, although, surprisingly, the attendance from Year 11 parents was disappointing. The school realises that staff need to work harder to encourage parents to attend when it looks as though attendance is going to be low.
65. Having many parents that live so far from the school means written communication is important. Use of homework diaries is inconsistent, depending on the thoroughness of the tutor involved. Some are not used as well as they could be, are not checked regularly, nor are parents always encouraged to sign them.
66. Parents' involvement continues to make a significant contribution to the life and work of the school. There is a thriving Parent and Teachers' Association, which raises a considerable amount of money to support and enrich the learning environment. They have a planned programme of activities, such as seasonal Fairs and events like the forthcoming wine tasting evening, which are usually well attended.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

67. Leadership and management are good. The school has made good improvement since the previous inspection in identifying the main causes of under-achievement of pupils in Years 10 and 11. There have been significant changes in staffing that have improved the leadership of departments and senior management. The role of heads of year now focuses on raising academic achievement as well as supporting pupils' personal development. The governing body now clearly holds the school to account so that the most urgent objectives are prioritised and systems are in place and working to enable the school to meet its targets.
68. The headteacher has been effective in recruiting talented teachers to the school. Equally as importantly, he has been very successful in building on the good practice of existing teachers. As a result, achievement is now satisfactory and is improving, apart from in Year 11. Alongside substantial support from the local education authority, he has made good use of the talents of one of his best teachers to lead developments in teaching and learning, which, with a commitment from all staff and governors, has successfully raised teaching standards throughout the school. This has been done while maintaining the caring environment and Catholic values. Although improvements have been made, there has been insufficient progress with the development of whole school literacy and numeracy policies and practices.
69. The new deputy headteacher has played a vital role both at a whole school level and in mathematics where teaching was unsatisfactory across all ages at the time of the previous inspection. Most members of the leadership group are overworked. This has a negative impact on the departments of design and technology and information and communication technology. These departments are both led by the member of the leadership group who has responsibility for data. The special educational needs co-ordinator is also the assistant headteacher and in this capacity has many responsibilities. Although she is well supported by teachers and support assistants she has not got enough time to lead the necessary developments in special educational needs. Although colleagues take on some responsibilities for aspects of the work, there are a number of management tasks that have not been done. The headteacher has only recently redesignated the roles within the leadership group but does not make enough use of the group as a strategic planning body.
70. The work of the governing body has improved considerably over the last two years. At the time of the previous inspection, significant changes in personnel had only just taken place. Since then, the governing body has grown in stature. They have prioritised very well and played a significant part in helping the school to improve. They have been very good in fulfilling their statutory responsibilities. The exception being that there is no careers education in Year 9 and provision for citizenship is unsatisfactory. Developments in this area have been severely limited by staff absence.
71. The governing body is well led. The chair of governors is very well supported by an active vice chair and there is strong support in all areas, particularly finance. The school has an appropriate racism policy and took firm action involving a racist incident last year. The governors have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school because of the improved way they hold the school to account. However, while the school improvement plan has clearly put systems in place to raise standards of attainment and teaching and learning, numerical targets for success are not highlighted in the plan. Governors ensure that financial resources are judiciously used to support priorities for improvement. A particular strength of the finance committee is its ability to look forward in order to plan expenditure over the next five years. Despite very good financial management, the school is not yet providing value for money. This is because results at the end of Year 11 have not yet reached the standards that are expected on the basis of what pupils have achieved when they join the school at the age of 11 years. Governors and the senior

management team are keen to compare the school's performance with other schools. They consult with parents and staff and challenge and change practice if this is what is required.

72. The leadership and management of middle managers, overall, are good. There are clear strengths, notably in English, science, art and music. In mathematics, leadership is still lacking, although management is good. Heads of year are effective in ensuring the good personal development of pupils and are beginning to get to grips with their role in overseeing pupils' academic progress.
73. The school has been through an extensive period of monitoring and evaluation. They have also been visited by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors since the previous full inspection. During this time, the headteacher has wisely been very prescriptive, particularly in focusing on teaching and learning. Because of this approach middle managers have not had the opportunity to develop their skills of monitoring and evaluation; nor have they had chance to share their best practice.

Staffing

74. Staffing is good. There is an appropriate number of subject specialists to meet most demands of the curriculum. The exception being in design and technology where the department is a teacher short. Staffing in special educational needs is adequate but currently classroom support is focused on the lower set in Year 8. This group were identified as being particularly challenging when they were in Year 7. Not enough work has been done to develop teachers' strategies for managing this group's behaviour. Therefore, there is still a reliance on support staff being there when they could be used elsewhere. The appraisal of staff performance is developing and supports a planned programme of school and individual training. It is used effectively to target teaching and learning and hence improve standards. The induction programme for new staff is very good. It enables new staff to settle quickly into the school.

Accommodation

75. Accommodation, overall, remains unsatisfactory, despite action being taken to remedy concerns identified during the previous inspection. The planned building programme that will improve accommodation for science, music and information and communication technology has not yet commenced. It will not be completed until September 2003. At the time of the inspection the improvement in accommodation for special educational needs was just about to begin, for completion in September 2003. Until now there has been no special educational needs room where pupils could be withdrawn for the intensive work necessary to overcome their difficulties. Resources for special educational needs are stored all over the school as there is no central space where these might be kept. Despite planned improvements in accommodation, there are not enough classrooms for mathematics teaching and this is not in future plans. At present, the school is not accessible for those with restricted mobility. However, new building and refurbishment plans will significantly improve this situation.

Resources

76. Overall, the quantity and quality of resources to support the curriculum are satisfactory. The school has, since the previous inspection, improved the quality and range of resources to support information and communication technology and the number of computers is above average. Access, however, is problematic, particularly for English and mathematics. In music the number of electronic keyboards is good and they are used well to support pupils' composition work. The school does make effective use of video projectors for teaching in the computer rooms. There is not enough equipment such as electronic white boards to support teaching and learning in other classrooms. The special educational needs team does not use computers to make the management of special educational needs more effective. Good use

is made of computers to track pupils' academic progress. The library, although small for the number of pupils, is well managed and provides a limited but very good selection of fiction books. There are resourcing issues in mathematics and modern foreign languages. Resources for pupils with special educational needs are unsatisfactory, particularly in terms of computer programmes to support their learning. Resources to support the development of pupils' literacy skills are also inadequate.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The school has made considerable improvements since staffing was stabilised in some key departments. In order to ensure that these improvements bring about a corresponding improvement in standards the governors and the headteacher need to:

- (1) improve GCSE results at the end of Year 11 by:
 - planning specific work to meet the needs of higher ability pupils;
 - involving tutors in monitoring and supporting progress;
 - sharing the best practice in teaching and learning across departments;(paragraphs 5, 22, 26, 27, 51, 55, 72, 73, 77, 86, 88, 89, 97, 110, 113, 118, 119, 123, 127, 143, 149)

- (2) improve the provision for pupils with special educational needs who are experiencing difficulties in literacy by:
 - providing short term intervention programmes to meet pupils' specific needs;
 - improving the quality of individual education plans;
 - purchasing appropriate resources including computer software;
 - improving the literacy policy so that all teacher re-enforce strategies used to improve their reading, writing and spelling;(paragraphs 4, 6, 30, 31, 56, 75, 76, 113)

- (3) secure the best practice in assessment and marking in all subjects by:
 - ensuring that all teachers assess using National Curriculum levels and tell pupils what they need to do to reach the next level;
 - mark work by indicating to pupils what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve;(paragraphs 25, 26, 53, 82, 98, 102, 105, 114, 124, 133, 134, 138, 139, 150)

- (4) ensure that pupils have opportunities to use computers in subjects across the curriculum by:
 - requiring that all subjects indicate how they plan to use computers in their teaching;
 - identifying how all subjects can contribute to assessment of information and communication technology capability;
 - ensuring that subjects have access to computers when they need them;(paragraphs 9, 24, 76, 96, 102, 122, 129, 132, 133, 138, 139, 150)

- (5) review the length of lessons in order to provide time for effective teaching;
(paragraphs 22, 31, 32, 89, 91, 95, 98, 102, 122, 149)

- (6) develop an accommodation improvement plan that will secure the development of the site over the next five years.
(paragraphs 75, 92, 132, 144)

In addition the governors and the headteacher need to:

- make sure that the planned development of citizenship meets statutory requirements;
(paragraphs 29, 105-107)
- secure improvement in the quality of reports to parents.
(paragraph 63)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	69
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	50

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	21	27	17	1	0	0
Percentage	4	31	39	25	1	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	394
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	45

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	82

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	20
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	28

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.0
National comparative data	7.8

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	1.2

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage (Year 9)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	40	43	83

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 5 and above	Boys	21	28	28
	Girls	39	39	34
	Total	60	67	62
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	School	72 (65)	81 (67)	75 (71)
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 6 or above	School	43 (31)	49 (40)	35 (37)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 5 and above	Boys	22	29	28
	Girls	36	39	27
	Total	58	68	55
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	School	70 (71)	82 (65)	67 (75)
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 6 or above	School	29 (31)	53 (36)	23 (33)
	National	32 (31)	44 (42)	34 (33)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	34	28	62

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	14	29	32
	Girls	13	25	28
	Total	27	54	60
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	44 (51)	87 (100)	97 (100)
	National	50 (48)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	36 (42.2)
	National	39.8 (39.0)

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

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
392	6	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	26.15
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.1

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	140

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	70
---	----

Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	21.5
Key Stage 4	20.66

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
----------------	-----------

	£
Total income	1,266,254
Total expenditure	1,152,315
Expenditure per pupil	2,939
Balance brought forward from previous year	29,624
Balance carried forward to next year	113,939

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	9.8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	11
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

58%

Number of questionnaires sent out

370

Number of questionnaires returned

213

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	39	49	9	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	38	53	9	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	32	55	6	0	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	24	46	20	6	4
The teaching is good.	30	57	9	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	43	15	4	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	32	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	34	4	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	40	40	18	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	43	44	4	1	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	41	53	5	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	47	12	1	7

Other issues raised by parents

A few parents expressed concern about the effect of supply teachers on pupils' learning. This situation has been remedied by the appointment of new permanent teachers. Two parents expressed concern about the arrangement for putting pupils into groups for lessons. They felt that the arrangements disadvantaged pupils who were good at one subject but were in lower sets because of overall results in internal examinations. In a small school there is going to be a wide range of ability in any group. In some lessons teachers do not always take sufficient account of individual pupils' needs.

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

ENGLISH

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

Strengths

- Teaching is of a consistently high standard throughout the department.
- Standards of attainment at the end of Year 9 are good.
- The positive ethos in lessons encourages all pupils to become fully involved.
- The very effective leadership and management during this school year have brought about dramatic improvement in provision for English.

Areas for improvement

- Attainment in GCSE examinations is too low.
- Marking has been inconsistent and weak and the very recent improvements need further development.
- Pupils do not have enough focused practice and guidance in writing English literature essays in Years 10 and 11.

77. Overall, standards of attainment in English are satisfactory. In 2002, results in national tests were well above average, as were the percentage of pupils gaining the higher levels. Both boys and girls achieved above average results. GCSE results in English language in 2002 were below average for A* to C grades and well below for the highest grades. Although English literature results were well below average for A to C grades, the school enters a much higher proportion of pupils for the subject than is entered nationally and this distorts the real achievement in the subject. Work seen during the inspection suggests that both test results at the end of Year 9 and GCSE results overall will be similar this year to what they were last year. Attainment in Year 10 suggests that there will be an improvement in GCSE results the following year. In Years 10 and 11, standards of attainment in speaking and listening and reading are higher than in writing. The disappointing attainment at GCSE is undoubtedly linked to the instability in staffing in the department and a period of difficulty before the new leadership and management of the department.
78. In speaking and listening, by the end of Year 9 the highest attaining pupils take active roles in discussions and clearly enjoy the opportunities to express their views. They have developed the capacity to respond to and build on arguments put forward by others. The lowest attaining pupils are also keen and confident speakers, although their contributions tend to be more disjointed and they are less likely to respond appropriately to the arguments of others. Although the inspection provided only limited opportunities to observe Year 11 lessons, in a poetry lesson pupils were seen to use emphasis and intonation to stress meaning well. They made good use of subject specific vocabulary.
79. In reading, by Year 9 the highest attaining pupils are good at identifying different layers of meaning and commenting on the significance of vocabulary choice. They justify their views with close reference to the text. Lower attaining pupils show a grasp of basic elements of narrative and character but interpretation of meaning is much more limited. By Year 11, the highest attaining pupils combine critical and personal comments and also understand the context into which the literature is set. One pupil wrote of Maggie in *Hobson's Choice*, 'she represents Victorian values but also shows a reversal of the gender roles at a time when women were generally subservient.' However, despite very good analytical skills, many pupils are less adept at writing literature essays. The weakest pupils struggle with distinguishing themes from plot.

80. In writing, by Year 9, the most gifted pupils make good use of their knowledge of different texts and genres in their own writing. Year 7 pupils looked carefully at the salient features of travel writing and then produced very good examples of the genre themselves. The weakest writers frequently struggle with spelling and punctuation. By Year 11, the most accomplished writers adopt a good and wide range of forms and styles while weaker pupils experience difficulties in structuring extended writing.
81. Although progress in lessons is good in all years, the weaknesses in the department that have only been put right this year have impeded progress over time. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 but unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11. There is no difference in achievement by different groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, boys and girls and those who have been identified as gifted or talented.
82. The quality of teaching is good and frequently very good in all years. The majority of lessons are very well structured and allow pupils to move easily from starter activities to group and independent work before the main points are reinforced in plenary sessions. To this extent the national Key Stage 3 Strategy has been successfully implemented. Judicious use of questioning is another strength of the department so that a large number of pupils become involved in oral work. In one Year 11 poetry lesson, questions moved from the straightforward to the more probing in a way that enabled all pupils to gain a deeper understanding of the text. One of the reasons why oral work is effective is that excellent relationships in the classrooms allow pupils to feel confident. A low attaining Year 9 group containing a high proportion of boys was able to discuss sensitively the issue of a mother and daughter relationship. Teachers generally explain and clarify issues very lucidly so that pupils understand expectations at all stages of lessons. Teachers also have a very good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of individual pupils that they use when allocating time to individual lessons. Marking is a weakness in the department. Although some work is marked thoroughly and helpfully other work is marked inadequately and infrequently and often the marking does not provide any real advice on how to improve. There is some indication that this was a great problem a year ago and some of the best marking is the most recent. In a number of lessons teachers found that parts of the lesson session had to be curtailed slightly to fit into the 50-minute lesson time.
83. As a result of the consistently good teaching, pupils are usually very attentive, enthusiastic and well motivated. These positive attitudes occur in all years and at all attainment levels. When given opportunities to work in pairs or small groups, pupils collaborate well and listen sensible to each other. They are keen to be involved in lessons. In a very low attaining set analysing a holiday video, every pupil wanted to express an opinion and answer questions about purpose and audience. Where pupils are unsure of elements of the work, they are usually willing to ask for help and guidance.
84. The English department contributes well to various aspects of pupils' personal development. A range of theatre visits enhances their understanding of drama while moral issues are very effectively considered in lessons, whether on topical issues such as animal welfare or social questions arising from texts studied. In a Year 10 lesson on speechmaking a discussion on the emotive language used in a speech by George Bush made an excellent contribution to citizenship. Multicultural development is not sufficiently represented. The school librarian, although working in a small library, has made very well informed choices of fiction in order to extend the reading of pupils who are not regular library users. Although there are some good examples of the use of computers, it is only very recently that the opportunities for its use have been explicitly planned. The overall provision is enriched by the emphasis on media and textual analysis. There are not enough opportunities for sustained writing for lower attaining pupils in Years 7 to 9, nor is there a systematic approach to improving the punctuation and spelling of these pupils.

85. The department has been through a difficult period. At the time of the previous inspection and immediately afterwards there was little development or response to national initiatives. However, from September 2002 an acting head of department led the department for two terms and since April 2003 a new head of department has been in post. During this period the department has made great progress. The leadership and management have been very effective in setting appropriate priorities, analysing results and identifying changes that need to be made and engendering a more consistent approach to the subject. It is a tribute to the whole department that morale is now high and that so much has been achieved in this year.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- Results in national tests in Year 9 are now above average and standards are rising.
- Overall, teaching is good and is often very good.
- Pupils have a good attitude to mathematics and are very aware of their progress.

Areas for development

- Results in GCSE examinations are not good enough.
- Pupils in the current Year 11 have not made sufficient progress.
- Leadership of the department is lacking.

86. Results in national tests in 2002 for pupils at the end of Year 9 were above average. This represents satisfactory progress from standards on entry. Results were in line with English and better than science. They were good compared with similar schools. This is an improvement on recent years when results have been average. Results in GCSE examinations in 2002 were below average. This is unsatisfactory achievement from their results in the national tests taken when they were aged 14 years. However, the results in 2002 improved from 2001 when they were poor.
87. Good standards are clearly evident in lessons seen in Year 9. The above average standards on entry in Year 7 have been maintained. Pupils in the lowest class work well in algebra when changing formulae around. This was very demanding work, but, because the teacher made references to speed, distance and time which were meaningful to them, they made good progress. Clear instructions from the teacher to the pupils' support assistant within the lesson plan helped pupils with special educational needs feel valued and motivated them to focus on their work throughout the lesson. The teacher was able to give considerable time to individual pupils who needed help because of the small numbers in the class. The most able pupils work at a suitably fast pace to plot graphs of ratios relating to the sides in right-angled triangles. All pupils in this class worked at a high level, but some should have been entered for the very highest level test papers. However, while all pupils in Year 9 are achieving well currently, staffing problems in the past mean that achievement since entry is satisfactory rather than good.
88. Pupils in Year 11 are doing less well. While achievement for the majority is satisfactory, there is a significant minority who have made little progress since Year 9. This problem is made worse by the high proportion of pupils who do not complete their GCSE course. The most able pupils have produced very high quality coursework in data handling and investigative work. However, in the lessons seen, which were voluntarily attended as pupils had officially left school, few of the average and more able pupils showed confidence with algebra. While

average pupils have made reasonable progress from Year 9, some pupils capable of better achievement were only entered for intermediate level examinations. They were well guided by their teachers in these lessons and the work was suitably targeted for revision, but standards should be higher. By contrast, pupils in the lowest class should achieve their potential. The teacher knew the pupils' special educational needs and in particular capitalised on the boys' willingness to perform to the rest by inviting them to work at the board. The class was working at the expected level on examination type questions about ratios. In contrast to Year 11, standards in Year 10 are good and overall achievement is satisfactory.

89. Teaching is good, overall. Work is well prepared with good use of the limited resources available, such as overhead transparencies for starter activities, worksheets and scientific calculators. Timing of activities is good, with an enjoyable mix of teacher explanation and individual work. Teachers know pupils' attainment, and assessment is used effectively to make the work challenging. Some marking is outstanding, particularly with the least able pupils in Year 7 and, together with highly individualised teaching and high expectations, these pupils have made exceptional progress. There is a significant proportion of very good teaching with pupils highly motivated and very well challenged. Despite this, there are no clearly identified materials for the outstanding pupils in top classes. Teaching is satisfactory rather than good when teachers allow too long for consolidation work or rush the whole class session at the end of the lesson designed to recap what pupils have learned. The new framework for teaching mathematics has been implemented well, with learning objectives shared with the pupils and the lesson split into three identifiable parts.
90. Pupils respond well. They have good relationships with each other and their teachers. They want to do well and persevere. In the best lessons, they discuss mathematics with each other, even though teachers do not plan for this. Pupils understand the National Curriculum levels very well and are motivated by teachers' reference to them.
91. A number of factors have limited the progress of the department. Staffing problems in the past have resulted in considerable unsatisfactory teaching that has hindered pupils' progress. There is insufficient time in Years 10 and 11, although this is to be remedied next year. The lesson length of 50 minutes is not helpful to teachers using the National Numeracy Strategy lesson format. Even the best teachers have difficulty in planning for sufficient independent work in the middle of a lesson or, when they do, the class session at the end is rushed.
92. The department has suffered from unsatisfactory leadership and management in the past. The arrival of the new deputy head teacher, who is the line manager of the head of department and a very good teacher of mathematics, has meant that the department has been managed effectively this year, largely because of this support. The head of department is not pro-active enough in leading the department. Schemes of work are incomplete, the department has too few textbooks for pupils to have their own to take home to study independently and there are few mathematics books in the library. There is not enough guidance in the subject handbook for teachers. A numeracy audit across other departments was never completed. The use of information and communication technology is inconsistent. Accommodation is unsatisfactory with only two rooms in mobile classrooms. Despite all of this, in terms of pupils' achievement, there has been good improvement since the previous inspection.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- Very good leadership has focused the department on raising standards.
- Teaching is consistently good. Teachers plan lessons well with a variety of learning activities.
- Good working relationships between pupils and teachers give pupils confidence to ask and answer questions.
- Accurate assessment and target-setting keeps pupils focused on their learning in Years 7 to 9.

Areas for improvement

- Examination results at the end of Year 11 are still not as good as they should be.
- The use of computers to enhance pupils' learning is underdeveloped.
- Checks on pupils' progress in Years 10 and 11 are not frequent enough to identify underachievement quickly.

93. Standards of work seen during the inspection are good by the end of Year 9 but only average by the end of Year 11. This represents an improvement from the previous inspection. However, progress is less rapid than expected in Years 10 and 11. This is mainly due to the fact that the improvements made lower down the school are only just beginning to have an impact in Years 10 and 11.
94. In the 2002 national tests at the end of Year 9, standards were average. They were lower than expected from above average pupils. Results have fluctuated over the past three years. Overall they are similar to those achieved in mathematics, but not as good as in English. Observations of teaching and in-depth analysis of class books and test results show that standards have improved and are currently good. More pupils are working at the higher levels. Improvement is mainly due to the leadership of the new head of department, who has sharply focused the department on teaching and learning.
95. Lessons are carefully planned with a range of learning activities. Science is made interesting so that pupils become more involved in their own learning. Boys are more willing to take part and consequently they have improved to an equal standard with girls. Teachers' assessments have become more accurate through the increased frequency of tests and the analysis of the results. The setting of pupil targets, the involvement of pupils in self-testing and the introduction of booster and revision classes have also given an impetus for learning. Some of the laboratories are too small and the cramped accommodation affects the quantity and quality of individual practical work, despite the diligent efforts of teachers. New accommodation is at an advanced state of planning. Individual lesson times are too short to allow lessons to be fully developed so that pupils are not extended or fully stretched in their thinking. In consequence, most pupils only make satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs work in smaller classes, get more individual help and consequently make good progress.
96. In all years, graphs and tables are used effectively to illustrate and interpret data. Pupils develop good literacy skills through discussions and the many opportunities to write their own descriptions and conclusions. Computers are not used enough to enhance teaching and learning or for the presentation of work.
97. GCSE results have been consistently below average in the past three years, but there was some improvement in 2002 when some pupils attained the highest A* grade. Girls did not do as well as boys in science. However, observations in class and a detailed analysis of coursework and tests show that standards are improving and are currently close to average

for both boys and girls. This standard is still not high enough when compared to their attainment on entry or their performance in the tests at the end of Year 9. The pace of change in Years 10 and 11 has been slower as the changes in attitudes in the lower school are only beginning to have an affect in the upper school. The small laboratories make it difficult for older pupils to carry out practical investigations comfortably and safely. However, good organisation by teachers ensures that very high standards are produced in coursework investigations. All pupils have a very good understanding of scientific method and high attainers produce predictions based on research and evaluate their work with maturity and understanding. Pupils with special educational needs can apply scientific method and make simpler but accurate conclusions. They make good progress and almost all achieve a GCSE grade. Previous weaknesses in the delivery of the biology aspect have been fully addressed.

98. Teaching is good. This shows good improvement from the previous inspection. All lessons are carefully planned with a common structure to promote good learning. Each lesson begins with an activity that reinforces previous learning and introduces the learning objectives. This is followed by a variety of learning activities and concluded with a thorough check of understanding. Pupils get fully involved in the many discussions and develop independence through planning their own experiments. This generates interest in science and hence learning is good. The short lesson time tends to make the central part of each lesson rushed for time or superficial and hence planned extension work for more able pupils may be omitted. For example, in a Year 9 investigation into insulation some very good planning by pupils, using GCSE criteria, was affected by rushed practical work so that high attaining pupils were not able to complete some more demanding exercises with graphs. Marking is generally good with helpful comments given. Coursework is marked well, but there is a large time gap between assessments and pupils would benefit from more frequent comments on progress. Homework is an integral part of the overall lesson planning and consists of an appropriate variety of research, extension work and consolidation of learning. The working relationships between teachers and pupils are good and this gives pupils the confidence to join in the frequent discussions and to both ask and answer questions. Pupils benefit from a wide range of experiences in science - marvelling at cell division and genetics, discussing the pros and cons of scientific advances, working safely in groups and researching the contribution of scientists from different cultures. There are not enough opportunities for imaginative writing.
99. Leadership and management are very good. This has improved from the previous inspection. There is a good sense of team spirit and a feeling of collective responsibility for improving standards. Assessment and target-setting systems are good in Years 7 to 9, but pupils in Years 10 and 11 do not get frequent feedback on their strengths and weaknesses. Assessment and analysis of results are well used to influence curriculum planning. The new head of department fosters a very good spirit of teamwork and is providing the leadership necessary to take the department forward. The department has made good improvement since the last inspection.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- Standards in public examinations by the end of Year 11 are well above average.
- Students' achievement is good by the end of Year 9 and very good by Year 11.
- Teaching is very good overall.
- Students' expressive and imaginative composition work is strong.
- Students have very good attitudes and behave well.

Areas for improvement

- The range of opportunities for three-dimensional work and the use of computers to support learning are limited.
- Not enough use is made of assessment to involve and inform pupils about their learning.

100. Standards of work seen during the inspection are above average by the end of Year 9. By the end of Year 11, standards are well above average with some pupils taking the GCSE examination a year early. These standards represent good achievement by the end of Year 9 in comparison to standards on entry in Year 7 and very good achievement by the end of Year 11. There is very good specialist teaching from Year 9 onwards and the non-specialist teaching in Years 7 to 9 is good and supports pupils very well. As a result, pupils develop very positive attitudes to art and very good levels of motivation.

101. GCSE art results in 2002 were above average. All pupils achieved a pass grade. Boys achieved particularly well. In comparison to their performance in other subjects, boys and girls achieved very well in art and design. Talented pupils are encouraged to take the GCSE examination a year early and results here are good. Two of these pupils are currently studying for the AS examination.

102. Teacher assessments in art at the end of Year 9 show above average numbers attaining the expected standard. In work seen, standards show steady improvement from Year 7 to Year 9 with good development of painting and drawing skills alongside the ability to make reference to the work of artists and different cultures. Teachers make limited use of computers to develop artwork. Opportunities for three-dimensional work are constrained by the lack of dedicated facilities. Pupils make work in clay but it cannot be fired because there is currently no kiln. Teaching provides good opportunities for personal development through class discussion and questioning that encourage pupils to reflect upon their work and explore and explain the expressive qualities in art from different times and cultures. The way teachers manage pupils is very good and they share lesson objectives with pupils to ensure they are involved in their learning. Teachers do not always make the criteria to be used for assessment clear to pupils. At times the short lessons limit the time to reflect and share ideas.

103. In work seen in lessons, sketchbooks and coursework, standards by the end of Year 11 are very good, with both talented pupils and those with special educational needs achieving very well. Work is highly imaginative and personal showing great perception and development of sensitivity. This is because the specialist teaching challenges pupils to explore and develop their own ideas and supports them effectively through individual discussion and evaluation. Knowledge and understanding are broadened through a very good programme of visits abroad and to local galleries and a recent exhibition entitled *Sacred and Profane* in art inspired the work of many pupils. Some pupils make very good use of technology, including video, to develop their imagery.

104. Leadership and management of art are very good with a clear focus upon high achievement for all pupils. The department also teaches textiles technology and standards here are also high, although the use of one room for both textiles and art is not ideal and requires careful management. The lack of a colour printer in the art room to provide immediate printouts limits the spontaneity of work. Three-dimensional work is constrained by the lack of ceramics facilities. Curriculum developments planned for the future will broaden the range of opportunities and pupils will have the option of following an art textile or graphics based examination as well as fine art. The assessment systems and use of data to monitor and analyse performance have improved since the previous inspection. There is scope to use assessment more to involve and inform pupils about their learning, particularly in Years 7 to 9.

CITIZENSHIP

Overall, the quality of provision in citizenship is **unsatisfactory**.

Strengths

- The curriculum already contains many elements of citizenship.

Areas for improvement

- No audit of existing provision has been done.
- A course has been planned but does not necessarily include new topics to complement those already covered.
- There are no plans yet for how the school will assess pupils' citizenship development.

105. The planned development of citizenship has not progressed as intended during the school year, largely due to staff absence. Currently, the school does not meet statutory requirements for the teaching of citizenship. Nor does it yet have an assessment system that identifies pupil progress. It is therefore not possible to make a judgement about the quality of teaching and learning, standards of attainment and assessment procedures.

106. During the inspection, opportunities for developing citizenship were identified. For example, in a Year 10 English lesson the consideration of emotive language provided an opportunity to investigate how public opinion is formed. In a Year 9 geography lesson, an examination of 'sweat factories' in Asia highlighted globalisation issues. In a Year 8 history lesson, discussion occurred on conflict resolution. However, on occasion, opportunities are missed. In a registration period, the activity of nominating members for the school council failed to include a satisfactory explanation of its role. The tutor did not recognise the opportunity provided to teach pupils how to nominate and vote for elected representatives. As a result, pupils did not recognise the importance of this activity and quickly lost interest.

107. There has not yet been a systematic audit of existing provision within all departments. As a result, many schemes of work do not identify opportunities for citizenship. The school is therefore unable to identify those parts of the citizenship curriculum for which there is no current provision. The school is beginning to investigate schemes of assessment in Years 7 and 8. However, the school does not yet have sufficient information enabling it to report on the progress of all pupils. During the current school year, planned links within the personal, social and health education curriculum did provide all pupils with limited access to a citizenship experience. In Year 11, one area of the programme of study was piloted. The school has also used consultancy support to plan for the future. At present, however, there is insufficient time identified to meet the requirements of the citizenship curriculum. The originally designated co-ordinator for citizenship was absent on long-term sick leave until April 2003. As a result of all these factors, the school has not moved forward sufficiently in developing this subject.

108. The school has identified how provision will be met from September 2003. Specific and regular time will be scheduled into the timetable. An audit is planned to take place before the end of the current school year. The result of this will inform the content of the teaching programme. Further staff training is planned and assessment procedures will be further developed.

109. Overall, the school does have the capacity to meet requirements, but there are a number of steps needed before it is able to demonstrate that citizenship provision is fully in place.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Examination results in textiles technology are very good.
- Examination results have improved over the last three years.
- There are very good developments in the teaching of computer-aided design.

Areas for improvement

- There are too few teachers of design and technology, which limits the progress pupils make.
- There is too big a difference in the standards reached between boys and girls in GCSE examinations.
- The different needs of pupils are not fully met.
- Pupils have insufficient opportunities to develop independent learning skills.

110. Teachers' assessments of 14-year-old pupils in 2002 are above average. However, current work is in line with expected standards, but no higher-level work is evident. GCSE results for 2002 are average. There is a slight rising trend over the past three years. There is a wide range of results in the different options: those for textiles technology are very high and for systems and control technology they are low. Staffing difficulties have had a significant negative impact on results in systems and control technology. Because of this, boys' results overall are much lower than girls as this is the aspect that boys choose to study.

111. By the end of Year 9, pupils are aware of some factors that must be considered when designing. They show how they can improve on their first ideas. However, pupils do not always show the links between the stages of designing and they have insufficient opportunities to use modelling to try out their ideas. Sketching skills in textiles technology are of a high quality, but this is not consistent across the department. Pupils make satisfactory progress using computer-aided design. However, the focus is on using elements of the computer program rather than factors of product design. For example, when producing ideas for a remote communication device, they do not take account of the fact that it is to be hand-held. Practical work is satisfactory. Boys' and girls' work is of a similar standard.

112. By the age of 16, the standard of pupils' current work is in line with what would be expected at this stage. They work with due regard to health and safety when using tools and machines and understand the basis of hygiene in food technology. They make satisfactory use of their mathematical skills by, for example, using graphs to represent data collected from surveys of possible users of their proposed products. There is some very good design and practical work in textiles technology. Design sketching in this area is good, as is the use of computer-aided design. Pupils do not have a good knowledge of the materials that they are using in resistant materials courses.

113. Pupils with special educational needs make progress similar to other pupils, as a result of sensitive support from teachers and support staff. However, teaching materials are not always modified to meet their needs. There is no special provision for pupils who have particular gifts or talents in design and technology.
114. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teachers have good subject knowledge, put to good use when extending pupils' knowledge. For example, one teacher ensured that pupils made good progress by constantly checking their understanding of new information. Pupils respond very well to timed tasks within a lesson, which leads to overall good use of time. Teachers are effective when working with individual pupils; here, good relationships are a significant factor which lead to pupils having positive attitudes to learning. Homework for pupils in Years 7 to 9 supports the work done in lessons, which is a recent improvement. In some lessons pupils are given good opportunities to develop their speaking skills. The system for assessing pupils' work in Years 7 to 9 has recently been linked to National Curriculum levels. However, this is not yet effective as pupils are still not clear about how to improve their work. There is no evidence of assessment being used to help with planning of future work.
115. Where teaching does not offer pupils sufficient challenge, for example in one examination class, pupils' achievements were too low, with associated homework being undemanding. Lessons that are teacher directed do not lead pupils to develop the skills of independent learning and, as a result, they are less well motivated. Some folder work is disorganised, which is an issue raised in a previous inspection. In one lesson lack of effective planning led to a learning support assistant doing too much work for pupils.
116. The head of department has a large number of responsibilities in school. Added to this, too much time is spent resolving day-to-day staffing issues because there is one teacher too few for design and technology. These factors restrict the development of the subject. The consequence is that management is satisfactory, but leadership is not. Areas for development normally covered, for example detailed planning for the future or raising the attainment of boys relative to girls, have not been fully addressed. Staffing overall is unsatisfactory. There is an over-generous allocation of time for technical support for the resistant materials area, but none specifically for food technology. This puts unnecessary pressure on the teacher and results in unsatisfactory conditions in the food technology room, where storage areas need a deep clean. Accommodation is satisfactory, but the resistant materials room has areas that need to be cleaned and some machines that need to be degreased and repainted.
117. Resources for learning are satisfactory. Those for teaching computer-aided design are very good and much improved since the previous inspection. However, pupils have too little access to computer aided manufacture, particularly the oldest pupils studying food technology. There are too few design and technology books in the library to support pupils' independent learning.
118. Although there are opportunities for computer-aided design, other elements of information and communication technology are less well developed. Pupils have no access to work with pneumatic systems. Some projects restrict pupils' design choices; for example, all are constrained to use one kind of mechanism when producing a mechanical toy. Overall, planning does not present sufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils. In Years 10 and 11 no vocational courses are offered.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Standards are improving in Years 7 to 9.
- The leadership of the head of department is good.
- The curriculum has been totally revised so as to meet pupils' needs better.

Areas for improvement

- Standards are not as high as they should be in Years 10 and 11.
- Computers are not used enough to develop independent learning skills.
- Marking does not give pupils enough guidance on how they might improve.

119. Teachers' assessments in 2002 for pupils at the end of Year 9 show standards to be average although lower than in 2001. Standards of work seen indicate that standards at the age of 14 are above average. The GCSE results in 2002, for pupils aged 16, show standards to be low and they were also low in 2001. Work seen confirms that at the end of Year 11, standards are below average, but have improved significantly in comparison with the two previous years.

120. The head of department inherited a difficult situation on his appointment in January 2002, having to address the significant issues identified at the previous inspection. He has undertaken a thorough review of both standards and the curriculum. As a result, standards are now rising, there is a new programme of study for pupils in Years 7 to 9 and a new GCSE syllabus is now in place in Year 10. Pupils' achievement is good in Years 7 to 9. Achievement in Year 10 is satisfactory. Achievement is unsatisfactory in Year 11; these pupils did not make sufficient progress when in Years 9 and 10 because no specialist teaching was available. However, they are currently making satisfactory progress because of improvements in teaching and learning.

121. By the end of Year 9, pupils acquire a wide range of geographical skills and use them effectively to complete a considerable range of tasks. For example, they apply their knowledge of different societies to investigate the manufacture of a pair of jeans and identify the differing returns for workers in the Philippines and the U.S.A. They use subject vocabulary effectively and write with empathy to describe factory conditions. Through this they identify several factors that lead to differing levels of prosperity in Asia and Europe. Most pupils are secure in using basic mapping skills. They are able to follow a route using an Ordnance Survey map and use the key and co-ordinates accurately to locate specific features such as a post office. Teaching is good in Years 7 to 9. Staff have a secure knowledge of the subject, make good use of appropriate resource material and question pupils effectively. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, because they are well supported with tasks set that match their individual learning targets.

122. By the age of 16, more able pupils produce detailed work on a range of topics, such as urban growth, national parks, climate and contrasting settlements. They write in detail, using appropriate subject language, but their mapping skills are not high enough. Other groups of pupils complete similar work, but their written work lacks detail, their mapping skills are under-developed and some tasks are not complete. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. In a lesson on urban development, there was a clear explanation of tasks with graduated objectives set. However, group tasks did not provide sufficient focus to promote higher levels of thinking and the 50-minute lesson did not allow enough time for adequate class discussion. As a result, learning was not reinforced sufficiently. Pupils' basic skills of presentation and accuracy are not high enough and the absence of any significant use of information and

communication technology results in restricted opportunities for independent research and the interrogation of data.

123. In Years 7 to 9, a new programme of study is motivating pupils and promoting higher standards. In Year 10 the new GCSE syllabus offers increased opportunities to widen the range of study. There are good opportunities for the development of numeracy skills in such areas as measurement and graphical representation. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall and at times good. Provision for the most able pupils is satisfactory but could be developed further through better lesson planning in the higher sets. The subject supports pupils' personal development well; for example, providing good opportunities to investigate contrasting social values.

124. Assessment procedures and the quality of reports are satisfactory, providing and reporting useful information on progress. The quality of marking is inconsistent and does not always provide pupils with sufficient guidance on improving their work. Leadership and management are good. The head of department is making a significant contribution to improving the subject. He has received good support from senior staff during his induction. The standard of accommodation and learning resources is satisfactory. Overall, improvement since the previous inspection is good.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- The standards and achievement of pupils in Years 7 to 9 are good.
- The quality of teaching and learning in all year groups is good.
- The development of literacy through history is good.

Areas for improvement

- Standards in Years 10 and 11 are not as high as they should be.
- Not enough use is made of computers to support pupils' learning.

125. Teacher assessments in 2002 for pupils at the end of Year 9 show standards of attainment to be above average, although they are lower than they were in 2001. The GCSE examination results in 2002, for pupils aged 16, show standards to be well above average. This is a marked improvement in comparison to 2001. Work seen during the inspection indicates that standards at the end of Year 9 remain above average. The standards of pupils aged 16 are above average, but predicted grades and other inspection evidence indicate standards are lower than in the previous year.

126. The history department has done well to maintain above average standards in the light of considerable staffing difficulties. The head of department has been absent on sick leave for 12 months, to April 2003. Two other members of staff, plus temporary teachers have taught the pupils throughout the school and the overall standard of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a secure knowledge of the subject and use resources effectively to set tasks which draw upon a range of skills. This is shown by the quality of work completed by pupils throughout the current school year.

127. By the age of 14, pupils have a good range of skills which they use effectively to produce wide ranging and detailed work. For example, they use source material to track changes in working practices during the Industrial revolution. This enables them to compare and contrast their own lives with those of factory children. Some pupils write vivid accounts of child labour, using empathy skills well. In a lesson on dictatorship, well judged questions provide good

opportunities for discussion and pupils use subject vocabulary effectively to compare different political leaders. The quality of teaching raises the attainment of less able pupils because they are challenged to think and their contributions are valued. Achievement is good in Years 7 to 9, but the planning of work in the higher sets does not always provide sufficient challenge for the most able pupils.

128. By the age of 16, pupils complete their GCSE studies and acquire a secure knowledge and understanding of topics studied. This is because they build steadily upon earlier skills developed and use them effectively to analyse evidence, recognise causation and present their ideas in a logical form. For example, the more able pupils write well-judged, analytical comparisons of Lenin and Stalin, showing how their differing personalities and priorities directed policy in Russia. All pupils demonstrate an ability to form judgements. The differences in standards between pupils of different abilities are reflected in the quality of language used and the range of factors introduced into an argument. In an outstanding lesson, pupils fully engage in a wide-ranging discussion, with high levels of challenge, the introduction of precise subject vocabulary and the visual modelling of political structures. This leads to very perceptive comments by pupils. One, in referring to the Russian peasants, says; 'without them everything collapses'. In Year 10, achievement is good. In Year 11, achievement is satisfactory and inspection evidence suggests that standards could be higher.

129. The curriculum is satisfactory overall and there is effective use of educational visits. However, there is insufficient use of computers to support learning. This has an impact on the quality and range of learning opportunities, particularly for older pupils to research work independently. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop literacy skills, through the range of tasks set and the use of appropriate language. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory, where setting arrangements provide opportunities for more individual support. There are good opportunities for pupils' personal development; for example, in a lesson on the slave trade, pupils have opportunities to discuss moral issues.

130. Assessment procedures and the quality of reports are satisfactory, providing and reporting useful information on attainment and progress. Overall, leadership and management are satisfactory because other staff have continued to support pupils effectively and the senior management has maintained oversight of the department. Overall, there has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good in Years 7 to 9 and on the GCSE course
- The range of experiences provided in Years 7 to 9 is good.
- There is regular and good use of computers to support learning in design and technology, religious education and music.

Areas for improvement

- There is not enough strategic leadership and monitoring of the subject at whole school level.
- Assessments are not accurate enough to monitor and support all pupils, particularly higher attainers.
- Too little use is made of computers to support learning in many subjects.

131. Teacher assessments for Year 9 in 2002 indicated the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard to be well above average. Over the past year and a half there has been significant disruption to teaching of the subject and this has had an adverse effect upon

standards and the continuity of learning for all groups of pupils. In the 2002 GCSE examination, standards were above average for both boys and girls and represented good achievement in comparison to their attainment in other subjects. Standards are below average in Year 11 both for the current GCSE course and in the use of information and communication technology to support learning across other subjects.

132. In work seen in lessons standards by the end of Year 9 are in line with expectations. All pupils have ICT lessons in Years 7, 8 and 9, which ensures that skills in using a full range of software are properly developed. Pupils are confident about using the school network and accessing information from the Internet to support their learning. Pupils have good attitudes and behave well which also helps them learn. Teaching is now good and ensures that tasks are well matched to the needs of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because teachers break tasks down into stages and explain things clearly. In a Year 8 lesson about controlling traffic lights, learning was very good as the teacher encouraged pupils to think and predict on the basis of their observations of a video clip. A simple recording sheet ensured they noted their observations and frequent questioning by the teacher checked their understanding. The satisfactory learning that takes place in information and communication technology lessons is, however, not built upon and reinforced in all subjects. The planning and tracking of pupils' experiences across the curriculum have not been sufficiently rigorous. There are two computer rooms, one that is very small and requires pupils to share computers. The other is under pressure of use for GCSE teaching groups and technology, which limits access for whole class use by other subjects.

133. In Years 10 and 11 a GCSE course in applied information technology ensures that those who opt for this course continue to develop their ICT skills. For the majority of pupils, though, who do not take this course, there is no regular development or assessment of skills and standards. Achievement overall is below expectations. The school has recognised this and from next year all pupils will follow an ICT course in Years 10 and 11. Marks for current Year 11 GCSE coursework indicate that standards overall are below average and that some boys and girls underachieve based upon standards attained in Year 9. Staffing difficulties have meant that learning has been disrupted for a significant part of the two-year course. Staffing is now stable and teaching and learning for Year 10 are now good with standards in line with expectations. Pupils are on course to achieve standards that are average or above. Coursework shows care in presenting software solutions for running a theatre. A local theatre visit has been very effective in helping pupils understand the context of their work. Clear monitoring sheets are used to track coursework and very good use is made of the Internet to provide on line resources for the course.

134. The strategic leadership of information and communication technology, particularly to support cross-curricular developments, is unsatisfactory. The teacher in charge of the subject has several other areas of responsibility that are demanding of time. The day-to-day management of a difficult staffing situation has been good and sustained the taught lessons. Standards, however, have been affected and reliable assessment of work has not taken place. The shortcomings in accommodation are recognised and improvements planned for the future. The scheme of work is now being developed in line with the national initiative to improve the challenge and continuity of learning and sustain development of ICT in line with the expectations of curriculum 2000.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- GCSE results in German, especially for girls, are consistently well above average.
- Good written coursework provides a basis for improving standards in Years 10 and 11.
- Pupils' positive attitudes and good relationships support learning well.

Areas for improvement

- In Years 7 to 9, assessment is not well used to support learning.
- Marking does not provide pupils with guidance on how to improve.
- Planning for improvement fails to address some important issues, some of which were raised at the previous inspection.

135. Teachers' assessments for 2002 show that standards at the end of Year 9 are above average. Girls did better than boys, by a widening margin. By the end of Year 11, GCSE results at grades A* to C in French were just above average, largely because girls did much better than girls nationally. In German, results were well above average. Girls did better than boys, with the margin increasing considerably. Pupils did better in German than in all other subjects. All pupils entered gained a grade. Small numbers of lower-attaining pupils gained accreditation through a Foreign Languages in Tourism course.

136. Inspection evidence shows standards to be consistent with, but not above, national expectations by the end of Year 9. In the context of attainment on entry to the school, this means that most pupils are not doing as well as might be expected. Higher-attaining pupils exchange information successfully, but standards in pronunciation are disappointing. Their comprehension skills are sound, but writing is under-developed. Though they practise quite demanding language in routine exercises, there is little evidence of extended accounts. Average-attaining pupils need more time or repetition, but understand key details and communicate information orally and in writing, largely in descriptive work. Lower-attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in small groups and respond well to high quality teaching. Such a group in Year 9 participated well in carefully stepped oral tasks and could ask for and give directions in French by the end of the lesson.

137. By the end of Year 11, work seen shows standards to be above average, representing good achievement in Years 10 and 11. Girls are more confident orally and sustain conversation well. In a Year 10 German lesson on food, pupils showed good comprehension skills, but pronunciation was insecure. The major improvement is in writing. In coursework on personal fitness, local area and past holidays, higher-attaining pupils write accounts and descriptions at good length, in accurate and sometimes complex language, in both French and German. Boys produce some good work, though girls achieve high standards more consistently. Average and lower-attaining pupils in French produce less complex and more repetitive language, which communicates effectively. Evidence from examination results shows listening to be the weakest skill, reflecting the limited amount of French and German heard in lessons. Pupils following the Foreign Languages in Tourism course enjoy their work and consolidate earlier learning.

138. During the inspection, teaching and learning were disrupted by staff absence and non-specialist staff taught some lessons. The quality of teaching seen was satisfactory overall. There is evidence of good teaching in Years 10 and 11 to prepare pupils for GCSE examinations. The main strengths in teaching are in planning a good range of activities to improve different skills; brisk delivery, so that pupils are engaged and remain on-task; and

good class management. Lesson objectives are shared and there is usually a recap to give pupils an awareness of progress. Teachers use a range of approaches, such as pair, group and whole class activities, because they can trust pupils to get on with their work. This reflects pupils' positive attitudes to language learning and the good relationships seen in lessons, both of which promote learning well. Teaching would be more effective if the foreign language were used more consistently to provide a model and to raise expectations. Written work in Years 7 to 9 is under-developed because there is no systematic planning of opportunities to experiment with the language learned. Though there has been some progress in using information and communication technology, provision is unsatisfactory, as it was at the previous inspection. Marking is weak. There is scant evidence of comments that provide explanation or guidance on how to improve. Consequently, despite a developing focus on language rules, the subject does not make as strong a contribution as it should to pupils' literacy skills. Much homework consists of learning tasks, so that opportunities are lost to extend the more able in teaching groups through challenging, open-ended tasks. Planning to extend gifted pupils is recent.

139. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Since the previous inspection there has been good progress in monitoring teaching and learning through lesson observation and work sampling, though this has not improved the quality of marking. Good analysis of GCSE results has led to improved provision for speaking and writing, though the weakness in listening and the gap between boys and girls have not attracted remedial action. The department recognises the weakness in the use of assessment to improve learning and provide accurate teachers' assessments in Years 7 to 9. Schemes of work are in an early stage of development. Planning for improvement has appropriate priorities but lacks sharpness in terms of the action to be taken. Disappointingly, the plan fails to include issues identified at the previous inspection, such as marking and information and communication technology. Residential visits to the Rhineland and Lourdes make a good contribution to the social and cultural development of those who participate. Overall there has been satisfactory improvement since that inspection, largely because results are improving.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- Pupils learn very well as a result of very effective teaching by the new head of department.
- The arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good.
- Information and communication technology is used effectively to enhance pupils' performing and composing skills.
- Opportunities for pupils to perform outside lessons are good and contribute well to pupils' personal as well as their musical development.
- Pupils show very good attitudes to the subject as a result of the very good relationships between the teacher and pupils.

Areas for improvement

- The accommodation is very limited and does not support class or instrumental teaching.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to sing in lessons.
- There are not enough untuned and tuned percussion instruments to support teaching and learning.

140. There are no national tests in music at the end of Year 9. Teachers' assessments for 2002 show both boys and girls attaining slightly above average. However, staffing difficulties at the time make these results unreliable. At GCSE the proportion of pupils attaining the higher

grades A* - C in 2002 was below average and slightly better than in 2001. Very few pupils gained A* and A grades. Results have not been as good as at the time of the previous inspection but numbers are small and statistically unreliable.

141. Most pupils enter the school with below average musical skills but by the end of Year 9 standards are average. This represents good progress and is the result of the very effective teaching pupils have received this year. Pupils in Year 9 have very good knowledge and understanding of Caribbean music. They can play the melody of 'Rivers of Babylon' on keyboards in time to a backing rhythm. However, their composing skills and use of chords are less well developed. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the smaller classes and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. The impact of the very good teaching is also evident in Years 7 and 8 where pupils are already attaining standards that are above average for their age. They are developing good keyboard and information and communication technology skills and understanding of how different parts of a piece of music fit together through using keyboards effectively to record different layers of their compositions. Higher attaining pupils can create their own melodies and harmony parts over a chord pattern. Pupils in Year 7 show good understanding of the features of blues music and improvisation. Pupils in Year 8 read music well and can perform combinations of different rhythm patterns fluently and accurately.
142. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about pupils' attainment by the end of Year 11 because no lessons were available and pupils' coursework had been sent to the GCSE examiners. The work of Year 10 pupils is as expected. Pupils show good knowledge and understanding of the features of Indian music. Most pupils receive instrumental or singing lessons, which have a positive effect on all aspects of their musical understanding.
143. The quality of teaching is very good and has improved since the previous inspection. As a result, pupils learn very well. Music lessons are well planned with very clear learning objectives which pupils understand. Activities are effectively integrated so that pupils make good gains in developing their musical understanding, skills and knowledge through regular opportunities to listen, perform, compose and appraise. The teacher's skilful use of questioning challenges pupils' thinking and ensures that they participate. This is often followed by a short written activity. As a result, pupils increase their knowledge and understanding of musical vocabulary and the features of a style or music tradition such as Reggae in a Year 9 lesson. The teacher's lively pace, very effective methods and efficient classroom organisation enable pupils to concentrate well and make very good progress despite the poor accommodation. In a Year 8 lesson an ingenious card game, combining the use of literacy and numeracy skills, kept pupils on their toes and reinforced their learning of note lengths and names. Pupils show very good attitudes and behave very well because of the teacher's high expectations and respect for them. Information and communication technology is used appropriately and effectively to support pupils' composing and performing skills. However, the planning for higher attaining and talented pupils could be more sharply focused so that they make even more progress in lessons. There are also some missed opportunities for developing pupils' singing skills.
144. The head of department has already made very good progress with his plans for moving the department forward, particularly in raising the profile of music in the school. This is as a result of very effective teaching and the many opportunities for pupils to be involved in performing music such as the Easter Extravaganza and the Eskdale Arts Festival. The school offers a good range of instrumental and vocal tuition provided by the local education authority Music Service and there is a developing number and range of extra-curricular activities to support and enrich pupils' personal as well as musical development. The school choir is well attended by keen and committed pupils from all years who achieve a very good standard. Arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good. Pupils are assessed regularly using the National Curriculum levels and are given targets for improving their work.

Information and communication technology resources are very good. However, the number and range of untuned and tuned percussion instruments are inadequate to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum and the range of music books in the library is too limited to support the music curriculum effectively. The music accommodation is poor because the classroom is small, there are no practice rooms and there is a lack of storage. Consequently, pupils do not have opportunities to work in groups with instruments and instrumental lessons take place wherever there is a space. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Pupils achieve well and reach above average standards.
- Knowledgeable teaching with high expectations of pupils means that pupils learn a great deal.
- Pupils are very keen and work hard in lessons.
- A well-attended and very good range of extra-curricular activities helps pupils to achieve well.

Areas for improvement

- Opportunities for pupils to gain accreditation in physical education are limited.
- Assessment, although carried out and recorded, is not being used to raise the aspirations of pupils.
- Information and communication technology is not used extensively enough in lessons.
- Lessons are too short and some activities are rushed.

145. Year 11 pupils were not in school for physical education lessons. Almost all the Year 11 pupils following the Junior Sports Leader Award gained the award this year. This group successfully gained nationally accredited units in games activities as part of the two-year course. These results continue the good level of achievement of previous years.

146. The inspection focused on the work of Year 10 pupils. The standard of work is above average and pupils achieve well in relation to their prior standards. This is due to pupils' very positive attitudes and teaching that has high expectations. Pupils have secure and consistent skills in a range of games. They use tactics thoughtfully and effectively. In cricket, boys persevere and succeed in mastering the square cut shot to the offside, aided by useful and informed guidance from their peers. In rounders, girls organise their fielding teams well, making the best use of each other's strengths. They work well as a team. Pupils lead warm-up activities confidently selecting activities relevant to the activity or sport. Pupils following the sports, recreation and leisure course use a good range of tennis strokes in singles play. Higher attaining pupils execute ground strokes with good style and efficiency placing shots accurately to outwit their opponent. The school does not offer a GCSE course in physical education. Pupils with a flair for the subject and an interest in pursuing studies in sport related course in the next phase of their education do not have the opportunity to gain this accreditation.

147. Standards of work in Year 9 are above average and pupils achieve well in relation to their average standards in physical education on entry to the school. Good teaching with high expectations, pupils' very good behaviour and positive attitudes and a wide range of opportunities beyond lessons all result in a good rate of learning in lessons and good progress over time. In Year 9, pupils demonstrate a good technique in athletics and an understanding of the underlying mechanical principles. They are keen and well practised observers of performance and give useful advice to each other on how to improve. A good proportion of girls successfully include the 'shift' steps to enhance the quality of their putting of the shot.

Year 9 boys show determination and good understanding of sprinting tactics in carrying out a 400-metre run. Their secure understanding enables them to identify how to improve.

148. Teachers know their pupils very well. They make suitable adjustments to tasks and equipment to match individual differences and enable pupils with special educational needs to make good progress. In most lessons, teachers place greater demands on talented pupils, although occasionally the opportunity to demand more is overlooked, for example, in evaluation tasks.
149. Teachers are encouraging yet challenging, setting high expectations of pupils. Consequently, participation in lessons is high; pupils have safe, smart kit; they work hard, behave well and want to succeed. Pupils know exactly what teachers expect of them because the purpose of each lesson is very clear and teachers make constant reference to lesson objectives when feeding back to pupils. Teachers' guidance on how to improve reflects a high level of understanding of the subject and helps pupils to make rapid progress. Technical language is used frequently and explained well. Good display of key words and their explanations in indoor areas reinforces the terms. Prompt starts to lessons, a good pace and activities that provide challenge to pupils in developing in all parts of the National Curriculum are key features of many lessons. For example, teachers expect pupils to take a lead in warm-up activity. In an excellent Year 8 rounders lesson the teacher prepared pupils to work independently very well, helping each other to improve on their skills. Higher attaining pupils met the additional challenges posed in adapted fielding practices. Teachers' very good questioning, as seen in a Year 10 cricket lesson, checks what pupils have learnt and develops their understanding. Teachers pay good attention to ensuring safe practice. Occasionally teachers miss opportunities to challenge higher attaining pupils, to give responsibility to pupils to work out solutions to problems, to structure evaluation tasks clearly or to pay enough attention to improving pupils' understanding of technical terms. These features are sometimes associated with non-specialist teaching. In some lessons, activities are rushed because the 50-minute lesson does not allow enough time to practise skills or apply tactics in a game and learning is not reinforced.
150. The subject is well led and managed. There is a clear understanding of what works well and what needs to be improved. Close monitoring and support of teaching has helped to develop effective teaching and improve on issues raised at the last inspection. Performance management systems have been effective in helping to successfully tackle underachievement among groups of girls. Information and communication technology is developing but is not used extensively enough. Assessment systems have improved but targets are not used fully to help raise the aspirations of pupils and teachers.