

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **HADLEIGH HIGH SCHOOL**

Hadleigh, Suffolk

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124795

Headteacher: Mr. R. Davies

Reporting inspector: Christopher Christofides  
7834

Dates of inspection: 15 - 19 May 2000

Inspection number: 187011

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11 to 16

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: High Lands Road  
Hadleigh  
Suffolk

Postcode: IP7 5HU

Telephone number: 01473 823496

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr. D. Farthing

Date of previous inspection: 12 February 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Christopher Christofides	Registered inspector	Equal Opportunities	What sort of school is it?
			What should the school do to improve further?
			The school's results and pupils achievements.
			How well are pupils taught?
			How well is the school led and managed?
Christine Haggerty	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for it's pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Morton Phillips-Davies	Team inspector	Science	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.
Tony Porter	Team inspector	Modern Foreign Languages	
Anthony Burdis	Team inspector	Art	
David Davies	Team inspector	English	
David Naylor	Team inspector	Mathematics	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Olivia Hall	Team inspector	Special Educational Needs	
		Physical Education	
Roy Knowles	Team inspector	Design and Technology	
Jim Kidd	Team inspector	History	
Martin Oldfield	Team inspector	Geography	
Stephen Lavender	Team inspector	Religious Education	
David Howe	Team inspector	Information Technology	
		Music	

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The Office for Standards in Education  
Alexandra House  
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Hadleigh High School is a five-form entry 11-16 mixed comprehensive school situated in the small rural town of Hadleigh in the south of the county of Suffolk. There are currently 639 pupils on roll. This figure has dropped gradually from the figure of 703 in 1995. 9.4 percent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is nearly half the national average. The school has a large rural catchment area as well as Hadleigh itself. There are seven main feeder primary schools. Few pupils attending feeder primaries opt for other Suffolk schools. Overall, the attainment of pupils on entry is at the national average. There are very few pupils from ethnic minorities. The school has low mobility. One hundred and twenty four pupils have special educational needs, a proportion broadly in line with the national average. Fifteen pupils are statemented, broadly in line with the national average.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is a good school which provides a good standard of education to its pupils. The pupils are given a very good start in Key Stage 3 and make steady progress throughout the school. As they move through the school the majority attain standards above or well above those expected for their age in all subjects except for information technology where they are below the national standard. The quality of teaching is nearly all satisfactory or better. Two thirds of the teaching is good or very good. The leadership and management of the school is good overall. The headteacher and key staff have worked hard to raise standards and maintain improvements for all the pupils. The governing body is generally effective in fulfilling its main responsibilities. The school provides good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Most pupils achieve high standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science and standards above national expectations in most other subjects.
- Good teaching. Teachers have good subject knowledge and understanding, manage their pupils well and have effective teaching methods.
- The pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are very good and a strength of the school.
- The progress of pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good.
- The procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are very good.
- The procedures for monitoring attendance, promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour are very good.
- The links with parents are good and parents' contribution to their children's learning at school and home is good.
- The leadership and management of the school is good.
- Governors understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school.

#### **What could be improved**

- The provision of pupils' spiritual development in lessons and throughout the school.
- The monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance and taking effective action.
- The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching.
- The use of assessment information to guide curricular planning.
- The teaching of numeracy across the curriculum.
- The effectiveness of the school's use of new technologies including information technology across the curriculum.
- Meet statutory requirements in information technology across the curriculum, and religious education in Year 11.
- Meet statutory requirements in a daily act of collective worship,

The strengths of the school significantly outweigh those that need improvement. The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan. The plan will be sent to all parents and guardians of the pupils at the school.

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in February 1996. The school has made good progress in addressing most of the key issues identified in the last inspection report. Standards have risen in Key Stage 3 and the already high standards in Key Stage 4 have been maintained. Good progress has been made in meeting the needs of all pupils especially those with special educational needs. These pupils have better access to resources and teaching matched to their abilities and needs. Development planning is now more effective. The roles of heads of faculty and heads of department are now clearer and more effective. Liaison with contributory primary schools is now good. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection and now over two thirds of teaching is good or very good. The law relating to collective worship is still not fulfilled. This was an outstanding issue from the last inspection. Some progress has been made in information technology but pupils' insufficient experience of information technology remains a key issue. Standards in music have improved and the hazards of dust and fumes in art have been eliminated.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 16 year olds based on average point scores in GCSE examination results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
GCSE examinations	B	A	B	B

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

At Key Stage 3 the test results in English, mathematics and science over the last three years show good improvement. In comparison with similar schools, all the core subjects results are well above average. In comparison with all schools the results in all core subjects are also well above average.

At the end of Key Stage 4 the proportion of pupils achieving 5 or more, grade A\* - C, at 57 percent, is above the national average and well above the average achieved by similar school.

The average point scores in GCSE examination results in 1999 at 41.3 per pupil are above the national average and above those of similar schools. The school has maintained these high standards for the last five years. Overall, the performance of boys and girls is similar in the average GCSE points in comparison to boys and girls nationally. Overall, the girls achieve better than the boys. Achievement in English, mathematics, French and geography is significantly better than other subjects. Standards of work seen are high in all subjects apart from religious education where standards are just in line with the locally agreed syllabus and information technology where standards are below national expectations. Pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language make good progress throughout the school.

The school has met its statutory targets that have been set and agreed by the governing body.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have a positive attitude to their school and they are keen and eager to attend school. Attitudes to learning are very good throughout the school. Informal relationships between staff and pupils are also very good. The vast majority of pupils are confident and cope well with everyday life in the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is very good in lessons; they are polite and courteous and conduct themselves very well in the corridors, in the dining hall and in the playground. They respond well to school rules and appreciate that teachers are there to help them. The pupils' behaviour is a strength of the school.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships in the school are very good. Pupils care about each other and show respect towards teachers, other adults and their fellow pupils. Pupils respond well when given time to reflect on their experiences, for example, in lessons teachers provide good role models and encourage their pupils to have respect for the values, feelings and opinions of others.
Attendance	Attendance overall is good and well above the national average. There is a low level of unauthorised absence. Punctuality is very good. Lessons usually begin and end on time. Routines are well established and registers are taken twice daily as required.

The development of pupils' attitudes, values and personal development is very good and a particular strength of the school. The pupils' behaviour in and around the school is very good. Attendance has improved and is well above the national average for similar schools.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory or better in almost all lessons. Over two thirds of the lessons are good or very good. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection where one in ten lessons were unsatisfactory and only half were good or better. The best teaching is in Key Stage 4, where all the lessons are satisfactory or better, with over seven in ten good or better. In Key Stage 3 the teaching is nearly all satisfactory or better with over six in ten of the lessons good or better. Overall, the quality of teaching in English, mathematics and science is good throughout the school. Some of the best teaching was seen in English, geography, design technology, history and physical education. Literacy across the curriculum is taught effectively. Numeracy across the curriculum is weak. In all subjects, teachers' subject knowledge and understanding is good. Teachers' planning is generally satisfactory. Their teaching method and their management of pupils is good. Their use of support staff is satisfactory. Their use of resources and homework is satisfactory. Teachers' assessment and feedback are satisfactory. Teacher expectations are satisfactory for meeting the needs of most pupils, but in some lessons teachers do not always challenge all pupils effectively. Pupils respond well to their teachers and work well, making good progress in their learning. They maintain their interest both when working independently and co-operatively. They concentrate on their work and remain on task. Pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language also learn well and make good

progress.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality of learning opportunities offered to pupils is generally good. The curriculum is relevant and generally broadly based. It meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum in all but two subjects; information technology across the curriculum and religious education in Year 11 where insufficient time is given to meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. The school effectively promotes literacy, but numeracy skills are not effectively applied across the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and these pupils take a full part in the work and life of the school. Requirements of the Code of Practice for special educational needs are met. Individual education plans are relevant and up to date, and learning is effectively supported to ensure these pupils make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is good. Support is adequately targeted and used.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. The moral and social aspects of the curriculum are very good and a strength of the school. Cultural provision is good. Spiritual development is unsatisfactory. Few opportunities are taken to reinforce pupils' spiritual awareness in some assemblies and in the majority of lessons throughout the school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is a caring school that offers its pupils a pleasant environment in which to learn. Pupils feel secure and well looked after. They have a good understanding of what the school expects and know the rules and sanctions. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good but the use of assessment information by teachers to guide future planning is unsatisfactory.

Overall, the quality of learning opportunities offered to pupils is good. The curriculum is relevant and generally broadly based. It meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum in all but two subjects. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. This is a caring school that offers its pupils a pleasant environment in which to learn.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Overall, the leadership and management of the school by the headteacher and key staff is good. The headteacher leads well and is able to communicate a clear sense of purpose and educational direction to all members of staff who work effectively together. The school's aims and values are reflected in its work, especially the attitudes and behaviour of the pupils and their willingness to learn.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil most of their statutory responsibilities well, but not the ones in relation to information technology, religious education in Year 11 and in the daily act of collective worship. They have an increasing role in shaping the direction of the school and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They effectively apply the principles of best value.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school carries out a thorough analysis of its performance. There is a useful monitoring programme through which this information is gathered. Nevertheless, the monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching is unsatisfactory. Also the school's evaluation of its own performance and taking effective action especially setting challenging targets is underdeveloped.
The strategic use of resources	Learning resources are used well throughout the school. Staff are deployed well according to experience and expertise. The accommodation is good, used well and enhances learning. The adequacy of learning resources is satisfactory. The school's use of new technology including information technology to access the curriculum is unsatisfactory.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The standards the school achieves are good</li> <li>• Good support and guidance for pupils with special educational needs</li> <li>• Good attitudes and values</li> <li>• Good standards of behaviour</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They would like to be better informed about how their children are getting on in school</li> <li>• They would like the school to work more closely with them</li> <li>• They would like to feel more comfortable when they approach the school with a question or a problem</li> </ul>

The inspection team supports the positive comments made by the many parents who made comments to the team either at the meeting or through questionnaires. The team did not find sufficient evidence to support the view of aspects that needed improving but nevertheless the headteacher and governors should address the needs of the significant minority of parents who expressed these views.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and achievements**

1. At Key Stage 3 the test results in English, mathematics and science over the last three years show good improvement. In comparison with similar schools, all the core subjects results are well above average. In comparison with all schools the results in all core subjects are also well above average.
2. In the National Key Stage 3 tests in 1999, the percentage of pupils attaining Level 5 or higher in English was above the national average. Girls performed better than boys in terms of average points, as is the case nationally. However, the performance of boys in the 1999 tests was above the national average. In mathematics the proportion of pupils attaining Level 5 and above was well above the national average. The proportion of pupils achieving Level 6 and above was also well above the national average. Results in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 3 were higher than those achieved in English and science particularly the percentage of pupils achieving Level 6 or above. Over the last four years the average National Curriculum points attained by pupils in mathematics was well above the national average.
3. Results in the 1999 end of Key Stage 3 assessments in science show that a significant proportion of pupils performed well above the national average at Level 5 and above, whilst at Level 6 they are above the national average. This is also the case for both boys and girls separately and for the four-year average 1996-99. The results in 1999 are also well above those for schools in similar circumstances. Pupils' attainment in science in the end of Key Stage 3 tests in 1999 was below that in mathematics and above that in English. These are very good results indicating that pupils make very good progress in science at Key Stage 3.
4. In 1999, GCSE results in English and English Literature were above the national average. In 1999, girls achieved better results than boys in both subjects, to a greater extent than was the case nationally. However, boys and girls' results were both higher than the equivalent results for boys and girls nationally in both subjects. Results in GCSE Drama were above the national average in 1999. Pupils' attainment in speaking and listening, reading and writing are above national expectations in both key stages. Pupils read a wide variety of novels, plays and poetry, including some texts from other cultures. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils are able to show understanding of the structures of texts and the ways in which meaning is created. The pupils' literacy standards are very good.
5. The proportion of pupils achieving grades A\* - C in the GCSE examination in mathematics in 1999 was well above the national average. The average points score at GCSE in mathematics was also well above the national average. Over the past three years the percentage of pupils achieving A\* - C has risen. When comparing the 1999 results of pupils' attainment in mathematics to the results achieved in other subjects in the school, the relative attainment of pupils in mathematics is significantly better than expected differences based on national results. There were no significant differences seen in pupils' attainment across the four attainment targets. High levels of investigative and presentational skills were seen in one pupil's investigation on the movement of maggots on different surfaces.
6. GCSE results in science have remained above the national average for the past two years as they were at the last inspection. In 1999 the proportion of pupils achieving grades A\* - C was well above the national average. Over the last three years the results in science have not been as good as in a number of the other subjects taken by the pupils. Standards in science towards the end of Key Stage 4 remain above the national average and pupil achievement is at least satisfactory.
7. At the end of Key Stage 4 the proportion of pupils achieving 5 or more grade A\* - C, at 57 percent, is above the national average and well above the average achieved by similar

school. The average point scores in GCSE examination results in 1999 at 41.3 per pupil are above the national average and above those of similar schools. The school has maintained these high standards for the last five years. Overall, the performance of boys and girls is similar with boys doing slightly better than girls in the average GCSE points in comparison to boys and girls nationally. Overall, the girls achieve better than the boys. Achievement in English, mathematics, French and geography is significantly better than other subjects. Standards of work seen are high in all subjects apart from religious education where standards are just in line with the locally agreed syllabus and information technology where standards are below national expectations. Pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language make good progress throughout the school.

8. The school has met its statutory targets that have been set and agreed by the governing body.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

9. Pupils respond well to the school and what it has to offer both in lessons and to the very good range of extra-curricular activities provided. The school provides an impressive range of extra-curricular sport, music and other activities in which there is a high level of pupil interest and involvement, with large numbers of pupils taking part. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour were good, very good or excellent in more than four fifths of lessons. This supports the quality of learning and of relationships in the school and has a positive affect on the standards of attainment.
10. Standards of behaviour are generally very good in lessons, around the school, at lunchtimes and as pupils arrive at and leave the school. The incidence of exclusions is very low. Teachers trust pupils to behave sensibly at lunchtime when a number of classrooms are open to pupils. Outside of lesson times many pupils work sensibly and unsupervised on a range of activities. Pupils are generally polite and courteous to their teachers, to their classmates and to visitors. There are a few pupils who exhibit challenging behaviour on occasions, but these are dealt with effectively by the staff. There is a clear behaviour and discipline policy, which includes sections on school rules and rewards and sanctions. Pupils appear to value the merits, certificates and other rewards they receive.
11. The aims of the school include the development of concern and respect for others and the development of social skills. The school is very successful in realising these aims. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and teachers are generally very good. There are many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility, particularly in Years 10 and 11 where these include the roles of Form Captain and Games Captain. In these roles Years 10 and 11 pupils organise and take lead in activities which include younger pupils in the school.
12. Pupils work well together; this is seen in the opportunities provided in many subjects, such as investigative work in science, a Year 7 study of nomadic life in history and a Year 10 business studies simulation, where they work collaboratively with their peers. Pupils generally cope well and work confidently both individually and in groups. The pupils' self-assessment of their progress also assists in the development of pupils' confidence and self-esteem.
13. Pupils are sensitive to the impact of their actions on others and show respect for others' values and beliefs. This is seen in the way they move around the school, work together and treat the school environment. Pupils in science, undertaking environmental fieldwork, were generally careful not to damage the environment and in another class they expressed their concern on an environmental issue. This is also the case in religious education when pupils are developing their views on religion and in English where pupils evaluate talent and respond appropriately.
14. Teachers provide good role models and encourage their pupils to have respect for the values, feelings and opinions of others. Pupils with special educational needs are integrated very well into the life of the school and the lessons. Pupils also displayed their high levels of concern for others in the huge response to a charity appeal organised by the school to support the victims of the Mozambican flood.

15. No oppressive behaviour was seen during the inspection but parents reported some incidents of bullying. There is no evidence of sexism or of racism but the school, as in the last inspection, acknowledges that some incidents of bullying have occurred. These have taken place largely off school premises. There is a clear statement and policy on bullying. The issue of bullying is taken seriously and when it occurs is normally very effectively dealt with.
16. The attendance of pupils is good. During the 1998/99 school year, the attendance level of 93.2 percent was well above the national average of 91 percent and similar to the attendance rate noted in the previous report. However, the majority of pupils attend school regularly and this has a positive effect on their progress and attainment. The level of unauthorised absences is low and broadly in line with the national figure. The school has recently introduced first day contact with parents and this has resulted in truancy being identified quickly and the appropriate action taken. The school works closely with parents to bring about improvements in attendance.
17. Punctuality on arrival at school is very good amongst the majority of pupils, many of whom arrive by bus. Registers conform to regulations. Registration is usually taken quickly and efficiently and provides an appropriate start to the school day. Lessons generally begin on time although there can be some minor time loss, generally due to movement around the school, during lesson change over times.

#### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

18. The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory or better in almost all lessons. Over two thirds of the lessons are good or very good. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection where one in ten lessons were unsatisfactory and only half were good or better. The best teaching is in Key Stage 4, where all the lessons are satisfactory or better, with over seven in ten good or better. In Key Stage 3 the teaching is nearly all satisfactory or better with over six in ten of the lessons good or better.
19. Overall, the quality of teaching in English, mathematics and science is good throughout the school. Some of the best teaching was seen in English, geography, design technology, history and physical education. Literacy across the curriculum is effectively taught. Numeracy across the curriculum is weak. In all subjects teachers' subject knowledge and understanding is good. Teachers' planning is generally satisfactory. Their teaching methods and their management of pupils is good. Their use of support staff is satisfactory. Their use of resources and homework is satisfactory. Teachers' assessment and feedback are satisfactory. Teacher expectations are satisfactory for meeting the needs of most pupils, but in some lessons teachers do not always challenge all pupils effectively. Pupils respond well to their teachers and work well, making good progress in their learning. They maintain their interest both when working independently and co-operatively. They concentrate on their work and remain on task.
20. Teaching in English is good in both key stages; sometimes it is very good. Most teachers in the department have good subject knowledge. Teachers of English are competent in teaching basic literacy skills. Teaching expectations are high in most lessons and teachers set challenging work. Teachers use a variety of different teaching methods, including writing frames and word lists for lower ability pupils. In some lessons, however, differentiated work is not provided for pupils of widely differing abilities. Pupils are managed well and good use is made of time, support staff and resources. Pupils are interested in their work and concentrate in most lessons. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, particularly in Key Stage 3.
21. The quality of teaching in mathematics overall is good, all lessons seen were satisfactory or better. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of mathematics. In mathematics lessons pupils are managed well. Teachers are insistent on high standards of behaviour. Some teaching is very good. In the most effective lessons teachers set clear objectives and there is a good balance between demonstration, individual work and explanation. However,

in a number of lessons the pace and challenge in the teaching is more moderate. In planning for lessons, learning objectives are frequently precise but they are rarely shared with the pupils, consequently, opportunities for pupils to assess and evaluate their own learning are missed. Teachers of mathematics teach numeracy skills effectively. Nevertheless numeracy skills across the curriculum are not effectively taught in many other departments, including science.

22. The quality of teaching in science is good overall at both key stages. It was good or better in about two-thirds of lessons seen. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen and some very good and excellent teaching was seen in Years 8 and 9. The quality of teaching is better in Key Stage 3 than in Key Stage 4. The generally good teaching has a positive impact on promoting pupils' learning of both scientific skills and knowledge in both key stages. Pupils develop their ideas and increase their understanding at a good pace in Key Stage 3, especially towards the end of the key stage but this is not sustained at the same high level in Key Stage 4. The good subject knowledge displayed by the teachers is generally used effectively in their teaching. Pupils are very effectively managed and this is a particular strength in the department. Teachers make good use of praise to motivate pupils and support their learning.
23. The quality of teaching in art, design technology, history, geography, modern foreign languages, physical education was judged to be good overall. The teaching in music, information technology and religious education was judged to be satisfactory overall. Teachers' use of homework to reinforce and extend what the pupils learn in school is satisfactory.
24. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is good. Learning support assistants are positive, conscientious and are successful in making demands on pupils' learning. Individual education plans are presently under review because of staff changes. Teachers and learning support assistants keep good records on special education needs pupils. Pupils with statements have regular progress reviews, though pupil self-evaluation has yet to be developed. Management of pupils' learning and behaviour in lessons is good and those pupils needing individual attention are well supported by specialist teachers who work regularly with them to improve their learning and behaviour attitudes. Planning between teacher and learning support assistants has been effectively improved since the last inspection. The teaching of pupils who have English as an additional language is good.

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

25. The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum. The curriculum reflects the school's aims and values. Although the curriculum includes the full range of national curriculum subjects it is unsatisfactory because it does not meet the statutory requirements for information technology, religious education in Year 11, or a daily act of collective worship. The daily "thought for the day", for example, is generally not used effectively to provide pupils with a time for reflection and thought.
26. In Key Stage 3 pupils are taught a common core of nine subjects, religious education and personal, social and health education. In Key Stage 4 pupils are taught a common core of six subjects and religious education, information technology, personal, social and health education and life-skills. In addition pupils can choose two further subjects. Pupils in Key Stage 4 can also follow a diploma in a vocational education course. In Year 11 each pupil has one lesson of information technology each week. In Year 11 pupils have one lesson of religious education each fortnight.
27. There has been a whole school focus on literacy across the school. In the mathematics area, for example, key words are displayed in each classroom. However, there is no whole school approach to the teaching of numeracy skills.

28. The provision of extra-curricular activities is very good. There is a full range of sporting activities outside lesson times giving pupils the opportunity to take part in sport within the school and in competition with other schools. There is a school orchestra and a school swing band and as well as school concerts, performances are given out of school at venues in the area. Pupils in Year 7 visit France and there are exchange visits with pupils from other European countries. Pupils have the opportunity to visit the theatre and regular visits are arranged to London theatres as well as residential trips to Stratford-upon-Avon. In addition to the Key Stage 4 fieldwork visits in history and geography, pupils in Key Stage 3 also undertake visits linked to their studies in humanities. There is a homework club and the library provides good facilities for pupils who choose to read or use the computer for recreation or study during lunchtimes.
29. Pupils are given opportunities to take on meaningful responsibilities. For example there are form captains and sports captains for each form. When pupils are appointed to particular roles they carry them out effectively. The work done by pupils to raise money for a range of charities is impressive and very successful.
30. Curriculum provision for pupils with special education needs is good in both key stages and meets the requirements of the Code of Practice. The recently revised individual education plans have good features and effectively meet the requirements of pupils with special educational needs. Pupils with statements are effectively monitored and interim and annual reviews meet statutory requirements. All pupils with statements have access to a broad and balanced curriculum and those with a physical disability have full access to classrooms and mobility training in physical education. Learning support staff are generous in their welfare support of special needs pupils outside their normal hours. Provision for English as an additional language is very good. Three pupils in Key Stage 3 are withdrawn for individual support from English for one lesson a week. There is a lack of a whole school policy for gifted and talented pupils.
31. The school's provision for personal, social and health education is very good and comprises a pastoral and guidance programme in all years and a life-skills course in Key Stage 4. Careers education in Key Stage 4 is also very good and involves pupils in the preparation of letters of application and CVs, mock interviews and careers conferences. Pupils are encouraged to prepare fully for work experience in Year 10, using relevant Information Technology software, and they also spend time considering time management and target-setting. Revision techniques and the completion of the National Record of Achievement are key elements of the Year 11 courses.
32. The life-skills course in Years 10 and 11 comprises modules on health and sex education, citizenship, careers and safety. Particularly effective in this area is the business simulation exercise entitled "Euroducks" where pupils are introduced to company structures, factors affecting business, teamwork and the European dimension. Teaching in this project is excellent, pupils thoroughly enjoy the activities and they make great gains in knowledge about the world of trade and industry.
33. The different elements of the PHSE courses are managed very well, supported strongly by both the pastoral, careers and life-skills teams. The major strengths of the initiative are high levels of teacher skill and commitment, in-depth planning and the curriculum content which serves to integrate all activities into a cohesive whole.
34. There are 16 pupils in Year 11 and 21 pupils in Year 10 following the Diploma in Vocational Education course. Pupils of all abilities follow the programme and where appropriate pupils are entered for a GNVQ foundation module in addition to the DVE assessment. The life-skills and work experience programme followed by all pupils in Key Stage 4 complements the taught DVE programme of study and ensures that pupils follow a curriculum which provides opportunity for pupils to demonstrate achievement against all the required assessment criteria of the DVE course and the GNVQ unit.
35. The school has good links with the feeder primary schools. There are regular meetings with

the local school which has a sixth form and a member of staff from that school teaches a module on the Key Stage 4 life-skills programme.

36. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. The moral and social aspects of the curriculum are very good and a strength of the school. Cultural provision is good. Spiritual development is unsatisfactory. Few opportunities are taken to reinforce pupil's spiritual awareness in some assemblies and in the majority of lessons throughout the school.
37. The school provides some opportunities for pupils to reflect on values, feelings and beliefs, however, within the curriculum few opportunities are taken to reinforce pupils' spiritual awareness. The school makes very good provision for moral and social education. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on aspects of right and wrong. They take responsibility for their own behaviour and the behaviour of others. The school's provision for cultural development is good.
38. Since the last inspection progress has been satisfactory. The school has maintained a curriculum that encourages pupils to consider their own values, attitudes and beliefs in terms of their personal relationships and membership of society. Pupils' welfare and guidance remains strength of the school. The range of extra-curricular opportunities remains very good. In some subjects, such as mathematics, strategies for ensuring that the curriculum is better differentiated have been introduced. However, the curriculum fails to meet statutory requirements and opportunities for the spiritual development of pupils is unsatisfactory.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

39. Overall, procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils welfare, health and safety are very good. The school has retained the very high standards of care reported in the last inspection. The hard-working site manager and caretaker regularly carry out risk assessments of the premises and the caretakers carry out all minor repairs. Very good procedures are in place to ensure all equipment is regularly tested. Legal requirements are met with fire regulations and all electrical testing. Very good procedures are in place to attend to pupils' medical conditions and all first aid incidents are dealt with appropriately. Pupils are well supervised at all times by a very committed and caring staff. The school liaises regularly with outside agencies to ensure appropriate support is available to pupils. There are very good procedures in place for child protection and all staff have received guidance on child protection awareness.
40. The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are very good and meet legal requirements. The school works closely with parents to bring about improvements in pupils' attendance. This includes home visits to parents and pupils by the educational welfare officer. Pupils are presented with certificates for 100 percent attendance.
41. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good. The policy, which emphasises the promotion of self discipline, is reinforced by a system of rewards and sanctions, which is understood by pupils and used very effectively by all staff. Form prizes are given to pupils who have made a significant contribution to life in their form and academic honours are presented at the end of year assembly. Sanctions include incident slips which have to be signed by parents, detentions, demerits, pupils put on report and internal exclusions.
42. Procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are very good. The school's anti-bullying policy is clear and comprehensive. Scrutiny of records show that procedures are followed and bullying is dealt with effectively. Form tutor's heads of year and heads of lower and upper school are available if pupils are worried. The local policeman, who is also a school governor, holds a weekly lunch- time surgery and pupils regularly drop in. Selected Year 10 and 11 pupils act as form captains for forms in Years 7 and 8. This provides another route for pupils to voice any fears they may have. Although there is no central record of

bullying incidents, the school records all incidents of bullying and the information is placed in the pupil's file.

43. Procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development are good. Concerns are discussed at regular pastoral committee meetings and appropriate action taken as necessary. Teachers share information daily at staff briefings. The learning support assistants are briefed regularly to ensure effective support and monitoring of pupils' personal development. The pastoral support system is very effective in monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development. The personal development of pupils with special needs is also effectively monitored and the progress they make is included on their individual education plans. The school makes very good use of a range of outside agencies to support pupils.
44. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory but the use of assessment information to guide curriculum planning is unsatisfactory. Procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress are satisfactory.
45. There is a school assessment policy that gives guidance to departments on marking and recording. Most departments have their own assessment policy based on the school policy. Departments are required to mark significant pieces of work regularly in such a way that it is possible for them to gauge the progress the pupils are making and understand what the pupil needs to do to improve. Some departments, such as English meet this requirement but in other departments, such as mathematics who set regular assessments to gauge the progress of individuals, the sharing with pupils of what they need to do to improve is less developed. Although the assessment policy provides an appropriate list of key objectives for assessment it is not clear how assessment procedures in departments are monitored. Most teachers keep records of pupil's achievements and some departments such as the mathematics department have central records. Departments such as the modern foreign languages department regularly review individuals' progress at departmental meetings.
46. The school has a large amount of data on pupils and it uses this data to analyse performance over time and compare attainment between subjects in the school and with other schools in the area. For example the school, in partnership with the local education authority, has for the last three years compared teacher assessment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 in foundation subjects with national statistics. The school also uses commercially available age related tests to chart the progress of pupils and be alerted to underachievement. Differences in performance by gender are closely monitored. However, the use of this information to review the curriculum, to guide curriculum planning and to provide curriculum specific targets for individual and groups of pupils is underdeveloped.
47. Reports are comprehensive and meet statutory requirements. The school has introduced mentoring of individual pupils in Key Stage 4 and also some mentoring of pupils in Year 8 but the development of academic mentoring is limited and underdeveloped. All pupils in Year 11 receive a National Record of Achievement that is word processed by the pupils.
48. Since the last inspection the school has extended its use of data and now produces predicted GCSE grades for individual pupils. Although reports remain well received by parents they remain too focused on pupils' efforts and attitudes rather than on progress in the curriculum. Self-assessment is not yet common across subjects. The monitoring of pupils' progress against National Curriculum criteria is underdeveloped.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

49. Overall, the effectiveness of the schools' links with parents' and the impact of parents involvement in the work of the school is good. Parents' views of the school are satisfactory. The majority of parents are happy with what the school provides and achieves but some parents would like more information about their child's progress and the opportunity to work closely with the school. A number of parents felt uncomfortable in approaching the school with questions or a problem.

50. The quality of information supplied to parents on pupils' progress and attainment is satisfactory. The governors' annual report to parents and the school prospectus are well presented, informative and carry all the required information. There are regular newsletters, which provide parents with up to date information on what is happening in the school. Pupils' annual progress reports to parents are adequate.
51. There is one parent-teacher consultation evening each year for each year group and some parents report that this is not enough. They would like more consultation evenings. The school provides an additional meeting for the parents of pupils in Year 7, Year 9 and Year 10 to discuss the next stage of education. In Year 11 there are focus meetings for groups of parents to discuss the progress of their child, if they are not on target for their predicted grades. However, not all parents have the opportunity to attend these meetings. Some parents commented that the school provides good information if a pupil is underachieving, but insufficient information if the pupil does not have a problem. Parents of statemented children are not always provided with copies of all reports before the annual review.
52. The contribution of parents to pupils' learning at school and at home is good. The home school agreement was introduced this year and has been signed by almost all parents. Seventy percent of parents attend the parents' consultation evenings. Parents report that the school fully involves them if there are concerns about a pupil's behaviour or attendance and they work in partnership with the school to bring about improvements. Parents attend all events that involve their children. Parents are involved with their children's learning through homework, although they and pupils report that homework is not always set in accordance with the school's homework timetable and policy.
53. The hard-working parents association is professionally organised. There is a wide range of social and fund-raising activities which are very well supported financially by parents. Last year the school raised a large sum of money to purchase a new mini bus. Two parent governors help in the school on a regular basis and are very supportive of the school and its aims.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

54. Overall, the leadership and management of the school by the headteacher and key staff is good. The headteacher leads effectively and is able to communicate a clear sense of purpose and educational direction to all members of staff who work effectively together. The school has made good improvements in addressing many of the issues from the last inspection report. For example, by improving the quality of teaching, the improvement in development, and meeting the needs of low attaining pupils.
55. The school has a clear set of aims and values, which have helped maintain the standards achieved since the last inspection. These are reflected in its work; especially the rise in standards at Key Stage 3. The commitment given to the school by the governing body, headteacher, all members of staff and parents has been maintained since the last inspection.
56. The governors fulfil most of their statutory responsibilities well, but not those in relation to information technology, religious education in Year 11 and in the daily act of collective worship. They have an increasing role in shaping the direction of the school and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They effectively apply the principles of best value.
57. Termly governors' meetings take place, in addition to these various working parties and committees also meet. The governors receive information from the headteacher at these meetings on a range of issues, including the school development plan. Governors make regular visits to the school and are beginning to contribute to the formulation of the development plan in order to shape the long-term strategic direction of the school.
58. The school development plan is a working document put together by the headteacher and the staff and focuses on curriculum issues for development and improvement. The school

carries out a thorough analysis of its performance. There is a useful monitoring programme through which this information is gathered. Nevertheless, the monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching is unsatisfactory. Also the school's evaluation of its own performance and taking effective action, especially setting challenging targets, is underdeveloped.

59. The school is staffed appropriately with suitably qualified teachers. Teachers know their pupils well. There is a mix of experienced and new colleagues, with a good range of curriculum expertise. There is a high level of commitment from both full and part-time members of staff. The learning support assistants are generally effective in their role and give good support to pupils with special educational needs. The school secretary and other administrative staff enhance the smooth running of the school. The midday and kitchen staff, support the school ethos along with the caretaking and cleaning staff who maintain the building to a good standard.
60. Arrangements for the professional development of staff are good. Provision from the local education authority is used well, but opportunities are also sought from other providers. The induction of new members of staff and newly qualified teachers is good. Statutory requirements are met in terms of teacher appraisal and newly qualified teachers.
61. The accommodation is generally well looked after and much improved since the last inspection. Overall, the accommodation is good and allows the curriculum to be taught effectively. The school has a satisfactory range of resources to support the curriculum. Classrooms are well managed and organised, with resources for pupils easily accessible. The school's use of new technology, including information technology, to access the curriculum is unsatisfactory.
62. The school's administration systems are good, overall. The budget is managed efficiently by the governors, who are well supported by the headteacher and his staff. Financial planning is good especially in supporting educational priorities. The finance committee works effectively and reports regularly to the full governing body meetings. Specific grants made to the school for special educational needs have been used appropriately.
63. Taking into account the full range of criteria, the standards achieved by the pupils, the quality of provision, the leadership and its ethos, the school is judged to be giving good value for money.

#### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

64. The governors, headteacher and staff should build on the improvements the school has made since the last inspection and develop the school's strengths in order to raise standards further by developing:
  - (1) The provision of pupils' spiritual development in lessons and throughout the school;
  - (2) The monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance and taking effective action;
  - (3) The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching;
  - (4) The use of assessment information to guide curricular planning;
  - (5) The teaching of numeracy across the curriculum;
  - (6) The effectiveness of the school's use of new technologies, including information technology, across the curriculum.

**In addition to the weaknesses identified above, the following issues should be considered for inclusion in the action plan.**

- (7) Meet statutory requirements in information technology across the curriculum, and religious education in Year 11.
- (8) Meet statutory requirements in a daily act of collective worship.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	151
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	147

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	16	50	32	2	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	653
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	50

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	15
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	124

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	6.2
National comparative data	7.9

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.6
National comparative data	1.1

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	58	72	130

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	41	50	45
	Girls	56	56	54
	Total	97	106	99
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	75 (73)	82 (73)	76 (68)
	National	63 (65)	62 (59)	55 (56)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	34 (39)	48 (50)	28 (37)
	National	28 (35)	38 (36)	23 (27)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	42	39	51
	Girls	57	49	59
	Total	99	88	110
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	76 (67)	68 (76)	85 (80)
	National	64 (61)	64 (64)	60 (61)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	34 (34)	30 (40)	38 (37)
	National	31 (30)	37 (37)	28 (30)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	72	61	133

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	35	66	70
	Girls	40	58	60
	Total	75	124	130
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	57 (69)	93 (98)	98 (98)
	National	46.6 (46.1)	90.9 (87.5)	95.8 (93.4)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	42 (42.6)
	National	38 (36.9)

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	16	75
	National		n/a

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	1
Indian	8
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	635
Any other minority ethnic group	3

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

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

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	39.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.4

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Education support staff: Y7 – Y11**

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	226

#### **Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	77
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#### **Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11**

Key Stage 3	23.3
Key Stage 4	19.1

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	Apr 99 – Mar 00
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	£
Total income	1669653
Total expenditure	1645961
Expenditure per pupil	2576
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	23692

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	653
Number of questionnaires returned	103

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	37	55	7	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	37	55	3	1	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	19	56	6	6	13
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	19	59	17	5	0
The teaching is good.	26	66	1	3	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	17	56	20	5	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	32	49	13	5	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	35	0	2	4
The school works closely with parents.	15	54	23	4	4
The school is well led and managed.	31	54	9	2	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	30	52	11	3	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	26	56	8	5	5

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

### **ENGLISH AND DRAMA**

65. In the National Key Stage 3 tests in 1999, the percentage of pupils attaining Level 5 or higher was above the national average. The inspection evidence confirms that the attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 is above national expectations. In the 1999 tests, girls performed better than boys in terms of average points, as is the case nationally. However, the performance of boys in the 1999 tests was above the national average for boys in the tests.
66. In 1999, GCSE results in English and English Literature were above the national average. In 1999, girls achieved better results than boys in both subjects, to a greater extent than was the case nationally. However, boys' and girls' results were both higher than the equivalent results for boys and girls nationally in both subjects. Results in GCSE Drama were above the national average in 1999.
67. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 3 and good progress in Key Stage 4. Appropriate targets are set for pupils and lessons are prepared carefully. The department is aware of the issue of girls' out-performance of boys in national tests and is taking action to deal with it. GCSE results in English Literature were better than results in GCSE English in 1999 and the department is taking action to deal with this by focusing on the teaching of grammar and the implementation of the school's Literacy Policy in Key Stage 3.
68. Pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is good in both key stages. In most lessons pupils respond well to questions asked by teachers and contribute when asked to do so. In a minority of less successful lessons teachers do not always encourage pupils sufficiently to ask questions. Key Stage 3 pupils are able to make appropriate responses in pair work, for example, when talking about the story of 'The Pardoner's Tale'. They can also take part in an effective presentation based on 'The Seven Ages of Man'. Key Stage 4 pupils talk purposefully in revision lessons, for example, when discussing the origin of quotations from 'The Lord of the Flies'. In a GCSE Drama lesson pupils are able to discuss characterisation and the use of movement and space when planning a presentation based on 'The Crucible'.
69. Standards of reading are above national expectations in both key stages. In Key Stage 3 pupils make good progress in reading. Pupils read a wide variety of novels, plays and poetry, including some texts from other cultures. The library is well stocked with fiction and reference works, including magazines and CD-ROMs. Computers are available in the library where pupils may word-process their English work. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils are able to refer to texts when making points, use dictionaries and thesauruses and appreciate texts by Shakespeare, nineteenth century writers and texts from other cultures. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils are able to show understanding of the structures of texts and the ways in which meaning is created. Pupils in both key stages make good use of the library as a resource.
70. Pupils' attainment in writing is above national expectations at the end of both key stages. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils understand language features such as parts of speech, similes personification and can use them in their written work. By the end of Key Stage 4 the work of higher ability pupils is detailed, analytical and comprehensive, for example, in comparative work on 'Jane Eyre' and 'Lord of the Flies'. Pupils draft their work and write imaginative extensions of texts such as 'Macbeth'. Pupils produce imaginative creative writing for the department's magazine 'Watchword'. They can produce work in word-processed format but do not make much additional use of Information Technology in their work.
71. Attitudes to learning are good in both key stages. Pupils' behaviour is good. Most pupils take care with the presentation of their work. Relationships between pupils and teachers are good. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in both key stages.

Additional help is provided for pupils who have difficulty in reading in Year 7. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress. Opportunities are also provided for talented pupils to benefit from additional lessons in Key Stage 3.

72. Teaching is good in both key stages; sometimes it is very good. Most teachers in the department have good subject knowledge. The teaching of the subject by non-specialists is satisfactory. Teachers are competent in teaching basic skills. Teaching expectations are high in most lessons and teachers set challenging work. Teachers use a variety of different teaching methods, including writing frames and word lists for lower ability pupils. In some lessons however, differentiated work is not provided for pupils of widely differing abilities. Pupils are managed well and good use is made of time, support staff and resources.
73. Teachers keep detailed records of assessment and use them to inform their planning. Teachers write comprehensive and diagnostic comments on pupils' work. Pupils are able to assess their own work. Homework is set and marked on a regular basis. In a minority of lessons the pace of work is sometimes slow. Pupils are interested in their work and concentrate in most lessons. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, particularly in Key Stage 3. Assessment is used to guide curricular planning.
74. The department provides an appropriate variety of curricular and other opportunities. The department is closely involved in the school's effective strategies for teaching the basic skills of literacy, including a weekly 'Literacy Focus' and a 'Word of the Week' which teachers discuss with pupils in registration periods. The department organises an annual drama production in co-operation with the music, art and RE departments, and Year 10 Drama pupils, stage a presentation of their work for the benefit of parents. Year 10 Drama pupils also run a Drama Club for Year 7 pupils. The department holds regular theatre trips, including a residential visit to the Globe Theatre in London and Stratford-upon-Avon. An 'Advanced Writers' group meets on a regular basis for those who wish to write creatively. Learning opportunities in Information Technology are limited at present.
75. Management of the subject is good. An appropriate emphasis is given to each of the attainment targets in the schemes of work. The Head of Faculty has a clear job description. The Faculty Development Plan focuses on raising attainment and sets realistic targets. The faculty has helped to develop and implement the whole school Literacy Policy successfully and is currently formulating plans to deal with issues such as raising boys' achievement. Insufficient use is made of Information Technology at present.
76. Accommodation is satisfactory. The Drama Hall is appropriate for its purpose but is occasionally used for other purposes, which reduces its effectiveness for Drama. Rooms are in a good state of repair and have attractive displays of pupils' work. The availability of learning resources is satisfactory for the needs of the pupils with the exception of the use of computers.

## **MATHEMATICS**

77. In the mathematics National Curriculum tests at Key Stage 3, in 1999, the proportion of pupils attaining Level 5 and above was well above the national average. The proportion of pupils achieving Level 6 was also well above the national average. Over the last four years the average National Curriculum points attained by pupils in mathematics was well above the national average for both boys and girls and well above the average for similar schools. The percentage of pupils achieving Level 6 or above was very high in comparison with the average achieved in similar schools.
78. The proportion of pupils achieving grades A\* - C in the GCSE examination in 1999 was well above the national average. The average points score at GCSE in mathematics was also well above the national average points score in the subject. Over the past three years the percentage of pupils achieving A\* - C has risen.
79. On entering the school, pupils' levels of attainment in mathematics are broadly in line with

national expectations. By the time they reach the end of Key Stage 3 pupils are achieving standards which are above the standards expected. Pupils can competently solve simultaneous equations graphically and they are able to change the subject of a formula. The more able are able to solve such equations by elimination. In an investigation on cube shaped solar panels pupils were able to make general statements and give an explanation of their reasoning and the higher achievers were able to justify their generalisations and their choice of mathematical reasoning.

80. At Key Stage 4 pupils consolidate the good progress they have made in Key Stage 3. Pupils working towards the intermediate level GCSE paper, for example, are able to use trigonometry functions, such as sine and tangent, correctly. Pupils working for the Higher GCSE paper can work out the volumes of different types of solids, they can factorise algebraic expressions and solve quadratic equations.
81. Levels of numeracy are in line with standards expected for the more able pupils and for pupils in Key Stage 4. At Key Stage 4 pupils have plenty of opportunity to develop their numeracy skills, for example, in a business simulation exercise pupils in Year 10 were producing company accounts. However, standards of numeracy for other pupils are below expectations. In a middle ability Year 9 class, for example, pupils were not secure in knowing how to change fractions into decimals. In science pupils do not always plot graphs correctly. There is currently no whole school strategy to support the pupils' development of numeracy skills across the school.
82. Pupils' learning in mathematics is good. Most pupils work productively and at a pace appropriate to the teaching. Pupils in Year 11, for example, were showing good application and independence in their work in preparation for the GCSE examinations. Where they are given opportunity pupils sustain their concentration and thinking and learn for themselves. In a year 7 class, for example, pupils showed good application to their work on mean averages. The amount of work completed by many of the pupils is impressive and although this work is monitored carefully pupils are not always clear about what they could do to improve and make progress in their learning.
83. The quality of teaching overall is good; all lessons seen were satisfactory or better. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of mathematics. Teachers teach numeracy skills effectively. In lessons pupils are managed well. Teachers are insistent on high standards of behaviour. Some teaching is very good, in one such lesson with a mixed ability Year 7 group the teacher had high expectations of the pupils, challenging them through her questioning and setting a brisk pace enabling very good learning to take place. In the most effective lessons teachers set clear objectives and there is a good balance between demonstration, individual work and explanation. However, in a number of lessons the pace and challenge in the teaching is more moderate. In planning for lessons learning objectives are frequently precise but they are rarely shared with the pupils, consequently opportunities for pupils to assess and evaluate their own learning are missed.
84. Pupils' attitudes to mathematics are very positive. In class their behaviour is very good. When working individually pupils work quietly and on-task. They ask questions of the teacher politely and with consideration for others. When a pupil answers or asks a question other pupils listen carefully. Mathematics exercise books are generally neat and well looked after. Overall, pupils behave in a mature way enabling effective learning to take place.
85. The progress of pupils with special education needs is good. Liaison with the special educational needs department is developing and recently completed individual action plans make more reference to mathematics but this is an area that needs further development.
86. Overall, Information Technology is not used effectively to support the teaching of mathematics. There are a number of computers available for use within the department but they are rarely used. This is because they are old and the software available on them is of limited use. Pupils in Key Stage 4 who are working on the graduated assessment in mathematics programme have access to a revision software package.

87. The mathematics curriculum covers all strands of mathematics although the opportunities for investigational work for pupils in Years 7 and 8 are limited. There is a weekly mathematics club for pupils in Key Stage 3 which, is well attended. All the mathematics rooms have a range of pupils' work displayed and some of the displays, such as the display linking mathematics to the Titanic, provide interesting mathematical connections.
88. Work is diligently marked and teachers follow up mistakes and misconceptions. Pupils are regularly tested and a folder of completed test papers is compiled for each pupil. The department has a central record of the results of internal and externally set tests and this is currently being computerised. The use of learning objectives within lessons to assess learning and evaluate teaching is underdeveloped. The use of curriculum targets in mathematics is underdeveloped.
89. The department is well led and well managed. It is a team that has worked together for a number of years. Liaison between the department and the primary feeder schools is good. The department has appropriate strategies to ensure that they are informed about the National Numeracy Strategy. There is a departmental development plan that has appropriate target areas and priorities for further development. However the evaluation and development of teaching within the department is underdeveloped at this time.
90. Since the last inspection progress has been maintained. The department continues to be well managed and led. There has been a slight increase in the percentage of pupils achieving grades A\* - C at GCSE level. The quality of learning remains good and pupils show good application. Teaching is good overall and there is a scheme of work, which currently is being updated, that provides a structure for the planning of lessons. There are adequate resources and the library is appropriately stocked with mathematics books. However, Information Technology remains underdeveloped, and there remains more work to do to ensure that pupils are better able to monitor their own work and progress.

## SCIENCE

91. The attainment profile in science of pupils on entry to the school is broadly in line with that seen nationally.
92. Results in the 1999 end of Key Stage 3 assessments show that a significant proportion of pupils performed well above the national average at Level 5 and above, whilst at Level 6 they are above the national average. The results overall are well above the national average. This is also the case for both boys and girls separately and for the four-year average 1996-99. The results have remained fairly constant over that period. The results in 1999 are also well above those for schools in similar circumstances. Pupils' attainment in science in the end of Key Stage 3 tests in 1999 was below that in mathematics and above that in English. These are very good results indicating that pupils make progress significantly above what could be anticipated in Key Stage 3.
93. Pupils' levels of attainment in the work seen and in lessons in Key Stage 3, particularly for those pupils in Year 9, are above average and their achievement is good. There were no significant differences seen in pupils' attainment across the four attainment targets. In one Year 9 class higher attaining pupils were beginning to show a facility in the use of symbolic equations to describe chemical reactions. In another, lower attaining pupils were able to undertake a simple experiment on cooling and graph their results to show the effect of limiting heat losses through conduction, convection and radiation. High levels of investigative and presentational skills were seen in one pupil's investigation on the movement of maggots on different surfaces.
94. GCSE results have remained above the national average for the past two years as they were at the last inspection. In 1999, 61 percent of pupils obtained the higher grades in the range A\* - C. Over the last three years the results in science have not been as good as in a number of the other subjects taken by the pupils. In the last two years a higher percentage of

girls than boys have achieved the higher grades A\* - C, but more boys than girls obtain the highest grades. Standards in science towards the end of Key Stage 4 remain above the national average and pupil achievement is at least satisfactory. In some instances attainment in their coursework was better than in the end of unit tests. A higher attaining group was observed to be secure in the knowledge of simple circuits, the use of Ohm's law and the relationship between the resistance of a wire and its length. The folders indicated pupils working above national expectations.

95. The department stresses the importance of literacy, particularly through its focus on the development of technical language. Numeracy is less well developed with instances of graphical work going uncorrected, and deficiencies in numeracy affect the confidence of some pupils in undertaking some aspects of work in science. There is at present virtually no use of Information Technology in science and this is a weakness in the department. The development of pupils' literacy, numeracy and Information Technology skills are not explicitly planned for within the current schemes of work.
96. High standards are evident in pupils' attitudes to science at Key Stage 3, and this is brought about in no small measure by the very good classroom management of pupils exhibited by all members of the teaching staff. In 50 percent of lessons seen, pupils displayed very good or excellent attitudes to work and they were good in a further 40 percent of lessons. This was seen, for example, in the way in which they set up apparatus and clear it away at the end of each practical session. Pupils work safely and very effectively in small groups, supporting each other.
97. In Key Stage 4 the pupils' interest in science, their levels of motivation and most surprisingly their willingness to take responsibility for their learning appears to diminish. Pupils' attitudes in 75 percent of the lessons seen were good but there were no lessons seen where the pupils' attitudes were very good or excellent. The much better pupil attitudes in science at Key Stage 3 than at Key Stage 4 are a factor in the higher levels of achievement seen in that key stage. The relationships both between staff and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves are good. A few pupils present challenging behaviour, but this is managed very well by the teachers and is not allowed to develop or to disrupt the work in the lesson.
98. The quality of teaching is good overall and at both key stages. It was good or better in about two-thirds of lessons seen. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen and some very good and excellent teaching was seen in Years 8 and 9. The quality of teaching is better in Key Stage 3 than in Key Stage 4 and this is reflected in the quality of learning and the achievement of the pupils. The generally good teaching has a positive impact on promoting pupils' learning of both scientific skills and knowledge in both key stages. Pupils develop their ideas and increase their understanding at a good pace in Key Stage 3, especially towards the end of the key stage, but this is not sustained at the same high level in Key Stage 4.
99. The good subject knowledge displayed by the teachers is generally used effectively in their teaching. Pupils are very effectively managed and this is a particular strength in the department. Support for pupils with special educational needs is good and this enables them to make good progress. Teachers make good use of praise to motivate pupils and support their learning.
100. A good feature of the schemes of work is the identification of learning objectives at three levels. However, while learning objectives are normally included in teachers' planning, they are not always shared with the pupils, so that whilst the tasks are clear to the pupils they are not always clear about their purpose and this limits progress. This is most noticeable with the lower attaining pupils who do not have the ability to infer the purpose of the work. Teachers normally adopt teaching strategies appropriate to the work and the purpose of the lesson. In many of the better lessons a variety of approaches are used effectively to maintain pupils' interest and motivation. There was, however, limited use in Key Stage 4 of pupils' own everyday knowledge and experience to create interest and extend the learning.
101. Most lessons have a common focus, and in some Year 7 lessons that contain pupils with a

wide range of abilities the work is not sufficiently differentiated to accommodate the range of pupil ability and does not sufficiently recognise the pupils' Key Stage 2 experience. In the better lessons the work provides an appropriate level of challenge for the pupils, and in the best lesson seen the teaching ensured a high level of challenge, the work progressed at a very good pace and pupils made excellent progress.

102. Books are marked diligently. The quality of marking is variable and in addition the members of department do not use the same criteria for allocating effort grades, which can be confusing for the pupils. Appropriate homework is generally set. Assessment is based mainly on the regular end of unit tests. National Curriculum levels are only used towards the end of Year 9. Pupils' attainment and progress is effectively assessed, but there is no central record in the department of the results of assessment, which is used in planning further work and to monitor pupils' progress against perceived potential. The use of assessment information in planning, needs to be developed.
103. The department contributes positively to pupils' social and moral development in a number of ways but opportunities are also missed. There is minimal contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
104. Basic aspects of the organisation of the department are effectively undertaken. The technicians provide efficient and effective support for the teachers and this makes a good contribution to the quality of provision, as does the good accommodation. Resources are generally adequate for purpose and used effectively except for the use of Information Technology, which is weak.
105. The department is staffed by an experienced group of teachers. They are personally well organised and individuals have developed good practices in areas such as aspects of assessment, the analysis of assessment data to support learning or the high quality of marking consistently undertaken by one teacher. However, the potential in the department is not being fully realised due to limitations in the management and co-ordination of the work in the department. These are fundamentally in three areas, the first being the lack of easily accessible guidance and agreement on approaches to aspects of work such as marking. The second is a lack of central systems, particularly for assessment, to support curriculum and teachers planning of their work and to monitor pupils' progress and set targets for them. The third is underdeveloped aspects of the schemes of work. In addition, whilst the quality of teaching is good, it is capable of further improvement through more effective monitoring and sharing of good practice.
106. Overall, the department is performing well but it has the potential with strong leadership to become even better.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

107. The standards that pupils achieve at the end of both key stages are at or above the levels expected for pupils of the same age nationally. The proportion of pupils achieving grades A\* - C in GCSE examinations in 1999 was above the national average. These results are similar to those obtained in previous years. The attainment of girls, however, is higher than that of boys. The department is aware of this and continues to look into ways of raising boys' achievement.
108. Standards achieved by the end of Key Stage 3 are in line with or above the level for pupils of the same age nationally. However, pupils' infrequent use of the vocabulary specific to the subject hinders in depth discussion of pupils' work and that of other artists and designers. Since the last inspection the use of sketchbooks to reinforce and support the work undertaken in class has improved. The department must consider implementing the Year 7 "sketchbook checklist" which suggests experiments with materials, techniques and research techniques across the whole of the key stage.
109. Standards achieved by the end of Key Stage 4 are good with the majority of pupils achieving standards that are at or above the levels expected of pupils nationally. Sketchbooks

continue to be used and support pupils' examination work and many display experiments with differing art techniques and research into the work of other artist and designers. Pupils still find it difficult, however, to use the subject's specialist vocabulary to discuss their work.

110. Specialist in-class support for pupils with special educational needs is good but the department must ensure that pupils of all abilities are given appropriately challenging work.
111. The quality of specialist teaching in both key stages is often good and never less than satisfactory. Teachers have good relationships with pupils, which encourage learning within an orderly environment. Lesson plans are clear and lesson objectives are made clear to pupils at the start of lessons. Use is made of the work of other artists and designers from a range of cultures for example, Aboriginal art in Year 7, but a lack of space in the department inhibits comprehensive displays to support pupils' projects.
112. Since the last inspection little progress has been made in the use of Information Technology. Although there are occasional examples, in both key stages, of pupils using Information Technology to support research, for example printouts of famous works of art, there are many missed opportunities for pupils to use Information Technology to enhance their learning. The department must address this issue as a matter of urgency if it is to meet the statutory requirement of Curriculum 2000 by September 2000. The art department is open for pupils to use during lunch times and after school. Many pupils take advantage of these extra-curricular opportunities to continue work started in class or to further their examination studies.
113. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils are good. Pupils are considerate to others and show a pride in their work. This behaviour makes a positive contribution to their learning in the subject.
114. The subject is soundly managed and routine administration and organisation are good. The department has worked hard to develop consistent assessment, recording and reporting procedures for all pupils. The department has the support of a part-time technician who makes a valuable contribution.
115. The subject has made progress since the last inspection particularly in the use of sketchbooks and the work of a variety of artists and designers from a range of cultures to support pupils' learning. However, urgent consideration must be given to ensuring that all pupils make appropriate use of Information Technology to support their learning.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

116. Standards are good overall and have improved since the last inspection. At the end of Key Stage 3 the proportion of pupils reaching Level 5 is above national expectations. The proportion reaching Level 6 is much lower than national expectations. Performance by girls is way ahead of that by boys and more than that found nationally. Performance in GCSE examinations is significantly above the national figure. Results in textiles, food studies and graphic products are well above the national figure; the result in resistant materials is below, previously also having been well above.
117. Classroom observation and the scrutiny of work confirm this picture of good attainment. Pupils make products of good quality better than they design and evaluate them. In Key Stage 3, pupils are able to initiate a range of design ideas in all the contributing areas with the best successfully developed, safely and accurately marked out, shaped, assembled, finished and tested. In Key Stage 4 many pupils produce extensive research and investigation in often very good folios. A good range of ideas are sketched, with those pupils on the Graphic Products course adding comparative annotations and showing good graphical knowledge, understanding and skill. In textiles pupils have a good knowledge of fibres and modern materials and their common usage. In resistant materials they very successfully make quality furniture with accuracy, attention to detail and a good finish.

118. A very positive attitude to learning is a feature of all lessons and is strongly supported by the provision of very good judicious advice, support and evaluation that advances learning and avoids frustration. Pupils respond well to challenge during effective use of questioning to probe understanding and develop thinking. They enjoy what they are doing, concentrate and work hard throughout lessons. They understand what they are doing and where improvement is needed. Behaviour is very good; well supported by the pace and interest of the work. Pupils co-operate and collaborate very well responding to instructions promptly in lessons and take responsibility as their own learning deepens as they progress through the school, culminating in a mature attitude in Year 11. However, they take infrequent opportunities to reflect and comment on their own work.
119. Teaching is good, sometimes very good in both key stages. Teachers have good subject knowledge and teach the subject in an interesting way thus sustaining a good pace. The teaching enables pupils to extend their knowledge and understanding, and encourages them to try out ideas. Demonstrations of practical skills are clear and timed to suit the needs of most pupils. Prior learning and curriculum objectives are discussed with pupils at the beginning of the lesson so that they are aware of its purpose. However, what they precisely have to do before the end of the lesson is rarely made clear to assist subsequent self-evaluation and to improve pupils' time management skills. Classroom management and the insistence on the best behaviour ensures a safe and orderly environment.
120. Resources are well maintained, and easily accessible but provide insufficient support for the less able. The monitoring of pupils' work year by year and its analysis to assess the rate of pupils' progress and to plan their own future teaching is unsatisfactory. The use made of homework in resistant materials is poor and must be used for the completion of work that does not require teachers' expertise or the school's specialist resources.
121. The written curriculum identifies clearly how the subject's aims are met especially in food studies where the added lesson plans provide good guidance for teachers. The rotational course, as currently operating in Key Stage 3, provides the barest coverage of the National Curriculum programme of study for the subject and lacks the necessary coherence and continuity needed to match the pupils' learning requirements and needs. 'Structures' is taught with materials, which will suit the Curriculum 2000 requirements. However, very little electronics and systems and control are taught and yet they become compulsory in September 2000;
122. Pupils are happy, confident and self-disciplined but lack opportunities to reflect on their work and record changes to their design proposal as it develops and is made. The individual help provided to pupils by teachers is good. Health and safety organisation and procedures are also good. Reduced staffing provision has resulted in larger teaching group sizes in practical lessons than those recommended nationally. The assessment and monitoring arrangement of pupil's academic performance are satisfactory.
123. Management of the department is good. The Head of Faculty has needed to take many difficult decisions following a major reduction in staffing and pupil contact time last year. They have generally been the right decisions. The senior management team and governors are very supportive. The organisation, management and maintenance of the accommodation and resources are good. Standards at Key Stage 3 have improved since the last inspection. At Key Stage 4 the quality of the work is significantly better. The quality of the teaching and learning has also improved considerably and expectations remain high.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

124. At the last inspection in 1996 it was reported that the geography department made a positive contribution to the life of the school. The standards achieved by pupils were often above national expectations. Since the last inspection this position has been maintained at Key Stage 4 and results at GCSE have been significantly above national comparisons. For example, in 1999 the GCSE results in geography were above national and county averages with nearly 85 percent of the candidates achieving A\* - C. When compared with national

results, geography is one of the highest achieving departments in the school at GCSE level. The teacher assessment results produced by the department at the end of Year 9 also reinforce this positive picture.

125. The number of pupils choosing to study geography beyond the age of 14, however, is below national and County averages and the numbers are likely to continue to fall this year.
126. The older pupils often exhibit skills and levels of knowledge that are above national expectations. These aspects include their ability to carry out geographical enquiries and to communicate their knowledge to a very high standard. For example, the Year 10 coursework based on the first hand study of Suffolk coastal processes is often very well presented. The pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and Information Technology are often of a high standard and are used to enhance and support their geographical work. Their knowledge of where places are and how they are developing is also often well developed. Pupils are aware of a range of environmental issues both locally and globally. Many are able to use news media to identify topical issues that relate to geography.
127. Most pupils observed respond readily to the challenge of the tasks being set and are willing to concentrate on them. Some of the pupils in Year 9 did not sustain the highest level of commitment throughout the lessons but most persevered throughout. Pupils can select appropriate information, often by using Information Technology but progress in this aspect of their work is sometimes hindered by the lack of up to date book resources. Many are confident learners and are able to work in groups and to contribute orally to lessons.
128. Pupils display very positive attitudes and behaviour. They are courteous and often work well with each other. They are usually self-disciplined and most have adopted good work habits, although some do not concentrate in a sustained way. They care for school property and often exhibit pride in their work. This was a particular feature of the majority of the older pupils. A minority have not followed the requirements of the GCSE course and have not been entered for the examination.
129. The quality of teaching is good and often very good. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject, are very experienced and have worked together for many years. Since the last inspection there is evidence that they have been working to cater for the differing abilities of the pupils in most classes. There is a good measure of support from Learning Support Assistants. The teachers manage the pupils well and ensure a good level of firm but effective discipline. Work is marked regularly but the objectives for individual lessons are rarely communicated to pupils. There are some good stimulating geographical displays. There is an unusually high level of Information Technology expertise displayed and one teacher in particular has made a significant contribution in this area.
130. The department is aware of these positive results. It is also aware of the need to develop aspects of its work; some of these aspects were indicated during the last inspection and are in need of urgent attention. The department must provide a range of fieldwork experiences for the younger pupils. The Key Stage 3 curriculum must be updated. Printed materials and map resources must be replenished.

## **HISTORY**

131. On entry to the school, attainment in history is in line with national expectations. At the end of Key Stage 3 attainment is above expectations and the majority of pupils have made good progress in acquiring and using historical skills. For example, they can discuss the options open to the Allies when dealing with the defeated Germany in 1919. In addition, they can give different opinions about the execution of Charles I and support their ideas with well thought-out reasons. At the end of Year 11 pupils' attainment is above that expected nationally. The percentage of pupils gaining A\* - C grades at GCSE has improved steadily over the past three years. In 1999, 65 percent attained the highest grades compared to 56

percent nationally. They handle sources well and are adept at evaluating a variety of evidence in their search for the truth.

132. In all years pupils behave well, showing real interest in the subject. They have very good relationships with their classmates and with their teachers and are willing to discuss and develop themes during lessons. They are often willing to answer questions and are also delighted for others who experience success. Pupils are invariably on task and display mature approaches to study, not only in lessons but also in the library when they spend time in research as part of homework assignments.
133. The quality of teaching is a major strength of the history department. Teaching is never less than satisfactory and in 80 percent of lessons it is good or very good. There is very good teaching in both key stages. Teachers work long and hard to provide the utmost support for their pupils and produce high quality resources in order to meet the learning needs of all. Moreover, pupils in Years 10 and 11, in particular, receive very good advice on examination technique. Pace of lessons is good and teachers ask challenging questions to motivate and to engage their pupils. Regular and consistent marking of written work supports these high expectations. Teachers treat their pupils with dignity.
134. The high quality of teaching offers pupils a variety of learning experiences. From a study of the inter-war years and a consideration of the reasons why important decisions were taken in relation to Hitler, for example, pupils are now aware that the past is best understood by reference to its own standards and values. Furthermore, pupils' imagination is fostered by the emphasis on stories about the spread of the plague: teachers read with real expression and pause just at the right moments in order to whet the appetites of their already fascinated pupils. These good examples of teaching and its impact from Key Stage 3 are augmented in Year 10 by the study of Alexander Fleming, when pupils are encouraged to empathise with this important scientist and thus gain greater insight into factors which bring about change.
135. The curriculum at both key stages is broad and balanced, fully meeting statutory requirements. The course begins with a module entitled "What is History?" From scrutiny of pupils' work, the course continues in a logical manner and pupils build up a bank of historical skills which they use to complete assignments. The subject-matter and teaching methods employed ensure that pupils' abilities to form opinions backed by evidence are enhanced. Pupils are encouraged to think for themselves. Pupils who sometimes find things difficult are supported well by teacher-produced resources designed to explain difficult concepts in a different way. Pupils take part in field trips and attend revision conferences, and the department is now looking at possibilities for organising history trips lower down the school.
136. The contribution of the history department to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Awe and wonder are evident in many lessons, particularly when pupils are studying gruesome aspects of the Black Death. Teachers are good role models who trust their pupils to act in a mature manner, but yet also insist on high standards of behaviour.
137. The high levels of commitment of the teachers and the sensitivity with which they treat their pupils are major elements, which confirm that the department cares deeply for the progress, both academic and social, of its pupils. Teachers plan their lessons very well and motivate their pupils through history games, drama activities and a wealth of pictorial evidence. The department is now looking at ways of enhancing its assessment practice in order to make pupils in the lower school more aware of National Curriculum levels.
138. Accommodation is good and classrooms display pupils' work. Learning resources are adequate overall and good in some areas. Library provision is extensive and there is a wide collection of video films and CD-ROM titles.
139. The department has made good progress since the last inspection. Pupils now benefit from a wider range of resources to cater for their different learning needs. Teachers have spent much time considering how best to incorporate Information Technology into its scheme of

work and, whilst there is still some way to go, pupils are now using CD-ROM and the internet to assist them with research. There are good examples of word-processed assignments in pupils' files.

140. The department has good and effective management and leadership. All staff speak highly of each other and they share, not only a vision for the teaching of history, but also a commitment to improvement. The department has good capacity for continued success.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

141. Standards of work in both key stages in Information Technology (ICT) are below expectations. There are core ICT lessons in every year. In addition, pupils can opt to take GCSE in Key Stage 4. Within ICT lessons, standards of learning are satisfactory. GCSE results in 1999 were slightly above the national average. Work is organised around a series of worksheets that cover various common software packages in a variety of contexts. Most concepts, however, are only covered once within each key stage. Progress within lessons can be good but the skills learnt are not developed or reinforced in other subjects.
142. There are few teachers delivering ICT. Some other teachers have appropriate skills but these are not exploited. Many do not have the skills, or have not received sufficient staff development to share the teaching and in doing so help integrate ICT across the curriculum. In ICT lessons good expectations are set, although learning objectives are not sufficiently defined and are not progressive. Standards of behaviour and the motivation of pupils for their work is good and pupils show respect for the equipment when working with others and in discussions with teachers.
143. Planning of ICT across the curriculum is poor. The level of staff awareness as to the potential and uses within their own subjects is very weak. Strategic planning for ICT is underdeveloped and many subject schemes of work do not address ICT. There is no effective policy for ICT implementation across the curriculum.
144. In some areas of the school these issues have been recognised but there has been little positive action to audit what is and should be happening in all subject areas, to change staff attitudes and address the problems of insufficient and outdated computer hardware. There are a few areas of sufficient practice. In Humanities for instance, pupils in Year 8 create charts to compare employment patterns in England and Canada. In Music fluent use of computers linked to electronic keyboards was seen where pupils were exploring combinations of sounds and composing pieces of music. There is some limited use in food technology and languages departments. These uses are the result of individual enthusiastic teachers rather than resulting from coherent curriculum planning. Pupils were not able to describe, or recall in any detail work in most subjects that involved the use of ICT. During the inspection week, ICT resources around the school, including a second teaching room, were regularly and frequently observed not being in use.
145. The methods used for assessment are weak. Little written work or computer printouts contain constructive comments. National Curriculum levels determined at the end of Key Stage 3, are not secure without a more rigorous scheme of assessment. A set of brief discussions between individual pupils and a teacher to determine a grade for a Certificate of Achievement in ICT at the end of Key Stage 4, were cursory and limited to simply checking activities.
146. Despite the progress made since the last inspection there are a number of outstanding issues. Investment in new computers was made at that time and the older stock distributed around the school. The new computers were networked in the main ICT teaching area. Pupils regularly use it at lunchtimes. This network has a range of relevant software resources. There is very restricted access to the internet, and whilst good management

information is regularly drawn from the office computers, the systems are very outdated and are only now being upgraded to a satisfactory level. The school is currently planning to make substantial improvements to its hardware from government grants designated to link the school to the National Grid for Learning.

147. An attempt to address the lack of subject context is made in the activities within ICT lessons with exercises relating to, for instance, travel and tourism, and local history. However, the lack of opportunities to carry out any real investigative work, and to discuss how ICT impacts upon our lives means that the school is not fulfilling its statutory requirements in ICT at Key Stage 3. Many of the aspects are barely addressed. At Key Stage 4, there is also a failure to meet the National Curriculum requirements because of the lack of ICT in the majority of subject areas.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

148. Standards in French are above the national average for the subject at the end of both key stages. In German at Key Stage 3 standards are below average, but in line with what can be expected given the limited curriculum time available to the subject. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils have made significant progress and standards in German are also above the national average for the subject. In both subjects the GCSE results in 1999 were well above the national figure for those gaining A\* - C grades including a significant number of A\* and A grades. The relative performance of boys and girls was in line with national expectations.
149. The quality of teaching is good overall. Lessons are well planned and most cover all four attainment targets of speaking, listening, reading and writing, although in the main planning does not specifically take account of the needs of pupils of all abilities. Lesson objectives are not shared with pupils at the start of lessons often enough nor is the learning consolidated at the end. Lessons are characterised by a good working atmosphere and good relationships between teacher and pupils. Teachers manage pupils well. Pupils respond enthusiastically in the best lessons and are fully involved throughout, making good progress. In some lessons the more able were not always extended. Expectations were not always high and pace was moderate. As the GCSE results demonstrate, however, progress over time for the more able pupils is good.
150. The attitudes of the pupils to French and German and their behaviour in lessons are in the main very good. They participate willingly in the range of activities offered and are particularly enthusiastic when they are fully actively involved in oral and paired or group work. In general the girls are more secure in the accuracy of their oral and written work although there are some notable individual exceptions. The higher attaining pupils show a good grasp of grammar. At Key Stage 4 pupils of all abilities are particularly well supported by materials appropriate to their needs and good use of the internet is made for this purpose. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are not fully developed. Most pupils who participated in the French or German exchange have made particularly good progress. Pupils are also enthusiastic about the day visit to France in Year 7. All these activities contribute well to pupils' cultural development.
151. Since the last inspection standards of attainment have remained high at both key stages and the department has developed well the use of National Curriculum levels for the systematic assessment of pupils' work. Teachers ensure a standardised approach to this process and the outcomes of this assessment inform decisions about planning, pupil grouping, and contact with parents about pupil underachievement. Whilst specific individual pieces of work in exercise books are corrected in detail with marks given, there were very few examples in French of suggestions in exercise books of how pupils might improve and no targets were seen. In the German books seen this was better. The quality of neatness and presentation was often poor from pupils of all abilities and worsened as the pupils got older with no apparent intervention from the teacher. Homework set is relevant and appropriate.
152. The department is effectively led and managed. Teachers share expertise on a regular

basis. The head of department undertaking a systematic programme of monitoring could achieve an even greater positive effect on the quality of teaching and learning in the department. The department must also implement a coherent policy for ICT and for its use by teachers in the classroom. The classrooms are adequately resourced and the displays are stimulating and relevant. Take-up of German in Year 10 is low, at about 30 percent and the number of dual linguists is particularly small given the standards of attainment in the department as a whole. Only one period per week is allocated to German in Years 8 and 9 and this may contribute to this small take-up and certainly affects standards of attainment in German at the end of Key Stage 3. This time allocation is low compared with national averages.

## MUSIC

153. At the end of Key Stage 4, many pupils achieve at and beyond the national expectation. GCSE results are good, although they can involve small groups of pupils. Compositions, often involving a music computer, can be structurally and rhythmically interesting, although melodies can lack shape and tend to 'ramble'. At Key Stage 3 standards are variable. There is an emphasis within class lessons on performing. Pupils' concentration and listening skills when playing pieces as a group are good, resulting in tight ensemble and balance. However, some pupils have underdeveloped reading skills and weak keyboard or fingering technique. This becomes most apparent in Year 9, where many pupils are insufficiently challenged by the music but still struggled to play eight bar phrases with simple rhythms fluently. Compositions tend to be short with little musicality and are often incomplete.
154. Teaching is satisfactory. The level of teachers' qualifications and experience is good. Consistent and good organisation of lessons provides pace, a variety and range of activities and experiences. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to the subject are excellent. They show responsibility in handling equipment, sensitivity and interest in listening to other pupils and in group work, and concentrate on their studies. There is a very good use of published material, recordings that includes unusual multi-cultural music and the electronic, percussion and computers that are regular features of music lessons.
155. The school needs to take further steps to address some aspects identified in the last inspection. Planning should be improved. Learning objectives are not clearly defined or 'mapped' across the schemes of work. Skill development is weak. This is not identified through assessment. Although pupils' work in lessons is marked regularly, there are very few teacher comments on written work, and assessment does not inform the planning of lessons or provide a complete and reliable profile of pupils' knowledge and understanding. The judgements about the National Curriculum levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 are therefore not secure. Reviews of assessment have taken place but a newly introduced assessment record kept in pupils' folders is not used regularly.
156. Pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to talk and write about music at length. Pupils' skills in appraising their own performances and other composers' music are weak. In a Year 8 lessons, for instance, to improve a class performance, it was repeated two or three times, rather than taking the opportunity to allow pupils to analyse mistakes and identify what had to be corrected. Comments by pupils about recorded music in GCSE groups tended to be descriptive, rather than analytical. Addressing this issue would also help to provide better and more secure methods for assessing pupils' work and their understanding.
157. Assessment within instrumental lessons is better. Some string teaching observed was very good. The teacher encouraged pupils to recognise their own mistakes, demonstrated ways of improving bowing control, identified particular points to improve and kept careful notes on progress to inform future lessons. Pupils reacted positively to the energetic and structured

teaching.

158. Music is making a significant contribution in enriching the life of the school and the lives of individual pupils. During the week of the inspection, the school music concert involved over 100 pupils and was enthusiastically supported by parents and other staff. There is very good direction, teaching and management of the numerous extra-curricular music groups. The standards of playing are very good for the size and age range of the school. They include a school orchestra, swing band and choirs who play regularly at local events and undertake foreign tours. Pupils' enjoyment and enthusiasm are very evident in all these activities. They reflect the more general emphasis that is evident throughout the school for celebrating and developing an aesthetic appreciation of the arts.
159. Music is well equipped. The department has been resourceful in acquiring the support of parents and governors to extend and maintain a good stock of instruments for many types of music making.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

160. GCSE examination results in 1999 were just below national expectations schools at the higher grades A\* - C. More than three-quarters of those entered in 1999 were boys who attained A\* - C grades broadly in line with boys' national averages. Results have generally been above national expectations for A\*-C grades between 1990 and 1998 and at the time of the last inspection. The reason for the percentage shortfall in 1999 can be explained in the disruption to staffing in the physical education department.
161. Attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with expectations. By the end of Year 9, teacher assessments in 1999 show that two-thirds of the year group are achieving or working beyond expectations across all areas of activity in physical education. At the time of the inspection, only athletics activities were observed because the school follows a modular timetable. Standards in throwing a cricket ball, discus and javelin are average. In a Year 7 mixed ability lesson, boys show well co-ordinated, competent skills in throwing the cricket ball. In a Year 9 middle set, pupils demonstrate consistent development in throwing a javelin. The majority are able to plan, use correct throwing techniques and evaluate their performance with increasing competence. Lower attaining pupils show good application in reinforcing skills and are achieving increasingly improved techniques of control in throwing the javelin. The majority of pupils across the key stage understand the effects of exercise on the body.
162. Attainment in lessons and in work seen for pupils in Key Stage 4 is in line with national expectations. Pupils show initiative and independence in organising equipment and activities for themselves and others. In a Year 10 practical assessment of GCSE rounders, the majority of pupils show above average attainment in throwing, catching and fielding and are able to sustain very good rates of exercise, for example, in sprinting between markers. In a Year 11 trampoline lesson most understand the principles of safety and many undertake a sequence of basic jumps, seat, front, back drops and somersaults with increasing competence. GCSE pupils show confident and accurate planning of routines. In a top set GCSE theory revision lesson, the majority of pupils are attaining a good standard of written work and planning for the examination.
163. The achievement of pupils, including those with special educational needs, across the key stages, is good. Pupils' attainment on entry is average. Boys, in general, show better developed co-ordination skills than girls in Year 7. By the end of Key Stage 3, however, girls make good gains in improving their fitness levels. Skills taught in lessons are reinforced, extended and further developed by an extensive range of extra-curricular activities making a significant impact on pupils progress particularly at Key Stage 4. Year 10 sports captains make a commendable contribution to younger pupils' achievement in helping with sports clubs. Lower attaining and special needs pupils make good progress in the theory aspect of sports studies and many 'D' grades at GCSE reflect a higher than expected result for these

pupils.

164. The quality of teaching and learning is predominantly good and occasionally very good at both key stages. Strengths lie in teachers' expertise and planning. They explain what pupils are going to learn and demonstrate techniques clearly to all levels of attainment. Tasks set are interesting and work is challenging and competitive. Pupils are managed well with considerable attention to groupings, organisation and content. In the best lessons, pupils are given time to practise new techniques and teachers' good use of questioning helps pupils improve, reinforce and extend learning. Where pupils are given responsibility, as in a Year 8 discuss-throwing lesson, those of modest attainment quickly improve the quality of their throw through positive feedback. Day-to-day assessment is effective.
165. The department is well led and an impressive handbook provides good guidelines to staff. Good progress has been made in addressing the issues raised at the last inspection. Teaching has improved and the provision for extra-curricular activities has remained excellent. Evaluation skills, involvement of non-participants and objectives of the lesson are clearer to pupils through more systematic lesson planning. The focus of work for the GCSE course is sharper through a modular approach to study. Accommodation is very good but there is a lack of a dedicated classroom base to strengthen subject identity and provide potential for storing class materials and pupils' records.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

166. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils' knowledge of the characteristics of believing communities and how beliefs affect behaviours is better developed than their ability to understand the relationship between experience and belief. This is best demonstrated in pupils' ability to recall factual knowledge about Christianity and aspects of other principal religions but a more limited ability to evaluate religious viewpoints and draw on knowledge to inform their own views.
167. There have been no GCSE entries in this subject for the past three years as it is no longer offered as an option, however, all pupils are now taught religious education in Key Stage 4. Standards are in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils' knowledge continues to develop well from Key Stage 3 but their ability to express viewpoints is less well developed especially when asked to weigh up evidence for supporting one view or another and taking into account their knowledge of the religions studied. Pupils are taught using a GCSE Short course syllabus but are not entered for the exam at the present time.
168. The quality of teaching and learning in both key stages is generally satisfactory although there are some unsatisfactory features. Where the teaching is satisfactory or better the teacher has good subject knowledge and ensures that pupils made quick gains in knowledge. There is effective management of pupils which, combined with well-organised routines, allows pupils to get on quickly with their work and minimise unsatisfactory behaviour. There is regular marking, relationships in classrooms are good and pupils are encouraged to do well. Where teaching is unsatisfactory there is an over-reliance on worksheets comprising a large number of short written tasks, which lack challenge and motivation. Lesson objectives although identified are not linked to tasks set and are not clear to pupils. Assessment criteria are not clear and pupils do not know how they could improve their work. Teachers are not able to effectively use assessment to inform their planning.
169. This department lies within a well-ordered and administered humanities faculty. The administration of religious education is very efficient and a range of policies and procedures are in place. Monitoring and evaluation is not effective. The department must focus much more rigorously on improving the quality of teaching and extending the range of resources used so that they cater for all abilities but especially the more able.
170. Since the last inspection provision for religious education in Key Stage 4 has improved, as have aspects of curriculum planning. There is still however insufficient time for teaching in Year 11 to meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.