

INSPECTION REPORT

CASTLEBROOK HIGH SCHOOL

Bury, Lancashire

LEA area: Bury

Unique reference number: 105363

Headteacher: Mr John Gannon

Reporting inspector: Mr Roger Holmes
2632

Dates of inspection: 30th April – 3rd May 2001

Inspection number: 188259

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 - 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	Bury
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs C Ormrod
Date of previous inspection:	June 1996

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7315	Geoffrey Kinder	Team inspector	Music	
18755	Roger Whittaker	Team inspector	Physical education	How well does the school care for its pupils?
19599	Carmen Markham	Team inspector	Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities?
13101	Mike Kell	Team inspector	<p>Special educational needs</p> <p>Equal opportunities</p>	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Castlebrook High School is a mixed comprehensive, taking boys and girls between the ages of 11 and 16. There are currently 943 pupils on roll, making it an average-sized comprehensive school. Numbers have risen over the last few years and the school is oversubscribed. Ninety per cent of the pupils are white, most of the rest are of Pakistani or Indian heritage and a few have Black Caribbean backgrounds. Only three pupils have English as an additional language, which is a lower proportion than in most schools. Fourteen per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is close to the national average.

When they come into the school at 11 years of age, pupils have the range and distribution of attainment typical of a fully comprehensive school. Twenty two per cent of pupils are on the school's register for special needs, which is similar to the proportion found in most schools. Over five per cent of pupils have statements for their special needs which is much higher than in most schools, partly as a result of the school's special provision for 25 pupils with moderate learning difficulties.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is effective and has many strengths. Pupils have very positive attitudes and behaviour is good. They make good progress and achieve well as a result of good teaching in most subjects. The headteacher's leadership has established a strong commitment to the overall care and development of the pupils, but management arrangements have not ensured that everyone's performance is as good as it should be. Overall the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve good results in most subjects.
- Teaching is good and pupils respond well.
- Pupils work hard and make good progress.
- Behaviour is good.
- The arrangements for pupils' moral, social and cultural development are strong.
- Parents support and value the work of the school.

What could be improved

- The clarity of management responsibilities and their focus on raising standards.
- The use of monitoring to ensure consistent practice and help raise standards.
- The use of assessment and target setting.
- More alternatives to GCSE courses in the curriculum.
- Organisation and deployment of resources for pupils with special educational needs.
- The use of information and communication technology (ICT) in subjects across the curriculum and standards of attainment in French and religious education.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The last inspection was in June 1996. Since then the school has made sound progress. The last report identified five key issues. Two of these have been tackled successfully, two which related to the school development plan have been addressed but some work is still needed and the school does not have a daily act of collective worship. The quality of teaching has improved, weaknesses in music have been addressed and results have continued to rise, particularly at GCSE.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 14 and 16 year olds based on their Key Stage 3 results average point scores in GCSE.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
Key Stage 3	B	C	B	A
GCSE examinations	B	B	B	A

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

At Key Stage 3, results in the tests for mathematics and science have been well above average for the last three years. Results in English dipped in 1997, but they have recovered and last year results in all three core subjects were above the national average and well above the results for similar schools. In the work seen in school at Key Stage 3, pupils are achieving better than usual in science and mathematics, as the test results indicate. Standards are close to those expected for pupils' ages in all other subjects, including English, apart from art, where they are well above.

Results at GCSE have remained above the national average for the last few years and are continuing to rise, staying the same distance ahead. They are well above those achieved in similar schools, with boys exceeding their national average by more than the girls exceed theirs. The best results are in mathematics and science. Results in French, geography and English literature are lower than the national average. In the work seen in the key stage pupils are working at levels higher than usual in mathematics and science. Standards are well above those found nationally in art. In most other subjects they are as expected, apart from French, ICT and religious education where they are lower.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very positive attitudes to the school. They work hard and concentrate well in lessons. This plays a big part in the success they achieve.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good in lessons. A very small minority of pupils sometimes misbehave around the school. Overall behaviour is good.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good. Pupils develop well in self-confidence and maturity.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory. Most pupils come to school regularly, but a few miss too much time and others are not punctual enough, partly as a result of problems with transport.

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.

Teaching is good overall. In over 66 per cent of lessons it was good or better and 25 per cent of lessons were very good or excellent. Almost all of the remainder were satisfactory and only two per cent were unsatisfactory. Teaching is good throughout the school in mathematics, science, design and technology, geography and ICT. It is also good at Key Stage 3 in English, history, modern languages, music and religious education. Elsewhere it is sound, apart from in art where it is very good throughout the school.

Teachers know their subjects well and manage pupils very successfully. Relationships are good, pupils concentrate, work hard and make good progress in lessons. The best lessons are lively and stimulating, they have a clear focus, pupils know what they are going to learn and play an active part in the process. Some lessons do not have this clear focus and examination of pupils' work shows that they are sometimes kept busy copying rather than learning.

Literacy skills are taught effectively in most subjects, supported by a whole-school policy. The equivalent policy for numeracy is very recent and so its teaching is less well developed. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. When they receive support in lessons or have special attention on their own, progress is often good. On a few occasions, when the class teacher has not prepared the right material for them and they have no specialist support, they do not make enough progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum covers all the National Curriculum requirements at both key stages. There are too few alternatives to GCSE courses at Key Stage 4.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory provision at Key Stage 3, ensuring that all pupils have access to the curriculum, but unsatisfactory at Key Stage 4 because there are too few alternatives to GCSE courses to meet their needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Provision for spiritual development is sound, provision for moral and cultural development is good and arrangements for social development are very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes good general care of its pupils, but arrangements to assess how well they are doing and to set targets for improvement need developing.

Parents have a very positive view of the school. They support the work of the school effectively. Most of the information they receive is good, but some reports do not tell them enough about how well their children are doing or how they could improve.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher's energetic and committed leadership has established a strong sense of purpose in the school and won the support of the local community. However, there are inconsistencies in the management arrangements and not enough focus on improving performance.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors meet regularly to carry out their duties. They are well informed and know the school's strengths and weaknesses. All statutory duties are met apart from the provision of a daily act of collective worship.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school analyses pupils' examination results effectively, but makes too little use of other assessment information, which would enable targets to be set for pupils' improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are used carefully and spending is controlled effectively.

The school has sufficient well-qualified staff. Arrangements for staff development are not well enough linked to the school's development plan. Resources are generally adequate and the number and quality of computers are much better than at the last inspection. Accommodation is adequate and the school has imaginative plans to improve its sports provision and provide extra community resources. Spending decisions are taken after careful consideration of cost and following wide consultation.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils make good progress. • Behaviour is good. • Teaching is good. • The school is approachable. • Pupils are helped to grow in maturity. • The school is well led. • There is a good range of extra-curricular activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More information on pupils' progress. • More chances to work with the school.

The inspection team agrees with the parents' positive views of the school. Inspectors also agree that some reports need to tell parents more about children's progress and what they could do to improve.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. When they come into the school at the age of 11, pupils have the typical range of ability of a fully comprehensive school. Their scores in the National Curriculum test taken at the end of their primary schooling are close to the national averages for English and mathematics and slightly higher for science. This picture is confirmed by the results of standardised tests which they take shortly after joining Castlebrook, where their scores are very close to the pattern used by the test to describe the theoretically average group of pupils. The intake has remained much the same over the last few years, although the proportion of boys and girls has varied considerably.
2. Pupils make good progress in the school and by the time they finish Key Stage 3, when most of them are 14 years old, their attainment is above average in most subjects. This represents good achievement. Over the last 3 years their scores in the National Curriculum test have been well above average in mathematics and science. Although they were just below in English as a result of unusually poor performance in 1997, the overall picture for all three of these core subjects has been well above the national average. The standards of work seen in the school in Key Stage 3 match these results for mathematics and science. In English, standards are close to those expected for pupils of this age and this is also the case for all other subjects, apart from art, where they are well above. In 2000 the results for all three core subjects were above the national average and well above those achieved in schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals.
3. Over the last few years results at Key Stage 3 have risen, but not quite as quickly as the national picture, partly because the school achieved particularly good scores in 1996. The relative performance of boys and girls has varied from year to year, but overall girls have performed noticeably better than boys and even more than they do nationally.
4. Results at GCSE have been above the national average and usually well above over the last five years. In 2000, over 50 per cent of pupils achieved five or more passes at grade C or above, compared with the national figure of 47 per cent. This is well above the results in similar schools. The school's average point score, which takes account of all passes, not just those at grade C and above, was also above the national average and well above those of similar schools. The best GCSE results were in art and mathematics, where they were well above the national figures. They were significantly lower than average in French, ICT, geography and English literature, with other subjects reasonably close to average.
5. GCSE results have remained above the national average and have risen at about the same rate as the national figures over the last 5 years. In 2000, boys and girls performed above their averages by an equal amount. Over the last 5 years boys have done relatively better than girls.
6. The standards of work seen at Key Stage 4 generally match these GCSE results, with pupils working at levels higher than usual in mathematics and science. Standards are at the expected levels in most other subjects and well above in art. The only subjects where standards are lower than usual for their age are French, religious education and ICT. In the last of these, many pupils are entered for the full GCSE which is studied in only one hour per week.
7. Overall, pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Five pupils with statements of special educational needs, supported by the learning support department obtained four or more GCSE passes grade A-G in 2000 and this included two grade C passes in art and one in food technology.
8. The school does not track effectively the progress made by pupils with special educational needs. Pupils with special educational needs take end of unit tests in mainstream classes along

with their peers and their general literacy skills are assessed termly within the curriculum support faculty. However, the school does not have tightly focused and challenging literacy targets and therefore it cannot accurately evaluate the effectiveness of its curriculum support faculty in raising standards.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good and these attitudes have a positive impact on pupils' progress.
10. Almost all pupils enjoy coming to school; discussion with pupils from all year groups confirms that pupils' attitudes to school are good and often very good. The vast majority of pupils are interested in what they are doing and take an active part in their learning. They are keen to learn, they listen carefully to their teachers' instructions, enter into classroom discussions in a constructive manner and sustain their concentration for appropriate periods of time. Most pupils show a pride in their work, they are willing and able to talk about their work and to explain their ideas and findings. Pupils with special educational needs generally have good attitudes to work and behave well in lessons and around the school. A significant number of pupils take part in the wide range of extra-curricular activities provided by the school.
11. The overall standard of behaviour is good. In virtually all lessons seen during the inspection behaviour was good and on many occasions very good. In only a very small number of lessons a few pupils lost concentration and became involved in low-level inappropriate behaviour. Whilst no examples of poor behaviour were seen during the inspection, there are a significant number of exclusions. During the last academic year there were 57 fixed term exclusions and 2 permanent exclusions and in the current academic year there have been 30 fixed and 5 permanent exclusions. The reasons for exclusion are due to serious violation of the school's code of conduct and the school's use of exclusion has been appropriate in the circumstances. In an effort to reduce the number of exclusions the school has recently established an isolation unit, targeted at pupils whose behaviour is perceived to make them vulnerable to exclusion. However, at the present time the use of this unit is somewhat ad-hoc and as yet the school has not evaluated the impact of the isolation unit in reducing the incidence of exclusion. Overall the incidence of exclusions has decreased slightly since the last inspection despite an increase in pupil numbers. However, in the current academic year permanent exclusions have risen as indicated above. Parents, whilst not commenting directly on the number of exclusions, are pleased with the standard of behaviour achieved in the school.
12. Pupils move about the school in an orderly manner. There were no instances of inappropriate behaviour observed in the corridors, at lesson change over or at lunchtime, even though some of the circulation areas are quite crowded. Outside lessons pupils interact well together, before and after school and during breaks and they chat and socialise together without any signs of rowdy or boisterous behaviour. Bullying is an occasional problem and the school has in place an anti-bullying policy which enables the school to react quickly and positively to known instances of bullying. Both pupils and parents are confident that the school takes appropriate action in response to such incidents. Generally, pupils treat school equipment with care and respect and the school is mostly free of litter and graffiti.
13. Pupils make good progress in their personal development. Relationships between pupils and teachers are very good, so too are relationships amongst pupils, they co-operate well together in pairs and groups, and they listen to and consider the views of others. For example in a Year 8 physical education lesson, pupils working in small groups were given opportunities to plan their activities and review the work of others and did so in a responsible manner. These relationships have a positive impact on pupils' learning. Pupils are developing their understanding of other people's cultures and beliefs and they are encouraged to reflect on how their actions affect others, mainly through their studies in religious education and in personal and social education. Pupils in all year groups show a willingness to take additional responsibilities, undertaking a range of duties as classroom monitors.

14. The introduction of the school council enables pupils across the school to participate in real decision making. Members of the council relate with pride the results of their contributions, for example the introduction of cubicles in the girl's showers. The range of responsibilities increases as pupils grow older, for example Year 10 pupils are engaged in paired reading with pupils from Year 7 and 8 on a daily basis and Year 11 pupils in the prefect system. Older pupils are encouraged to plan and organise their own work and are developing their ability to work independently. Almost all parents consider the school is helping their children to become more mature and responsible.
15. Overall attendance is satisfactory. In the 1999/2000 academic year attendance was above the national average and unauthorised absence was below national average. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when overall attendance was broadly in line with national averages. However, in the current academic year there has been a deterioration in the levels of authorised and unauthorised absence. Registration is undertaken morning and afternoon. A significant number of pupils do not arrive on time partly as a result of difficulties with public transport.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

16. The quality of teaching is good. Sixty six per cent of lessons were good or better and 25 per cent were very good or excellent. Only two per cent were unsatisfactory. These figures are slightly better than at the last inspection, with more very good lessons seen. The quality of teaching in the school has a major impact on the pupils' attitudes to work and the high standards they achieve.
17. During the inspection teaching was slightly better at Key Stage 3 than Key Stage 4 but this was at least partly due to the numbers of revision lessons taking place with the older pupils which limited teachers' opportunities to demonstrate really high quality teaching. Teaching is good throughout the school in mathematics, science, design and technology, geography and ICT. It is good at Key Stage 3 in English, history, modern languages, music and religious education. In other subjects it is satisfactory, apart from in art where it is very good at both key stages.
18. Teachers know their subjects well and manage pupils very effectively in almost all lessons, ensuring that they work hard and make progress. Most lessons are lively and interesting so that pupils are kept involved and want to do well, but from looking at their books and talking to them, it is apparent that they sometimes have to copy out long sections of work and this is less effective in helping them learn and build enthusiasm for the subject.
19. Planning for lessons is supported by effective schemes of work in all subjects, but varies considerably between staff even in the same department. Some staff focus their lessons very effectively by identifying the key things that pupils will learn, they make sure that the pupils know what these objectives are and review them towards the end of lessons so that pupils realise the progress they have made. In these lessons, pupils and teachers are working together successfully and there is often very effective support for individual needs, such as in a mathematics lesson on telling the time, in which the teacher very successfully linked the work to pupils' individual targets for improvement. In many lessons, however, planning concentrates on what the pupils will do, rather than what they will learn. These lessons are often conducted well, but sometimes pupils are kept busy rather than learning. In a few cases, for example in physical education and ICT the teachers have no specific planning for lessons and rely on their long experience of having done it before to carry them through.
20. Teachers generally know the pupils well and in the best lessons they make good use of this knowledge to adapt work to meet particular needs and to ask questions which stretch pupils but which they can answer so that they grow in confidence. Detailed assessment information is not readily available and so is not often evident in lessons.
21. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well when they are taught in the learning support department because the overall quality of teaching is good, even though on occasions time is not

used well and activities can become too pedestrian. All sessions in the department are characterised by very good relationships amongst staff and pupils and between pupils themselves. As a result, pupils feel able to express their views and attempt work, secure in the knowledge that support and encouragement are at hand. Therefore, pupils have a good attitude to these sessions and behaviour is always good. For example, when a small group of thirteen year olds read parts in a play they did so willingly, even though they were not able to read fluently and confidently. Other pupils in the group listened carefully and respectfully.

22. Pupils learn well when they are withdrawn because teachers are skilful in choosing activities that reinforce and build systematically on their prior learning and in providing texts and other activities that are appropriate to pupils' interests, needs and age. Therefore, pupils know what they have to do and experience success. Two 15 year olds were able to make good progress in understanding and appreciating the concept of 'influence' because the teacher used time well and provided a mixture of activities that maintained pupils' attention. Questions were used particularly well to test, challenge and extend the pupils' understanding and age-appropriate vocabulary respected their developing maturity.
23. On occasions, pupils with special educational needs achieve well, and sometimes very well and excellently, in mainstream classes. At these times pupils make such good progress because teachers are aware of their needs and learning targets and have good classroom management skills. As a result they work very well with support staff to involve pupils with special educational needs in the full range of class activities and this was evident in a number of lessons during the inspection. For example, a teacher used excellent resources to back up and review the fieldwork that had been carried out by fifteen year olds on a recent visit to Blackpool and deployed two curriculum support teachers particularly effectively within the class to enable the pupils to participate fully. The active role of support teachers and teaching assistants is a feature of mainstream lessons in which pupils with special educational needs achieve well and their highly effective contributions were observed in a number of lessons. However, pupils with special educational needs do not achieve satisfactorily in all mainstream lessons. On these occasions, pupils' learning is restricted because of insufficient levels of classroom support, inappropriate written tasks and unsatisfactory planning and preparation by teachers that does not take note of pupils' needs as identified in their individual education plans. Consequently, pupils lose interest and learning is disrupted as their behaviour deteriorates.
24. Pupils behave well in lessons. They listen and respond well to the teacher, concentrate and work hard. When asked questions they are keen to reply and often give thoughtful responses. When given the chance they show considerable responsibility and work well together in groups, for example helping each other to use a new computer programme.

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

25. The curriculum in Key Stage 3 is satisfactory but at Key Stage 4 it is unsatisfactory as it fails to meet the needs of all pupils because there are no vocational courses in school and none are planned for the next school year. However, the school meets all the statutory requirements in both key stages. This indicates good progress since the last inspection, when four subjects did not meet statutory requirements.
26. The Key Stage 3 curriculum is broad and balanced, with an appropriate time allocation to the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. However, in Key Stage 4 the absence of vocational courses means that the needs of some pupils are not met, although the twelve pupils who are formally disapplied from modern foreign languages have extra support in key skills and follow courses leading to appropriate accreditation.
27. The school has made unsatisfactory progress in the development of ICT partly because there is a shortage of computers in classrooms and teachers are still completing their training in developing the use of ICT across the curriculum. A literacy strategy is being implemented. All classrooms

display the key words associated with the subject that is usually taught in the room. However, these displays are not always used by the teacher. A numeracy strategy is being developed for implementation.

28. The current timetable organisation of five lessons a day with a two-week timetable is working effectively. This is an improvement since the last inspection. However, two of those five lessons are fifty-five minutes long instead of an hour and over time this reduces the time available for those subjects with shorter lessons. The inspection team found that the time in the two daily registration periods was not consistently well used, although they are intended to support the personal, social and health education programme and provide time for records of achievement. A review of these arrangements could ensure a better use of time.
29. The provision for the personal development of pupils in the school is satisfactory. It was not possible to see the two weekly lesson of PSHE but evidence was found in a scrutiny of work and documentation and through interviews with teachers and pupils. The school has a well-established programme for personal development that includes drugs, health and sex education. However, most of the programme is delivered by the form tutors so the quality of the provision varies with the tutors' commitment to the subject and skills in presenting the material. The school is aware of this issue and is trying to use external specialist speakers when possible. Pupils report that the quality of the programme is best in Year 7 and after that the topics gradually begin to become repetitive.
30. The curriculum for these pupils with special educational needs in Key Stage 3 is generally satisfactory, although there are some unsatisfactory features. An innovation called the 'Orange Strategy' was trialled in 1999-2000 in which the lowest attaining pupils in the new Year 7 intake who were pupils with special educational needs, followed an intensive literacy programme. These arrangements meant that although these pupils made significant progress with their literacy skills, they did not spend as much time on other subjects. There were fewer pupils with special educational needs in the group who entered the school in September 2000 and so the 'Orange Strategy' has not been continued for any Year 7 pupils. A number of pupils in Key Stage 3 still do not follow all subjects of the National Curriculum as they continue to receive additional literacy support instead of studying a modern foreign language from which they were disapplied.
31. The curriculum at Key Stage 4 for pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory, although the school has recently introduced a support option into Year 10 so that pupils can choose to follow an ASDAN course. However, generally pupils have no alternative but to follow a traditional curriculum of General Certificate of Education with extremely restricted opportunities to take Certificates of Educational Achievement instead and no opportunity to follow vocational courses. The curriculum for these older pupils fails to meet their needs as it does not provide more work-related opportunities for learning.
32. Provision for extra-curricular activities is good. There is a range of activities to meet the needs and interests of most pupils. The school is involved with activities and competitions with other schools but the opportunities are greater for girls than for boys. English, mathematics, science, geography and modern foreign languages all hold after school extension lessons. At lunchtime the choir and band meet but there could be more opportunity for playing instruments. The school has drama productions and visits to theatres and art galleries are an important part of the life of the school. There are good opportunities for residential experiences, fieldwork and visits abroad including the ski trip.
33. Pupils with special educational needs have full access to the range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities that the school offers. In addition, the school is beginning to develop supporting activities that promote the learning of pupils with special educational needs, such as the paired reading programme that takes place each morning when Year 10 pupils work with eleven year olds.
34. Although the school has a strong commitment to accepting everyone and addressing their needs, this is not yet always translated into practice. Most staff provide tasks and activities that

enable pupils with special educational needs to have positive and successful learning experiences. However, other teachers are reluctant to accept these pupils into their classes and this is reflected in lesson planning and preparation which do not identify how individual needs are to be met through appropriately challenging work.

35. The school makes satisfactory provision to ensure that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum and other activities that it offers, although its provision for pupils with English as an additional language is under developed. The special educational needs co-ordinator has responsibility for overseeing this provision and monitoring progress.
36. The provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good overall.
37. The provision for the social development of pupils is very good. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility and show initiative. Systems are in place to encourage pupils to support each other and to be responsible in their attitudes to work, to others and to their environment. The school council, PSHE, the prefect system, the appointment of librarians and the paired reading scheme are examples of this provision. Social development is also included in the theme for the week, delivered in form time and in collective worship. Relationships within the school are very good and pupils work well in teams. Provision for the moral development of pupils is good and pupils have a strong sense of the difference between right and wrong. They also have a growing awareness that many moral issues are complex and that personal belief is an important factor in decision making. Many subjects in the curriculum make a significant contribution in this area including RE, PSHE, PE, drama and English. Collective worship also makes a contribution, for example the assemblies on Nelson Mandela's positive approach to life.
38. Provision for cultural development is good. The school has special festivals devoted to developing cross-cultural experience throughout the curriculum, for example the Chinese and Egyptian festivals. History teaches Islam very effectively and the study of world religions in RE helps pupils to become aware of a range of cultures and traditions. English, art and music explore local, national and global traditions. There is some excellent work in textiles which looks at patterns and styles from Guatemala and from the traditions of Klimt and Hundertwasser. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. Form tutors are responsible for developing an ethos of valuing the individual and celebrating success. Subjects like RE, art, English and music make a significant contribution to this area. However, only one of the eight acts of collective worship observed had a strong spiritual content. The development of the reading themes is intended to reinforce spiritual understanding but although some form tutors make an effort to develop the themes, in most classes it is not done at all or it is done badly.
39. Careers education is satisfactory. Year 9 pupils have support from careers education specialists to help them make their option choices for GCSE. In Years 10 and 11 competition for PHSE time means that the main careers education activity is the writing of a personal statement for the national Record of Achievement. Careers guidance interviews are provided in small groups and for individual pupils where required. Work experience is available for all pupils during Year 10. Arrangements for this are satisfactory. Pupils are briefed before they undertake their work placements, however there is little opportunity for debriefing and integrating their experiences into vocational learning.
40. The school has satisfactory links with the community, which contribute to pupils' learning. There are effective links with local business and the industrial community which have been used to provide pupils with work experience placements. The school uses the local and wider environment to support pupils' learning in a number of subjects including history, geography and design and technology. There are also strong links with both amateur and professional sports clubs. The technology faculty has established some good links with local businesses who provide materials to support design and technology and have provided placements for teachers for training in industrial practice, for example a local bakery and fast food outlet. However, there is little overall co-ordination of these links or evaluation of the impact of these links on the work of the school.

41. Overall the school's links with partner institutions are good. There are good links with the local primary schools. The school has appointed a liaison teacher to oversee the transitional arrangements from junior to secondary school, and over time has developed effective procedures to ensure a smooth and stress free transition. Parents receive good quality information about the transitional arrangements and visit the school with their children to meet the headteacher and form tutors. Towards the end of the summer term pupils experience a taster day at the school where they participate in lessons and familiarise themselves with their new environment. The liaison teacher meets Year 6 staff to ensure all relevant information relating to pupils' academic and personal development is available. After Year 11 pupils have left school in the summer term, feeder schools are given the opportunity to use some of the school's facilities, including food technology rooms and information technology equipment. There are appropriate links with local colleges.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

42. The welfare of pupils is ensured through effective arrangements for dealing with illness and accidents, appropriate child protection procedures and the promotion of health and safety. There are sound links with a range of outside agencies and support services, for example the Police, Youth Advice Centre and the Educational Psychologists. A health and safety policy, which was written by a working party including a member of the governing body, is reviewed every two years. The health and safety policy is implemented with appropriate risk assessments in most subjects. There is now a need to monitor this implementation so that the school has secure knowledge of its effectiveness. During the inspection week a number of minor health and safety issues were reported to the deputy headteacher. Appropriate arrangements were put into place to remedy these concerns.
43. Overall the school's procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' behaviour are satisfactory. The school's behaviour policy is well known to pupils who have a clear understanding of what is and is not acceptable behaviour. They are aware of the school's system of rewards and sanctions and readily accept the principle of sanctions as a response to poor behaviour. The school has procedures in place to discourage and eliminate bullying and oppressive behaviour and generally these procedures are effective. Pupils indicate they feel safe in all areas of the school and that support and guidance are available should they be subject to oppressive behaviour. However, there is still a relatively high instance of pupil exclusions and the school has introduced an isolation system targeted at pupils whose behaviour is perceived to make them at risk of exclusion. However, staff do not have a consistent view of how isolation should be used, whether as a last resort to prevent disruption of other pupils' learning or to be used to modify pupils' behaviour as soon as their behaviour is identified as unacceptable. At the present time the school does not use the behavioural statistics that it gathers in order to monitor the effectiveness of behavioural strategies teachers use in the classroom. At the moment it does not have in place policy and procedures for the use of force to restrain pupils if this were ever to become necessary and is waiting for guidance from the LEA.
44. Overall the school has satisfactory procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. Form tutors monitor attendance on a daily basis and refer any unexplained absences to the pastoral secretary, who operates a first day contact system. Letters are sent to parents if no reasons for absence have been received after 3 days. However, teachers do not analyse attendance sufficiently and therefore do not have an overall view of attendance in their tutor group. The long term monitoring of absence is insufficiently developed. Year group co-ordinators are responsible for monitoring attendance, however, there are no set criteria to prompt action and whilst all co-ordinators have a knowledge of pupils with really poor attendance, in many year groups co-ordinators do not monitor attendance by the classes within the year group. The school receives good support from the Education Welfare Officer who meets with co-ordinators on a weekly basis, and rigorously follows up instances of poor attendance identified by year group co-ordinators. However, at the time of the inspection, attendance registers have significant gaps. During the autumn term the school introduced a computerised attendance system and did not maintain manual registers and because of operating difficulties with this system, the school

reverted to the manual registers and therefore the current registers do not record pupils' attendance for part of the current academic year.

45. The school assessment policy is not consistently implemented across all faculties. The arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are inconsistent across the school and are therefore unsatisfactory. The monitoring of the effectiveness of the assessment policy is also unsatisfactory.
46. Throughout the school there are pockets of good practice in assessment, for example art and music, but there is an over reliance on end of unit tests in most subject areas. This means that information from assessment is not used enough to plan learning which closely matches pupils' needs.
47. The further development of a whole school computerised system for recording assessment information should facilitate the tracking of pupil progress and the demonstration of the gains they make. However, assessment is generally underused to plan learning and to identify what pupils need to do in order to improve their performance. Many pupils are unclear about how they are currently performing and their strengths and areas for development. The use of individual learning targets is underdeveloped. The school marking policy is inconsistently implemented and monitored. The policy is not linked to learning objectives which are explicitly shared, reinforced and reviewed in lessons. There is no assessment of pupils with English as an additional language in terms of their stage of language acquisition or their learning needs. Their progress as a discrete group is not monitored.
48. Underperformance in Year 11 pupils is identified after the mock examinations in December each year and academic mentoring is provided between January and the start of the GCSE examinations. This intervention is too late to have sufficient impact on attitudes and performance. Systems to identify underperformance from Key Stage 2 and from NFER tests data should be developed from the start of Key Stage 3 and deployed throughout the school. The use of national data comparing the performance of different groups should be further developed to set challenging targets within the school.
49. The school makes satisfactory provision for meeting the overall needs of pupils as identified in statements of special educational need, although these statements are not always updated by the LEA at the time of transfer from primary school. However, the effectiveness of this provision is reduced because some of the school's monitoring and target setting procedures are not sufficiently rigorous and focused.
50. The school meets its statutory requirements to conduct annual reviews and it produces individual education plans as required. At the beginning of each school year staff produce annual plans that are based on the targets set at the previous annual review and these annual plans form the basis of subsequent individual education plans. This process is unnecessarily complex and has some unsatisfactory features. For example annual reviews and the production of annual plans could be some months apart and the annual plans do not always accurately and comprehensively reflect the targets set at annual review.
51. Individual education plans are unsatisfactory overall even though they contain some useful information. Individual needs are summarised, test scores are provided and the nature of additional support provided is quantified. However, they also have weaknesses. In particular, targets are not always clear enough, so that there is some confusion between actions to be taken by adults on behalf of pupils and learning targets for the pupils themselves. In addition, the plans do not always have clear, unambiguous targets that can be measured accurately against specified criteria. Some targets are imprecise, for example, 'to develop basic numeracy skills'; others cannot be measured, for example, 'to improve confidence', whilst some are impossible to manage and monitor, for example, 'to develop a circle of friends' and 'to reduce having to be told to be quiet to less than three times per day'.

52. There are not strong enough links between the targets for pupils with special educational needs set at the annual review, the role of the annual plan, the individual education plan drawn up following that review/production of the annual plan and the formal review of targets at the subsequent annual review. As an area for whole school development, annual reviews should be used as an opportunity to identify broad areas for target setting, such as literacy, numeracy and personal development, which can then be broken down into detailed targets with clear assessment criteria in individual education plans.
53. Procedures for assessing pupils' achievements and progress within the curriculum support department are satisfactory. Teachers know their pupils very well and they use ongoing assessment during lessons well to check on what pupils can do, know and understand. However, individual pupils' achievements are not always reflected in lesson planning by teachers not in the curriculum support department. These plans are not sufficiently sharp in identifying the anticipated learning outcomes for individual pupils in order to assess their progress in developing new skills, knowledge and understanding.
54. Academic mentoring processes do not at present have a clear focus. Early planning of appropriate strategies has not yet affected practice. It is, therefore, too early to assess the impact of these arrangements on pupils' attitudes to learning and attainment. At present, form tutors monitor pupils' academic progress and raise concerns when necessary. Often monitoring is triggered by the subject teachers or parents. This sets in motion an action plan and close monitoring of the pupils' progress. The school needs to monitor the effectiveness of the present strategies to ensure that secure judgements are made. This will provide a base against which to plan for the future

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

55. Overall parents have positive views of the school. In particular, parents are pleased with the quality of teaching, the standard of behaviour, the expectation that their children will work hard and the way the school is led and managed. The majority of parents also indicated that their children liked coming to school, they make good progress in their learning and the school is helping to make them to become more responsible and mature. Parents at the parents' meeting were very supportive of the school and were pleased with the homework club and the recent introduction of the breakfast club. Evidence from the inspection mostly confirms these positive views of the school. A significant minority of parents expressed concerns at the lack of information about their children's progress and how closely the school works with parents. Discussion with the headteacher indicated that these parental concerns relate to the school's decision not to hold an additional parents' evening for Year 7 parents in the autumn term as a result of industrial action and whilst parents can request an interim report, they do not have the opportunity to attend a formal parents' evening until towards the end of the summer term.
56. Overall the quality of information provided for parents is satisfactory. The school prospectus and annual governors report provide a wide range of information about the school and its activities. Monthly newsletters, which are sent to parents on a specific day each month, together with letters about specific events, ensure parents are aware of current school issues. Parents were consulted on the home and school agreement and virtually all parents signed the agreement; however, it has not been in place long enough to make a significant impact on the school's partnership with parents. Parents are invited to parents' consultation evening once a year. Parents value these meetings and attendance is very good. However, parents have expressed concerns that the school has not provided a consultation evening in the autumn term for Year 7 parents, who now do not have the opportunity to discuss their children's progress until late in the summer term, which many parents consider too late for effective action to be taken should their children experience difficulties in settling into the school. The quality of pupils' annual reports is variable and generally they do not give sufficient information on pupils' weaknesses and what they need to do to improve.
57. Overall parents' involvement in their children's learning at school and at home is satisfactory. Whilst few parents help directly in school they support extra-curricular activities attending the

school sports competition and accompanying pupils on school trips. Generally parents support their children's learning at home, they view and sign their children's homework diary and many use it as an effective means of communication between home and school. Most parents are supportive of the school if their children have behavioural or learning difficulties. The school has satisfactory arrangements to involve parents of pupils with special educational needs in the development and review of their children's individual educational plans. There is a small but active Parent Teacher and Friends Association that organises social and fund raising events. Significant amounts of money have been raised to provide additional learning resources, which have had a positive effect on pupils' learning.

58. The school provides good information to prospective parents of children with special educational needs and parents are fully involved in annual reviews. Individual action plans for pupils with statements are sent home for parents to examine, however, the school does not share individual education plans in the same detail with other parents and this could be an area for development.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

59. The headteacher has led the school successfully for some 18 years. During this time the school has established a strong reputation within the area, pupils achieve much better results than in most schools and the school is regularly oversubscribed. Much of this is due to the headteacher's enthusiasm and commitment. His frequent direct involvement with pupils helps to keep him well informed and promotes their good behaviour and commitment to the school.
60. The school has two deputy headteachers; one has responsibility for pastoral duties and manages the heads of year, the other has responsibility for the curriculum and works with the heads of faculty. Their roles are beginning to overlap appropriately, reflecting the close link between the way the school cares for its pupils and the results they achieve.
61. The management structures in the school ensure that it runs smoothly and problems are tackled effectively as they arise, but there is considerable inconsistency in the performance of different post-holders. For example some heads of year monitor pupils attendance closely and others do not; similarly some heads of faculty see their role as supporting heads of departments within the faculty and others leave them much more to their own devices. Although clear job descriptions have been written, in practice they are not followed closely enough and senior management has not tackled this issue. There has been too little monitoring of people's performance and when problems have been identified, they have not always been resolved successfully.
62. At the time of the inspection the school had an acting head of the curriculum support faculty, who is also the special educational needs co-ordinator. As a result, the leadership and management of the faculty is unsatisfactory as a number of issues that need resolving will not be addressed until a permanent appointment is made. There are staff tensions within the faculty that reduce its effectiveness and a number of administrative practices such as teachers' timetables and the deployment of staff restrict its efficiency. The school's curriculum support policy has recently been reviewed and whilst this makes a passing reference to inclusion it does not focus sufficiently sharply on emphasising the need to make the school a fully inclusive organisation. Similarly, the school development plan contains only isolated references to inclusion even though special educational needs represents one of the local authority's priority areas for development.
63. The school development plan is based on a thorough review of the school's work for the previous year, including an analysis of each subject's performance. This provides a set of useful information, to which each subject department and pastoral group is required to respond. When each of these has produced its own plans and they are all put together there is a plethora of areas for development, which is further expanded by the requirements to respond to national initiatives such as the literacy scheme. Unfortunately the lists of items are not reviewed to establish their relative priority. This limits the value of the plan; some items are addressed and deadlines met, but others roll over to the next year.

64. The governing body meets regularly and is kept well informed about the school's work. Governors take their role seriously and keep careful watch on the school's finances, ensuring that there are sufficient reserves to meet any likely changes in the number of pupils. They are aware of the school's overall performance and the relative strengths and weaknesses of different departments. Statutory requirements are met, apart from the provision of a daily act of collective worship.
65. The finances of the school are well managed. The responsibilities of the governing body, its committees, including the finance committee, are clearly defined and limits of delegated authority have been established. The governing body are appropriately involved in the development and monitoring of the school development plan and budget. However, both the budget and school development plan are mostly limited to the current financial and academic year and there is little strategic planning over the next two to three years.
66. The headteacher and the school's financial secretary work well together to ensure effective financial procedures are in place. The financial secretary ensures up to date financial information is readily available to the headteacher and governors and ensures that the principles of best value are used when negotiating contracts with suppliers. There were no recommendations for the school to action in the latest audit report. Whilst the school ensures that specific grants are used for their specific purposes, the grant for staff development training is not used effectively. The provision of staff training is not sufficiently targeted to the needs of individuals and the curriculum and there is little or no analysis of the impact of staff training on teaching and learning.
67. The school has effective administrative systems. The administrative systems work smoothly and staff are committed to providing a good level of support to teaching staff; however, the amount of support staff is low in relation to similar schools and on occasions the school has found it necessary to provide additional part-time clerical support. The school is actively considering increasing the level of administrative support.
68. The school makes good use of its well-qualified and experienced staff, both teaching and non-teaching. The match of staff to the needs of the curriculum is good. Almost all subject departments have sufficient qualified specialist teachers to meet the demands of the curriculum and to ensure that pupils are taught effectively. There are enough support staff to enable the school to function efficiently. The religious education department, however, has to rely on a number of non-specialist staff drawn from other departments to cover some 17 periods per week and this has an effect on standards. There is a small number of staff for whom heavy teaching commitments make it difficult to carry out their other responsibilities effectively.
69. The school has good procedures in place for the induction of staff new to the profession, based on the local authority model. Newly qualified staff have sufficient time allocated for their professional development; school policy indicates that they are regularly observed teaching and have written targets for improvement. The system however is not sufficiently monitored to ensure that these requirements are always met, particularly when the new teacher works in more than one department.
70. All staff, teaching and non-teaching have an opportunity to identify their own training needs and each faculty also draws up its own training plan. Considerable sums are spent to allow teachers to attend external courses. Training in the use of information technology is currently given priority. Training is not sufficiently prioritised to support the school development plan and it is not rigorously evaluated for its impact on teaching and learning.
71. The accommodation is satisfactory overall and allows the curriculum to be taught effectively. The last inspection reported that increased numbers had created pressure on specialist accommodation and since then the school roll has increased by 9 per cent. Nevertheless, apart from food technology, where there is insufficient accommodation and the rooms are cramped, there is adequate space for learning although some classes are rather large for the classroom space provided. The English, music and two mathematics classrooms are resonant and need carpeting. In some subject areas, classrooms are scattered, creating problems for teaching,

learning, management and resources. Mathematics rooms are located in three separate areas, history in two and these need to be brought together in subject suites. The previous report noted that the food technology and textiles rooms are isolated from the main technology area and this situation remains. The library has adequate space for book stock but none for future necessary developments and there is no ready access from it to the adjacent information technology room. Some drama studio floor tiles are damaged and potentially hazardous but there are plans to repair these. The carpet tiles in the junior common room and the library are very worn giving the latter in particular a rather uninviting atmosphere. The whole appearance of the junior common room is scruffy. There is no appropriate space for whole school assemblies and large-scale performances. The combined hall/dining hall has no proper facilities, the lecture theatre is not big enough and the sports hall is not a suitable venue.

72. The buildings are very well maintained. The cleaning staff work effectively, the school is bright and clean every morning and litter is kept in check. There is an absence of graffiti in the school including areas where it is most likely to be found such as in the toilets. Occasionally graffiti appears on more remote outside walls but this is quickly removed. The exterior of the building is undergoing extensive refurbishment, including re-roofing and only the final phase to replace the wooden cladding on one side remains to be done. The hard surface play areas are mostly in satisfactory condition. Although the gym and sports hall are very good, the outdoor PE facilities are in a very dilapidated state. The pitches are waterlogged, the all-weather pitch is badly maintained and fencing is poor. The previous report identified some of these difficulties. The old tennis courts have now been sold for building land and an adjacent field has been purchased. There are ambitious plans to rectify the present unsatisfactory features, but there will be a significant interim period whilst present conditions remain.
73. The library is an open, light spacious environment with a wide range of books and periodicals that are suited to the needs of the pupils. There are representative books on most subjects. At the beginning of every year there are special introductory courses for pupils showing them how to access books and other materials. SEN pupils are catered for in the library. The library is left open even when no members of staff are present and pupils are given the responsibility for signing out their own books. There are audiocassettes, but no videocassettes and no CD ROMs for pupils' use. At present annual capitation is £2,800.00 for 2000 – 2001, which is insufficient to satisfying the demands of pupils for access to the Internet, for example. The teacher/librarian is supported by pupils, but there is still no ancillary support for the library. Departmental use remains rather haphazard. The library resources are currently used mainly by humanities and art and design, but not by science and mathematics. There is a distinct need for improvement in ICT provision in the library or to give easier access to the adjacent ICT room so that pupils can gain access to the Internet. At present it remains an under-utilised resource which is largely ineffective in promoting higher levels of literacy, encouraging reading, supporting teaching or helping pupils to access information quickly and efficiently.
74. There has been significant improvement in terms of the ICT provision within the school since the last Inspection. There are now four ICT suites which give pupils access to approximately seventy new PC's, four scanners, four colour printers and four laserjet printers. There is an additional suite which houses fifteen old networked Acorn machines which are due to be replaced soon. In spite of this improvement which has resulted in a ratio of computers to pupils of 1:8, this still falls just short of the government target of 1:7 by 2002. There is a proposal to install a new server by September 2001. There were instances during the inspection however, where groups of 29 were being taught in an ICT suite that contained only 20 workstations. Inevitably this had an adverse impact on both teaching and learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

75. In order to raise standards and improve the quality of education even further, staff and governors should:

- i. Clarify the roles and responsibilities of senior and middle managers to ensure that there is more consistency in the way that staff with equivalent jobs work and that they all focus on providing the best provision for pupils. This will involve:
 - setting clear expectations for team leaders to monitor colleagues;
 - making more use of monitoring to ensure that people are working well and to spread good practice;
 - using a wide range of sources of monitoring information, including: planning at different levels; pupils' work; discussion with pupils; assessment information and lesson observations; and
 - linking staff development to the outcomes of monitoring, so that strengths in the school can be built on and weaknesses addressed.
(see paragraphs 44, 54, 61, 83, 94, 104, 127, 134, 148, 153, 159)
- ii. Make more effective use of assessment information. This will involve:
 - collecting a full range of information for each pupil, including SATs results, standardised test and data from student assessments;
 - making assessment information readily available by using suitable electronic storage;
 - analysing the assessment information to set targets for individuals and to identify what they need to do to improve; and
 - using the information to judge how well different groups are performing.
(see paragraphs 8, 20, 45 - 48)

In addition to these main points, the school should also consider:

- Improving the provision for pupils with special educational needs. This will involve:
 - making a permanent appointment of SENCO as planned; and
 - making sure that all staff respond to pupils' individual education plans in their lessons, particularly when there is no extra specialist support in the class.
(see paragraphs 23, 62, 81)
- Reviewing the curriculum at Key Stage 4 so that it includes some work related courses to broaden the range of opportunities available to the pupils.
(see paragraphs 25, 30, 31)
- Strengthening the co-ordination of ICT across the school so that subjects are supported as they expand the use of ICT in their work.
(see paragraphs 27, 139)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	170
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	43

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	23	41	31	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	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	943	n/a
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	135	n/a

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	51	n/a
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	232	n/a

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	16

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.7
National comparative data	7.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4
National comparative data	1.1

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

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
		2000	94	99

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	62	69	61
	Girls	76	70	69
	Total	138	139	130
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	72 (62)	72 (66)	67 (59)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	30 (25)	49 (42)	33 (25)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	52	71	63
	Girls	76	74	65
	Total	128	145	128
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	66 (69)	75 (66)	66 (61)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	34 (37)	44 (37)	38 (38)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (28)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	89	82	171

GCSE results		5 or more grades A*-C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	39	84	85
	Girls	47	79	81
	Total	86	163	166
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	50 (46)	95 (96)	97 (100)
	National	47.4 (46.6)	90.6 (90.9)	95.6 (95.8)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	41 (xxxx)
	National	38.4 (38.0)

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

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	6
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	13
Pakistani	42
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	4
White	854
Any other minority ethnic group	22

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	3	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	1	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	53	2
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	56
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	328

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	78.1
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	21.7
Key Stage 4	18.5

Financial information

Financial year	1999
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	£
Total income	2,310,167
Total expenditure	2,295,772
Expenditure per pupil	2,496
Balance brought forward from previous year	13,2774
Balance carried forward to next year	14,7169

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	943
Number of questionnaires returned	141

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	35	52	11	2	1
My child is making good progress in school.	50	45	2	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	52	5	1	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	49	11	1	1
The teaching is good.	45	48	2	1	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	31	41	20	5	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	39	1	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	72	27	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	33	50	13	1	4
The school is well led and managed.	57	39	0	1	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	44	3	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	50	8	2	11

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

ENGLISH

76. Attainment in the 2000 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 was above the national average in relation to the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level, Level 5, and in line for the higher level, Level 6. Results were above those achieved in similar schools. Over the previous three years, results, although rising, have been slightly below the national average. GCSE results in English were close to national averages in 2000, however results in English literature for the same year were below. In previous years they have been more in line with the national average. Overall, there is a trend of improvement. There is little difference in the performance between boys and girls, although girls performed less well in English literature in 2000.
77. A significant number of pupils enter the school with an insecure grasp of standard English, but the problem of literacy is being addressed. There is an extensive school policy, developed by the faculty and an expectation that all school staff will contribute to improving language use and basic literacy. Pupils with weak literacy skills are given support and an individual reading programme is being developed effectively. However, the overall literacy policy is not yet fully embedded in all departments. There is an emphasis upon preparation for end of key stage tests and GCSE examinations. The faculty is making progress in raising standards, as seen in lessons and through the scrutiny of pupils' work.
78. The majority of pupils are confident speakers, willing and able to express opinions in appropriate language, conveying expression as well as meaning by the end of Key Stage 3. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils, including those with special educational needs, are clear and coherent at all levels of attainment. They use an increasing range and variety of vocabulary and expression and are fluent in the use of standard English. Listening skills are generally well developed and in both key stages pupils listen constructively and carefully. Many pupils enter the school with limited reading skills. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils, including those with special educational needs, can read independently and with understanding. By the end of Key Stage 4, they recognise the key features of language use. Pupils appreciate the different layers of meaning in their reading and are able to respond at a personal level. Lower attaining pupils are able to identify key features and extract and collate information. Higher attaining pupils demonstrate more critical and personal responses. Pupils' writing is suitably varied and interesting, conveying meaning in a range of styles. Across the key stages there is a developing vocabulary, particularly by higher attaining pupils, that aids description and enables more precise meaning in their written work. By Year 9, basic grammatical structures are generally correct, pupils are able to paragraph correctly and construct both simple and complex sentences. They use a range of punctuation to enhance meaning, although lower attaining pupils are less confident. By the end of Key Stage 4, writing is more confident and appropriate, being suitably adapted to a variety of audiences. Higher attaining pupils are using language effectively to enhance their meaning. They write with sensitivity and feeling. There are examples of a confident and perceptive response to literary texts. Lower attaining pupils produce clear, simple, sustained pieces of writing, though paragraphing and punctuation are not always accurate.
79. Pupils make satisfactory and sometimes good progress in both key stages. At Key Stage 3, written work and oral response show that previous work is being effectively consolidated. Pupils seek information to clarify ideas and display an increasing sensitivity to literature. They are developing an understanding of different styles of writing and they know how to incorporate their learning into their written work. The range of vocabulary being used is extending, particularly by higher attaining pupils, and enhancing descriptive writing. The writing of the majority of pupils is becoming suitably extended. At Key Stage 4, pupils are consolidating earlier learning and developing further the understanding and use of different writing styles. Pupils recognise the features of persuasive language in a sensitive analysis of the use of language in a speech by Dr. Martin Luther King. They are able to recognise and use such features and extend their own

writing. There are examples of further enhanced understanding, the seeking of information to develop knowledge and ideas and opinions being formed and adjusted. The learning of pupils with special educational needs is well integrated and supported in most lessons.

80. In both key stages, pupils' attitudes to English and their response to the subject are mainly good. Relationships are positive. Pupils engage in the prescribed tasks, work co-operatively and respect each other's views. Where appropriate, they work independently and remain focused. Pupils are responsive to questioning by the teacher and are willing to make contributions to the lesson. At Key Stage 4, pupils are prepared to challenge appropriately to enhance their learning. In almost all the lessons observed pupils displayed commitment and application.
81. Teaching in English is good overall. There is more good teaching at Key Stage 3, than at Key Stage 4. Knowledge and understanding of the subject are very secure. Classroom management and organisation are effective and expectations about behaviour are made clear. Lessons are planned to suit the overall needs of the pupils and the curriculum. Questioning, explanation and discussion are well managed. However, whilst the individual needs of pupils are recognised, what is taught does not always match pupils' abilities and aptitudes, except by outcome. Where teaching is particularly good, pupils are challenged in their learning and the pace of the lesson is brisk. Homework is well used to reinforce and extend class work and in the best instances, provides pupils with the opportunity to reflect, be creative and to develop their skills further. Written work is regularly marked. Although comments, where made, are always positive and encouraging, they do not always sufficiently indicate how the work might be improved.
82. The National Curriculum is comprehensively delivered and suitably links all aspects of English, although the use of ICT is not sufficiently developed. The schemes of work are being revised and developed further to provide a firm foundation for pupils' learning. Through the programmes of study and in the resources used, the faculty contributes to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Assessment procedures are insufficiently developed to be effective in assessing pupils' progress and attainment, or to fully inform teaching. However, some good practice in meeting the needs of individual pupils was observed. The particular need of pupils with English as an additional language is not specifically addressed.
83. The faculty is currently managed and led by an acting head of faculty during a period of secondment. The faculty has clear aims and the well-qualified staff work productively and co-operatively in developing an ethos of mutual support. They are committed to the well being of pupils, and actively engage in professional development. However, there is no formal and effective procedure for monitoring and evaluating teaching and pupils' learning. Although there are short-term targets, formal long-term planning for development of the faculty needs to be established. With the exception of information and communication technology, the resources within the faculty are good. Accommodation consists of adjacent rooms, generally of a good size, with pupils' work effectively displayed. Since the last inspection there have been some improvements in the way the department is managed, resulting in a more consistent experience for all pupils.

Drama

84. Drama is taught as a separate subject to pupils in Key Stage 3 and is an option at Key Stage 4. There is no provision for pupils in Year 9. The proportion of pupils achieving GCSE grades A*-C in 2000 was below the national average. However, the pupils who choose drama, work at, or near, their capacity and achieve well in terms of earlier attainment. At Key Stage 3 pupils demonstrate an understanding of basic performing conventions and use these to express their ideas. Higher attaining pupils show more perception and imagination in their interpretations and create and sustain complex roles. At Key Stage 4, performance skills are developed further. Pupils are able to respond sensitively to text, displaying increasing understanding, perception and imagination. They are able to broaden and develop skills, such as costume, make-up, and stage design. The subject is making a significant contribution to the development of pupils' listening and speaking skills. Pupils make good progress in both key stages. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language, participate fully and make very

good progress. Pupils respect each other's feelings, work well together and acknowledge each other's achievements. There is a positive impact upon personal development. The quality of teaching is very good overall. The pupils are managed well. Lessons are well planned and present a challenge to the pupils. In the few instances where the teacher has insufficient knowledge of the subject to develop pupils' performance skills, learning remains satisfactory. Drama is well led and managed. There are detailed schemes of work, exhibiting a clear sense of direction and clarifying the subject's aims. Short term planning for development is sufficiently detailed, but the longer-term development needs to be addressed. Resource provision is good. Accommodation, though sufficient for delivery of the curriculum, is in need of refurbishment. Since the last inspection, provision for drama in Year 9 has been removed.

Literacy across the curriculum

85. Although there are a significant number of pupils with weak literacy skills upon entry, the standard of literacy across both key stages is satisfactory. Pupils receive focused and effective support from both faculties of English and curriculum support. Pupils who have reading difficulties upon entry to the school are well supported through a range of initiatives so that they make good progress over time. The school has a literacy policy that details the responsibility of all subject areas. Word lists are displayed in all classrooms, although these are not always sufficiently referred to, to aid pupils' learning. They are well used in mathematics and history, but not in physical education and music. However, in many subjects, pupils are confident and articulate speakers. They listen well and engage in a variety of writing styles. In their response to questioning they are able to form clear and extended answers, particularly where the questioning is well focused, as observed in mathematics. Pupils listen attentively and receptively to each other and to their teachers and are fluent and confident in their response. Higher attaining pupils are capable of extended and mature discussion. Pupils have sufficiently secure skills in reading and information seeking to be able to access all areas of the curriculum. However, insufficient use is made of the library to encourage reading and research and retrieval skills. A small proportion of pupils read widely for pleasure, but borrowing figures for the library are low. The majority of pupils produce a competent standard of written work that is suitable for its purpose. They are learning systematically to make notes for themselves, extracting information and appropriately incorporating information into developing extended writing. In mathematics, information and communication technology and history, teachers correct pupils' spelling. Dictionaries are used in English, history and geography. There is some good practice in extending writing skills in history, geography and art and there is an emphasis on accurate grammar in modern foreign languages. Overall, however, the contribution of individual subjects to the development of pupils' literacy skills is inconsistent.

MATHEMATICS

86. Standards achieved by pupils at the end of both key stages are good and they make good progress. At Key Stage 3 the proportion of pupils achieving the national standard of Level 5 and above is 72 per cent; this is above the national standard of 65 per cent. The proportion achieving the higher standard of Level 6 and above is 49 per cent and is well above the national standard of 39 per cent. In comparison to similar schools the school's results are excellent with the proportion of pupils achieving the national standards at Key Stage 3 being considerably higher. Over recent years the school's results have improved and they have increased at a rate faster than the national trend. Overall, the mathematics results are slightly better than the other core subjects.
87. At Key Stage 4 the proportion of pupils achieving grades A*-C of 61 per cent and is above the national standard of 47 per cent. In comparing these results with similar schools they are excellent. The school is also well above the national average in the proportion of pupils gaining A*-G grades in mathematics. The school's results are 99 per cent compared to the national average of 97 per cent. This is due to the very successful entry policy of the department where it is extremely rare for a student not to be entered for a GCSE in the subject. Pupils' attainment in mathematics is higher than in many subjects in the school. The trend in results over the last few years has been improving. There are differences in the attainment of boys and girls at the end of

Key Stage 4 with the boys' results slightly higher than girls'. This difference in attainment was noticeable in some lessons.

88. In the work seen in lessons, books and discussions attainment at the age of 14 is above the national standard. Pupils in the top sets are achieving very high standards, particularly in algebra and trigonometry. Higher attaining pupils are able to manipulate complex algebraic expressions and have a high mental agility when working with graphs and co-ordinates when pupils respond to questions without writing or drawing. Lower attaining pupils, especially pupils who are identified as having special educational needs, also achieve well. These pupils were confidently able to work mentally at an appropriate level with number and the standards achieved on mathematical units, particularly the application of them, are good.
89. At the age of 16 attainment is good. Pupils in the higher ability groups achieve very high standards in all areas of mathematics especially in algebra and the more demanding trigonometrical topics for GCSE higher level. They manipulate surds and numbers in standard form. Lower attaining pupils work confidently at appropriate levels and also demonstrate good understanding in most aspects of the subject. Pupils with special educational needs work confidently with different methods of graphical representation including the presentation of data in pie charts.
90. Pupils of all ages and ability have trouble in remembering and applying basic number work including the recall of their multiplication tables. This was very noticeable in some higher ability groups where, for example, pupils were unable to solve a quadratic equation because they could not recall $7 \times 4 = 28$.
91. Pupils of all ability levels and ages make good progress. This is directly related to the quality of teaching. The progress made by pupils with statements of special educational needs is very good. Pupils were able to build on their knowledge of mathematical units quickly and briskly through the high level of enthusiasm and commitment to the work. Higher ability pupils also make very good progress especially where teaching is strong. Pupils also have good motivation and ask searching and demanding questions about their work showing high levels of thinking skills. This was particularly evident in a lesson on the mean of a grouped frequency distribution where all pupils were able to apply previous knowledge to solve new problems. Girls at Key Stage 4 were less willing to answer questions in lessons and their confidence in the work was not as good as that of boys.
92. The quality of teaching is good. Although there are variations in its quality it is a major strength of the department. There is no significant difference in the quality of teaching at either key stage. There was a significant amount of very good and good teaching of the subject. This has a significant impact on the standards attained and progress made by the pupils. High quality planning and a very effective homework policy are key features in the work of the department. More recently the department has introduced a three-part lesson and where this structure is followed, the pace brisk and work is carefully planned and sufficiently challenging, pupils make very good progress and the use of the time within the lesson is managed well. Many of the teachers use very good questioning and answering strategies to maintain students' concentration and check for understanding.
93. In the less successful lessons where teaching is satisfactory and in one instance, unsatisfactory, pupils are not clear on what they are supposed to be learning. Pupils' behaviour is on some occasions unsatisfactory because the level of work set is insufficiently challenging and the pace of lessons is too slow. In these lessons teachers' expositions at the beginning of the lesson were too long and pupils did not engage fully in the learning process. There were some exercise books that had not been marked by teachers for some time and there were few comments to explain how pupils could improve their work. Some exercise books however were very well marked.
94. Leadership of the department is good and the staff work well together as a team. There has been appropriate in-service training on raising attainment within the department and these strategies

are evident in the classroom. Assessment is not sufficiently developed and the department does not fully use all the data available to analyse the progress and attainment of pupils. Targets are set for pupils' results and these are sufficiently challenging but they are not yet shared with pupils. There are some problems with accommodation where learning is inhibited by noise from other rooms and their distance from the rest of the department.

95. There has been a significant improvement since the last inspection particularly in the results achieved by pupils, the quality of teaching and the provision and targets for pupils who have special educational needs, especially those who have statements. The development plan still needs sharpening in focus and detail and the provision for ICT is improving but the difficulty in gaining access to ICT facilities prevents further progress.
96. Standards of numeracy are high and in line with the high standards achieved in mathematics but the application of numeracy across the curriculum is underdeveloped with few opportunities observed during the inspection. There were good examples in ICT where pupils' knowledge of shape was used in control technology and there was good teaching in geography where pupils' knowledge on pie charts was reinforced before they presented their fieldwork findings. The school has a numeracy policy in draft form that will help promote a more effective whole school strategy.

SCIENCE

97. The standards achieved in science at age 14 are well above those achieved in similar schools and above the national average. Girls achieve slightly better than boys. Girls do slightly better in mathematics and slightly worse in English than in science. Boys do slightly better in science than both English and mathematics. At age 16 standards in the separate subjects of chemistry and biology exceed the national averages and those in physics are in line with the national average. Pupils following the Dual Award scheme achieve standards that are similar to the national average for both boys and girls. The trends in standards at ages 14 and 16 are rising above the national averages since the last inspection in 1996.
98. The inspection week was just prior to SATs tests at age 14 which allowed a number of revision lessons to be observed. Pupils displayed good knowledge of topics such as photosynthesis, forces and atomic structure, were able to understand misconceptions in answers to questions and apply principles to new situations. Revision lessons also made reference to the practical activities undertaken in the past three years and pupils showed sound understanding of the need for fair testing and the importance of presenting results clearly. Attitudes towards learning for SATs were good at all levels of attainment. The pupils increasingly take responsibility for their learning in science and this is making a positive contribution to the achievement of standards. Setting within the 11-14 age range is effective and helps to maximise the learning opportunities for all pupils.
99. At the age of 16 pupils are entered either for separate sciences or the Dual Award, and a small group follow a course leading to a Certificate in Achievement. The standards reached by pupils are good. Pupils in a lower group were able to successfully investigate the factors affecting the rate of photosynthesis using a computer simulation and a higher group displayed confidence in the use of mathematical techniques in their answers to physics questions during a GCSE revision class and in questions that required the use of the concept of the mole in chemistry. Homework tasks link closely to work covered in lessons and pupils benefit from this.
100. At age 11 pupils enter the school with average attainment in science. The curriculum includes a good range of experimental activity and is topic based. Increasing demands are made upon pupils so that by age 14 they are able to use multiple units confidently, for example in density and solubility and have an understanding of chemical equations. Pupils also show increasing ability to be able to cope with abstract concepts such as electric current and move progressively from judging the brightness of bulbs to quantitative measurements. Investigative work increases in difficulty each year and by the age of 14 many pupils are able to plan investigations effectively and understand how to control variables. The setting arrangements allow for the same topics to

be covered at different depths for all pupils and the rotation of groups enables them to be taught by teachers with specialist subject and pedagogic knowledge. Teachers have high expectations from pupils at all levels of attainment and all make good progress.

101. Between the ages of 14 and 16 those following the separate sciences are being fully stretched in their understanding of abstract ideas such as bonding between atoms and many pupils are expecting to proceed to A level studies in science. Those following the Dual Award make good progress and at age 16 are able to make connections between work being covered in different disciplines in topics such as vision. Pupils following the Certificate of Achievement course make good progress in studying how science is useful in everyday life.
102. The quality of teaching is good overall and often very good. It is a major strength and in nearly all lessons. Teachers are well qualified, most have significant experience and have excellent relationships with pupils at all attainment levels. This leads to pupils having a very positive attitude towards learning. High expectations of progress by all pupils, the use of regular assessment, good record keeping and sensitivity to individual needs all contribute to maximising the learning potential of pupils. The best lessons seen included a variety of learning approaches e.g. video, discussion, experimental work and thinking skills were used in a Year 9 lower set lesson on pregnancy. Challenge was evident in several lessons, particularly those that involved abstract ideas, such as chemical bonding. Pupils were required to make predictions in experimental exercises such as the effect of acid concentration on dissolving magnesium. This encouraged them to think about the scientific method of enquiry and strengthened their understanding. The best lessons also made reference to previously covered work and other topic areas within the science programme and so encouraged pupils to perceive coherence within the subject. Teachers make good use of a wide range of teaching resources and techniques and match these to the learning needs of particular groups. Pupils make good use of voluntary revision classes and teaching staff make themselves available for additional help at lunchtime and after school.
103. Pupils respond well during lessons. They settle down quickly, show sustained concentration for the full duration of the lesson and are keen to participate in practical work. They show respect for each other and the co-operative nature of practical work adds to their social development. In one class containing lower attaining pupils boys and girls were specifically encouraged to work together. Pupils with special needs are well supported in their learning by teachers, teaching assistants and fellow pupils. Safety requirements for practical work are followed by all without continual reminders from teachers and equipment is treated with respect. Many pupils were able to talk with confidence about their practical work during lessons and had a clear understanding of the purpose of the activity. They were generally proud of their work and progress in science.
104. The science faculty benefits from strong leadership and is well managed. Teaching and technical staff work together well as a team and policies, procedures and practices are agreed through consensus. Faculty documentation gives recognition to wider educational issues and staff debate these regularly. Some teachers also have whole school responsibilities or assist in ICT and special needs teaching. There is a complex system of setting and rotation of groups but this works to the benefit of pupils and maximises the efficient use of equipment. Staff teach mainly in subject specialisms but share their expertise well within the faculty. One of the lower set Dual Award groups remains with the same tutor for all their lessons in the interests of curriculum continuity. This willingness to continue to look for improvements that benefit pupils is a good feature. The faculty is adequately equipped with teaching resources with the exception of modern ICT facilities for use in laboratories. Laboratories are clean and benefit by attractive displays but are in need of refurbishment. The faculty has addressed the issue of storage of corrosive chemicals since the last inspection.
105. The faculty needs to formulate a more detailed development plan for the enhancement of learning science though ICT, perhaps including interactive electronic whiteboards, more data logging equipment and Internet access. Curriculum links with primary schools, which have been strong in the past, should be re-established. The faculty provides a very good training environment for future teachers and the existing links with university departments might be developed further.

ART AND DESIGN

106. Over 90 per cent of fourteen year olds at the end of Key Stage 3 have achieved the expected levels in the teachers' assessments conducted in 2000. This is significantly higher than the national average and more than half the pupils achieved the higher levels. There were no noticeable differences in achievement between boys and girls at Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 4 94 per cent of candidates achieved grades A*-C in the GCSE art and design examination in 2000. This result was very much higher than pupils' achievements nationally. The performance of school candidates was better in art and design than in all of their other subjects. Girls performed even better than boys.
107. Most pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 are working at levels that are well above those set by the National Curriculum for pupils of their ages. The majority of Year 7 pupils were highly motivated and have developed the capacity to work at a good pace throughout each lesson. Good relationships have been established between the teachers and pupils who responded positively to the tasks that were set. Most showed genuine interest in the activities and were able to sustain concentration throughout each lesson. They were keen to acquire appropriate new skills in drawing, painting and printmaking and in the manipulation of a range of 3D materials that would enable them to convey information and communicate their feelings to others. The quality of their 2D drawn studies using pencil, chalk and crayons was very good and they worked hard to improve their skills at handling paint. Some pupils had developed the capacity to modify work and to make improvements in response to their own evaluations and the criticisms of others.
108. Year 8 pupils are making very good progress and they have developed greater competence in communicating their ideas, concepts and feelings to others. They applied real effort to the set tasks and most worked in a highly concentrated fashion to realise their intentions. It was apparent that these pupils were capable of working with some degree of independence and were developing the capacity to think and learn for themselves. The quality of ideas and the technical skills displayed through the work was of a high standard for pupils at this level. Some of them succeeded in producing highly personal images through the use of a wide range of 2D and 3D materials.
109. By Year 9 most of the pupils are familiar with the many ways that visual elements can be used to convey meaning and communicate ideas and feelings through the creation of images and artefacts. They have also been successful in acquiring appropriate skills that have enabled them to carry out research into the work of other artists so that they could apply this knowledge and understanding to their own work. By this stage there was greater control over the chosen media either in 2D or 3 Dimensions. The pupils enjoyed exploring the characteristics of oil pastels when producing their own 2D studies in preparation for more finished paintings. The overall quality of image making was of a high standard for pupils at this level.
110. Pupils at Key Stage 4 are performing at levels that are well above the national average. They demonstrated enthusiasm for their set tasks, they were productive and worked at a good pace throughout each lesson. They have developed the capacity to think and act with a high degree of independence. Most were able to resolve problems for themselves without undue reliance on the teacher. They understood what they were doing and were determined to improve their technical skills and the overall quality of their work. By this stage most pupils were capable of carrying out detailed research into their subject matter. Through their work, most demonstrated the ability to plan, to organise and think ahead. They also showed that they had the confidence to explore new ideas and acquire new skills and techniques where necessary. In addition to producing images using traditional techniques such as watercolour or acrylic paints, many pupils had started to make use of modern technology. Some pupils had begun to employ black and white photography in their work. Others were using scanners and computers to produce exciting colour images. Generally speaking the range, depth and quality of these images were of a very high standard for pupils.

111. Teaching is very good at both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. The teachers know their subject, are very well organised and deliver their materials at a pace and at a level that are appropriate to the needs of the pupils. At all times the pupils were actively involved in any discussions that took place and most could talk confidently about what they were doing. At both key stages the set tasks were challenging for the majority of pupils who were obliged to work with some degree of independence. The management of pupils was very good and the teachers insisted on high standards of behaviour at all times. There was very little idle chatter or any disruption during any of the observed lessons. Generally speaking there were very good relationships between the teachers and the pupils who responded positively to the tasks that were set. The pupils were actively encouraged to develop their ideas and concepts through a process of exploration and experimentation with a range of media and materials.
112. The department is well led. The curriculum is well planned and provides opportunity for pupils to acquire understanding of their own rich cultural backgrounds and the diversity and richness of other cultures. Pupils investigate the work of Antoni Gaudi and Islamic art and architecture. Information and communication technology was being employed purposefully in this context. There is a need however for extending the range of courses on offer at Key Stage 4 to incorporate some aspects of work-related or vocational education. There is no doubt that a significant number of pupils would derive benefit from such a programme with its emphasis on coursework.
113. Accommodation is satisfactory at present. With any increase in numbers however, or with any alterations to the curriculum to include vocational or GNVQ courses, then this state of affairs could change rapidly. At present there is too little storage space and this presents problems for both teachers and pupils. Due to the success of the art and design department it continues to attract even greater numbers of pupils which means that serious consideration should be given to the appointment of a technician for the area. This would mean that staff who currently prepare studios and equipment before lessons would have more time to carry out their other duties and responsibilities.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

114. The standards of attainment by the end of each key stage are in line with the national expectations. Standards have risen since the last inspection in 1996 in drawing and modelling as a result of improved teaching including computer-aided design.
115. In the 2000 National Curriculum assessments of Year 9 pupils' work, the teachers assessed standards as in line with the national average. The results at Level 5 or above were noticeably higher than in 1999 although fewer pupils achieved at Level 6 or above. Boys' results have lagged behind those of girls in recent years and by a larger margin in 2000 than in 1999, although the separate performance of boys and girls was not analysed by the school. Girls' results in 2000 exceeded the national average for girls, whereas boys were below the national average for boys.
116. Results in the 2000 GCSE for grades A* - C in the different subject related courses were in line with the national average for all schools for both boys and girls. All pupils achieved at least grade G. Results were best in graphics products and food technology which were above average and three girls gained the highest A* grades in food technology. In the new GCSE textiles technology course, results matched the national average. Results in resistant materials were below average but taking account of pupils' abilities they achieved appropriately. The GCSE results have been consistently in line with the national average in the last three years.
117. Pupils' attainment in the subject is very varied on entry in Year 7, often below that expected for their age. Pupils' current overall attainment by Year 9 is at the standard expected nationally and closely reflects the teachers' assessments in 2000. The department ensures that most pupils make good progress and understand how to achieve good standards at each stage in their design projects to achieve finished products of good quality. Pupils develop skills in a range of activities including graphics, resistant materials, electronics, food and textiles. They use a wide variety of sources of information for their designs and develop cultural awareness, as seen in

imaginative ideas for cushion designs in a Year 9 project using patterns from other countries such as Mexico. They understand the working characteristics of a range of materials for different purposes to create, for example, individual designs for a cosmetic mirror or an eye-catching sales display. Pupils understand what constitutes a healthy diet and explore industrial processes to develop their food products. They use tools safely and accurately. Standards of graphical skills are generally above average and pupils use appropriate units of measurement to draw with good accuracy. Pupils improve the presentation of work with desktop publishing and use computers for designing, for example to create electric circuits, although resources limit pupils' experience of computer-aided manufacture. In some of the rotated units of study in Years 7-9 teachers' planning limits the level of work that pupils can achieve.

118. Pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 4 is in line with national expectations and reflects the results of the GCSE examinations in 1999 and 2000. Current work is average and some is better. Girls achieve better results than boys. Research is generally well planned and evaluated and includes use of the Internet and suitable links to industry. Standards of practical work are good and pupils work to clear criteria. Higher attaining pupils plan design projects in systematic detail, selecting options and evaluating them carefully to produce for example a storage container, a design for a shopping mall, a handbag or a new food product. Pupils show good data-handling skills and higher attaining pupils explain findings of research in graphs and tables. Pupils know exactly how their work is assessed and use a detailed check list to make sure they cover the requirements of each project. A small number of lessons in construction lack suitable variety of work for individuals and groups of pupils. In a few lessons the work for pupils with special educational needs is not structured effectively enough.
119. The requirements of National Curriculum 2000 are met. The department is very well led and has maintained the good standards identified in the last report. Improvements include recently trained staff developing initiatives in systems and control and textiles technology at both key stages. The department planning is not yet produced to a standardised format to ensure continuity in teaching. The scheme of work in Years 7-9 is arranged in modules that do not always allow pupils to achieve sufficient depth in new work and this has affected the progress of some pupils. The recent appointment of a Key Stage 3 coordinator is improving curriculum monitoring. The strong links with industry and the community contribute to above average standards of work in GCSE graphics products and food technology. Analysis of teacher assessments and GCSE results is not sufficiently rigorous to guide curriculum planning. There are no alternative choices at Key Stage 4 to meet the needs of those pupils for whom GCSE is not the best option.
120. Teaching areas are widely dispersed and this hinders communications and the efficient sharing of resources, especially of computers. Accommodation for food technology is insufficient and inappropriate. The rooms are too small for the number of pupils to work safely when engaged in practical work and furniture is worn and needs refurbishment. Storage is inadequate in food and textiles. Insufficient progress has been made to remedy these deficiencies in accommodation noted in the last inspection, despite the school's self-help improvement to create a new teaching area for computer control. The quality of technical support is good and is used effectively.

GEOGRAPHY

121. Teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 indicate that attainment is in line with the national expectation. Observation of pupils' work in books and lessons during the inspection indicates that standards of attainment are improving at Key Stage 3. By the end of the key stage pupils demonstrate a sound knowledge of places and locations in Britain and the wider world. The majority of pupils could identify continents, oceans and major countries. They develop a good range of skills associated with maps and atlases. They also show a good understanding of the influences that affect different climate regions of the world. They are able to identify the features of different regions of France and use appropriate geographical language to explain their thinking. Teachers take care, together with support staff in lessons, to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and lower attaining pupils attain as well as they can. Throughout the key stage pupils are working well and this is reflected in pupils' work in books, lessons and discussions.

122. At the end of Key Stage 4 however, standards of attainment are below the levels achieved nationally. GCSE results for grades A*-C have declined since the last inspection. In 1999 and 2000 attainment in the higher grades, especially A* and A, was considerably lower than performance nationally. However, pupils' attained broadly the same in geography as they did in other subjects. The department needs to consider why it is not attracting a larger proportion of the more capable pupils in the school.
123. Pupils demonstrate sound map interpretation skills. They can identify the features of an established settlement and describe land use using appropriate geographical language. Work seen in books, coursework, lessons and discussions is in line with national expectations. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are provided with good support and attain well in relation to their prior attainment. However too few pupils are extended and challenged to achieve the highest grades at GCSE and too many pupils attain grade D.
124. In Key Stage 3 pupils make good progress in geography. On entry to the school standards are slightly below the national expectation, however the opportunities provided to develop geographical and key skills ensure that pupils make good progress in acquiring knowledge and understanding. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress.
125. In Key Stage 4 progress is good in lessons and in work seen, although the more able pupils do not always have their learning extended and challenged appropriately. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported throughout Key Stage 4 and make good progress.
126. At both key stages teaching overall is good. The most effective teaching showed some notable features. Teachers' subject knowledge was consistently very good and used to good effect. In the most successful lessons opportunities are provided for pupils to develop a range of geographical and key skills, for example pupils in Year 8 were working collaboratively to produce wall displays on the climatic regions of the world. As a result of the teacher's approach, pupils were able to organise roles and responsibilities within their groups, provide evidence of research and plan their work to meet class deadlines. In Year 9 lower attaining pupils were provided with very good learning resources to enable them to collect and organise information from a video and their prior learning and to produce quality pieces of written work. Lessons were lively and stimulating, but pupils' work is too often copied, indicating that this is not always the case. The structured use of talk has a positive effect on learning where it is planned into lessons. Opportunities to discuss learning and solutions should be provided more consistently in all lessons. Assessment of pupils' attainment through end of unit tests is well developed but target setting strategies based on the next steps of learning are under-used. Pupils should be clear about what they need to do next in order to improve their performance. Marking and feedback are inconsistent. The best practice in marking is detailed and based on clear criteria and learning objectives. It provides information about strengths and identifies what should be done in order to improve. Fieldwork has a positive impact on pupils' learning. It is very well planned and provides a very good opportunity for all pupils to develop geographical skills and understanding, for example Year 10 pupils completed a land use survey in Blackpool in order to understand the impact of tourism on the development of a town. The fieldwork enabled pupils to produce high quality coursework for their GCSE examinations. The opportunity to use information and communication technology in logging land use and presenting the survey evidence in graphical form was missed. Teachers manage behaviour very well and pupils' attitudes to their learning have a positive effect on their progress and attainment. Pupils engage well with the content of the lesson and work well together. They are able to sustain concentration and show interest in their work. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong and this has a very positive impact on learning. Pupils collaborate very well in group work. They are able to take responsibility within groups and when given the opportunity are able to make evaluations of their own and their peers' contributions to the work produced.
127. The management of the department is satisfactory. Good practice is shared in departmental meetings. Assessment and marking is checked when the department reviews pieces of work.

Teaching is monitored by the head of department, but the system lacks rigour and structure at the moment. There are examples of very good and excellent teaching within the department which could be shared and spread more consistently through lesson observation and support. Effective working practices are in place and there is a strong sense of unity and common purpose. This is reflected in the high quality display throughout the department.

128. GCSE performance is compared with the previous year's results. The department does not use comparative national and similar school data sufficiently to judge how well it is doing. Insufficient use is made of pupil data to predict performance and raise expectations. Learning targets based on challenging expectations and national curriculum objectives are not set. These would help pupils, especially the more able, to raise attainment at Level 5+ at Key Stage 3 and gain the higher grades at GCSE. The arrangements for supporting, monitoring and assessing the newly qualified teacher in the department are very effective. Since the last inspection learning resources including textbooks have improved considerably and are now very good. Pupils' engagement with their work and the pace of lessons are now overall very good, again a considerable improvement.

HISTORY

129. In 2000, pupils' attainment as measured in National Curriculum assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 was good; the proportion of pupils attaining National Curriculum Level 5 and over was above the national average. Over the last three years the standard has been slightly above average and broadly consistent. At the end of Key Stage 4, the proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-C at GCSE in 2000 was below the national average but the proportion gaining A*-G was above average. Girls performed better than boys. Over the last three years results have varied considerably; in 1999, they were well above average but in 1998 well below, reflecting the fact that the group of pupils opting for history at this level varies considerably from year to year.
130. The standard of work seen during the inspection at Key Stage 3 was broadly in line with national expectations. By the end of Year 9, pupils have developed their knowledge of history. They can make use of historical sources appropriately, selecting information and deploying it in their written work using correct historical terminology. Pupils develop their understanding of different types of historical evidence. Most pupils can explain some reasons for historical changes; pupils of above average ability can evaluate sources. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils demonstrate a good level of knowledge about the twentieth century history topics they have studied. They can analyse the reasons for and the results of historical events. Pupils of below average ability can make use of sources and identify some similarities and differences between them. Pupils of average attainment can interpret and evaluate these sources at an appropriate level. Pupils of above average attainment can deploy their knowledge effectively and make connections between the different topics they have studied. Overall, attainment at Key Stage 4 is in line with national standards. Since the last inspection, standards of attainment have been maintained.
131. The quality of learning at both key stages is good. Pupils make a consistent effort with their work. Almost invariably, their attitudes are positive and they behave well in lessons. They are willing to learn and they can sustain concentration for considerable periods. Pupils take care with their written work and present it well. There is a positive and constructive relationship between pupils and their teachers; pupils also work well together and they respect each other's contributions in group work and in class discussions. Pupils of different abilities make good progress overall. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress, although there is limited in-class support for these pupils, even in groups where there is a considerable number of such pupils. Real enthusiasm is seen in some lessons at Key Stage 3. However in occasional lessons pupils play a rather passive role.
132. The standard of teaching seen was good overall. Lessons were always at least satisfactory, often good and sometimes very good. There were more good and very good lessons at Key Stage 3 than at Key Stage 4. Consistently strong features of teaching include the sound subject knowledge of teachers; good management of pupils' behaviour and good use of time and the use of classroom materials which are accessible to pupils of all abilities. All of these factors help pupils to learn. In very good lessons, the pace is brisk and teachers use their questioning to ensure that every pupil contributes to discussions, as in a Year 11 revision lesson on examination technique and a Year 8 lesson revising medieval monarchs. In the best lessons, teachers had clear objectives which were explained and which the class understood. This good practice should be extended to every lesson so that pupils understand clearly what they are learning and can assess how much progress they have made by the end of the lesson. The department makes very effective use of decision making exercises, project work and fieldwork. Pupils often have the opportunity to develop their own ideas, as in a Year 9 group work lesson on Hitler's rise to power. However in occasional lessons opportunities are missed to challenge pupils, particularly the most able, to think for themselves. The department has very poor resources for the use of information and communication technology and there are problems of access to central resources; as a result, teachers are not able to make effective use of information technology in history lessons. Due attention is paid to teaching historical vocabulary and to correcting spelling and grammar in pupils' written work. However the department does not have a systematic approach to teaching extended writing skills from Key Stage 3 onwards.

133. Work is marked regularly according to departmental policy and pupils have a clear understanding of the level at which they are working. Teachers' comments on work are positive and encouraging and there is a good profiling system to record progress. Pupils also have the opportunity to comment on their own performance. However teachers need to give clearer indications to pupils of how they can improve their work and to set them specific targets for this improvement.
134. Management of the history department is good. There is a good scheme of work which has been reorganized recently and which incorporates regular end of unit assessments. Due time and attention are given to non-European elements of the history curriculum. Planning is satisfactory; there is a good plan for the development of information and communication technology in the subject. Resources are satisfactory; pupils are generally unable to take textbooks home but history staff produce good quality reprographic materials for use in the classroom and for homework. The head of department has worked with the school librarian to ensure that the library provides effective support for the history curriculum. History staff work very much as a team, ensuring consistency across the department in what is taught to pupils. The department benefits from having well qualified, committed and experienced staff. Some monitoring of teaching and learning takes place but this should be more consistent to help the department identify its strengths and weaknesses systematically and to set clear targets to raise standards further.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

135. The teaching of information and communication technology (ICT) as a specific subject is good. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and of their pupils. The organisation of the department does not allow for this good teaching to impact fully on standards. Pupils do not have the opportunity to use the capabilities gained in ICT lessons to support their learning in other subjects across the curriculum.
136. Pupils' attainment is just below national expectations in Key Stages 3 and below national expectations in Key Stage 4. Standards of attainment at Key Stage 3 had fallen since the last inspection but the most recent results of teacher assessment show an improvement on the previous year. Pupils' progress is more rapid in Year 9 than in Years 7 and 8 where there was too much emphasis on acquiring skills, repeating work from the Key Stage 2 programme of study.
137. Pupils' attainment in the full GCSE is below the national expectation and significantly below the school average. This is partly a result of pupils studying the course for only about half the time taken in most schools. Although girls' performance in GCSE is better than boys', their underperformance in ICT is further below the school average than is the boys'.
138. Teaching was good overall in both Key Stages 3 and 4. Teachers have good subject knowledge. While there was some very good teaching there was also some that was just satisfactory. Very good teaching was typified by having clear objectives, which are reviewed at the end of the lessons and a good pace. The teachers have good knowledge of the pupils and likely misconceptions and keep thorough assessment records to assist in planning for progression. In lessons where teaching was only just satisfactory, there was no evidence of planning to meet the needs of individuals, tasks were set verbally and all pupils were expected to tackle the same tasks.
139. The ICT department forms part of the technology faculty within the school. The head of faculty formally monitors teaching within the department but some weaknesses have not been addressed. The management of ICT within the school is the responsibility of the head of ICT. Opportunities for pupils to use their ICT capabilities to support learning in other curriculum areas are few. ICT use is well developed only in modern foreign languages where it is used to help develop language skills. Other curriculum areas report difficulties in gaining access. Development plans exist and teachers are following training courses to develop the use of ICT in different curriculum areas.

140. While the ICT course in Key Stage 3 provides full coverage of National Curriculum requirements, the scheme of work and assessment procedures are in need of development. The scheme of work lacks the detail needed to ensure that tasks are set which extend and challenge all pupils. Assessment procedures need to be established and appropriate records kept.
141. All pupils follow an ICT course in Key Stage 4. This leads to short course GCSE. There is the opportunity in the options system for pupils to also follow a full course GCSE. As this would mean following two ICT courses and is not a popular choice with most pupils. Lower attaining pupils are encouraged to make this choice and spend the extra time studying for the full course. These pupils make good progress and score better than expected grades at GCSE. The highest attaining pupils sit the full course GCSE examination, despite having only had the time to study for the short course. Because of a lack of curriculum time these pupils make less progress than they would be expected to do.
142. Pupils are taught in small classes in Key Stage 3 and rarely need to share computers. However when four classes run at once, there is no computer room available for cross-curricular use. Class sizes are larger in Key Stage 4 where higher attaining pupils are taught in larger classes and pupils have to share computers.
143. Since the last inspection there has been an important change in the computer platform used. This has been managed well to minimise disruption to pupils' learning. The old platform computers that make up provision in one out of four rooms are still used effectively to provide access to control technology that is not yet available on the new network. However, little has been done to address problems identified with the scheme of work and assessment procedures.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

144. Standards reached by pupils in French and Spanish by the age of fourteen are in line with national expectations. In 2000, the percentage of candidates who gained A* to C grades in GCSE French was well below the national average and below the average for other subjects in the school. The percentage of candidates who gained at least a grade G was above the national average. A much smaller number took Spanish and the percentage of candidates who gained A* to C grades was above the national average. All candidates gained at least a grade G. The percentage of candidates who gained A* and A grades was well below the national average in both French and Spanish. The GCSE results in 2000 indicate an improvement on the results of the previous year.
145. Standards of work seen in Key Stage 3 are satisfactory. Most pupils demonstrate a good understanding of spoken French or Spanish, which represents an improvement since the last inspection. Higher attaining pupils have a good knowledge of grammar. They use accurately, for example, possessive adjectives and direct object pronouns. Others show an understanding of some of the rules of grammar but are unable to apply those rules appropriately. Pronunciation is at least intelligible. During the lessons observed, there was little independent use of the foreign language for real, communicative purposes. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, especially in listening comprehension and in well-rehearsed exchanges that require short, simple responses. They copy words and short phrases correctly.
146. In Key Stage 4, standards of work seen during the inspection are below national expectations and pupils do not make enough progress in the key stage. Higher-attaining pupils have an insecure knowledge of tenses and consequently their writing is inaccurate. Oral skills within structured role-plays are good, but all pupils demonstrate a lack of confidence when they are required to speak independently. Responses are mostly limited to the minimum demanded. The foreign language is not used routinely in the classroom for everyday transactions. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. They can take part in short, rehearsed exchanges with one another using cues or prompts to help them.

147. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 3 is good and in Key Stage 4 satisfactory. There are many good features of teaching throughout the school. Teachers plan their lessons well in order to provide a variety of appropriate activities that enable their pupils to develop their language skills. There is a lively pace to most lessons, which sustains pupils' concentration on their tasks. Pupils are encouraged to think about the sounds and patterns of language. The management of pupils is good and ensures that teacher-student relationships are positive. Good use is made of support staff with pupils with special educational needs and this helps them to make good progress. Strategies used by teachers to develop pupils' listening and reading skills are effective. In spite of pockets of good practice, the progress and standards of pupils are adversely affected by insufficient insistence on developing and extending the speaking skills of pupils preparing for their GCSE examinations. Pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to practise speaking in pairs or small groups. Extensive use of the foreign language by the teacher sets an appropriate challenge to listening skills, but there is not enough insistence on making pupils use the foreign language for real purposes. The provision of opportunities for independent talk is limited and consequently most pupils do not develop their oral skills as well as they could.
148. The leadership and management of the department are now good. The recently appointed head of department has developed new schemes of work with a view to achieving a more consistent pattern of practice across the faculty. There is a clear focus on the improvement of standards. New procedures for monitoring and reviewing pupils' achievement throughout the school have been introduced. The setting of clear, realistic targets for individual pupils so that they know what they need to do in order to improve their performance levels would have a positive impact upon standards. Further development of a formal programme to monitor all the teaching in the department would lead to more effective dissemination of good classroom practice throughout the faculty.

MUSIC

149. The last inspection reported on a department in a state of chaos. Standards were low, there had been no real progress for a long time and most Year 8 and 9 pupils were alienated from the subject. With the change of staff three years ago the situation has been fully retrieved and the subject put on a firm footing in the school. Pupils in all years enjoy their music lessons.
150. At both key stages pupils' attainment is now in line with national expectations. Pupils come to music in groups set by modern language attainment, the rationale for which is not clear. At age 14, the end of Key Stage 3, pupils' composing in the higher sets is above average, showing competence and creative approaches. Most other pupils achieve satisfactorily, although a few, not necessarily those in the lowest groups, do less well. Standards in performing show a similar pattern and in both activities the lower attainers lack manual dexterity or find difficulty with reading music. In terms of their previous performance, all achieve satisfactorily or better. At age 16, the end of Key Stage 4, GCSE group sizes have been too small for viable statistical comparison, although the three entered in 2000 did well. GCSE group sizes in the current Years 10 and 11 are much bigger, reflecting the pupils' positive perception of the subject now. Theoretical and composing work in lessons observed was of an appropriate examination standard. Progress, so lacking at the time of the last report, is now good in all years, but the lack of suitable good quality computers in the music area prevents developments in information technology. The small school band plays very well and provides the nucleus for future exciting developments. The singing group functions enthusiastically, performing very attractive material written by the head of department.
151. The quality of teaching overall is satisfactory with many good features at Key Stage 3 and good features at Key Stage 4. Informed by detailed curriculum documentation, teachers' planning enables most lessons to provide good learning experiences for pupils. At both key stages composing tasks are challenging, but at Key Stage 3 the requirement to use music notation sometimes inhibits results. In some lessons, covering theoretical aspects of the GCSE, pupils are too passive, they need to be involved much more in discussion to develop their musical understanding. At the time of the inspection there was an emphasis on electric keyboard work and the department should monitor its curriculum delivery to ensure a wide range of musical

experiences is offered, including singing. The keyboard skills course engages pupils' interest, but the department should ensure that it provides more aesthetic experiences alongside its rather mechanical approach. On-the-spot feedback to pupils is effective and good use is made of the keyboard lab in this respect. Assessments are well recorded and informed by them, the department has trialled the new reporting requirements successfully. Pupils' varying musical needs are mostly well met by the school. Those with special educational needs achieve appropriate standards in playing and composing, but the restricted amount of instrumental teaching on offer limits opportunities for the more able musicians, of which there are many. Only flute teaching could be observed and this was done very well.

152. In all lessons pupils acquire new skills and understanding and their interest is very well sustained. When tasks allow for a really creative approach, pupils can work in a very inventive way. Little opportunity is given for pupils to discuss each other's playing and composing, which they should be doing in order to develop technical language, critical judgement and understanding. Pupils' attitudes to music are now entirely positive and their behaviour is almost always very good. They collaborate very well in small group work helping each other to solve the musical problems presented by playing and composing activities.
153. The curriculum reflects a good spread of musical styles and cultures and the department has recently been involved in an Indonesian Gamelan project. The subject is well led and good support is being given to the initial teacher-training student currently working in the department who taught 38 per cent of the lessons observed. Resources are very limited in range and should be expanded to complement the good stock of keyboards and to provide the computer facilities urgently needed for the new GCSE syllabus and other work. The accommodation offers enough working space but is resonant and would benefit from carpeting. Music is now firmly back on the map at Castlebrook. The school should support the department in its keenness to raise the subject's profile further by the carefully staged introduction of singing in assemblies; increasing the number of pupils learning instruments; developing further the instrumental and vocal ensembles; continuing to increase the take-up for GCSE and giving more public performances.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

154. Pupils' attainment in physical education by the age of 14 is in line with national expectations. This is due to sound teaching and because pupils have a responsible attitude and approach towards learning. By the age of 16 pupils' overall attainment is in line with national expectations. The percentage of pupils achieving A*-C grades in 2000 was just below national averages for all schools. Against similar schools the percentage was above average.
155. By age 14, pupils have developed basic techniques of passing and catching in rounders and bowling action in cricket as a result of time being allocated to consolidating their learning. Pupils who are performing above national expectations have good technique in bowling, with good line and length, in cricket and field well when taking part in a game of rounders. Pupils' development of knowledge and understanding is enhanced by their ability to work cooperatively in pairs and small groups when practising basic techniques. Pupils' attainment during Years 10 and 11 in core physical education is in line with national expectations.
156. Pupils make sound progress through both key stages. Sound teaching makes sure that basic skills are acquired and that pupils work productively with one another. For example there is good learning of movements on the trampoline in which quality of performance is emphasised. There is also some good learning of basic techniques of leg and arm action in sprinting, which is then transferred to running relays. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress. This is because of sound systems for consultation and planning with the special educational needs department. High attaining pupils make sound progress as a consequence of good opportunities to practise their skills.
157. The quality of teaching is sound overall. In a minority of lessons teaching is unsatisfactory but there is also an example of very good teaching. The strengths of teachers include good knowledge of the subject, organisational skills, good relationships with pupils, a commitment to

pupils' moral and social development and practice which ensures a safe learning environment. This means that pupils are able to learn basic techniques through appropriate activities and in an environment which encourages learning. There is sound provision for pupils with special educational needs. Planning is a weakness because it does not identify what pupils will learn from the lesson. This means that the teacher is not clear enough about pupils' strengths and weaknesses and consequently intervention with pupils misses points which would enhance learning. Some teaching time is lost because pupils spend too long getting changed and this has a negative effect on learning. Assessment procedures for monitoring pupils' progress have been developed but all pupils still do not know what they can and cannot do and how to make progress. There are too few opportunities for pupils to consolidate and develop their use of the subject's specialist language.

158. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They enjoy physical education and have a responsible attitude and approach to their learning. Participation levels are good. Pupils concentrate and therefore remain on task. They are able to work effectively as individuals but also co-operate well when working in pairs and small groups. Behaviour is good. Pupils develop good relationships with other pupils and the teacher. The standard of physical education kit is good. Pupils are able to take responsibility within extra-curricular activities.
159. The physical education curriculum meets statutory requirements. Since the last inspection the time allocation now enables a good breadth and balance of activities for all pupils. A GCSE course is now offered to pupils. The department recognises the importance of extra-curricular activities, which enhance learning. There has been progress, since the last inspection, in making appropriate provision for both boys and girls. Take up by pupils is good, with some progressing to local and area teams and competitions. The school has had success with teams winning local leagues and tournaments. Leadership of the department has many strengths which include a good department handbook, systems and procedures for ensuring a safe learning environment, good movement and maintenance of resources and a commitment to helping pupils to further develop their skills through extra-curricular activities. There is now a need to develop monitoring systems so that the head of department can make use of the strengths in teaching within the department to address the weaknesses so that all make good progress. This will also allow the subject's development plan to focus on raising standards and pupils' attainment. Indoor facilities are good but poor maintenance and repair of outdoor facilities means that some lessons have to be moved indoors and consequently some pupils do not always get a good balance of activities.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

160. Standards of achievement at the end of Key Stage 3 are satisfactory overall, but they are unsatisfactory by the end of Key Stage 4
161. On entry to the school pupils are attaining at the expected levels. They have some knowledge and understanding of Christianity, a limited knowledge of other faiths and little understanding that religion has an impact on a person's life style and actions. They make good progress and by the following Easter they have deepened their understanding of the impact of belief on the lives of religious believers. In particular they have a good understanding of symbolism and artefacts and all but the least able are achieving Level 4 with some elements of Level 5. They have not deepened their knowledge of other faiths at this point but this reflects the Bury Agreed Syllabus. Pupils then make good progress so that by the end of Year 9 they are able to apply knowledge learned, evaluate ideas, use religious language accurately and make comparisons between religious traditions. For example work on church design demonstrates good application of knowledge gained. All pupils are able to discuss personal belief and work on the existence of God demonstrates Level 5 which is achieved by middle and able pupils; some pupils in the top sets achieve Level 6. However, less able pupils in classes with large numbers of statemented pupils have some difficulty in making significant progress because they do not receive enough support.

162. At Key Stage 4 standards vary from GCSE grades A* to U with some pupils not entered for the examination. Results for the short course are well below the national average and below the overall average grades achieved by the school. In addition the 2000 results of 32.6 per cent A* to C grades are poorer than those for the previous year. The short course, which is followed by all pupils, is taught by several non-specialist teachers and this is likely to be the cause of the department underperforming. However, examples of good work and progress were seen. In work on the existence of God able pupils demonstrate their ability to handle complex concepts. All but the least able show good knowledge and understanding of moral and contemporary issues like marriage, euthanasia and abortion. Some good work was seen on key concepts relating to these topics.
163. The quality of teaching in religious education is good in Key Stage 3 but is unsatisfactory in Key Stage 4 overall, although some excellent teaching was seen. Planning is good and relates to the locally agreed syllabus. It provides for consistency in content across the classes. In the best lessons the teacher has good subject knowledge, uses a variety of teaching and learning styles and maintains pace and challenge throughout the lesson. Homework is set regularly and relationships with the pupils are good. Use is made of a good range of resources and pupils are expected to use ICT in their work if possible. However, there is little use of ICT in lessons. Good exploration of religious language makes a contribution to the development of literacy. In most lessons pupils are given time to discuss and reflect on ideas and this contributes to quality learning. Weaknesses in teaching are linked to the setting of tasks that do not match the needs of the pupils, lack of planning with support teachers and support assistants and the failure to share learning objectives with the pupils. Pupils involved in research need more resources in order to develop their understanding and investigative skills.
164. The department is well managed and non-specialist staff are given support. Currently the department is included in the humanities development plan but religious education needs a development plan of its own to ensure that the subject moves forward. Marking is satisfactory and indicates some ways in which the work can be improved but this needs further development as pupils are not able to explain how they can improve their work in the context of religious education. Assessment is developing but it is not sufficiently rigorous and it is not used to inform planning.
165. The department has made good progress since the last inspection. All pupils have sufficient time for religious education and follow a GCSE course in Key Stage 4. Statutory requirements are now fully met. The religious education resources in the library have been improved but pupils still need to be more involved in developing their own learning. The subject makes a good contribution to the spiritual, social, moral and cultural development of pupils.