

INSPECTION REPORT

MARSHLAND HIGH SCHOOL

West Walton, Wisbech

LEA area: Norfolk

Unique reference number: 121212

Headteacher: John Bennett

Reporting inspector: Grace Marriott
3674

Dates of inspection: 30th April – 4th May 2001

Inspection number: 190099

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Foundation
School category:	Secondary
Age range of pupils:	11 - 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	School Road West Walton Wisbech
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Dr. A W Greer
Date of previous inspection:	23 rd to 27 th September 1996

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19653	Elizabeth Dickson	Lay Inspector		How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
27501	Vera MacRae	Team Inspector	English, English as an additional language	
1503	Terry Browne	Team Inspector	Mathematics	
1522	William Keast	Team Inspector	Science Special educational needs	
2501	Raye Allison-Smith	Team Inspector	Art	
25073	Stuart Jordan	Team Inspector	History, Geography Equal opportunities	
10817	George Rayner	Team Inspector	Information & Communication Technology	
11746	Robin Coulthard	Team Inspector	Music Religious Education	How well is the school led and managed? How well are pupils taught?
4617	Rosalyn Fox	Team Inspector	Modern Languages	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
2495	Brian Munden	Team Inspector	Design and Technology	
3726	Maureen Bean	Team Inspector	Physical Education	How well does the school care for its pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

e-Qualitas Ltd, Langshaw, Pastens Road, Limpsfield Chart, Oxted, Surrey, RH8 0RE.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Marshland is an 11-16 mixed foundation school in Norfolk, on the edge of Wisbech, and close to border with Cambridgeshire. It has 828 pupils on roll, which is approximately 100 more than at the last inspection. Pupils come from the small Fenland villages as well as some from Wisbech itself. Just over 10% of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is broadly average. The pupils come from a wide variety of backgrounds including a settled traveller community. A few children come from families whose ethnic origins are African or from the Indian sub-continent and have English as an additional language, but none are at an early stage of learning English. Just over a quarter of pupils are on the special educational needs register, which is above average, as is the proportion with statements. The range of special needs is fairly wide and includes dyslexia, emotional and behavioural needs, and moderate learning difficulties. Pupils' attainment on entry is slightly below average overall, with rather more pupils whose attainment is below average than above average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Marshland is providing a satisfactory standard of education. Standards in most subjects are broadly average and pupils are achieving at a level which is satisfactory in relation to their standard of work when they joined the school, though not in English in Key Stage 4. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Leadership and management are also satisfactory overall, with some strengths at the level of senior management, in subject management and in pastoral care, but also weaknesses particularly in the school's development planning and the consistency with which school policies are implemented. The governors are supportive but not fully involved in setting the strategic direction of the school.

What the school does well

- The pupils are doing particularly well in science, and standards are better than those in similar schools.
- Standards are above average in art in Key Stage 4.
- In mathematics, design and technology, history, geography, the pupils are making good progress and achieving well relative to their previous standards of work.
- The teaching seen in design and technology, music, information and communication technology (ICT) and physical education (PE) was good.
- The school's pastoral care is good, the house system works well and relationships are good.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.

What could be improved

- Standards in English, particularly at GCSE, are not as good as mathematics or science and are below the national average.
- Pupils are not receiving their full entitlement to ICT and as a result standards are not as high as they should be.
- In some of the teaching, the expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough and the work could be better matched to pupils' needs.
- Development planning is not focused sharply enough on raising standards, and school policies are not implemented consistently enough to ensure uniformly high standards.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in September 1996. The improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The key issues relating to setting and the timing of the school day have been tackled, and there has been an improvement in the attainment of boys. The school has made good progress in implementing the new requirements for performance management. Teaching is now more systematically monitored at the level of senior management, but not consistently at the level of departments. Financial planning is better integrated into development planning and the governors' committees have a more clearly defined monitoring role. However, the governors are not as involved in strategic planning as they should be. The accommodation has improved and ICT facilities are better. Non-specialist teaching in many subjects is still affecting standards. Where implemented well, the school policies and systems are making a difference to standards, as for example in science and design and technology. There has not

yet been enough improvement in English. Subjects are now planning more systematically to enhance pupils' spiritual development but the arrangements for collective worship still do not meet statutory requirements.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 16 year olds based on average point scores in GCSE (GCSE is graded on an A*-G scale, A*=8pts, A=7pts, B=6pts, C=5pts, D=4pts, E=3pts, F=2pts, G=1pt).

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
GCSE examinations	C	C	C	E	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E

In 2000, the school's GCSE results were close to the national average both in terms of the average point score and the percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more GCSE A* to C passes. They were well above the national average for 5 or more A* to G grades. When compared with similar schools (that is those with a similar number of pupils entitled to free school meals), the GCSE points scores were well below average, but average compared with what the pupils had achieved at the end of Year 9. Overall the school's GCSE results have changed little since the previous inspection.

GCSE results were above average in science and mathematics but in English were well below average. In English, pupils are not achieving as well as they could be whereas in mathematics their achievement is satisfactory and in science they are doing well. The 2000 results were better than previous years in mathematics and art. The pupils achieved their best results in art and music, where standards were above the national average. They did worst in physical education (PE) and German, where standards were well below average. In design and technology, history, geography and French, the results were below average, but current work in these subjects and in PE, in Years 10 and 11 indicates that standards are now in line with the national expectations. Standards in German have also improved and are now below, rather than well below, expectations. Boys' results have improved in the last three years and are now average when compared with boys nationally. Girls' results are also average though not as good in 2000 as in the two previous years. The school achieved its target for GCSE points scores last year and has set a realistic and slightly higher one for 2001.

The school's results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 have improved since the last inspection and in 2000 were better than most schools. The greatest improvement has been in mathematics. Results were well above average in mathematics and science and average in English. Both boys and girls are doing better than the national average, with girls doing slightly better than boys. When pupils' attainment in Year 9 is compared with what they could do at the start of Year 7, they are achieving satisfactory standards in English, and doing well in mathematics and science.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Attitudes to the school are satisfactory overall.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in lessons, and around the school generally, is satisfactory.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between the majority of pupils and with adults are good overall.
Attendance	Attendance is slightly below the average and unauthorised absence is above than the national average. Punctuality is good.

Most pupils treat each other and teachers with respect. They are interested in and involved in their learning, particularly when the teaching is stimulating, but a few are not enthusiastic. Similarly, most pupils behave well and are good-natured and co-operative but a minority have difficulty in sustaining

concentration and can be unco-operative and behave in a challenging way in lessons.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The teaching was satisfactory or better in just over 9 out of 10 lessons seen (92%). It was good in half (50%), and very good in one lesson in ten (10%). In the best lessons relationships are good and teachers manage behaviour well. The lessons are well structured and pitched at a suitable level for the class. Teachers give good explanations and make a strong feature of introducing technical language through the use of key words. This supports literacy well. The good teaching enables pupils to work at a good pace and to be confident in what they know and can do. It encourages the pupils to ask questions and think for themselves. Teachers' subject knowledge and understanding is a particular strength in Key Stage 4.

The main weaknesses in teaching relate to some teachers' expectations not being high enough, and work not being well enough matched to pupils' needs. The eight per cent of teaching which was unsatisfactory was spread across a number of subjects including English, mathematics, science, art, geography, history, music and religious education. It was mostly but not entirely related to non-specialist teaching. In general, the non-specialist teaching lacked depth because teachers' subject knowledge is not secure and so they are too reliant on the scheme of work. This leads to some lack of motivation and inefficient learning by pupils. The non-specialist teaching is particularly affecting standards in art and history in Key Stage 3.

Teaching in the core subjects is satisfactory. In English teaching focuses purposefully on examination requirements. The best mathematics teaching involved using resources beyond the textbook and use questioning and explanation well to promote purposeful learning, but generally the range of teaching methods and resources was too narrow. Lessons are well structured in science and challenging questioning helps to stimulate good learning in some lessons, and there is good use of scientific vocabulary. The overall standard of teaching in design and technology, ICT, PE and science is good. It is also good in French in Key Stage 3, while in Key Stage 4 it is good in art, history and religious education. The teaching is very good in music in Key Stage 4. Pupils with special educational needs and the very few with English as an additional language are taught, and learn in the subject sets. The linking of learning support assistant to subjects enables the pupils to learn well and make satisfactory, and often good, progress in both key stages.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is satisfactory with some strengths but also a weakness because ICT is not used enough in all subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Learning support assistants are linked to subjects, which develops mutual trust and understanding.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The provision for the few pupils with English as an additional language enables them to make progress at a similar rate to other pupils
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes satisfactory provision for supporting pupils' moral and cultural development; social development is good but spiritual development is not satisfactory.

How well the school cares for its pupils	The good quality pastoral care, developed through the house system helps to build positive relationships across the school. Child protection procedures are good.
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The curriculum meets statutory requirements except in ICT. At Key Stage 3, it is enhanced by drama and by a choice of French or German. In Key Stage 4, a small number of pupils follow an appropriate work-related course which allows them to become more familiar with the world of work. Enough time is allocated to most subjects, though not to religious education or careers. The partnership with parents is satisfactory. The school recently carried out a survey of parental views and intends to address the issues arising from this. The Parent Teacher Association provides good support.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher leads the school energetically and with a strong sense of commitment. The senior staff have a clear view of what they want to achieve but the development planning is not rigorous enough at all levels to ensure that aims are achieved.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are supportive and well-informed but not as involved as they could be in the strategic planning and setting priorities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher carries out formal reviews of each subject, but the targets set are not having enough impact on standards. Some heads of department are much more effective than others in monitoring work.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are used carefully to support the school's educational priorities using the principles of best value.

The leadership and management of the school are broadly satisfactory but there are areas which need to be improved. The school development plan has many good ideas, for example the development of ICT, literacy and numeracy, and a whole-school review of the curriculum, but a number of areas such as assessment and standards in English are missing. The quality of departmental planning varies too much, some is good but some is unsatisfactory. The school has enough teachers to teach the National Curriculum and in Key Stage 4 and they are almost all teaching their subject specialisms. In Key Stage 3, some non-specialist teaching is unavoidable, but too many teachers are teaching subjects in which they are not specialists, because of the way the timetable has been constructed. Resources are satisfactory overall and much better in ICT. The school has enough accommodation, which is maintained in a satisfactory condition, though the amount of litter spoils the environment.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • Their children are expected to work hard and achieve their best. • The staff are approachable and parents feel able to ask questions or discuss problems. 	A minority of parents have concerns about <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • homework • information for parents • extra-curricular activities • behaviour.

The inspection team felt that behaviour is satisfactory overall, though recognising that the way in which a few pupils behave at times adversely affects the learning of others. The provision of homework is broadly satisfactory but with some inconsistencies. When compared with other schools, the range of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. The school is meeting statutory requirements for providing information to parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. In 2000, the school's GCSE results were close to the national average both in terms of the average point score and the percentage of pupils gaining five or more GCSE A* to C passes. They were well above the national average for five or more A* to G grades. When compared with similar schools (that is those with a similar number of pupils entitled to free school meals) the GCSE points scores were well below average, but average compared with what the pupils had achieved at the end of Year 9. Results in mathematics were close to those for similar schools; in science they were above and in English they were well below. Overall the school's GCSE results have changed little since the previous inspection.
2. The results for individual subjects varied considerably. The 2000 results were better than previous years in mathematics and art. The GCSE results in the core subjects were above average in science and mathematics and well below average in English. In English, pupils are not achieving as well as they could be, whereas in mathematics and science their achievement is satisfactory. The pupils achieved more A* and A results in mathematics and science than they did in English.
3. In other subjects the pupils achieved their best results in art and music, where standards were above the national average, They did worst in physical education (PE) and German where standards were well below average. Although in design and technology, history and geography and French the results were below average, current work in Years 10 and 11 in these subjects, and in PE, indicates that standards are in line with the national expectations. Standards in German have also improved and are now slightly below expectations.
4. The attainment of boys has improved in the last three years and their GCSE results are now average when compared with boys' nationally. Girls' results are also average though they were not as good in 2000 as in the two previous years. There are variations within subjects but no overall pattern. The school achieved its target for GCSE points scores last year and has set a realistic and slightly higher one for 2001.
5. The school's results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 were better than average in terms of the overall points score. The test results in mathematics and science were above average and they were average in English. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels in these tests (level 6 or better) was very similar to the national picture in English and mathematics and better than the national results in science. Over the last three years there has been no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.
6. The Year 9 test results have improved since the last inspection, with the greatest improvement in mathematics. When pupils' achievement in Year 9 is compared with their standard of work when they joined the school in Year 7, they are achieving satisfactory standards in English and doing well in mathematics and science.
7. Most pupils with special educational needs are taught within the setting arrangements in subject areas. The support that they receive, by being in smaller groups and with learning support assistants (LSAs) who are linked to specific subject areas, enables them to make satisfactory, and often good, progress in both key stages. A small group

of pupils in both Years 7 and 8 follow an intensive, corrective reading course within their English teaching. Progress here is good because of the more individual nature of the support. The newly established independent learning centre (ILC) is effective in tackling the specific skill development of individual pupils, again generally on a one-to-one basis. Overall, the achievement of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Similarly the few pupils with English as an additional language receive an appropriate level of support and their achievement is satisfactory.

8. The pupils use their literacy skills satisfactorily in other subjects, though some weaknesses in basic skills affect their work in subjects such as history. They are able to use appropriate technical language and writing frames help them structure their written work in art and in design and technology. However, the research skills they acquire in the weekly library sessions in years 7 and 8 are not exploited as fully as they could be in later years. Numeracy across the curriculum is generally satisfactory, as pupils have sound numerical skills. They use these most consistently in science and design and technology.
9. Standards attained in English at the end of Year 9 are average. Overall, pupils' achievement in Key Stage 3 is satisfactory. Pupils perform well when they are answering teachers' questions, working in pairs and when writing narrative about their own experiences. They are less good when attempting to interpret texts in their written work. The achievement of the current Year 11 pupils is unsatisfactory because they have not made enough progress during the GCSE course. The coursework seen during the inspection was below average being too narrow in range and, with few exceptions, lacking imagination and in-depth analysis. There are inaccuracies in spelling, grammar and punctuation.
10. In mathematics, GCSE results have generally improved over time because the experienced teachers have taught pupils the necessary knowledge and skills for examinations. Pupils' achievement is good at the end of Key Stage 3 when compared with what they could do when they joined the school in Year 7. In the best lessons pupils are making good progress. For instance in one lesson, lower-attaining pupils learnt about the different types of average through collecting various types of data. However, the progress in some lessons was slower, for example when pupils working on areas and perimeters could not able to build on what they already knew. In both key stages, pupils' skills in problem solving, communicating and reasoning are not as well developed as their other mathematical skills. Boys have achieved better mathematics results than girls at GCSE, but the reverse is true in Key Stage 3.
11. In science, pupils are doing better than in English and mathematics, mainly because of the high degree of consistency in the planning and teaching of the work and teachers' expectations. Pupils do equally well in the different aspects of science. Practical investigations are an integral part of pupils' work and they acquire good skills but a shortage of appropriate hardware and software means that their skills in the use of ICT are less well developed.
12. In art, the GCSE results are good and pupils achieved better results in their art examinations than in most of their other subjects. Given the low levels of attainment of some pupils when they started the GCSE course, they made excellent progress. Attainment of pupils currently in Year 11 is above average but below the standards of last year.
13. In design and technology, the standard in Year 9 is in line with the national expectation and pupils are achieving at a satisfactory level because the curriculum is well

structured and well taught. GCSE results have been consistently below the national average except for the results in graphics, which were above the national average. Current work in Years 10 and 11 indicates that standards are rising.

14. In both history and geography the standards of work of pupils currently in Year 9 are in line with national expectations. At GCSE pupils did better in history and geography than in most other subjects. When compared to their earlier attainment, pupils' achievement in geography is good and in history it is satisfactory in Key Stage 3 and good in Key Stage 4. The difference between the two key stages reflects the effect of non-specialist teaching.
15. In ICT, Year 9 pupils are working in line with expectations but almost exclusively in the handling and communication aspects of ICT and they do not have enough opportunities to reach the same standards in most other aspects, particularly using computers to take measurements. The work of Year 11 pupils taking GCSE, is below average. They use ICT tools for specified tasks, such as PowerPoint to publicise a computer club, and spreadsheet records to manage its finances, but do not sufficiently analyse their tasks, or explain and evaluate the approaches. Overall achievement is unsatisfactory. The use of ICT in other subjects is too patchy to ensure consistent progress.
16. In modern foreign languages, in both French and German the standard of work of Year 9 pupils is in line with national expectations. Pupils have good recall of previous learning, and reading and listening skills are well developed. The improvement in standards in Year 11 in both subjects this suggests that GCSE results should be better this year. When compared with their earlier attainment, pupils in both key stages achieve appropriately and make steady progress through the key stages.
17. In music, standards are below the average in Key Stage 3 and pupils' achievement has been unsatisfactory, though standards are rising because the teaching is better. Pupils currently taking GCSE in Year 11 are attaining standards that are overall in line with national averages.
18. In physical education, at the end of Year 9 standards are broadly average overall. GCSE results have remained at a low level since the last inspection. In 2000 the results were significantly below the national average but the achievement of the present Year 11 cohort is satisfactory and they are expected to do much better.
19. Standards of attainment in the religious education (RE) are below those expected by the locally agreed syllabus at the end of Key Stage 3. This is partly because pupils they join the school with limited knowledge and understanding of RE and partly because of some non-specialist teaching. In Year 11 about a quarter of the pupils take a GCSE short course examination. Pupils' achievement in some lessons in Key Stage 4 is good, but overall progress and achievement are unsatisfactory because not enough teaching time is allocated to the subject.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

20. Pupils' attitudes to the school are satisfactory overall. Most pupils demonstrate an interest and involvement in their learning, particularly when they receive stimulating teaching. A minority of pupils, particularly in lower sets are not enthusiastic learners and are unco-operative in lessons. They have not developed good learning habits, make little use of their opportunities and often distract others from their work. During the inspection there were occasions when despite satisfactory teaching, some pupils

demonstrated a lack of interest in their studies. They do not always have high enough expectations for what they could achieve. In about 10 per cent of lessons, attitudes and behaviour were negative, typically when pupils exploited weaker teaching. This was having a detrimental effect on other pupils' learning.

21. The majority of pupils listen well in lessons in all subjects and settle quickly to any written tasks set. Pupils are prepared to discuss their work in order to gain greater understanding, as in a Year 7 ICT lesson where pupils conferred with one another and assisted each other in drawing and creating logos, showing high levels of interest and concentration. In many lessons they showed maturity and diligence in their work. For example, in a number of geography lessons pupils persevered in collecting and processing data and expressed a curiosity about other places and the people who live there, and in history lessons many pupils were willing to read a variety of sources and showed respect for historical evidence. In art, Key Stage 4 pupils show a good level of interest and desire to improve their work.
22. Standards of behaviour in lessons, and around the school generally, are satisfactory. Most pupils are good-natured and co-operative with teachers. However, a minority have difficulty in sustaining concentration and can behave in a challenging way in lessons. In a Year 8 history lesson pupils took time to settle down, several interrupted while the teacher was talking, with some pupils shouting out and throwing pens. Movement around the school is usually orderly though there were occasional examples of pupils showing a lack of awareness of others in moving between lessons. Racism, bullying and oppressive behaviour were not apparent during the inspection. Whilst pupils acknowledge that some bullying happens, they are happy that it is sorted out to their satisfaction, once staff are alerted. The incidence of fixed term exclusions is above average, but has reduced significantly since the last inspection, in part due to the introduction of an Individual Learning Centre, where pupils spend time supervised and working, as an alternative to exclusion.
23. The behaviour of pupils with special educational needs is generally good. They are integrated well into the school, while having the opportunity to drop into the learning support department (LSD) base should they feel the need. Most of these pupils have good attitudes to school. The pupils who have behavioural difficulties are supported in the classroom by support assistants who know them well.
24. Relationships between the majority of pupils and with adults are good overall. The good quality pastoral care, developed through the form tutor and house system, is instrumental in building positive relationships across the school. Most pupils treat each other and teachers with respect. There are many examples of pupils working well together, particularly in ICT, music, drama, design and technology and science. For example, in a design and technology lesson pupils helped each other in producing a metal figure, and in a Year 11 English lesson pupils worked happily in small groups and made contributions to discussions without fear of ridicule. The personal development of pupils is satisfactory. Year 8 pupils act responsibly as receptionists, and pupils in all year groups respond well to opportunities given to contribute to the school community, for example as form captains, library monitors or members of the school council. Whilst pupils generally have respect for property, many do not use litter bins and drop a significant amount of litter which detracts from the environment.
25. The attendance levels of pupils, at just over 90%, is slightly below average. Unauthorised absence, where no satisfactory reason is given, at 1.3% remains higher than the national average. There are a number of disaffected pupils, particularly in Year 11, whose attendance is irregular, and their attainment is adversely affected by

recurring absence. Punctuality is good; most pupils arrive well in time for morning school and few are late.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

26. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and slightly better than at the time of the last inspection. Just over nine out of ten lessons seen (92%) were satisfactory or better. Half the teaching (50%) was good and a tenth (10%) was very good. Teaching was very good in music in Key Stage 4 and good in French in Key Stage 3, while in Key Stage 4 it was good in art, history and religious education. Teaching was satisfactory elsewhere, except in art and history in Key Stage 3, where it was unsatisfactory.
27. In the best lessons relationships are good and teachers manage behaviour well. The lessons are well structured and pitched at a suitable level for the class. Teachers give good explanations and demonstrations and use resources well. They make a strong feature of introducing technical language through the use of key words. This supports literacy well. Numeracy skills are being well developed in science and design and technology though not as much in other subjects. The good teaching enables pupils to work at a good pace and to be confident in what they know and can do. It encourages them to ask questions and think for themselves. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of their subjects was a particular strength in Key Stage 4. Homework is mostly used constructively to support and extend work in class though there are variations in quality and usefulness.
28. In the eight per cent of lessons where teaching was unsatisfactory and in some lessons, which were otherwise, satisfactory, teachers were not expecting enough from pupils. There were also some weaknesses in the match of work to pupils' needs. The unsatisfactory teaching was spread across a number of subjects including English, mathematics, science, art, geography, history, ICT and religious education. It was mostly, but not entirely, related to non-specialist teaching. In general this lacked depth because teachers' subject knowledge was not secure and so they were too reliant on the scheme of work. This led to some lack of motivation and inefficient learning by pupils. The non-specialist teaching was having a particular effect on standards in art and history in Key Stage 3 but also in music.
29. The assessment of pupils' work is inconsistent, particularly in the foundation subjects. For example it is good in design and technology but not in the humanities. In geography, history, PE, modern foreign languages and ICT, teachers have assessed standards at the end of Key Stage 3 as above national expectations. The evidence from the inspection is that this is an over-estimate of attainment and reflects the limited access to external evaluation of standards. In general, marking is satisfactory but with some variation in quality which makes it rather more difficult for pupils to know how to improve their work
30. Subject teachers, with the help of the learning support assistants allocated to their subject, plan and teach work which is generally well adapted to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs. Teachers are well aware of pupils' individual education plans (IEPs). This, together with the support that they receive in the classroom, and for some pupils in the ILC, helps pupils with special educational needs to make satisfactory, and often good progress. The few pupils with English as an additional language are supported at a level appropriate to their understanding of English and make satisfactory progress.

31. Teaching in the core subjects is satisfactory. In English, most teachers have a good knowledge of the subject, including those who are non-specialists, and teaching focuses purposefully on examination requirements throughout the subject. Pupils are set by ability, but some lack of flexibility in planning means that within a set the work is not always appropriate for pupils at either end of the ability range. Changes in teaching staff have affected the implementation of the literacy policy and important approaches to aspects of literacy that affect pupils learning, such as different spelling approaches and methods of marking have not yet been agreed.
32. In mathematics, teachers have good relationships with their classes, managing to stimulate almost all pupils into a satisfactory response. The established and experienced teachers have secure subject knowledge and use questioning and explanation well to promote purposeful learning. Teaching was better where lessons went beyond the use of the textbook but in general, lessons involved too narrow a range of resources and teaching methods and sometimes work was too undemanding. Teachers missed opportunities for planning discussions between pupils to stimulate collaborative working. Although mental starters to lessons are intended, a more consistent approach to practising number skills in Key Stage 3 would extend pupils' numeracy skills further. The teaching of numeracy in other subjects needs more input from mathematics.
33. Lessons are well structured in science. Teachers start by making it clear to pupils what is to be achieved in each lesson and end with a review of what has been learned. This allows previous work to be built on progressively and encourages methodical learning. Challenging questioning helps to stimulate good learning in some lessons, and there is good use of scientific vocabulary. A weakness is the insufficient amount of extended writing in Key Stage 4 and some insecure subject knowledge by non-specialist teachers.
34. The variation in the standard of teaching between specialist and non-specialist staff was most marked in art in Key Stage 3. Pupils made good progress where the teachers used exemplar material and demonstrated techniques. The non-specialist teachers, who teach almost half of the lessons, were unsure over assessing pupils' progress because the planning was not detailed enough. This led to under-achievement and a loss of motivation. In contrast, in Key Stage 4, the consistently good teaching helped pupils to be aware of examination requirements and to help to develop high standards.
35. Very good technical knowledge was a feature of the good teaching in design and technology. Careful planning, good technical demonstrations and much individual support enabled pupils to make good and sometimes very good progress. There is good use of computers for research and presentation. Written comments on how pupils can improve their work are a constructive feature of the very good assessment procedures. In ICT, specialist teaching is good. Teachers demonstrate techniques well and set challenging work and provide good support for individuals and effective-whole class guidance, where common problems arise. A strength of the planning is that it assists those teachers who are non-specialists to achieve satisfactory standards of teaching. A weakness is the lack of variety of challenges for pupils of different levels of attainment.
36. In the humanities, planning is good in geography, enabling pupils to make productive use of their time and to develop specialist geographical skills, especially in Key Stage 4. Teachers generally have high expectations but in Key Stage 3 assessment does not give pupils enough advice on how to improve. In history in Key Stage 4, skilful

questioning, clear explanations and informative expositions challenge pupils well and lead to high standards of learning. Similar strengths are found in Key Stage 3, but assessment is less constructive and the non-specialist teaching adversely affects some pupils' progress.

37. In French, previous learning is well consolidated and teachers prepare pupils well for examinations. Pupils learn to use the language for meaningful communication in class, but homework tends to be repetitive and does not extend pupils' skills sufficiently in manipulating the language. In German, the teachers stretch the most able effectively, use the board and flashcards well to support comprehension, and enable pupils genuinely to enjoy their learning. Occasionally there is too much talking from the teacher, which reduces the pupils' opportunities to learn through practising speaking the language.
38. Teachers both use their skills and communicate their enthusiasm well in music. They challenge all pupils and provide good support to assist the progress of all. There are very good opportunities in both key stages for pupils to learn theory through practical music-making. In PE, teachers give good demonstrations and use technical language well. They evaluate pupils' performances helpfully at GCSE level, but assessment is less purposefully carried out in Key Stage 3. In RE some of the subject knowledge of non-specialist teachers is unsatisfactory, but the specialist teaching has many strengths. Teachers present ideas in a challenging way and place a strong emphasis on developing pupils' understanding of key words.

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

39. The curriculum is broadly satisfactory at both key stages, with some strengths but also some weaknesses. In Key Stage 3, the curriculum meets statutory requirements except for ICT because pupils are not given the opportunity to study measuring and because too little ICT is taught within other subjects. It is enhanced by the addition of drama and by a choice of French or German on entry to the school. There is adequate time allowance for all subjects apart from personal and social education (PSE), which, as at the last inspection, is not taught in Years 7 and 8. There is a good rotational system of delivery for design and technology.
40. In Key Stage 4, pupils study the full range of compulsory subjects and a small range of vocational courses. An ASDAN Youth Award course is offered in the option block in Year 10 and a small number of pupils do not take design and technology and a modern foreign language in Year 11 to allow them to follow an appropriate work-related course. A small number of pupils take two foreign languages. GCSE courses were introduced for ICT two years ago but the statutory requirements are not met because a large number of pupils either do not take ICT or are not taught it through other subjects. Time allocations are adequate for most subjects but there is not enough time in RE for pupils to cover all aspects of the agreed syllabus and there is only one lesson per fortnight in PSE. This means that pupils have relatively little time to cover all aspects of a course which includes careers education.
41. A new curriculum model for September 2001 includes the provision of personal and social education for Years 7 and 8 for all but those pupils wishing to take a second foreign language in Year 8. There are no proposals to increase the amount of time for personal and social education or religious education in Key Stage 4.
42. All departments recognised the importance of literacy within their subjects and have

put systems into place, for example the phrases 'Learning Objectives, Key Words and What Went Well' are on all boards. However the good start made in Year 7 on using the library for to develop research and other literacy skills is not sustained and systematically built on. Some subjects make a sound contribution to numeracy. For example, the science scheme of work has been prepared so that the demands on pupils' numeracy skills match the work in mathematics. In design and technology, pupils are expected to handle numerical data on a computer when working on nutrition.

43. The scheme of work for PSE has been reviewed and now contains a good course on citizenship. A variety of outside speakers such as magistrates and the school nurse, enhance the programme. Despite the limited time, the provision for careers is good. The co-ordinator works closely with the Norfolk careers service and all pupils in Year 10 take part in work experience, for which many find their own placements. There is a detailed plan for delivery, and pupils have access to a large number of outside agencies for support.
44. The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Individual learning support assistants are linked to particular departments, allowing mutual trust and understanding to develop. This allocation also builds on the support assistants' interests and strengths. In Key Stage 3 an effective corrective reading programme is in place for a small group in each of Years 7 and 8. In Key Stage 4, an option to follow an ASDAN course and certificates of achievement in English and mathematics allows alternative ways of accrediting achievement. A study skills programme is provided for those who are unlikely to succeed in two foreign languages, and a recently introduced work-related learning programme is providing successfully for a selected group of pupils who might otherwise be lost to education. In both key stages, staffing resources are committed to create smaller teaching groups, the learning support base is available and offers homework support at lunchtime, and the ILC provides support and counselling for pupils with behavioural problems and short periods of remedial work for individuals' specific skills.
45. Since the last inspection, there have been some improvements but some issues remain unresolved. Most departments have re-written their schemes of work, and they are now adequate overall but are not satisfactory in relation to ICT. They are good in science in Key Stage 3, The last lesson of the day has been lengthened but timetabling issues remain with some subjects, such as French and German taught twice in one day and some inappropriate double lessons in subjects such as art at Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 4, single art lessons mean that older pupils who are specialising in the subject have more limited time to complete their projects. Timetabling difficulties also mean that there is some mismatch of teacher expertise to groups, despite the fact that, in some cases, the expertise is available and deployed elsewhere. Setting arrangements have been reviewed and the corrective reading scheme is now included in the time allocated for English. Most subjects are taught in blocks. Languages and humanities are timetabled against one another, however, and the school continues to put lower-attaining pupils into the half of the year group which takes German.
46. Extra-curricular provision is satisfactory overall, with some good features. There are subject-specific clubs for a variety of subjects including art, and the ICT drop in session is well attended. There is a range of physical education activities and musical activities such as the school production and a good range of instrumental provision. A keyboard club has now been formed, and much more is planned. A good range of visits exposes pupils to cultural experiences that widen their knowledge, such as visits

to art galleries. The very good fieldwork in geography for example the study of process and shopping centres in Peterborough supports achievement. Pupils are provided with first-hand experience of other countries through visits to France and Germany, and an activity week provides very good learning opportunities around team-building skills. Many of the activities however are restricted to Years 10 and 11.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

47. The school makes satisfactory provision for supporting pupils' moral and cultural development; the provision for their social development is good but, as at the time of the last inspection, it is unsatisfactory for their spiritual development.
48. Since the last inspection, the school has raised the awareness of staff about the scope and range of the spiritual dimension of the curriculum, and departmental documentation now provides teachers with some guidance in this area. Some departments, such as geography and history, have incorporated good examples of ways in which their subject can consider fundamental questions and contribute effectively to spiritual awareness. During the inspection a moment of wonder was experienced in a music lesson, when pupils found that they could play an excerpt from Holst's 'St Paul's Suite' on tuned instruments as an ensemble, and found that the music 'spoke to them'. As yet, however, some subjects have not identified plausible opportunities for spiritual development in their planning and the school has therefore only partially addressed this area of weakness from the last inspection.
49. There is a regular pattern of assemblies. Although they sometimes include moral, social and cultural aspects, they do not have any spiritual element. No assemblies seen during the inspection offered any opportunity for prayer, reflection or contemplation. They do not meet the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship for all pupils, which was also the case at the last inspection.
50. The provision for moral education is satisfactory and in general teachers reinforce the school code of behaviour. They set high standards and provide good role models in their relationships with pupils. Several subjects have units of work which enable pupils to consider their own response to contemporary ethical issues. Drama lessons provide pupils with good opportunities to explore issues such as loneliness and bullying, and work on the Holocaust in history encourages pupils to consider questions of human rights and responsibilities. Other strong contributions to pupils' moral development are made in religious education, where the moral implications of issues such as euthanasia and abortion are examined. Good examples can also be found in geography, for example when pupils consider the wider moral and ethical concerns in society such as the distribution and consumption of resources. Regular fundraising for charities is one way in which pupils express their value of caring for others less fortunate than themselves, with each house taking turns to organise fundraising events.
51. Provision for social development is good overall. Pupils have a wide range of opportunities to exercise responsibilities and relate positively to others. They are given responsibility as form captains, sports captains and members of the School Council. Reception duties for Year 8 pupils provide opportunities for accepting responsibility and developing self-confidence in working with the office staff. In lessons, some teachers provide opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills through collaborative work. Physical education is particularly strong in this regard, with many examples where high expectations of co-operative behaviour and fair play lead to positive attitudes and good social development amongst pupils. Science teachers

encourage pupils to take responsibility and work productively together, and music lessons promote good social skills through paired work and class ensembles. The wide range of extra-curricular activities and Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme give pupils scope to broaden their social horizons, and visits involving residential experiences enable some pupils to participate in shared activities. Pupils are encouraged to respond to social issues in geography and religious education through their studies of various cultures and faiths.

52. The provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. It is an integral part of many schemes of work. For example, work in geography includes topics on the exploitation of the rainforests, population control in China and Japanese culture and society. The religious education syllabus provides opportunities to learn about the cultures and beliefs of people who belong to religions other than Christianity. In music, there is a good balance of work from other cultures including Chinese, and pupils study both western and non-western art.
53. A good range of visits exposes pupils to cultural experiences that widen knowledge and understanding - to museums, art galleries, and places of worship such as Ely Cathedral and the Hindu temple at Neasden. The modern foreign languages department offers first-hand experiences of another culture through visits to France and Germany. Pupils' awareness of other cultures is further enhanced through the school's sponsorship of an Indian child; in addition this year the school is raising money to send a party of pupils to carry out voluntary work in Malawi.
54. Links with the community were described as weak by the last inspection. They have improved to some extent. There are a good number of visits to local places of interest and the school's activities and pupils' individual achievements receive wide coverage in the local press. As part of a community-based initiative, several pupils from the school are establishing a sensory garden in the local village. The school has good links with its main feeder primary schools and works closely with them to ensure a smooth transfer for pupils who will join the school at the start of Year 7. Curricular links are beginning to develop in some subjects. Links with the local college have been created, and are benefiting a number of older pupils. At present the school is used in the evening for some adult education classes, and these will increase in number from September 2001.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

55. Child protection policies are in place and comply with locally agreed procedures. The designated teacher with responsibility for child protection has received recent training. The pastoral handbook provides staff with detailed notes on how to recognise abuse and the procedures to follow. This aspect of the school's system of care is good.
56. Arrangements for health and safety are satisfactory overall. A health and safety audit was carried out by the LEA in January 2001, and its report written designated the arrangements as acceptable. The report identified a number of points requiring action, for example the need to introduce a formal system of monitoring health and safety which would include the keeping of records. At the time of the inspection, these issues had not been dealt with. The school has an appropriate number of people with first aid qualifications, and arrangements for reporting and dealing with incidents are satisfactory.
57. The house system in the school is very strong. It permeates the whole of school life and plays a significant part in its caring ethos. The house system engenders a group identity and a feeling of security for pupils and ensures that all of them are known very

well by a group of staff. The teams are well-managed and have regular meetings to ensure that relevant information is shared. Heads of house also meet formally on a regular basis with the deputy head (pastoral).

58. The procedures for monitoring personal development are good and have improved since the last inspection. Good use is made of an ICT-based system, in which pupil profiles are held on a data base that can be accessed and monitored by form tutors and heads of house. This provides good continuity of care and support for pupils' personal development. At present, this good system is not well supported by a whole school PSE programme, since PSE is not available for Years 7 and 8 although this is being planned for September 2001.
59. The system for appointing house officials and prefects promotes pupils' personal development very well. All posts have to be applied for in writing, and interviews are held by heads of house before posts are allocated. This has raised the profile of these posts and increased the bond between pupils and form tutors, who work closely together when making the applications. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously and are prepared to intervene when necessary.
60. Supervision of pupils' conduct at breaks, lunchtime and after school is good, with few reported incidents of poor behaviour. However, litter is a serious problem, especially on the field following lunchtime, when the area is rendered particularly unpleasant for physical education lessons. The procedures for dealing with incidents of bullying and other oppressive behaviour are good. Pupils reported that there were few incidents of this nature, but in any event they were clearly comfortable with approaching their form tutor or head of house when they felt in need of support.
61. Liaison with feeder primary schools is good. All new pupils are invited to a "taster" day in July when they meet with their form tutors and are introduced to the house system, as well as experiencing a variety of lessons. A designated liaison teacher visits all the main feeder schools and information from the schools is used extensively to place new pupils into houses and sets for the first term.
62. The provision for special educational needs is good. Very good links with primary schools ensure a smooth transfer of pupils with already identified problems, and tests in school also identify pupils with difficulties. A 'cause for concern' system works well in identifying and monitoring potential academic or behavioural issues and the work of learning support assistants is managed flexibly so that they can deal with pupils' needs as they become apparent during the year. This is efficient use of the available resources. This is a good provision but is only available for part of the week. The targets within pupils' individual education plans are becoming more specific, but more could still be done to focus on the action that subject teachers need to take. Annual reviews of pupils with statements of special educational need meet statutory requirements and lead to appropriate transition plans for older pupils. The reviews for pupils at the next lower level are not quite as regular. In both cases, reviews have shown a successful reduction in need and resulted in pupils moving from statements and to lower levels on the register. The links with external providers of specialist help and support are good.
63. The Individual Learning Centre (ILC), by tackling behavioural issues which might otherwise have resulted in fixed term exclusion, is part of the school strategy to maximise pupils' involvement in education. A behaviour support teacher is also available one morning each week, to help pupils whose behaviour is causing concern.

64. The school has sound procedures overall for assessing pupils' academic performance and these are rather better than at the last inspection. Progress is checked in the core subjects through regular and accurate assessment. Arrangements are good in science with thorough assessments, careful moderation of teachers' marking and good records. The marking of work across subjects is generally sound, but there are inconsistencies within and between subjects. In the foundation subjects improved assessment systems have been developing in design and technology and ICT. In other subjects the systems are less well developed and Key Stage 3 assessment is not accurate enough. Assessment overall is better at Key Stage 4 where it supports pupils in preparation for examinations.
65. The raising of achievement is supported by the good amount of assessment information in use, including value-added measures and target setting. All this feeds into the strong support arrangements of the house system. The data is beginning also to help subject teachers monitor individual pupil progress and evaluate overall performance. In particular, the guidance for GCSE pupils is very good in music and good in science, and developing well in design and technology. The school sets individual targets for pupils, who are involved through their written reports and individual interviews in Year 11.
66. The use of assessment information to guide curricular planning is generally weak. Evaluation and changes in teaching are little used for example in geography or history, or in mathematics where planning is based mainly on textbooks. However, there is some good practice in design and technology where the teachers are constantly evaluating work, introducing new activities and developing teaching.
67. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are good. Form tutors hold "academic tracking interviews" with each year group of pupils in their forms at set times of the year, using the computer-based pupil profiles. They have a clear idea from these profiles of the progress of each pupil and are quickly alerted if there appears to be a problem. Heads of house interview each Year 11 pupil at the start of the autumn term and identify any pupil who would benefit from mentoring, for whatever reason. A programme is then instituted for these pupils on an individual basis with mentors who are drawn from a volunteer body of the staff and who give their time freely to the programme for the benefit of the pupils. This is another good aspect of the care system.
68. Implementing the school policy on assessment was a key issue at the last inspection. There has been improvement in the feedback provided to pupils, but there are still inconsistencies that need further attention, for example in marking and using assessment to inform planning.
69. The school's procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good. The form tutors monitor attendance and report any concerns to the heads of house, who meet the educational welfare officer weekly. The school is currently trialling a 'first day call' system, where a member of staff telephones parents on the first day of a pupil's absence. This has resulted in some improvement in the overall attendance rate.
70. Overall the school takes good care of its pupils. The weaknesses lie in the lack of a formal set of procedures to monitor health and safety and in the inconsistent use and quality of assessment across the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

71. Approximately 20 per cent of parents completed the parents' questionnaire, but only ten parents attended the meeting with the Registered Inspector. On this evidence, parents appear to hold generally positive views of the school, though not as positive as at the last inspection. Most of those who responded feel comfortable about approaching the school with any questions or problems, although several thought that the school did not work closely enough with parents. Some are dissatisfied with the amount of homework provided but it is not clear whether they feel that more or less is needed. A significant minority of respondents expressed concern about behaviour at the school. Inspectors found that the setting of homework was generally satisfactory, although there is some inconsistency in the amount and frequency with which it is set. The inspection team concluded that behaviour in the school is satisfactory overall, but a few pupils can cause disruption in some lessons, thereby affecting others' learning.
72. The school's partnership with parents is satisfactory. The headteacher recently carried out a survey of views of parents, together with those of pupils, staff and governors, and has plans to deal with the issues arising from this. Parental involvement in the formal work of the school is limited, but the Parent Teachers Association provides good support. It organises monthly discos for pupils, and raises significant amounts for school funds.
73. The quality of information provided for parents is satisfactory and the amount has increased since the last inspection. The regular newsletters are well-presented publications, which include a wide range of interesting and valuable information about school activities and pupils' achievements. The overwhelming majority of parents have signed the home/school agreement. As mentioned in the previous report the pupils' work record books provide a strong day-to-day link between home and school, and are regularly monitored by form tutors. Form tutors and heads of houses keep in close contact with parents, both to keep them informed of any concerns and to convey positive news about their child's work or conduct. Annual and interim reports advise parents of the progress their children are making. Reports are satisfactory overall though the annual reports are not consistent across all subjects. The best identify individual achievement in each subject and suggest ways to improve, whereas some contain bland statements and are lacking in specific information on pupils' attainment. Parental consultation evenings are held once a year and parents who do not attend are contacted as necessary. Attendance at parents' evenings is satisfactory.
74. Parents and carers are appropriately involved in the annual reviews of pupils with special educational needs. They are kept well informed of their child's progress, and are immediately contacted if the school has any concerns.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

75. The headteacher leads the school energetically and with an obvious sense of commitment to providing a good education. He and the senior management team maintain a conspicuous presence around the school, promoting good order. An open style of management means that the headteacher is readily accessible to pupils and teachers to discuss concerns. This promotes good relationships. The work of the school is based on a wide-ranging and worthwhile set of aims, summed up in the motto 'Celebrating the Individual'. Concern for individual pupils is evident in the well-organised and managed house system which ensures that all pupils are well known to staff and that their welfare is closely monitored and promoted throughout their time in the school.
76. The responsibilities of the senior management team rotate from time to time, giving

each a practical and good understanding of a wide range of management responsibilities. The systems for the day-to-day management of the school work well. The head and deputies have had recent training appropriate for school development, and other teachers have access to good professional development. For example, a different member of staff is co-opted onto the senior management team each term, and staff hold the post of deputy head of house for a two-year period which provides them with a good insight into whole school issues.

77. The school's response to the previous inspection has been satisfactory and the key issues have been tackled systematically, though some of the matters raised within sections of the report, for example in relation to the curriculum, have not been dealt with fully enough.
78. The governors are very committed to the school. The chair of governors visits the school very regularly and is in frequent communication with the headteacher. The governors' committees have a more clearly defined monitoring role than at the time of the previous inspection. Governors receive an abundance of information about developments through written information from the headteacher, the work of the various sub-committees, contributions of parent and teacher governors and occasional presentations by staff. This gives them a satisfactory understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and they discharge their role as critical friend satisfactorily. Governors discuss examination results and set targets for the headteacher.
79. The governors discuss development plans and influence decisions, but overall they do not give a strong enough steer to the school's strategic planning. However, governors have little first-hand experience of the day-to-day work of the school apart from regular and valuable liaison between the governor with responsibility for special educational needs and the special educational needs co-ordinator.
80. There are good opportunities for all staff to contribute to school planning. This happens through departmental meetings and in the 'Forum', which meets regularly and is attended by all those with posts of responsibility. The curriculum group which consists of a smaller number of staff with middle and senior management responsibilities, also discusses school development. These opportunities, coupled with the overall open style of management, enable staff to have a shared commitment to the school's further development and the capacity for further improvement is satisfactory.
81. There are strengths in management at both senior and middle management level but the main weakness is that the planning for the school's future development is not satisfactory. The governors and staff have not identified key objectives which will really make a difference to standards and the planning contains too wide a range of targets. Current plans for development are contained in two planning documents. The school development plan contains general issues under four headings: teaching, learning and the curriculum; management; pupils, pastoral matters and the community; site development. The document contains many good ideas, including the development of ICT, literacy and numeracy, and a whole-school review of the curriculum. It does not include important issues, such as raising standards in English and assessment, teaching methods and the revision of policies.
82. The school improvement plan, which is the second document, provides a summary of departmental development plans. The quality of departmental management and planning varies greatly. Some is good, such as in science, but other subjects such as English, music and ICT are still having to overcome the effects of past weaknesses. In

subjects where planning is broadly satisfactory, such as mathematics and the humanities, there are still some quite significant weaknesses. Some departments have not formulated appropriate success criteria in their planning. Each department interprets school priorities in its own way. Currently they are working to achieve objectives concerned with raising pupils' achievement in Key Stage 4, and improving discipline generally but there is no co-ordinated whole-school approach to either of these.

83. The provision for special educational needs is well managed. A new policy, meeting the requirements of the current code of practice, awaits governors' formal approval. The special needs governor works closely with the special educational needs co-ordinator. Each department has a named link teacher who ensures that everyone in the department knows the system, and who ensures that the special educational needs of pupils is a regular item on departmental agendas. The co-ordinator works in close co-operation with the heads of house to identify and address behavioural issues.
84. The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching are not satisfactory because they are not rigorous enough. The monitoring at the level of senior management is systematic and the headteacher has completed a formal review of each department and provided a detailed written report. This is a good start, but the targets set as a result of each review lack rigour and an appropriate time scale, and do not necessarily form part of the annual programme of planning for each department. Departmental monitoring of teaching is much less systematic and the school policy on this is not implemented as effectively as it could be. For example monitoring has been regular and effective in science but not in English.
85. The priority in the school development plan, to produce a formal job description for line managers has not been achieved. The headteacher and deputies act as line managers for heads of department. Meetings with heads of department vary in regularity, according to the needs of the department. For example departments such as music and design and technology are strongly supported at present, which is valued by the heads of subjects. Other departments meet less often with their line manager. Although there are good opportunities for communicating ideas and information, the system is not rigorously focused on improving pupils' attainment or departmental efficiency. Overall, the lack of focused priorities means that staff are not held as accountable as they could be for implementing school policies and meeting the school's expectations.
86. The school has established a good system for performance management. Teachers acknowledge the effectiveness of recent procedures for personal target setting as a means of furthering their professional development. Staff have access to appropriate individual training but some departments have had relatively little access to good quality external advice to assist them in evaluating their work and raising standards in subjects.
87. The school makes good use of computers for administration, record keeping and financial planning and management. Pupils' pastoral records are stored on computer and accessible to those who may require information. Contributing to pupils' records is a carefully monitored procedure. Careful accounting ensures that specific grants are spent for their intended purpose. The finance officer monitors the spending of the budget very carefully, and the auditor's recommendations are scrupulously carried out. The school seeks best value for money in all its expenditure. Financial planning is better integrated into development planning than it was at the last inspection and the planned surplus has been allocated to specific projects. However, the school is not

achieving best value when teachers are teaching outside their specialist areas because of timetabling difficulties. This use of non-specialist teachers, and the lack of formal co-ordination of and support for the teaching of non-specialists is having a negative impact on art in Key Stage 3 and to a lesser extent on history, geography, music and religious education.

88. Staffing is satisfactory overall and good in some subjects such as design and technology and science. The school has sufficient teaching staff and is well supported by a strong team of non-teaching staff. The school has a supportive programme for recently appointed experienced and newly-qualified teachers, which is based on departmental support and the use of mentors. This is seen to be effective. The school has made appropriate arrangements to deal with a temporary staffing difficulty in mathematics. Staffing for modern foreign languages is now satisfactory, although staff absence in the past because of illness is continuing to affect standards and there is no foreign language assistant to support pupils' learning. There have been considerable changes in English and the new head of department is in the process of creating a new team. The frequent changing of co-ordinator and teachers for ICT is still having a detrimental effect on standards in this subject.
89. Accommodation is satisfactory overall. Provision is satisfactory in most subjects and history, geography, design technology and ICT have benefited from recent improvements. However, computer rooms are rather small for large groups. There are sufficient mathematics rooms, but because the department has insufficient storage space the classrooms are cluttered and this does not create a good learning environment. The learning resources unit has been extended to include a computer area. This unit now provides a good working environment but is relatively small.
90. The school has made significant additions and alterations in order to increase and improve its accommodation. The gymnasium has been improved and extended and the specific grant for the National Grid for Learning has been used to improve computing facilities in several areas. Similar proposed improvements for provision of computer areas in the mathematics and English departments have still to be completed and access to computer provision for these areas is limited and affecting the development of ICT particularly in English.
91. The school benefits from the employment of a site manager with expertise in building construction. This is enabling the school to make good use of available budgets in carrying out planned programmes for building and decoration. However, the external condition of some windows is poor and the flat roofs continue to require maintenance.
92. Resources are satisfactory overall in range and quality. The provision of and access to computers has improved significantly and the school has plans to develop this further. Resources are best in design and technology, English in Key Stage 4 and the library. Resources for design technology are well managed and enhanced by considerable efforts of teaching and support staff in producing good quality teaching aids and materials. In other subjects there are gaps in resources for German (outdated textbooks) and music (a lack of classroom instruments, CDs and ICT). Resources in the library are satisfactory and have been enhanced by the provision of computers in the extended area.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to improve the quality of information and raise standards the governors, headteacher and staff should take steps to:

- 1) Raise standards in English, particularly at GCSE by raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can be expected to achieve in both oral and written work through:
 - introducing more detailed and specific schemes of work with clearly identified resources;
 - encouraging teachers to share good practice and develop a more unified approach to planning and teaching English;
 - providing more opportunities for the head of department to monitor teaching and learning;(Paragraph 103)

- 2) Improve the provision for information and communications technology so that:
 - all pupils at Key Stage 4 get their full entitlement,
 - the planned programme of improving of facilities is completed as quickly as possible,
 - there is systematic detailed subject planning for ICT and good co-ordination of provision across the curriculum,
 - the ICT scheme of work includes measuring at Key Stage 3(Paragraphs 88, 90, 170,171)

- 3) Ensure that:
 - the school development planning, particularly for the curriculum and staffing, focuses clearly and systematically on the major issues and key priorities which will raise standards;
 - there is greater consistency in the implementation of policies and procedures at departmental level through more rigorous monitoring and accountability;
 - governors and senior managers minimise the impact of non-specialist teaching and provide more effective support for non-specialist teachers in all subjects;
 - departments have access to appropriate external specialist support and advice;(Paragraphs 81, 82, 84, 85, 87 96, 128, 132, 158)

- 4) Raise the quality of the satisfactory and unsatisfactory teaching to that of the good and very good through:
 - establishing higher expectations for what pupils can achieve a better match of work to the full range of ability in classes or sets;
 - more focused and consistent marking and use of day to day assessment to give clear guidance on how pupils can improve;
 - using a wider range of teaching methods to develop pupils' learning skills and independence and raise their expectations of what they could achieve.(Paragraphs 28, 29, 34, 35, 36, 64, 65, 96, 103, 113, 127, 128, 132, 134, 144, 157, 160, 163, 174)

Minor Issues

In addition the headteacher and governors should consider including the following issues in their action plan:

- 1) Meeting statutory requirements for collective worship and improving spiritual development (Paragraphs 48, 49)
- 2) Creating a litter free environment (Paragraphs 24, 60)
- 3) Formalising procedures for monitoring health and safety (Paragraphs 56, 70)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	148
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	50

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	10	50	32	8	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	828
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	84
Special educational needs	Y7- Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	33
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	226
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	7
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	24
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	47

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.2
National comparative data	7.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.3
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	80	71	151

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	45	62	64
	Girls	51	55	51
	Total	96	117	116
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	64(65)	77(70)	76(62)
	National	63(63)	65(62)	59(55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	30 (28)	44(48)	40(31)
	National	28(28)	42(38)	30 (33)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	46	57	46
	Girls	52	54	42
	Total	98	111	86
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	65(66)	74(64)	58(62)
	National	64(64)	66(64)	62(60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	30(26)	46 (32)	41(34)
	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	75	76	151

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	29	71	73
	Girls	36	74	75
	Total	65	145	148
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	43(40)	96 (93)	98(98)
	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	35(35.9)
	National	38.4(37.8)

Figures in brackets refer to 1999.

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	0
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	0
Indian	8
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	0
White	807
Any other minority ethnic group	9

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	117	2
Other minority ethnic groups	1	0

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

Teachers and classes

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: Y 7– Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	45.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.2:1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff:Y7–Y11

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	284

Deployment of teachers:Y7–Y11

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

Key Stage 3	24
Key Stage 4	21.7

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	2214707
Total expenditure	2073886
Expenditure per pupil	2461
Balance brought forward from previous year	151
Balance carried forward to next year	140972

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	37	50	6	6	1
My child is making good progress in school.	45	47	5	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	23	55	16	3	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	56	12	6	1
The teaching is good.	32	58	6	1	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	43	13	6	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	54	38	6	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	40	2	2	0
The school works closely with parents.	30	53	9	8	3
The school is well led and managed.	44	42	5	3	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	35	54	8	3	1

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

ENGLISH

93. Over the last three years, results of national tests at the end of Key Stage 3 have fluctuated from above to below the national average. In 2000, the proportion of pupils who reached the nationally expected level 5 was in line with the national average for all schools and for similar schools. The results in English were not as good as in mathematics and science.
94. The evidence of pupils' written work and the lessons observed showed that the standards of pupils currently in Year 9 are average. Pupils perform well when they are answering teachers' questions, working in pairs and writing narrative about their own experiences. They are less good when attempting to interpret texts in their written work. They are achieving at a satisfactory level relative to their starting point in Year 7.
95. GCSE results in English and English literature are lower than at the last inspection. The proportion of pupils achieving at grades A* to C in 2000 was well below the national average, and considerably lower than similar schools. However the school enters a higher proportion of pupils than most schools do. The gap between the boys' and girls' results in this school was smaller than nationally. The results were significantly worse in English than in mathematics and science.
96. Overall, the standards attained by the pupils currently in Year 11 are also well below the levels expected in all aspects of the subject. The achievement of the present Year 11 pupils is unsatisfactory because they are not making enough progress from Key Stage 3. Standards of work are low, partly because previous staffing difficulties have affected pupils' learning but also because teachers' expectations of their pupils are not always high enough.
97. In oral work at Key Stage 3, pupils are enthusiastic, answering the teacher's questions with relevant responses. The pupils made good progress when this was extended into discussion in small groups and then giving feedback to the rest of the class. This was observed when a Year 9 class who were discussing the unfolding aspects of Macbeth's character were organised into groups, so that the oral skills of some complemented the written skills of others. Pupils have too few opportunities for in-depth debate in Key Stage 4. Many lessons began with some teacher-directed question and answer time, followed by written work consisting of exercises that do not challenge the high and average attaining pupils or promote independent learning skills. There were exceptions: in a good discussion guided by the teacher, a high-attaining group of Year 11 girls offered alternative viewpoints to interpretation of text and discovered a deeper level of meaning.
98. Pupils in Key Stage 3 are encouraged to read widely and many do so. Some classes keep reading logs that are carefully monitored. Library lessons in Years 7 and 8 enable pupils to work independently by teaching the skills of reading for a variety of purposes. In Years 10 and 11, the reading tends to follow the requirements of the GCSE syllabus. The study and research skills developed in the earlier years are not extended, and pupils become more teacher-dependent.
99. In written work, younger pupils write successfully in different styles using some lively vocabulary. Some high-attaining pupils show a degree of critical analysis when comparing and contrasting authors, but other pupils' work remains largely at a

descriptive level. Techniques, such as writing frames or story pyramids, are not used frequently enough to help pupils develop their skills in organising their writing coherently. The GCSE coursework seen during the inspection was below average as it was narrow in range and, with a few exceptions, lacked imagination and in-depth analysis. Spelling, grammar and punctuation were also weak. ICT is used largely for the presentation of written work, with some very eye-catching work in Year 10.

100. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory. They were satisfactory in the majority of lessons observed, good in several, and very good in one. Most teachers have a good knowledge of the subject, including those teachers that are not English specialists; they are enthusiastic and aware of the examination requirements. Class management is firm and the good pace keeps classes occupied. The best teaching is at Key Stage 3, where many pupils, given the opportunity, apply themselves enthusiastically to some challenging work. An example of this was a low-attaining class which was looking at books and their covers; the class discussed sensibly in pairs, looking for evidence about what the book contained, then wrote their answers in sentences. Good relationships have been established between pupils and teachers, showing a respect for each other. Pupils participate willingly and are aware of the level of behaviour expected from them.
101. The improved standards in lessons of pupils with special educational needs are due partly to an effective partnership between teachers and support staff which helps these pupils to make good progress. In addition groups of the lowest attaining pupils, have a reading intervention programme in Years 7 and 8 which improves their reading skills. The few pupils with English as an additional language make appropriate progress.
102. However, there is some unsatisfactory teaching at Key Stage 4. Additionally, at both key stages weaknesses were observed in lessons that were judged on balance to be satisfactory. Teachers do not adapt the work sufficiently to meet the range of needs within each class. At Key Stage 4, the evidence from the pupils' work over the year shows that it is often undemanding. Although it covers the requirements of the GCSE syllabus, it has not challenged high-attaining pupils sufficiently, and the low-attaining pupils have not had crucial concepts reinforced. As a result they have not made enough progress.
103. In the past teachers have tended to work in isolation from each other which means that they have not been consistent enough in their approach to teaching. This has had an effect on standards. The schemes of work have not been detailed enough nor linked closely enough to resources to ensure that each year's work builds systematically on the previous year. The lack of a policy on teaching grammar is one example of this. Similarly the inconsistent approach to marking means that pupils are not clear about what is required to raise their standards to a higher level. The recently-appointed head of department is aware that these and other issues need to be tackled in order to raise standards and has clear and realistic strategies. She has already introduced a more appropriate GCSE syllabus, is changing the gender imbalance within sets and making good the uneven distribution of resources and the lack of material from other cultures and traditions. She has not yet had the opportunity to monitor teaching and ensure that good practice is shared and departmental policies are consistently implemented.

Literacy

104. The school's provision for raising standards of literacy is satisfactory. All departments recognised the importance of literacy within their subjects and have put satisfactory systems into place, particularly in relation to developing pupils' vocabulary. Key words are displayed and used in history, RE, art, science and design and technology. Good oral work in RE, PE and design and technology reinforces technical language. Writing frames help pupils structure their written work in art and in design and technology. In the weekly library lessons in Years 7 and 8, pupils learn the skills of planning, reviewing, note taking, researching and reading techniques which include of skimming and scanning text. However, these skills are not exploited as fully as they could be in later years. Library staff have developed links with some departments, especially in science whose pupils use the library regularly for research; the library is under-used by other departments. Changes in teaching staff have affected the implementation of the literacy policy and limited its effectiveness. Crucial approaches to aspects of literacy that affect pupils learning such as different spelling approaches and methods of marking have not yet been agreed.

Drama

105. Drama is taught as a separate subject from English with its own head of department and schemes of work. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 have one fifty-minute drama lesson a week, generally taught by English teachers. There is one GCSE drama class. Drama makes a strong contribution to pupils' moral and cultural understanding and to the social life of the school through giving pupils the opportunity to perform in school productions. Several topics address sensitive issues, for example old age, teenage rebellion and bullying. Techniques such as hot-seating and role play raise awareness and boost pupils' confidence and self esteem. The drama room, though small, provides a useful teaching area which allows a range of skills and techniques to be taught and explored.

MATHEMATICS

106. Results in the national tests in mathematics at the end of Year 9 have risen since the last inspection. In 2000 they were above the national averages both for all schools and for similar schools. These results were better than English but not as good as science. Over the last five years, boys have achieved better mathematics results than girls.
107. The evidence from pupils' work and lessons suggests that overall the standards of the current Year 9 match the national expectations and are not quite as good as the previous year. For example, high-attaining pupils can solve simultaneous equations, handle transformations of shapes and use tree diagrams in probability. Middle-attaining pupils used trial and improvement methods competently to solve equations. Although there is planned work on investigations, pupils' skills in using and applying mathematics are weaker than other aspects of the subject because most lessons are focused on answering short questions from textbooks.
108. When pupils enter the school in Year 7, their standards are below average overall. In relation to these prior levels of attainment, pupils' achievement is good at the end of Key Stage 3. In lessons where pupils are taught well they make good progress. This was evident in a well-taught lesson where lower-attaining where pupils collected a range of data which they then used to learn about the different types of average. However, the progress of pupils in some lessons was slower, for example when pupils worked out areas and perimeters, the teaching did not help them to build on what they already knew.

109. GCSE results overall in mathematics have improved over the last five years, although they have varied from below to above the national average. In 2000, the results were slightly better than those for all schools nationally and close to those for similar schools. As at Key Stage 3, pupils did much better in mathematics than English, but not as well as in science. In 2000 the girls out-performed the boys. Standards are in line with those expected at the end of Year 11. High-attaining pupils were able to transform graphs, manipulate algebra and solve probability problems. They learn how to tackle investigations, leading to sound coursework. However, as at Key Stage 3, using and applying mathematics does not permeate the majority of lessons, and so pupils' skills in problem solving, communicating and reasoning are less well developed. However, GCSE results have improved over time because the teachers have been experienced and have taught pupils the necessary knowledge and skills for examinations.
110. Over time at Key Stage 4, pupils' achievement in mathematics has been generally good. In 2000 the GCSE results were much better than those of most schools whose results in national tests had been similar at the end of Year 9. However, in lessons observed during the inspection, and in the work in books, achievement was satisfactory. Some pupils were less confident and accurate than might be expected. For example, some higher-attaining Key Stage 4 pupils struggled with graphs of the form $y = mx + c$, and others made basic algebraic errors. Throughout the school pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in mathematics, especially where there is a learning support assistant providing good help.
111. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour overall are good and this contributes to their learning. In most lessons, pupils behave well although occasionally they are chatty and a few show a lack of interest which affects their learning. The much of the pupils' written work is untidy and this often goes unchecked by teachers.
112. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory and is resulting in satisfactory learning. It was satisfactory or better in almost all the lessons seen, and good in about half. The established and experienced teachers showed they had secure subject knowledge and teaching skills. They gave clear explanations, and questioned pupils effectively. In some classes, the teachers motivated and managed some groups of uninterested pupils skilfully. In all the teaching observed, relations between staff and pupils were good. This contributed to orderly classrooms and a positive response from pupils. The better teaching was well-prepared and made use of resources beyond the text book, for example when some low attainers carried out practical measuring of different items in the classroom.
113. Although outweighed by the strengths, some weaknesses in teaching were seen. There was no consistent approach to making clear to pupils at the start of a lesson what they were expected to learn, and providing a summary or check of progress at the end. Most teaching seen relied too heavily on the textbook, and so some work was undemanding or the pace of the lesson was slow. Teachers made too little use of practical resources or effective use of the board to help pupils learn, and did not plan opportunities for pupils to discuss their work, to help them explore and understand ideas. The marking of work is weak. Teachers do not check pupils' work consistently enough, pick up errors or provide sufficient guidance.
114. Mathematics results have improved at a satisfactory rate since the last inspection, but the department has been less effective in dealing with other issues. The variations in teaching and learning styles have not been dealt with effectively. The department recognises the shortcomings in the use of ICT within mathematics and the need to

provide a lead in numeracy across the curriculum but has not tackled these systematically enough. However, literacy is promoted well within mathematics, such as the use of writing frames in coursework and the good attention to vocabulary in some lessons.

115. The department has been effectively led to achieve its main aim of improving examination results. However, some deficiencies in management and administration will need to be addressed by the new head of department. For example, the schemes of work are very brief, especially at Key Stage 4. This has an impact on learning when, as recently, there have been temporary staffing difficulties and non-specialist staff have to teach mathematics, but have little guidance to help them. The requirements of Curriculum 2000 have not yet been planned for. Whilst there are sound resources in the range of textbooks, the department has poor resources for ICT. For example, no computer is available for teaching or administration. As noted at the departmental review, accommodation is unsatisfactory. The environment is cluttered and needs a good clear out, and the management of the department is hindered by the lack of efficient storage space and an office.

Numeracy

116. Numeracy across the curriculum is generally satisfactory, as pupils have sound numerical skills, but planned policy development needs more input from mathematics. Some subjects make a sound contribution. For example, the science scheme of work has been prepared so that the demands on pupils' numeracy skills match the work in mathematics. In design and technology, pupils are expected to handle numerical data on a computer when working on nutrition. Although mental starters are intended, a more consistent approach to practising number skills in Key Stage 3 mathematics lessons would help to extend pupils' numeracy skills further.

SCIENCE

117. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 have risen over the last three years. In 2000 they were above average compared to national results, but well above those of similar schools. Pupils did better in science than in English and mathematics. Girls and boys did equally well, as is the case nationally.
118. The standard of work of pupils currently in Year 9 is also above national expectations. Pupils are equally strong in each physics, chemistry and biology because they are well taught from a scheme of work which ensures the full coverage of the National Curriculum. Practical investigations are an integral part of their study. A recent increase in the provision of computers available to the department has allowed teachers to develop this aspect of the requirements of Curriculum 2000. However, a shortage of appropriate software and limited equipment to allow computers to interact with practical investigations, means that pupils' skills in this respect are not as good as in other practical aspects of science. There is little difference in the attainment of boys and girls.
119. Since the last inspection the GCSE results in science have improved at a similar rate to the national results. In 2000, the results were a little, but not significantly, above the national average. The proportion of pupils gaining grades A* to C (53%) remained similar to the previous year, and the proportion gaining at least grade G remained at the national average. However the school enters far more pupils for science than most schools so and the results are much better than those of schools with similar Key Stage 3 results. Pupils made relatively greater progress in science than in the other

subjects they studied. Girls outperformed boys to a similar extent as nationally.

120. The evidence of the pupils' work and the lessons observed showed that Year 11 pupils' attainment is in line with the nationally expected level. Pupils do equally well across the range of the modules in the course they study. The difference in standards between the higher and the lower-attaining pupils shows in the depth of their responses to the work covered. The investigations that pupils carry out as part of the formal work which are assessed as part of their examination are of high standard. Higher-attaining pupils produce very detailed accounts and lower-attaining pupils are effectively supported by the carefully prepared structure of the work. Some pupils choose to use word processing to help their presentation, and others use spreadsheets to handle their results. Nevertheless, as in Key Stage 3, pupils' skills in using ICT to support and develop their work in science are comparatively weak.
121. When pupils enter the school in Year 7, standards are below average overall. Compared to this attainment, pupils' achievement in Key Stage 3 is very good. It is satisfactory in Key Stage 4. For example, higher-attainers in Year 9 clearly knew the structure and function of animal and plant cells and, through careful questioning by their teacher, built up their knowledge of the similarities and differences. A lower-attaining group confirmed their knowledge and understanding of energy chains consolidated in a carefully structured revision lesson.
122. This small-step approach to learning contributes to the good progress which pupils with special educational needs make in Key Stage 3 and their satisfactory progress in Key Stage 4. Progress is assisted, particularly in Key Stage 3, by the contribution of the learning support assistant who helps develop teaching materials and supports pupils with behavioural difficulties. As a result, the achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good in Key Stage 3 and satisfactory in Key Stage 4.
123. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning observed was satisfactory. However the evidence from pupils' work suggests that the teaching is better than this. At the time of the inspection, the Year 9 and 11 lessons were revision for imminent examinations and Year 10 pupils were undertaking their practical assessments. There was more good teaching in Key Stage 3, but also a little unsatisfactory teaching. A strength in much of the teaching was the pupil management skills of most of the staff. This resulted in lessons in which a calm atmosphere helped pupils concentrate and learn.
124. Most lessons followed a similar, effective structure. The teachers started by sharing what they expected pupils to learn from the lesson with them. They recalled the work of the previous lesson and built new work progressively on this. At the end of the lesson, the class reviewed the outcomes to reinforce what they had learned. This helped pupils build up their knowledge. Lower-attaining pupils found the structure particularly helpful. Pupils generally worked well and concentrated on their tasks. In many lessons teachers used their own good knowledge to give clear explanations but, in others, where the teacher was teaching outside their own specialism, explanations were not so clear and occasionally contained inaccuracies. Teachers frequently used questioning well to probe pupils' understanding, by asking them to explain their initial statements. Where this was done well, it gave teachers an insight into pupils' misunderstandings and allowed these to be corrected. Questioning was weaker when it required only short, often monosyllabic, answers. However, these were not major weaknesses in teaching.
125. The display and use of key words made a good contribution to pupils' literacy. These key words were particularly well used in a revision lesson in which pupils were asked

to explain each new word as it arose. Teaching provides many opportunities for pupils to practise numeracy skills. Learning together in practical work also contributes to pupils' social development. The department has identified where the subject could contribute to pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development. However, the less experienced teachers, who rely too heavily on the commercial scheme for coverage of the subject in Key Stage 3, do not take these opportunities. Here, and in Key Stage 4, there is little evidence of pupils being required to produce longer pieces of writing in which they explain their understanding or argue a case.

126. Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are generally good. The majority of pupils are either keen to learn or are willing to work if they are managed well. For example, a lower-attaining group responded well to a carefully-planned lesson revising animal characteristics, food chains and food webs. Where teachers' management skills are weaker, the behaviour of higher-attaining pupils deteriorates and that of lower-attaining pupils can be poor.
127. Leadership and management are good, as at the last inspection. The head of department has coped very well with the induction into the department of five newly-qualified teachers in the last three years. The relatively inexperienced team of teachers is being developed well. Schemes of work, particularly in Key Stage 4, are good. The departmental handbook gives full and clear guidance to the teachers, and so pupils experience consistency within the department. School policies for monitoring teaching and learning are implemented systematically and effectively, which has helped to raise standards. The head of department monitors the work of her colleagues thoroughly and provides good support. Pupils' attainment is regularly assessed and the department uses ICT well to record and analyse this data and to handle documentation.

ART AND DESIGN

128. The results of teacher assessments of pupils' attainment at the end of Year 9 in 2000 were broadly average. The evidence from the inspection, of current Year 9 pupils shows that standards vary widely from class to class and overall are below the level expected for their age. Achievement overall is unsatisfactory. Just under half the classes in Key Stage 3 are taught by non-specialists who do not have the expertise to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding and develop their practical skills sufficiently. Consequently significant numbers of pupils do not make enough progress and do not achieve the results they are capable of. In other classes, where expectations are higher and pupils are given better guidance on how to improve, they achieve well, and a significant proportion attain good standards.
129. In lessons where pupils made good progress and standards were higher, they could recall the work of previous lessons and use a combination of skills to inform their work. For example, pupils in a Year 9 class were modelling facial features onto clay masks referred to their own drawings made from observation. They explained how the exaggerated features of carved masks from Africa and the fine detail of theatrical masks from a Venetian carnival had influenced some aspects of their work. The masks they made were small, very carefully produced and expressive. In classes where pupils had not been taught to organise and structure their responses, they found it particularly difficult to express their ideas visually and in speech and writing. Although teachers used the key words a lot, pupils did not have enough opportunities for pupils to practise and use the words themselves in the context of their own work and when talking about the work of others. The work in portfolios shows a developing understanding across range of skills and experiences in three-dimensional

constructions and in two-dimensional work. In some portfolios pupils had examples of computer generated work. The work in sketchbooks is very variable in both the quantity of work produced and the quality of presentation.

130. In previous years, the percentage of A* to C grades has been close to the national average. Results in the most recent GCSE examinations were very high and showed a significant improvement on previous years. In 2000, 92% gained A* to C grades and over half gained grades higher than a B. These results are very high compared with the national results and the results for schools with a similar intake. Pupils gained better results in art than in most of their other subjects. Given the low levels of attainment of some pupils when they started the GCSE course, their achievement was excellent.
131. The attainment of pupils currently in Year 11 is above average, though not as good as last year. Some of the work is of high quality and shows the depth of thinking and level of skill required for the higher grades. Much other work is superficial in the quality of research and investigation, and final pieces are rather predictable, lacking individual interpretation and imaginative use of materials. The achievement of pupils in Key Stage 4 is good overall. However, pupils who have their art lessons in three single lessons, rather than one double and one single lesson, are disadvantaged and their chances of achieving well in examinations are reduced. In the rush to use the time to the full, there is a tendency for teachers to tell pupils what to do rather than ask the questions that encourage reflection and lead to more independent and individualised outcomes. When selecting their work for display and assessment, the pupils were confident and able to make appropriate decisions using the examination assessment criteria to help them make their choices. They are encouraged to continue their work after school, and many do.
132. Teaching and learning at Key Stage 3 are unsatisfactory. A number of issues such as the use of non-specialist staff highlighted in the last inspection continue to be unsatisfactory. The number lessons judged to be satisfactory has increased but the quality of teaching and learning still varies too widely. In a high proportion of lessons, there were weaknesses in planning and in the use of assessment to plan the next stages of learning. Teachers manage pupils well and positive relationships are consolidated by clear expectations of behaviour. Pupils are generally co-operative, keen to learn and do well. In a minority of lessons observed, teachers' expectations were too low and this led to underachievement and a loss of interest and motivation. Where teachers demonstrated skills and techniques or used exemplar materials and resources, the learning was effective and pupils made good progress.
133. At Key Stage 4, teaching and learning are consistently good. The examination syllabus guides teachers' planning and assessment and pupils benefit from good quality one-to-one feedback on their work and progress. Pupils work hard, and gain in confidence as their work improves. In some lessons, pupils made considerable gains in their learning because of very good features in the teaching. For example, skilful questioning encouraged pupils to make decisions for themselves and to experiment with combinations of materials and processes, including computer-generated imagery. Pupils became more independent, were better prepared for the examination, and relied less on the teacher to suggest what they should do next. Where teaching made use of the examination criteria to plan and discuss the work with pupils, it was generally of a higher standard. Key words and writing frames are beginning to be used effectively to promote the development of vocabulary and literacy skills, but are not planned within the whole curriculum along with other activities including computer-generated work. Pupils are not given a structure that helps them formulate their ideas

and talk about their own and others' work.

134. The Key Stage 3 curriculum plan does not identify in sufficient detail what will be taught or how pupils' learning will be assessed. Subject specialist teachers use their experience and expertise well to track pupils' progress, adjust their teaching to meet pupils' learning needs and to record what has been achieved and the level of understanding. This information builds into a useful record of achievement that contributes to the statutory end of key stage assessment. Non-specialists' assessments focus on pupils' attitudes and behaviour instead of their learning, contributing to the weakness in adapting the teaching to their learning needs.
135. There are a number of strengths in the management of the subject and the improvement overall since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The head of department has provided a great deal of help and support for non-specialists and this has led to an increase in the satisfactory and good teaching compared to the last inspection. There has been considerable improvement in the most recent GCSE examinations and very good achievement. The challenge will be to maintain this record of success in future years. In sharp contrast there not been enough progress in tackling some of the issues in the last report which are affecting standards in Key Stage 3. Most of these are whole school issues of timetabling, the use of non-specialist staff and the poor accommodation in one studio which are not within the control of the head of department.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

136. The results of teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 have fluctuated from year to year, but were below the national results in 2000. Standards are improving and the standards of pupils currently in Year 9 are in line with the national expectation. Standards are highest in food and textiles. In resistant materials, more emphasis is placed on the development of knowledge and skills and there is less time allocated to teaching this aspect of design and technology than to the others.
137. Pupils develop good levels of knowledge and understanding about materials and ingredients and how they should be used safely. They use a range of research and recording techniques well. Research through surveys and self-evaluation of their own work is very effective in developing understanding about the requirements of different groups of people and this information is used well in their development ideas. Modelling and making activities employ a range of skills and techniques, and pupils produce practical work that is well made and finished.
138. GCSE results have been consistently below the national average. In 2000, results overall were below the national average for the proportion of pupils gaining A* to C grades though the proportion gaining at least a G grade was above the national average. Results varied considerably both between design and technology subjects and between teaching groups of the same subject. Only the results for graphics products were above the national average. Girls continue to attain a larger proportion of the A* to C grades than boys. Pupils did relatively less well in design and technology than in their other subjects.
139. Current work in Years 10 and 11 indicates that standards are rising and are in line with the national expectation. The structured approach used by teachers for course work is enabling all pupils to meet GCSE requirements well. In the better folders, the quality of research, analysis, and development and evaluation of ideas is very good. Pupils develop knowledge and skills and understand how materials and ingredients can be

used safely, effectively and sometimes creatively in the development of their own ideas. Presentation of work is often good and there is some good use of computer-generated work in all subjects. Practical work is good, demonstrating a range of skills and well finished products.

140. When compared to their earlier attainment, pupils' achievement is good throughout the school. Almost all settle to work quickly and there is a positive culture for learning in most lessons. In Year 7, pupils used good planning and preparation skills when producing biscuits and Year 8 pupils developed their knowledge of textiles well when planning, making and evaluating their individual bag designs. In resistant materials, pupils used a number of batch production techniques to produce a garden trowel in a combination of materials. They learned how to use hand tools and machines safely to mark out, cut and shape wooden components for their bird boxes. Boys and girls used a computer programme to analyse the nutritional values of ingredients in their food products and are becoming confident in using computers in the presentation of their work.
141. In Years 10 and 11, pupils' achievement is good overall, although it varies considerably. The well-structured courses enable examination requirements to be met, but some pupils are less committed and so their achievement is lower. Year 10 pupils successfully drafted and produced their own questionnaires as a regular part of their research procedures. Others developed knowledge about control systems such as the temperature control of a greenhouse and then produced good illustrated notes using the computer. In Year 11, all pupils follow the well-structured plans for course work, and their achievement reflects individual ability and commitment. The higher-attaining pupils produced extensive, good quality work that is well researched and presented to a high standard. They used knowledge effectively in developing their ideas for products and, as a result of detailed evaluation, applied their knowledge to good quality solutions that address the original specification for their product. Pupils are good at producing questionnaires, recording results of surveys and presenting the results of research and investigations. Overall, all pupils, including those with special educational needs and pupils of lower prior attainment, make at least satisfactory progress because they apply their technical abilities well.
142. Overall, teaching and learning are good. They were never less than satisfactory and frequently good in the lessons observed. Teachers have a very clear understanding of the requirements of the National Curriculum and examination work, and this enables them to focus pupils' work throughout the school. Teachers have very good technical knowledge, which is reflected in demonstrations and individual support for pupils. For example, in Year 11 resistant materials lessons, good use was made of a video camera to demonstrate techniques for using a metalwork lathe, and the expertise of the technician was used effectively to demonstrate woodturning. In a food technology lesson, pupils' understanding was consolidated through effective questioning which used their prior knowledge and enabled them to illustrate the effects and applications of food additives. Overall, planning is good and is effective in guiding learning. However, some lessons needed more detailed planning of what pupils were expected to learn. In the majority of lessons, time was used very well and teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour and performance were suitably high.
143. Pupils' knowledge of technical language is being developed well through oral and written work. Computer-generated work is being increasingly included in the research and presentation of pupils' work. Marking is good. In Key Stage 4, the written comments are very effective in enabling pupils to improve their work. Marking is complemented by good individual support and discussion with pupils about their work.

144. Leadership and management are good. The recently appointed head of department is systematically tackling underachievement and the decline in standards since the last inspection. There is close co-operation between teachers. Considerable work is taking place to develop schemes of work and appropriate teaching resources. Programmes of work are being developed well, but the lack of time for resistant materials in Key Stage 3 restricts coverage of certain aspects of the required programmes of study. Nevertheless, statutory requirements are met. Departmental documentation is developing well and there is a very positive approach to monitoring the development and improvement of the subject. The school implementation of school policies and expectations for departmental management are having a positive effect on standards. Effective use is made of current staffing. Accommodation and resources are good and have been recently improved by the addition of a small computer room.

GEOGRAPHY

145. The results of teacher assessment at the end of Year 9 were well above those reported nationally. However, the evidence of the inspection indicates that these assessments were inaccurate, tending to overestimate what pupils have achieved. The standards of work of pupils currently in Year 9 are in line with national expectations. They have a good understanding of where places are located and, through frequent use, have developed very good atlas skills. They learn to use technical terms accurately because teachers are insisting on their use and constantly checking understanding. Pupils demonstrate an appropriate knowledge and understanding of the places and themes studied and, through their response to questions, showed good recall of factual information. They are less confident in the use of map-work skills, having too few opportunities to practise these.
146. There has been no significant improvement in GCSE results in the five years since the last inspection, but there has been some improvement over the past three years. In 2000 the results were below the national average but the proportion gaining at least grade G was above the national average. Relative to their prior attainment, the pupils did better in geography than in most other subjects. Girls outperform boys by a wider margin than is the case nationally.
147. The evidence of pupils' work and the lessons observed showed that standards in the current Year 11 are higher and that attainment is average overall. Their work shows a secure understanding of the links between human and physical aspects and the operation of processes, as was seen in a lesson where Year 11 pupils reviewed and investigated further the case studies they had covered. Pupils of all levels of attainment make good use of their numerical skills in interpreting and presenting data. Their skills in this area are above the national expectation. They acquire the skills necessary for enquiry work, though they do not have enough practice in using ICT to support this. The very good fieldwork for example the study of process and shopping centres in Peterborough helps pupils to make good progress.
148. When compared to their earlier attainment, achievement in geography is good. When they enter the school in Year 7, standards are below average overall, particularly with regard to literacy. From this baseline, pupils make steady progress so that by Year 9 standards are average. In a lesson on economic development higher-attaining pupils made good progress as a result of the high expectations of the teacher and the involvement of pupils in their learning. Similarly good progress was made as low-attaining pupils investigated population migration in Brazil. The teacher had a very good knowledge of the needs of the pupils and matched the resources and tasks

accordingly. For example, Year 8 pupils had made effective use of maps and data to compile a fact file on Brazil. However the understanding of geographical processes, both physical and human, is a weakness in Years 7 and 8. At Key Stage 4, higher-attainers are achieving well but where the work is not matched to their needs, some lower-attaining pupils do not complete work essential to their full understanding and examination revision.

149. Pupils with special educational needs make progress similar to that of other pupils. Teachers are aware of their needs and provide effective support. Where learning assistants were present, opportunities for improvement and progress were enhanced, as in the Year 8 lesson on Brazil.
150. Overall the teaching observed was good, only one lesson being less than satisfactory. Teachers planned lessons effectively, making good use of the schemes of work, and used time and resources effectively. Pupils respond positively to the good teaching. They showed interest in their work and were willing to ask and answer questions, listening carefully and respecting others' contributions. The good behaviour reflected teachers' skills in managing their pupils. The specialist teachers have good subject knowledge and so give clear explanations. In a Year 9 lesson this enabled higher-attaining pupils to gain a very good understanding of global wind systems and air pressure. The teaching was strongest at Key Stage 4 where a greater emphasis was placed on the teaching of processes and subject skills. Also, teachers have a clear focus on examination syllabus requirements and the criteria for success. Teachers' higher expectations at this stage are reflected in better day-to-day assessment and the regular setting of homework. Teachers do not insist that the very useful guidance provided for pupils on the presentation and organisation of work is used consistently and as a result standards of presentation are not high enough.
151. The assessment of work at Key Stage 3 is not as good at Key Stage 4 because teachers give pupils too little information on how they might improve. Difficulties in deploying staff are overcome by sharing groups and the use of non-specialist teachers. In these groups it results in a lack of continuity in learning and contributes to the weaknesses in their knowledge and understanding evident in some of the work at Key Stage 3. Insufficient emphasis is placed on improving pupils' literacy skills and generally, teachers give pupils too few opportunities to use ICT, though in a small number of lessons it was used well.
152. The teacher in charge of geography provides effective leadership and efficient management and the progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory overall. The strong teaching team has the capacity and commitment necessary to achieve further improvement. Schemes of work have been revised, though they do not yet meet fully the requirements of Curriculum 2000. They provide much improved support for teaching than was the case at the time of the last inspection. Issues relating to underachievement and slow progress by groups of pupils, identified in the previous report, have been addressed. The department has been less successful in monitoring work, ensuring the sharing of good practice and improving how pupils' work is assessed.

HISTORY

153. The results of teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 were well above those reported nationally. However, the evidence of the inspection indicates that these assessments were inaccurate, tending to overestimate what pupils had achieved. The standard of work of pupils currently in Year 9 is in line with national expectations.

154. Pupils are strongest in their understanding of chronology and have a good knowledge and understanding of the events, people and periods studied. Pupils develop an increasing appreciation of how and why events, changes and people's actions may be interpreted differently, as in a Year 9 lesson when pupils learned how propaganda was used to justify the bombing of cities during the Second World War. Pupils have too few opportunities to develop the research skills necessary for the independent study required at Key Stage 4.
155. GCSE results in history have not improved significantly since the last inspection. In 2000 the results were below the national average. The proportion of pupils gaining A* to C grades remained the same in the previous year, though the proportion gaining at least grade G was a little above the national average. However, pupils did better in history than most of their other subjects, matching the predictions made of them on the basis of their prior attainment. Though the pattern has fluctuated, in 2000 boys outperformed girls by a significant margin. The evidence of pupils' work and the lessons observed showed that the attainment of current Year 11 pupils is also below average, though more are working at the levels necessary to attain higher grades than has been the case in the past.
156. When compared with their earlier attainment, pupils' achievement is satisfactory at Key Stage 3. Where work was well matched to their needs, all pupils made good progress. For example, in a Year 7 lesson where they reviewed the importance of the Church in Medieval times, pupils were able to recall information and develop their ideas in response to the teacher's expert questioning. When they enter the school in Year 7, standards of literacy are below average and this affects the progress they are able to make. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 experience difficulties in communicating their knowledge and understanding through their written work. They are encouraged to develop an appropriate vocabulary but insufficient emphasis is placed on the development of literacy skills. A significant minority of pupils in Key Stage 3 are reluctant to complete homework.
157. In Key Stage 4, achievement is good. Pupils make good progress in acquiring the skills necessary to analyse, explain and assess the significance of events. For example in a Year 11 lesson where pupils revised Hitler's rise to power, they were able to evaluate sources and showed a sound grasp of cause and consequence. The coursework based on 'Gressonhall Workhouse' demonstrates their ability to select and organise information to carry out a structured investigation. As part of this study Year 10 pupils use, compare and evaluate different documents in the light of the changes brought about by the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act. When Year 11 pupils used 'mind-mapping' as an aid to revision all made very good progress and achievement was high. The higher attaining pupils were challenged to extend their understanding and apply their skills fully.
158. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall, although it varies considerably. For example in a Year 8 lesson, low teacher expectations and ineffective pupil management resulted in poor progress for all but a small minority. In contrast in a Year 9 lesson all pupils, including those with special needs, made very good progress in achieving an understanding of what it must have been like during the 'Holocaust'. The presence of learning assistants enhanced the pupils' opportunities for improvement.
159. Teaching was most effective at Key Stage 4, where it was good overall. The specialist teachers have very good subject knowledge and give clear explanations. They

question pupils skilfully, challenging them to develop their answers and to provide evidence in support of their views. This is resulting in good learning. Planning is good and lessons are thoroughly prepared. Teachers recognise pupils' needs, and have high expectations of them. A range of resources and methods are used to good effect. The teaching of skills, for example in the interpretation and evaluation of sources, as a notable strength of the lessons observed. Teachers also provide additional help by running extra revision classes, and these are well attended.

160. At Key Stage 3 the overall judgement is that the teaching is not satisfactory, because of the impact of non-specialist teaching. There were nonetheless strengths in the specialist teaching which were similar to those in Key Stage 4. In the best lessons the teaching stimulates pupils' interest in the subject and encourages them to ask questions. Teachers maintain very good records and are well informed about the needs of individuals, making effective use of the attainment data available. They give pupils good feedback but there are also weaknesses. The day-to-day assessment and marking of work is too variable in quality and does not provide enough information on how pupils might improve. Marking does not always address pupils' difficulties in spelling, grammar and punctuation.
161. In a significant minority of lessons at Key Stage 3 there is non-specialist teaching. In these lessons opportunities to develop subject skills and emphasise the most important information are missed. The sharing of these groups between two teachers results in a lack of continuity in the learning. Insufficient use is made of ICT in teaching and learning and the practise of pupils' numerical skills is neglected.
162. The department responded positively to the findings of the last inspection, but change has taken longer to achieve than might have been expected. The attainment and progress of lower-attaining pupils at both key stages has been improved and there is no evidence of significant underachievement at Key Stage 4. Pupils are better supported in their learning. Much progress has been made in developing the monitoring of learning and this is beginning to have an impact on standards.
163. The day-to-day management of the department is broadly satisfactory but there are weaknesses which need to be addressed. Determined leadership and focused team meetings, together with the full implementation of school policies on marking and assessment and the systems for the monitoring of teaching and learning, are required in order to achieve further improvement.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

164. Teachers assessed their pupils' standards at the end of Year 9 as very high in 2000. Evidence from the inspection indicates that this was an overestimate. The school is aware that it needs to review the basis on which it makes assessments. No pupils were entered for GCSE in 2000.
165. The work of the current Year 9 pupils is in line with national expectations in one aspect of the curriculum: the handling and communication of information. Standards do not reach national expectations overall because pupils do not have enough opportunity to reach the same standards in most other aspects, particularly using computers to take measurements. Most pupils can compile information in spreadsheet tables and use the software's tools to make simple calculations. Many pupils have learned to make more complex calculations, such as using comparative figures from a number of countries to compare social conditions in each. All are able to produce posters in which

information in different forms is integrated, using facilities such as ClipArt, WordArt and charting tools. The work of most pupils shows awareness of the purpose and audience for the task. That of the higher attainers is distinguished by confident literacy skills, with word-processed pieces being longer and more detailed, rather than by demonstrating markedly better ICT capability and skills.

166. The work of current Year 11 pupils taking GCSE courses is below expectations. This is because, though able to use a range of ICT tools to address specified tasks, such as using art packages to create logos, PowerPoint to publicise a computer club and spreadsheet records to manage its finances, pupils do not sufficiently analyse their tasks, explain the approaches or evaluate these. There is evidence that the prior learning and attainment of these pupils, some of whom joined the course late, were also lower than the average, and so overall their achievement is satisfactory. Pupils in the current Year 10 group are reaching standards that are closer to expectations.
167. Pupils make good progress in some individual lessons, and their achievement is satisfactory within the taught course in ICT in each key stage. However, pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory overall because various aspects of the ICT curriculum are not covered sufficiently, particularly in Year 9 and in Key Stage 4 for those pupils not taking GCSE. In particular pupils do not have adequate opportunities for work in the measuring and modelling aspects of ICT. Because they receive good individual support from teachers, pupils with special educational needs make good progress in lessons, but their overall progress is unsatisfactory for the same reasons as those that affect other pupils' achievement.
168. The specialist teaching observed was good overall in both key stages. The best lessons started with clear explanations of the work to be carried out and demonstrations of relevant techniques, making good use of a large monitor. The teaching strongly encouraged pupils to develop confidence in working independently, making and justifying choices of software and approaches and they learnt well. Teachers provided good support to individual work, and taught the whole class when recurring problems were identified. Relationships were good. In the satisfactory teaching, the teachers were not planning sufficiently for the range of individual needs and capabilities in their classes. While some good, open-ended work is provided which challenges higher-attaining pupils, the pupils were determining their own level of response, rather than the teacher managing and directing this. The main weakness is in the marking of work. This does not consistently give pupils enough guidance on how well they are progressing, and what they need to do to improve.
169. Lessons taught by non-specialists were satisfactory overall. The teachers followed departmental plans competently, but missed opportunities to explore key points fully. For example, in a Year 8 lesson on information gathering, the characteristics of a poorly designed questionnaire about shopping habits were identified. However, the implications for the processes of investigation and assembling of information, in a form suitable for processing, were not fully emphasised and pupils did not learn as much as they could have done.
170. Even though much progress has been made recently, the improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. This is because a number of important issues have not been dealt with adequately. Overall achievement remains unsatisfactory. The use of ICT within the subject areas is still generally weak, although it is good within design and technology. The statutory requirements for all pupils are now not met in either key stage. Most subjects do not have detailed plans for integrating ICT in their schemes of work. The introduction of GCSE courses is a significant improvement, however. Progress is being made in developing teachers' expertise in using ICT in

their teaching. There has been good improvement in the provision of resources, with a significant development of centralised ICT rooms and clusters in departments, although these do not yet include English and mathematics.

171. Long-term vision and development have suffered in the past because several co-ordinators have held the position. The leadership and management of ICT are now satisfactory, and the weaknesses are being tackled. The improved level of resourcing has placed the school in a good position to raise standards. The good provision of technical support is of great benefit. When problems with the computers occur in lessons, assistance is quick and efficient, minimising disruption to pupils' learning and enabling the co-ordinator to focus on educational development. However, his teaching commitments in other subjects limit the time he has available for this. The school is planning to introduce a taught course in Year 9 and significantly increase the number taking GCSE in the next academic year. The teaching of ICT in other subjects has not been systematically audited and co-ordinated. Other weaknesses include the limited availability of ICT resources to all departments, and the capacity of the school's network to cope with the demands placed on it.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

172. The results of the teacher assessments for French and German at the end of Year 9 were above those reported nationally. The evidence of the inspection indicates that they were too high. Teachers rounded up the results of the four attainment targets to a final grade rather than ensuring that the level had been achieved in every attainment target.
173. Since the last inspection, standards have apparently dropped but this is mainly because a much higher proportion of the year group now takes a modern foreign language to GCSE. A reading scheme has been introduced to enable pupils to develop their reading skills which makes effective use of the library and is encouraging pupils to value reading more highly. There are still no foreign language assistants, which means that pupils have little access to foreign nationals. The use of French and German by pupils is not as strong as it was then. However some higher attainers do use German occasionally to communicate with the teacher. Schemes of work have been rewritten and give adequate support to teachers although more reference to information and communication technology and to the differing needs of pupils is required.
174. The management of modern foreign languages is satisfactory, with strengths but also areas that need improvement. The team of teachers is dedicated and close-knit. They have a shared commitment to raising standards and to achieving the best for their pupils. The head of department regularly monitors lessons and written work, but the evaluation is not yet rigorous enough to ensure that the best and weakest practice is properly identified and that good practice is disseminated to the rest of the team. More use is being made of ICT, and teachers are beginning to be aware of the role modern foreign languages have to play in the development of literacy skills. The department has not had access to enough external support to provide an objective view of standards and teaching. Visits to France and Germany are offered and there are pen friend links in several classes. Whilst resources are generally adequate, there are not enough textbooks for pupils to take home which means that time which could be spent completing exercises is used to copy vocabulary and structures. In German the textbooks precede the national curriculum and do not offer sufficient support for the lower attaining pupils.

French

175. The standard of work of pupils currently in Year 9 is in line with national expectations. Average and higher attaining pupils attain the highest standards. They have good recall of previous learning and reading and listening skills are well developed. Many operate fluently in present and past tenses, using 'être' and 'avoir' as the auxiliary verbs accurately. The weakest skill is writing and this is generally because pupils are given too few opportunities to use the language.
176. GCSE results are lower than they were at the last inspection partly because numbers entering for the examination have increased significantly. The 2000 results were not as good as previous years and although low when compared with national figures, were similar to the pupils' results in many of their other subjects. Boys did much better than girls in 1999 but worse in 1998 and in 2000 in line with national trends. The evidence of pupils' work and the observation of lessons showed that standards in the current Year 11 are better. They are in line with national expectations for this stage of the course. Higher attaining pupils write high quality, extended descriptions of weekend activities, using past, future and present tenses accurately and employing a variety of vocabulary and structures to vary their work. Few however are producing the sort of work that will result in the very highest GCSE grades. Lower attaining pupils attain standards that are well below national expectations. They have difficulty remembering what they have done before and are working at the individual word stage of production.
177. When compared with their earlier attainment most pupils achieve well at both key stages. The exceptions to this are those at either end of the ability range. The highest attaining pupils are not yet achieving the very highest levels they are capable of. Similarly, those at the lower end of the ability range do not make quite as much progress as others. This is mainly because not enough attention is paid to their individual learning needs when teachers plan lessons. Staffing difficulties in the past have affected the progress of some pupils over time.
178. The teaching observed ranged from very good to satisfactory but was satisfactory overall. It was good at Key Stage 3 and satisfactory at Key Stage 4. Teachers have good subject knowledge; they review previous learning diligently and manage classes well, whilst at the same time maintaining good relationships with them. They prepare pupils very well for examinations. Teaching was most effective in a Year 9 lesson for lower attaining pupils, where excellent classroom management, good review of previous learning and a task which allowed pupils to use the language for real communication purposes, meant that pupils made very good progress. They were able to use the past tense both fluently and accurately by the end of the lesson. The area where teaching could be improved relates mainly teachers providing sorts of tasks that will ensure that there is enough variety for all pupils to achieve to the very best of their abilities. Homework is sometimes used to extend the learning but much of this consists of repetitive exercises or learning and do not require pupils to manipulate the language for themselves.
179. As a result of this satisfactory teaching, learning is also satisfactory. It is good at Key Stage 3 and very good when pupils have sufficient opportunity to use the language being taught. Attitudes and behaviour are good.

German

180. Standards of work of pupils currently in Year 9 are in line with national expectations. Higher attaining pupils take part in role-plays of several exchanges to book

accommodation. They understand the teacher's extensive use of German and have well developed skills in all four attainment targets of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. They communicate with the teacher with one-word replies. Lower attaining pupils complete similar work with one or two word phrases. They are at the stage of copying work rather than using the language themselves.

181. GCSE results have fallen since the last inspection but numbers entering for the examination significantly increased during the same period. In 2000 the proportion of pupils gaining A* - C grades was very low when compared with national percentages at half the national average. Boys attained particularly low results although their performance in German was about the same as it was in their other subjects. The standard of work of pupils currently in Year 11 is better and is slightly below national expectations. Higher attaining pupils use past tense verbs to write about holidays to America and give basic opinions on the problems of drug and alcohol abuse amongst teenagers today. Lower attaining pupils understand questions about self and school but have difficulties recalling previous learning such as the numbers and everyday present tense verbs.
182. When compared with their earlier attainment, pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve appropriately and make steady progress through the key stages. Attitudes and behaviour are good.
183. The teaching observed ranged from satisfactory to good but was satisfactory overall at both key stages. The best lessons began briskly with a detailed review of previous learning. Teachers used resources such as the whiteboard and flashcards effectively to support comprehension and to enable them to deliver the lessons almost entirely in German. A variety of tasks was used to stretch the most able. Some challenging groups were managed extremely well. Relationships between teachers and some groups are particularly good and pupils enjoy the fun generated by some teachers. Where there were weaknesses it was because there was occasional overuse of English or because the teacher spent too much time talking to the class rather than giving them enough time to practise the language for themselves.
184. As a result of the satisfactory teaching, learning was also satisfactory at both key stages. It was good in the high ability Year 7, 9 and 11 groups observed where pupils were provided with ample opportunity to practise the language being taught. They built effectively on previous learning and developed the skills of listening and speaking well, as a result of the large amount of German used by the teacher.

MUSIC

185. In the teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2000, pupils' attainment was below the national average. This was borne out in the standards of work observed during the inspection. Staffing problems restricted the progress made by pupils in 2000, and the current shortage of equipment and accommodation, when two music classes are taught at the same time, continue to impair the progress that Year 9 pupils make. These pupils have a limited working knowledge of the elements of music prescribed in the National Curriculum. They were able to describe the varied character of different sections in Charles Ives's Variation on 'America', but had a limited grasp of technical musical language. When composing their own variations, they were hampered by limited keyboard skills and a lack of confidence in their abilities to improvise.
186. Small numbers of pupils take GCSE music. Results in 2000 were above the national average, but the small numbers taking the examination make comparisons with

national figures of little significance. In the previous two years, results were below average. Pupils currently in Year 11 are attaining standards that are overall in line with national averages. In composing, they achieve consistent style within each piece and write well for their chosen instruments. Standards of musical literacy and levels of accomplishment on instruments vary greatly. Several pupils showed technical security and a good sense of style in recorded examples of their performing. Several pupils had achieved a good standard of competence in ICT, which they use for presenting their compositions. Standards of instrumental recognition in analysing questions were satisfactory, but spelling of basic musical words was sometimes inaccurate.

187. Pupils' achievement in relation to their own previous learning has been unsatisfactory over time in Key Stage 3, but in individual lessons it was sometimes good during the inspection. It was good in Year 7, where pupils were able from notation to play a simple tune rhythmically on percussion instruments or keyboards. Then they invented their own tunes, using a five-note scale, and most could fit these securely as solos between whole-class performances of the main tune. In Year 8, pupils understood 'drone' and 'ostinato' and gained basic knowledge of Chinese instruments. Singing was tentative, but pupils made good progress in devising a simple accompaniment on keyboards to a Chinese song. Progress was unsatisfactory in Year 9 when pupils worked on computers, devising a synopsis of the story on which Stravinsky's 'Firebird' is based. The lesson had no valid musical content. In another Year 9 lesson, pupils made good progress in developing skills of improvising, composing and performing and made good gains in musical knowledge through applying it in an interesting task. GCSE pupils make very good progress, for example, in Year 10, they extended their practical skills and theoretical knowledge effectively by working as a class ensemble to perform an extract from Holst's 'St Paul's Suite'.
188. As a result of staffing difficulties, some pupils have not acquired good working habits. Overall, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are unsatisfactory in Key Stage 3. Some classes respond poorly to good teaching and show a reluctance to be actively taught, but are more efficient when working independently. In Years 10 and 11, pupils work efficiently. They are well motivated, work hard and are enthusiastic.
189. Teaching is satisfactory overall in Key Stage 3. Lessons have clear objectives and resources are well organised. The teacher plans lessons well and organises time carefully, which encourages a good rate of learning. Effective planning enables musical theory to be learned by applying it to interesting practical tasks. Carefully thought-out topics provide good opportunities for pupils to learn at their own pace and achieve good feelings of success when sharing in whole-class performances. When pupils are learning independently, the teacher provides effective individual assistance and constructively evaluates their work. Sometimes, however, in lower school lessons, behaviour is confrontational and relationships deteriorate. In a computer-based lesson, the tasks were not directly linked to a genuine musical experience and pupils were not helped to make progress. Consequently, the teaching was poor. The teaching of GCSE music is very good. The teacher uses her considerable musical skills effectively, plans very carefully and provides a high standard of individual attention so that every pupil is suitably challenged and supported. As a result, they concentrate well and learn efficiently.
190. The new head of department, who has been in post for less than two terms, has made a substantial impact on reorganising music in the school. In particular, she has reinvigorated the GCSE sets and given them a strong sense of purpose. A new curriculum is being compiled that is appropriately based on current statutory requirements and contains imaginative topics and tasks that are carefully matched to

the musical needs and interests of pupils. Assessment of what pupils do enables subsequent planning to be carefully targeted. Musical resources are well-organised and attractive exhibits and pictures have turned the music room into a stimulating working environment. There are good plans for developing extra-curricular music. Instrumental tuition by visiting teachers is well organised and monitored. Since the time of the previous inspection the development of music has been unsatisfactory, but initiatives are now underway to stimulate a good range of appropriate developments. The main outstanding tasks are to cultivate more positive attitudes to music amongst pupils in Key Stage 3 and to overcome problems of resources and accommodation so that the quality of provision is consistently good for all pupils in Years 7 to 9.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

191. The results of teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 were above those reported nationally. However, the evidence of the inspection indicates that these assessments tended to overestimate what pupils have achieved. The standard of work of pupils currently in Year 9 is at the level of national expectations overall. They are able to demonstrate the principles of shot putt with reasonable accuracy and show the beginnings of sound technique after a short period of instruction.
192. GCSE results have remained at a low level since the last inspection. In 2000 the results were significantly below the national average for all maintained schools; the school's average points score was 3.55 as opposed to the national figure of 4.66. However, 100% of pupils entered achieved at least a grade G, which is above the national average. In 1999 the examination board was changed to one which took greater account of the strengths of pupils in practical work and the present Year 11 cohort is predicted to gain 52% A* to C passes, which will represent a significant increase in standards.
193. Attainment overall in the present Year 11 is likely to be at the level of national expectations. A limited range of activities was seen during the inspection, but it was clear that attainment in tennis at present is below average. Only two pupils in one group could demonstrate a forehand drive with any consistency, but this activity is newly introduced into the curriculum. In rounders, skills were at the level of national expectations with some pupils demonstrating fielding skills above average. Observation of some extra-curricular activities and the scrutiny of team results in other team games indicate that attainment in many activities is at least average and in hockey, for example, it is likely to be above average.
194. Achievement in all lessons seen was satisfactory and in many instances it was good. Where teaching was good, as in most Key Stage 3 lessons, pupils were enabled to show steady improvement in the acquisition of relevant skills and in understanding and knowledge of the rules governing the different activities. However, the difference in achievement between Years 7 and 9 in putting the shot was unsatisfactory since it arose purely from the greater strength of the bigger and older pupils and not from any development of technique. Overall, however, achievement in Key Stage 3 was good. In Key Stage 4 achievement in lessons was good where appropriate resources were used to enable the pupils to succeed in mastering the difficult skills, as when short tennis equipment was used with a Year 10 group. Overall, however, achievement in this key stage was satisfactory. Achievement over time would be an inappropriate judgement at present, as the present cohort in Key Stage 4 is the first to follow a teaching programme rather than a recreational programme and expectations of pupils and teachers are still at times at odds with one another.

195. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress because the teachers know them well and are aware of their individual needs. Teachers are able to adapt and modify tasks to enable these pupils to succeed, as was seen in the lesson on shot putt in Year 7 where pupils were helped to achieve a creditable performance when the teacher modified the task.
196. Overall the teaching observed was good. Teachers have good knowledge of the activities they teach and are able to give clear and accurate demonstrations which enable the pupils to learn well. Relationships are good. Teachers work very well together which provides a very good role model for pupils. Some of the lessons seen gave pupils the opportunity to take responsibility, for example in leading parts of the warm-up, but other opportunities were missed, such as teaching pupils to use a stop-watch accurately to record timed runs. GCSE groups were asked to analyse and evaluate performance but other groups were not given the opportunity to evaluate their learning, for example at the end of a lesson. The good use of technical language noted in Key Stage 3 should lead to greater confidence of the use of such terms in Key Stage 4.
197. Pupils' behaviour in their physical education lessons is good in both key stages. Those who participate do so with enthusiasm and concentration on the tasks set. However, in both key stages there was an unacceptably high number of non-participants for all lessons seen except one and these numbers rose noticeably as pupils progressed through the key stages. The attitudes of these non-participants were passive; they did not disturb the learning of others but, on the whole, they took no active part or interest in the lesson. The response to extra-curricular activities during the week of the inspection was similarly poor, although evidence of participation in the previous terms was seen to have been good.
198. The improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. GCSE results have remained low but sensible steps have been taken in the last two years to rectify this and results are predicted to rise significantly this year. Teaching overall is now good and basic schemes of work have been written for all activities. Most of these do not yet have sufficient detail of what pupils are expected to achieve at different stages. The athletics schemes of work do not show sufficient continuity and progression. Assessment procedures are satisfactory but do not as yet help pupils to understand what they must do to improve in different activities. However, attainment overall shows a steady improvement.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

199. Standards in the lessons observed and work seen are below those expected by the locally agreed syllabus at the end of Key Stage 3. This is partly due to a significant minority of non-specialist teaching which, during the inspection, varied from very good to unsatisfactory. Higher attaining pupils wrote perceptively about their own ideas of God and their understanding of miracles. There is less substantial writing than in many schools and the work of lower attaining pupils was sometimes unfinished and often very brief. Pupils have a good understanding of moral dilemmas in society and weigh evidence carefully before deciding on their point of view. Pupils' spoken opinions are usually very brief, but they have strong views about current issues, such as animal rights and killing in self-defence.
200. All pupils follow a GCSE short course in RE, and about a quarter take the examination. Provision for RE is unsatisfactory in Key Stage 4, as the subject is not allocated enough time to cover the course adequately. Results in the short course are below the

national average, but above the school's average results, because candidates are carefully selected on the results of the mock examination. In lessons observed, pupils showed a secure understanding of the effects of pollution on the environment. Written work was satisfactory and pupils used reference books carefully. Standards of discussion were below average.

201. A small number of pupils take the full GCSE course, for which the school makes a satisfactory allocation of time. Results are below average but represent good achievement by these pupils. Higher attaining pupils gave lively views on marriage and understood well the Christian view of marriage as a life-long commitment. Others in the group were very reluctant to express views orally. Written work is similarly variable. The best is extended, well expressed and presented using word processing skills. It has been carefully researched, from books and the Internet. Some, however, shows little thought and is carelessly presented.
202. Pupils enter the school with levels of attainment in RE that are below average. From this baseline, they make satisfactory progress through the Key Stage. In Year 7, pupils gain a good understanding of symbolism in major world religions and gain varied information, for example about festivals of light in different religions. Pupils learn key words carefully. For example, when learning what the communion service means to Christians, they carefully define relevant terms, such as eucharist, chalice and paten. Written work varies in quality, from extended and careful work by higher attaining pupils, to incomplete and poorly presented work from lower attaining pupils, for whom tasks are inadequately modified. Pupils' achievement in individual lessons in Key Stage 4 is good, but overall progress and achievement are unsatisfactory because of the poor allocation of time. In Year 10, some pupils wrote thoughtfully about the dangers of television, the morality of cigarette and alcohol advertising. They know about major Christian and Hindu festivals. However, the overall volume of written work is small.
203. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good in lessons in Key Stage 3. Pupils do not readily accept all traditional views but they are courteous in disagreement. Some pupils, while they are receptive, do not make sufficiently active contributions to discussions. Attitudes in Key Stage 4 are overall unsatisfactory. Pupils' attitudes are affected by the subject's poor provision and apparent lack of status. Pupils showed some resistance in most lessons observed and did not settle readily to sustained independent working.
204. Teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 3, though there was a small amount of unsatisfactory non-specialist teaching during the inspection. In Key Stage 4, teaching was good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and prepare lessons thoroughly, providing worksheets that are of a high standard. Where textbooks are used, teachers provide additional background information and regularly check pupils' understanding. Pupils learn good research skills. Teachers place a strong emphasis on technical words and their definitions and RE makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' development of literacy. Teachers lead discussions well, presenting challenging ideas to pupils, and this stimulates effective learning, so that pupils work hard to understand the difficult ideas which are presented to them. Generally, however, teachers invite answers only from volunteers and do not target sufficiently those who do not offer an active response. Some lessons, where new topics are introduced, need more dramatic introductions, possibly involving the greater use of artefacts or videos. Where the teaching was unsatisfactory, the teacher had prepared the lesson inadequately and the intended development of pupils' views was not achieved. The quality of marking varies greatly. Some is detailed, but much marking in Key Stage 3 does not

inform pupils how they may improve their work.

205. The development of RE has been satisfactory since the previous inspection. Despite the poor time allocation, the subject is now well established in Key Stage 4. The schemes of work are good, reflecting locally agreed and examination requirements appropriately. The department has good plans for development to raise standards further. These include target setting for each pupil using information from assessment and the extended use of computers. More appropriate setting arrangements, planned for September, will enable pupils to be challenged more suitably. At present, work is does not always adequately meet the needs of lower attaining pupils. The teacher in charge of religious education shows a particular strength in curriculum development and provides an example of good teaching for colleagues to follow. Monitoring of the non-specialist teaching in Key Stage 3 is informal and unsatisfactory, due to a lack of time. A greater range of resources, such as videos and artefacts and computers, is needed to give more impact to individual topics.