

INSPECTION REPORT

Northfleet School for Boys

Gravesend

LEA: Kent

Unique Reference Number: 118928

Headteacher: Mr J. Hassett

Reporting inspector: Mr G. Clements

5317

Dates of inspection: 29 November - 3 December 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 708482

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Modern (non-selective)

Type of control: Foundation

Age range of pupils: 11 to 18

Gender of pupils: Boys

School address: Colyer Road
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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Dr Stephen King

Date of previous inspection: November 1994

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Mr J Peplow Lay inspector		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development; Attendance; Support, guidance and pupils' welfare.
Mr D. Burbidge Team inspector	Mathematics	Accommodation and learning resources.
Dr D. Lewis Team inspector	Science	The curriculum and assessment.
Mrs A. Snelling Team inspector	English	Staffing.
Ms L. Woods Team inspector	Geography	Partnership with parents and the community.
Mr S. Bell Team inspector	Design and technology Art	
Mr J. Royle Team inspector	Information and communications technology Music	
Mr D. Wasp Team inspector	History Religious education	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
Mr J. Bowden Team inspector	Physical education	Special educational needs
Mr J. Dockrell Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	Equal opportunities
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MAIN FINDINGS

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- The school is successful in its aim to develop in pupils a sense of personal responsibility.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good and, consequently, pupils have positive attitudes to learning.
- The commitment of all staff to helping pupils in their personal and academic development, as well as the good overall quality of the teaching, is a strength of the school.
- Pupils make consistently good progress at each key stage.
- The progress made by pupils is monitored effectively, particularly at Key Stage 3, and the aspirations of all pupils are raised through setting individual targets for achievement.
- Sixth-form students have high aspirations and are good role models for younger pupils.
- Support for pupils for whom English is an additional language and for pupils with special educational needs is very good and enables them to make good progress in developing their literacy skills.
- The provision of information technology resources is very good and enables pupils to reach high standards in their computing skills.
- The pastoral care and teaching programme for pupils joining the school in Year 7 are especially good and help them to settle into their new environment.
- Financial control and administration are very good and the school gives good value for money.

WHERE THE SCHOOL HAS WEAKNESSES

- I. The curriculum for design and technology at Key Stage 3 does not meet statutory requirements as pupils do not have the opportunity to study either textiles or food technology.
- II. The school programme for redecoration and refurbishment has yet to be completed. Accommodation is poor in design and technology where it is detrimental to the standards of work pupils can achieve.
- III. The library is not used effectively as a learning resource centre to support the development of literacy.
- IV. There are no school policies for literacy and numeracy.
- V. The school development plan has too few long term targets and success criteria are too general and do not allow governors to take an active enough role in monitoring school improvement.
- VI. The vocational curriculum is not supported sufficiently by links with the business community.

The strengths of the school far outweigh the weaknesses. The governors' action plan will set out how the weaknesses identified during the inspection are to be addressed. The plan will be sent to all parents or carers of pupils at the school.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE THE LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress on most issues arising from the previous inspection.

The school has been most effective in reviewing teaching and learning strategies and has made outstanding improvement in the overall quality of teaching since the previous inspection. It has reduced

the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching from 29 per cent to just two per cent.

Through the introduction of target setting procedures, that include close partnership with parents, the school has successfully raised the aspirations which pupils have for their own achievements.

It has built on its good processes for priority setting through an intensive analysis of its strengths and weaknesses. This led to identification of areas for improvement, which form the basis of the school's strategic development plan. However, this plan does not have appropriate criteria to help governors to monitor improvement and does not express a long term vision for the school.

Considerable improvements have been made to the school environment, but much remains to be done to provide satisfactory facilities in all curriculum areas, particularly in design and technology. The programme of redecoration and refurbishment has yet to be completed. Previously discarded buildings have been renovated and reinstated as teaching areas and acoustics have been improved by the carpeting of classrooms throughout the school. Display has been improved in all areas of the school.

Issues concerning the need for more coherence in collective worship and for more opportunities for pupils to reflect on human experiences have been addressed. Provision for spiritual development is now satisfactory. The school complies fully with the statutory requirements for collective worship. There is a full programme of assemblies with related themes and reflections to be used during form tutor times.

The major health and safety issues have been addressed, but the flat roof in several parts of the school is in poor condition.

The sound leadership and good management of the school, together with the commitment and determination shown by staff and governors, demonstrate the capacity for further improvement. However, improvement of accommodation is limited by the lack of a sufficient budget to make the necessary changes.

STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS

The following table shows standards achieved by 14, 16 and 18 year olds in national tests, GCSE and A/AS-level examinations in 1999:

Performance in:	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	
Key Stage 3 Tests	E	D	<i>well above average</i> A
GCSE Examinations	E	D	<i>above average</i> B
A/AS – levels	E	n/a	<i>average</i> C
			<i>below average</i> D
			<i>well below average</i> E

The level of pupils' attainment on entry to the school is well below average. The performances of pupils in Key Stage 3 tests, GCSE examinations, GNVQ courses and A-level examinations show that

significant value is added by the school in nearly all subjects. Since the previous inspection, performance has shown a steady trend in improvement that is faster than the national trend. At the end of Key Stage 3, the attainment of pupils in information and communications technology is above average and indicates the good value for money that is being derived from investment in computing resources. Attainment in other subjects at the end of Key Stage 3 is below average for all maintained schools, but mostly in line with the average for secondary modern schools.

At GCSE in 1999, more than four-fifths of pupils gained seven or more A*-G grades, but the proportions gaining the higher grades were below national averages in most subjects. However, in geography and art, results for those pupils entered were well above average.

The attainment of students on GNVQ courses in information technology and business at intermediate and advanced levels is good, with a high proportion gaining full accreditation at the end of their courses and many gaining distinctions. In 1999, all students entered for A-levels in English and art were successful, but results in economics were poor.

Pupils of all ages, including those for whom English is not their home language and those with special educational needs (SEN), generally make good progress throughout the school.

QUALITY OF TEACHING

	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
Years 7-9	Good	Geography, history, science	---
Years 10-11	Good	Geography, history, art, modern foreign languages, science	---
Sixth form	Good	Information technology	---
English	Good		
Mathematics	Good		

Since the previous inspection, the quality of teaching has improved considerably. The good overall quality of teaching and the strong commitment of all teachers to helping pupils improve their standards are strengths of the school. The quality of teaching is satisfactory or better in 98 per cent of lessons and good or better in 53 per cent. These proportions are above national averages. The teaching is very good in a sixth of lessons, most frequently in art, business studies, design and technology, English, geography, history, mathematics, religious education and science. This teaching is characterised by enthusiasm, high expectations of work and behaviour and good rapport between the teacher and pupils.

Teachers are competent in their specialist subject knowledge and they plan their lessons well, varying activities appropriately to maintain the interest and concentration of pupils. Teachers in most curriculum areas make satisfactory use of computing facilities, but some make insufficient demands on pupils to use these resources for independent research activities. Teachers make effective use of setting arrangements and set appropriate work that is matched broadly to pupils' abilities, but they could give more specific attention to the low literacy and numeracy levels of many pupils.

Teachers give pupils good feedback through marking so that they know how to raise their standards and they set pupils suitable targets to focus on improvement. Teachers improve the appearance of their teaching rooms and raise the self-esteem of pupils by displaying work of good quality. Teaching is least satisfactory when teachers' expectations are too low and they place too little importance on the quality and presentation of finished work.

The quality of support for pupils for whom English is an additional language and for those identified as having special educational needs is very good at both key stages. Consequently, most of these pupils make good progress.

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

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Good behaviour and attitudes to school have a positive effect on pupils' learning and the standards they achieve.
Attendance	Satisfactory. The school works hard, together with outside agencies, to maintain a satisfactory level of attendance.
Ethos*	Good. The school creates an effective learning environment with very good relationships and equality of opportunity for all its pupils.
Leadership and management	Day-to-day management is good, but development planning needs to be improved to enable greater involvement of governors in monitoring school improvement.
Curriculum	Satisfactory in all aspects except that it does not fully meet statutory requirements in design and technology at Key Stage 3. The GNVQ sixth form curriculum is particularly appropriate.
Pupils with special educational needs	Support for pupils with special educational needs is very good and enables them to make good progress in achieving the targets of their individual education plans.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Provision for social development is very good and a strength of the school. Provision for moral development is good. Provision for spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	There are sufficient qualified staff. Availability of support staff is good. Resources for information technology are very good. Resources in other areas are adequate. Accommodation is unsatisfactory. There is good display throughout the school, but the redecoration programme is incomplete and provision for design and technology is poor.
Value for money	The school gives good value for money. Good quality teaching and very good relationships between staff and pupils ensure that throughout the school pupils make good progress in their academic and personal development.

**Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

THE PARENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
VII. good relationships between teachers and pupils based on mutual respect	XII. occasional instances of bullying
VIII. arrangements for transfer from primary schools	XIII. occasional inconsistency in school
IX. support given to pupils with special educational needs	
X. support given to pupils for whom English is not their home language	
XI. good communication between school and home	

The positive views expressed by parents are all substantiated by the inspection. When bullying occurs, it is dealt with quickly and effectively. Lapses in communication and inconsistencies in school punishments are rare.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

In order to maintain and build on the improving standards which exist in the school, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

1. Improve the quality of education in design and technology by:
 - a) ensuring that the curriculum at Key Stage 3 meets statutory requirements through inclusion of either compliant materials (textiles) or food (*paragraphs 26, 56, 112*)
 - b) ensuring that the specialist accommodation meets suitable standards. (*paragraphs 60, 61, 68, 113*)

2. Widen initiatives to raise standards of literacy and numeracy by:
 - a) writing and implementing school policies for literacy and numeracy (*paragraphs 21, 23, 26, 53, 82, 89*)
 - b) ensuring that all departments adopt strategies to improve literacy and numeracy within their schemes of work and their development plans (*paragraphs 21, 26, 82, 89*)
 - c) developing the library as a learning resource area. (*paragraphs 64, 68, 82*)

3. Develop a critical role for governors in the evaluation of school improvement by:
 - a) identifying long term targets for the future of the school (*paragraphs 52, 56*)
 - b) including easily measurable success criteria within school and departmental development plans. (*paragraphs 52, 56*)

- 1? Add more relevance to the sixth form vocational curriculum by:
 - a) increasing curriculum links with the business community (*paragraphs 47, 50, 104, 107*)
 - b) establishing relevant work experience opportunities for all students. (*paragraphs 30, 50, 107*)

In addition to the key issues above, the governors should ensure that their annual report to parents includes all statutory attendance information. (*paragraphs 18, 48*)

4? INTRODUCTION

4? Characteristics of the school

1. Northfleet School for Boys is an 11-18 secondary modern in North-West Kent. The school receives most of its intake from the local area, although a significant number of boys travel from further afield to attend the school. The roll has increased substantially since the previous inspection in November 1994. The school is above average in size for modern schools and has a current roll of 829, including 85 students in the sixth form.
2. Pupils are from a range of social backgrounds. The proportion eligible for free school meals, at 16 per cent, is just below the national average. Most pupils, 78 per cent, are white, 19 per cent are Indian and many other ethnic groups are represented. A quarter of pupils come from homes where English is not the first language. Of these pupils, 90 receive additional English language support in school.
3. Attainment on entry is well below average. A substantial number of pupils have weak literacy and numeracy skills. There are 29 pupils with statements of special educational need, which is above the national average and represents a small increase since the previous inspection. The school is designated as one that takes pupils with visual impairment. Two pupils are currently on the school's register of special needs for visual impairment. The school's register of special educational needs includes 410 pupils in Years 7-11, which is proportionally very much higher than the national average. Disapplication of the National Curriculum has been made for two refugees who recently joined the school. The proportion of pupils continuing full-time education after the age of 15 is about two-thirds. Three-quarters continued into further or higher education in 1999 after two years in the sixth form.
4. The school aims to produce young men of character who will take their place in the community as active and fair-minded citizens. It aims to provide a secure environment in which boys, with a wide range of academic ability, are challenged to reach their potential. It aims to develop in pupils the attributes of perseverance and organisation and in partnership with parents, it emphasises the need for formal qualifications in an ever-increasingly technological world. The priorities of the school development plan are: raising expectations; improving planning and review; improving monitoring and evaluation; improving communication and ensuring consistent application of the school's behaviour policy.
5. The school has set statutory targets for the Year 2000 of 28 per cent of Year 11 pupils to gain five or more A*-C GCSE grades; 95 per cent of pupils to gain at least one A*-G grade and an average GCSE point score of 30.

5. **Key indicators**
Attainment at Key Stage 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3
for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	147	-	147

5. National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	59	80	70
	Girls	-	-	-
	Total	59	80	70
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	40(58)	54(48)	46(41)
	National	63(65)	62(60)	55(56)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	14(18)	21(22)	7(10)
	National	35(35)	37(36)	24(27)

5. Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	63	75	80
	Girls	-	-	-
	Total	63	75	80
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	40(57)	50(70)	47(71)
	National	64(62)	64(64)	60(62)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	14(17)	24(33)	10(24)
	National	38(31)	38(37)	30(31)

Attainment at Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	119	-	119

GCSE Results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A* to G	1 or more grades A* to G
Number of pupils achieving standard specified	Boys	25	104	110
	Girls	-	-	-
	Total	25	104	110
Percentage achieving standard specified	School	21(20)	87(91)	92(100)
	National	46.3(44.6)	90.7(89.8)	95.7(95.2)

1998 figures in brackets

Attainment in the Sixth Form

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 who were entered for GCE A/AS examination in the latest reporting year:

Year	Male	Female	Total
1999	16	-	16

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	13.1(10.0)	-	13.1(10.0)	1.9(3.2)	-	1.9(3.2)
National	n/a	n/a	(17.6)	n/a	n/a	(2.8)

Number in final year of approved vocational qualifications and percentage of such students who achieved these qualifications:

	Number	% Success rate
School	25	88(95)
National		(82.7)

1998 figures in brackets

Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year:

		%
Authorised Absence	School	10.5
	National comparative data	7.9
Unauthorised Absence	School	1.2
	National comparative data	1.1

5. Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:

	Number
Fixed period	64
Permanent	5

5.

5. Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

	%
Very good or better	16
Satisfactory or better	98
Less than satisfactory	2

5. PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

5. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

5. Attainment and progress

1. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is well below the national average with substantial numbers of pupils having weak literacy and numeracy skills. The prior attainment of current Year 7 pupils, although higher than that of previous year groups, is significantly below average. Almost three-quarters of pupils entering the school in Year 7 have reading ages below their chronological age and less than half reached the national expectation of Level 4 in English at the end of Key Stage 2. At the end of Key Stage 3, the proportions of pupils reaching the national expectation in standard National Curriculum tests in 1998 were below average in English, mathematics and science compared with pupils from all maintained schools, but similar to those of pupils in secondary modern schools. Overall, this represents significant value added in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and continued the positive trend since the previous inspection. In 1999, the percentages of Year 9 pupils reaching the national expectation were maintained in mathematics, increased significantly in science, but decreased substantially in English. Attainment in lessons reflects these standards in mathematics and science, but suggests higher standards in English similar to 1998. Overall standards of literacy and numeracy are below average.

1. Standards of attainment, as indicated by the school's teacher assessment at the end of Key Stage 3, are above average in information and communications technology, average in art and design and technology and below average in geography, history, modern foreign languages, music and physical education. With the exception of art and design and technology, where standards of current Year 9 pupils are below average, these standards are reflected in pupils' work. Standards achieved by pupils in lessons confirm that the attainment of many pupils is held back by weak reading and writing skills.

2. Overall standards of achievement at GCSE have improved significantly since the previous inspection, although results in most subjects are below and, in a few subjects, well below national averages for all maintained schools. The proportion of pupils gaining five or more A*-G grades has fluctuated around the national average for all maintained schools of 88 per cent. In 1999, more than four-fifths of the Year 11 year group gained seven or more A*-G grades. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher grades has increased. The percentage achieving five or more GCSE A*-C grades rose from 10 per cent in 1996 to 21 per cent in 1999, representing a trend in improvement much faster than the national trend. Although this percentage is well below the national average for all maintained schools of around 48 per cent, and below average for pupils in secondary modern schools, in relation to pupils' prior attainment it represents value added by the school.

3. Compared to results in the previous year, GCSE results improved considerably in 1999 in art, French, geography, and science and fell most significantly in English literature, information technology and in design and technology. For those pupils entered in 1999, results in geography and art were well above national averages and results in history were in line with national averages for pupils in all maintained schools. Staff changes affected results in English literature and design and technology; in information technology, the coursework of the higher attaining pupils did not match the requirements of the revised criteria.

4. The attainment of students on GNVQ courses in information technology and business at intermediate and advanced levels is good with a high proportion gaining full accreditation at the end of their courses. In 1999, results in information technology at advanced level were particularly good with two-thirds of those entered gaining distinctions. Students following

GNVQ courses have confident communication skills and are learning to work independently. Overall results at A-level are below national averages. Few students are entered and numbers for each subject have fluctuated over the past four years. In both 1998 and 1999, in relation to students' prior attainment at GCSE, good results were achieved in English and art with all candidates gaining A-E grades. Results in A-level economics have been poor and this course is no longer offered.

5. Overall progress at each key stage and in the sixth form is good. Pupils make progress that is at least satisfactory in 94 per cent of lessons. This figure is well above average for secondary schools in comparison with national statistics. The progress of pupils is good or better in 25 per cent of lessons, in a tenth of which, their progress is very good. Progress is particularly good in information technology and art at all key stages, history and science at Key Stages 3 and 4, and geography at Key Stage 3.
6. Progress is best where pupils are strongly motivated, find the activities relevant and interesting, are actively involved in the lesson, are challenged to express their own ideas and can take pride in the final presentation of their work. Progress is slowest when teaching is too didactic, when the content is not stimulating, and when pupils are not required to think for themselves and rely too much on individual help from their teacher.
7. Pupils with special educational needs generally make good progress and benefit from the high frequency and quality of additional classroom support. Many of those who join the school with very low levels of literacy are making good gains in their literacy and numeracy skills through use of the computerised individual learning programme. For example, approximately a third of Year 8 pupils using the programme last year made greater than a year's gain in their reading ages. Pupils with emotional or behavioural difficulties receive effective support, both inside and outside the classroom, which is helping them to concentrate better on their work and make satisfactory progress. Similarly, pupils for whom English is an additional language receive very effective support and make good progress.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

8. Behaviour in and around the school is good and contributes significantly to pupils' progress and personal development. Discipline is firm, but not harsh, and teachers treat pupils fairly. Occasional instances of bad behaviour occur, but most pupils are well behaved and are polite and considerate to teachers and other adults in the school. Pupils identified as having special educational needs generally behave appropriately in lessons. The school behaviour policy is understood by the staff and is applied consistently throughout the school. When bullying occurs, it is dealt with quickly and effectively. Exclusion is used appropriately as a sanction against unacceptable behaviour. Five permanent exclusions took place during the past school year and in each case, the correct procedures were followed. Inspection findings corroborate the views of most parents who believe the school achieves a high standard of behaviour.
9. Classroom management is sound and teachers treat pupils with courtesy and they respond positively. The quality of relationships between teachers and pupils is very good and is a strength of the school. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. In almost all lessons, pupils take an interest in their work and concentrate well throughout the lesson. Occasionally, particularly when there is insufficient variety of activity or challenge within the lesson, some pupils lose their motivation. Sixth-form students have high aspirations and they are good role models for younger pupils. Racial harmony exists within the school and pupils have respect for other people's feelings, values and beliefs. They also show a high level of respect for the school premises and equipment. The school develops in pupils a sense of personal responsibility and they willingly undertake a variety of tasks around the school, acting as monitors, prefects and

sports captains.

Attendance

1. Attendance at the school is satisfactory and similar to that at the time of the previous inspection. Staff are given clear guidance on registration procedures and the statutory requirements are being met. Attendance registers are marked correctly at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. Absences are closely monitored. Where necessary, such as in dealing with the long term absence of a few Year 11 boys, the school takes appropriate action in conjunction with the education welfare service.
2. Most pupils arrive on time for registration in the morning and they arrive at lessons promptly after lunch and break times. Punctuality to lessons is promoted by rigorous class registration procedures.
3. Rates of authorised and unauthorised absence are not published in the school prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents, as required by current regulations.

18. **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

Teaching

4. Since the previous inspection, the quality of teaching has improved considerably. The good overall quality of teaching and the strong commitment of all teachers to helping pupils improve their standards are strengths of the school. The quality of teaching is satisfactory or better in 98 per cent of lessons and good or better in 53 per cent. These proportions are above national averages. The teaching is very good in a sixth of lessons. The overall quality of teaching is similar at both key stages and in the sixth form.
5. There is some very good teaching in many subject areas, most frequently in art, business studies, design and technology, English, geography, history, mathematics, religious education and science. This teaching is characterised by high expectations of work and behaviour with clearly established classroom routines, clear objectives that are expressed with enthusiasm, and good rapport between the teacher and pupils, which gives pupils the confidence to respond to questions and express their own opinions.
6. Teachers are competent in their specialist subject knowledge and in their management of most pupils. They plan their lessons well and, in most lessons, they vary activities appropriately to maintain the interest and concentration of pupils, sustain a steady pace throughout the lesson and make effective use of resources. Teachers in most curriculum areas make satisfactory use of computing facilities, but some could make greater demands on pupils to use these resources for independent research activities. Teachers make effective use of setting arrangements and set appropriate work that is matched broadly to pupils' abilities, but they could give more specific attention to the low literacy and numeracy levels of many pupils.
7. Teachers generally use homework satisfactorily to consolidate and extend pupils' knowledge and understanding, but sometimes the work is not sufficiently challenging and may be only a completion of classwork. Teachers give pupils good feedback through marking so that they know how to raise their standards and they apply the school marking policy rigorously by

- setting pupils suitable targets to focus on for improvement. Teachers improve the appearance of their teaching rooms and raise the self-esteem of pupils' by displaying work of good quality. This practice sets high standards for other pupils to follow.
8. Pupils identified as having special educational needs receive very effective additional support in lessons that is complemented by effective specialist support in individual withdrawal sessions, such as corrective reading in Year 8. Subject teachers are aware of those pupils on the school's register of special educational needs and each department has copies of pupils' individual action plans. Subject teachers are involved in setting targets on these plans. There is direct subject teacher input into subject-specific target setting. Most of these subject targets are clear and sharp, but some are a little vague and lack specificity. Teachers employ a good range of strategies to support pupils with special educational needs and work well with other adults providing support in lessons.
 9. The quality of support for pupils for whom English is an additional language is very good at both key stages. Consequently, most of these pupils make good progress in developing their English language skills.
 10. Teaching is least satisfactory when teachers' expectations are too low and they place too little importance on the quality and presentation of finished work. Sometimes, the pace of the lesson can become too slow or there is insufficient variety of activities within a lesson to sustain the interest of all pupils. In some lessons, teachers do not build on pupils' knowledge systematically or give pupils enough opportunity to work independently. In very few lessons, classroom management is unsatisfactory and teachers do not ensure that pupils are purposefully engaged in their work throughout the lesson.
25. **The curriculum and assessment**
11. The school provides a curriculum which generally supports the needs of pupils well. Pupils identified as having special educational needs have access to the entire curriculum. All the subjects of the National Curriculum are taught to pupils up to age 16, although requirements for design and technology are not met in full, and there is provision for social and health education, sex education and for pupils to learn of the dangers of misuse of substances. In the sixth form, the range of subjects offered is limited to a small group of subjects at GCE advanced level (A-level), and a range of GNVQ subjects. This provision is appropriate for students in the school. Provision for the teaching of religious education complies fully with the requirements of the local Agreed Syllabus. At Key Stage 3, the design and technology curriculum does not meet statutory requirements as pupils do not study either compliant materials (textiles) or food.
 12. The school has adopted a teaching week of 25 hours which is in line with that in most secondary schools, but the times allocated to modern foreign languages at both key stages and to music in Year 9 do not allow sufficient attention to be given to all aspects of these subjects. All pupils at Key Stage 4 take double science in a time allocation of four hours per week which is well below the average time given in other schools. At Key Stage 4, there is the opportunity for pupils to study Punjabi instead of French. For pupils for whom the GCSE is not appropriate, alternative accreditation is offered through short courses in information technology and design and technology and through Certificates of Achievement in physical education and French.
 13. Pupils are allocated to ability bands during Year 7. This helps teachers adapt the curriculum for each pupil so that it is appropriate to their individual needs. The introduction of a commercial computerised individual learning programme that is timetabled for use by many pupils, including all those in Year 7, has already had significant impact on improving standards of

literacy and numeracy. Although some departments help to raise literacy skills, for example, by the implementation of spelling policies, there is insufficient focus on the improvement of key skills across the whole curriculum. At Key Stage 4, pupils choose the two optional subjects which they are to take for GCSE and a good level of guidance is available to ensure that they make a suitable choice. Setting is used to ensure that the curriculum in each subject is appropriate to the needs of all pupils, including those of higher ability. Throughout the school, support for pupils identified as having special needs and those for whom English is an additional language, is very good. Individual education plans are in place for all pupils in Years 8–10 on stages 2 – 5 of the Code of Practice. Learning objectives on these plans, particularly those set by the special needs department, are realistic and attainable, reviewed regularly and, where appropriate, new targets are set or existing ones modified.

14. The sixth form provision is appropriate for students in the school. Students are offered A-level GCE courses in English, art and general studies; GNVQ courses in business at advanced level, and information technology at intermediate and advanced levels; and GCSE courses in English and mathematics. In addition, religious education is taught as part the compulsory personal, social and health education programme and physical education is optional. Most students choose combinations of courses which lead to GCE and GNVQ qualifications.
15. All pupils gain a good level of experience in the use of information and communications technology (ICT) from Year 7, and they are encouraged to continue to make use of ICT throughout the school. Most subjects encourage pupils to use their ICT skills in the production of their work, and examples of word processing, use of spreadsheets and desk top publishing are on display in classrooms and corridors. However, practice varies between subjects and, in some areas of the curriculum, further development is needed. The use of ICT skills in all GNVQ courses is particularly extensive, but the absence of relevant work experience opportunities for these students is a weakness of this vocational provision.
16. In addition to the subjects of the National Curriculum, the school provides a well designed, comprehensive programme in personal, social and health education, which includes sex education taught in accordance with school policy.
17. Careers education is satisfactory. A structured careers programme is available throughout the school and is provided jointly with the local careers service. A range of up-to-date and appropriate leaflets is available in the library and pupils have access to videos for further information. All Year 11 pupils receive an interview with a specialist officer from the careers service. A careers convention and a school-based careers evening for Year 10 pupils is well supported by local firms. Work experience is available at the end of Year 10 and is taken up by a large majority of pupils.
18. A good range of extra-curricular activities is available to pupils throughout the school. Most of these involve sporting activities, and include inter-form competitions and outings to Wimbledon and Twickenham. The participation of pupils in these activities is good. There is a variety of musical activities, a well-attended chess club for Year 7 and an active and enthusiastic gardening club. Outings and visits take place in several areas of the curriculum, including art, design and technology, geography, history, modern languages and science. Homework clubs are also available at lunchtime and after school. All these activities extend pupils' range of experiences well and make a significant contribution to the sense of community within the school.
19. The school has a good scheme for assessing and monitoring pupils' work, based on a detailed school policy. Homework is set regularly and there is a common set of criteria against which work is marked. Comments written by teachers are generally helpful and pupils are given clear

pointers to further progress. In nearly all subjects, assessments inform the planning of the curriculum in both individual lessons and in the longer term. Procedures for the identification and assessment of pupils with special educational needs are very effective and meet fully the requirements of the Code of Practice. A range of intake data is quickly gathered and is made available to all teachers.

20. Formal assessments are made regularly in all subjects and the results, on a common school scale, are used in setting targets for pupils in each subject and for departments as a whole. Assessment information is used very effectively to monitor the progress made by pupils, particularly at Key Stage 3. The information is also used to analyse the progress made by pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. In order to maintain consistent standards of assessment, most departments have archives of pupils' work to illustrate the standards required at each of the levels of the National Curriculum. Assessment practice is particularly good in design and technology. Arrangements for discussion of attainment and progress with pupils and parents are good, and additional support is available for any pupils who need it. Reports to parents are informative and meet all statutory requirements.

35. **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

21. Provision for the spiritual development of pupils is satisfactory. The key issues highlighted in the previous report concerning the need for more coherence in collective worship and for more opportunities for pupils to reflect on human experiences have been addressed. The school complies fully with the statutory requirements for collective worship. There is now a full programme of assemblies with related themes and reflections to be used during form tutor times. In general, form tutor time is used well to promote spirituality, for example, by Year 12 students for a mature discussion on pollution and in Year 10 to reflect on the importance of Advent. Within the curriculum, religious education makes a strong contribution to the spiritual dimension of the school and there are opportunities for reflection in personal and social education lessons. Elsewhere, there are more limited opportunities for spiritual growth, although departmental planning contains provision for such opportunities.
22. Provision for moral education is good. There is a clear code of conduct displayed in classrooms and pupils are helped to distinguish right from wrong through strong, but fair, disciplinary procedures. There is a system of merits, special awards and commendations, and achievement assemblies take place regularly to celebrate success. The personal and social education programme includes health education as part of its remit and there are comprehensive policies on drugs and sex education. Teachers provide good role models and sixth form prefects are active in supporting younger pupils throughout the school. The moral development of pupils is sustained through the personal and social education programme where pupils are encouraged to develop an understanding of citizenship. Moral issues are also discussed in history, with particular reference to human rights; in physical education, where respect and fair play are stressed; and in geography, where environmental issues are given prominence.
23. Provision for social development of pupils is very good. The previous report suggested that pupils should become more involved in school issues. This has been addressed successfully through a system of class monitors and sports captains. Pupils continue to work well collaboratively and there is good rapport between teachers and pupils based on mutual respect. Indeed, relationships between teachers and pupils, and between pupils themselves are a strength in the school and create an harmonious atmosphere throughout the school. In the past, there has been a paired reading scheme where older pupils helped younger ones. The lack of a scheme at the moment means there are missed opportunities for pupils' social development. There is a

range of lunchtime and after school activities to improve the social development of pupils, including sports, chess, drama, gardening and computer clubs. Pupils are also encouraged to become involved in activities outside school, such as the design of an adventure playground for a local primary school.

24. Provision for the cultural development of pupils is satisfactory. There is a positive ethos in the school and pupils from different backgrounds mix together freely and harmoniously. Cultural diversity is celebrated in the classroom and corridor displays and a regular newsletter outlines cultural events and achievements for each year group. There is good extra-curricular provision, particularly in sport, for which the school has recently been awarded a Sportsmark. The modern foreign languages department has exchange links with a school in Cambrai, but more opportunities should be provided for pupils to make links with the local community and to visit places of cultural interest. The cultural development of pupils is fostered in religious education through a strong emphasis on multi-faith issues: in geography, through an examination of the role of women in developing countries; in art, through a celebration of imagery from a variety of cultures; and in form tutor time, for example, through the playing of a didgeridoo to exemplify native Australian cultural traditions.
25. Overall, the school has made good improvement since the previous inspection. All pupils take a full part in the life of the school and school policies and practice contribute well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

40.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

26. The commitment of all staff to helping pupils in their personal and academic development is a strength of the school.
27. The staff of the school are committed to help pupils in their personal and academic development. The good overall quality of the teaching enables pupils to make consistently good progress at each key stage. The progress made by pupils is monitored very effectively at each key stage and the aspirations of all pupils are raised through the setting of individual targets for achievement. For example, every pupil at Key Stage 4 receives individual mentoring from a senior member of staff to review their progress and discuss their future. The involvement of parents in the target setting process raises their expectations for their son. The supportive and sensitive induction of pupils into the school in Year 7 and the pastoral care they receive enables them to settle comfortably into their new environment. The very positive views expressed by parents regarding the help and guidance available to pupils, especially on transfer from primary schools and also to those for whom English is not their home language, are fully substantiated by the inspection.
28. The staff know the pupils well. They have created a caring environment and pupils have confidence to approach their teachers should they encounter a problem. Effective policies and procedures exist for maintaining discipline and monitoring behaviour and attendance. The school has effective measures to combat bullying should it occur.
29. The school provides a well structured personal, social and health education programme, which is taught effectively by form tutors. The school is fulfilling its statutory obligations for child protection and all staff are aware of the correct procedures. The senior staff work closely with outside agencies as the need arises. The school is successful in promoting the health, safety and well being of pupils, but more rigorous health and safety checks are needed to ensure that minor hazards that arise are dealt with rapidly.

30. Pupils with statements of special educational needs are well cared for and supported where possible by specialist support staff, both in lessons and in withdrawal sessions in the Corrective Reading Room or the Reading Workshop. The special needs department has very good links and effective relationships with outside specialist agencies, such as the local authority physical and sensory service. Transitional and annual reviews are well organised and support pupils with statements of special educational needs as they move through the school. Where appropriate, outside agencies are fully involved in this process and the careers service takes part in transitional reviews.
31. The school makes very good provision for many of the pupils whose first language is not English. Assessments in their own language help to identify educational as well as language needs. In addition to in-class support, the language service offers home-school liaison. The effectiveness of the provision is seen in the good progress made by these pupils. The language service reacts to needs and has been flexible enough to accommodate recent refugees from the Balkans and Chechnya.
46. **Partnership with parents and the community**
32. The school's partnership with parents is generally satisfactory and parents are pleased with the work and approach of the school. They are provided with the information they need to support their son's learning, but the school's links with the community are insufficient to provide an adequate enrichment of the curriculum.
33. The quality of information that the school sends out to parents is good. The school prospectus is well presented and gives full information about the school's aims, its curriculum and the attainments of pupils. The Governors' Annual Report to Parents presents a good review of the year's achievements. However, the required attendance information was omitted from both of these. Reports on pupils' work and progress are issued twice a year. These provide parents with comprehensive information about their son's attainment of skills and knowledge in all subjects studied, the effort he is making and also set targets for future progress. Parents have the opportunity to discuss their son's progress at the parents' meetings arranged to take place after the issue of reports. The half-termly newsletter is an effective means of communicating with parents.
34. Parents' overall involvement in their son's work and progress is satisfactory. Most pupils complete their journal each day and this provides information for parents about homework and is a channel for communication with teachers. This occasionally leads to an effective dialogue between parents and teachers, but is not always efficient as it relies on boys to relay the messages. Most parents have signed and returned the home-school agreement issued this term. The school uses the good support available from the local authority to communicate effectively with the parents of pupils with language difficulties. Those parents employed at the school as classroom assistants or lunchtime supervisors are very involved in school activities, but otherwise there is very limited involvement of parents as a resource in any subject, particularly in areas such as business.
35. The work experience programme in Year 10 and the community service programme for sixth-formers provide some opportunities for pupils to contribute to the local community. The school's programme of links with the community is small and the opportunities provided to enrich the curricular work of the school are unsatisfactory. Some local expertise is brought into the school to support the sport and the personal, social and health education courses. Liaison with primary schools is effective in supporting the transfer of pupils, and occasional projects are undertaken, such as designing and building equipment for an adventure playground. The careers programme brings in some local employers for careers conventions and occasional

mock interviews. However, there are no effective, permanent links with local businesses to support the GNVQ curriculum or with organisations able to develop pupils' awareness of citizenship or their cultural development.

50. **THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

50. **Leadership and management**

36. The headteacher provides effective leadership and has the confidence and respect of pupils and their parents. He has ensured that the school is successful in its aim to develop in pupils a sense of personal responsibility. He is ably supported by the senior management team, staff and governors. Together, they have ensured that an effective learning environment with very good relationships and equality of opportunity for all its pupils has been created in the school. Day-to-day management is good and the school runs smoothly.
37. The school has made good progress on the management issues arising from the previous inspection. It has built on its good processes for priority setting through an intensive analysis of its strengths and weaknesses, which led to identification of areas for improvement forming the basis of the school's strategic development plan. It has set appropriate, challenging statutory targets at GCSE. The identified priorities are: raising expectations; improving planning, monitoring, evaluation and review; improving communication; and, consistent application of the behaviour policy. The strategies identified for improvement in these areas are appropriate. However, with the exception of GCSE targets, the success criteria are not easily measurable, are not focused sharply on pupil outcomes and all have short timescales and are likely to be completed within a year. There is no long term vision for school development to help senior and middle managers plan accordingly and make most effective use of their resources.
38. The school has been most effective in reviewing teaching and learning strategies and has made substantial improvement to the overall quality of teaching since the previous inspection. A major contributory factor to this improvement has been the programme of lesson observations by the senior management team and heads of department, which has led to more consistent classroom practice. The school handbook is extremely well presented and contains clear guidance for teachers and well considered policies. Implementation of these policies is consistent. However, the school has no whole school policies on literacy or numeracy to support a coherent approach by staff in raising pupils' basic learning skills.
39. Since the previous inspection, the senior management team has been enlarged, and the roles of middle managers have been defined more clearly. Communication to departments and throughout the school has, consequently, been improved as more staff are actively involved in decision making.
40. Leadership of the special needs department is effective. All issues from the previous report have been addressed. The school's register of special educational needs is efficiently and effectively organised and updated regularly. The school fully meets the requirements of the Code of Practice.
41. Financial control is efficient. Governors are kept well informed of the financial status of the school and they meet frequently to discuss and approve school policies. Although governors invite heads of departments to address them at governors' meetings on relevant important issues, governors are not linked systematically to departments, involved in working parties or sufficiently involved in monitoring school improvement. In this latter respect, they are not helped by the generalised success criteria of the school and departmental development plans. They are too reliant on school staff interpreting the relative success in achieving each target in hindsight rather than having clear, predetermined measures of success. The curriculum sub-committee maintains a good level of awareness of the curricular needs of the school in the short term, but there is no long term vision for the development of the curriculum and no strategic

plan for the sixth form. The premises sub-committee has instigated a rolling programme for refurbishment and redecoration within the limitations of the school budget. With the exceptions of failing to ensure that the school meets National Curriculum requirements for design and technology and that their annual report to parents includes the required information, such as attendance data, governors meet their statutory responsibilities.

56. **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

42. The school has sufficient teachers with the necessary expertise and experience to deliver fully the National Curriculum and the range of examination options in Key Stage 4 and post-16. Staff deployment has generally improved since the last inspection and fewer staff teach outside their areas of specialist knowledge. There is a good balance of experienced staff who have been at the school for some years and those new to teaching and the school. Forty per cent of the staff are female and they are represented in posts of responsibility at middle and senior management levels. Ethnic minorities also have significant representation on the staff and in managerial positions.
43. The teaching staff are well supported by a large, dedicated team of specialist support assistants who have a good range of experience and extra appropriate and individual specialist qualifications. Their commitment to working with pupils with special educational needs and with pupils for whom English is an additional language significantly benefits these pupils. There are sufficient support staff to enable departments to meet the demands of the curriculum. The need for a technician for information and communications technology, identified in the previous inspection, has been met. A part-time assistant in the library has been appointed, but the responsibilities of this position, such as development of the library as a learning resource, are not specified in a job description. The office staff are friendly and competent, and make a positive contribution to the smooth running of the school, as do the caretaking team and ancillary staff.
44. The school has comprehensive policies for appraisal, induction of new teachers and staff development. There is an established system for appraisal of both teaching and support staff, and newly qualified teachers and those new to the school are supported well. Sound, well-defined arrangements for staff development are in place and training is linked to school development planning. The need for in-service training in management skills and in physics and chemistry, as identified at the time of the previous inspection, has been addressed. Induction also involves students training to be teachers. The school has established strong, useful links with training institutions.
45. Accommodation is adequate for the numbers of pupils on roll, but overall the quality of the accommodation is unsatisfactory. It is particularly poor in design and technology, where it is detrimental to the standards of work that pupils can achieve. The school has extensive outdoor sports facilities that are maintained in good condition. Facilities for physical education are supplemented by using the adjacent sports hall during the day.
46. Since the previous inspection, considerable steps have been taken to improve the environment and provide a better stimulus for learning, but much remains to be done to provide satisfactory facilities in all curriculum areas. Attractive, stimulating displays are a feature of most classrooms. A rolling programme of redecoration and refurbishment, involving the weekly use of a community service team, has been instigated. Previously discarded buildings have been renovated and reinstated as teaching areas and a sixth form common room has been provided. Acoustics have been improved by the carpeting of classrooms throughout the school. Tarmac areas and pathways have been improved and any litter within the grounds is now collected regularly. Roof leaks in wet weather still cause hazards through slippery floors and damage to

electric lighting. The school has been unsuccessful in its repeated bids for funding to repair its flat roofs. Standards of cleanliness in classrooms and corridors are good in the main building, but unsatisfactory in the design and technology areas due to the poor condition of the building. Minor hazards have not been repaired as the school has not been subject to a recent rigorous safety inspection.

47. Overall, resources are adequate. The provision of very good computing facilities, which includes five fully equipped rooms with modern equipment, promotes high standards of work by pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by the provision of technological equipment, such as laptop computers and a magni-link for visually impaired students.
48. The condition of books and materials is generally satisfactory and, since the previous inspection, many old books have been discarded from the library and the school. There is an inadequate number of textbooks and research materials for business studies and inadequate sound reproduction equipment for music. More textbooks are required in mathematics to ensure one textbook for each pupil, especially in Year 7, to assist their progress.
49. The library, with a suite of computers, is still not used effectively as a learning resource centre or to support the development of literacy. The ratio of books available in the library to the number of pupils in the school is unfavourable. The school has planned a millennium project to upgrade and refurbish the library with the intent that its full potential will begin to be realised next year.
64. **The efficiency of the school**
50. Financial control is very good and expenditure is monitored effectively by governors who try to ensure best value for money in contracted services and in the resources bought. The school receives an annual income per pupil that is well above average in comparison to other secondary modern schools as it receives substantial additional funding to meet the entitlement of many pupils for whom English is an additional language, statemented pupils, and the very large number of other pupils with special educational needs.
51. Special educational needs support staff are very effectively deployed to ensure that all pupils identified as having such needs are supported and that those pupils with statements of special educational needs receive the support to which they are entitled. The department receives sufficient capitation to provide resources for identified pupils and the use of this is monitored effectively. Funding for special needs is used appropriately and is supplemented by extra funding from the school's budget. A detailed breakdown of how the money is spent is made available to governors.
52. The ratio of pupils to teachers in the school is just above the national average for secondary modern schools. Teachers are deployed efficiently to teach in areas of their main specialism. Efficient use of teaching staff throughout the school allows for economical average class sizes at Key Stages 3 and 4 of 24 and 21 pupils per class respectively, which are beneficial to pupils' progress. Organisation of option groups at Key Stage 4 is efficient and most teaching groups are at their optimum sizes. Although A-level classes in the sixth form are very small, these are compensated by much larger GNVQ classes and some teaching of Year 12 and Year 13 students together, to make overall provision of the sixth form economically viable.
53. Accommodation is managed effectively, but maintenance costs are high as a consequence of the poor condition of some of the school buildings, especially the design and technology area. Good

use is made of specialist facilities and subject areas although, as a consequence of teachers having their own bases, a few large classes are taught in rooms that are uncomfortably small. This arrangement does, however, have the advantage that teachers take responsibility for their own classroom environment. Teachers make effective use of available resources and the excellent computer facilities are well used, both during and outside lesson times, and enable pupils to reach high levels in their expertise. The recent purchase of a commercial, individualised learning programme has had a considerable beneficial effect on pupils' progress in basic skills and is proving to be most cost effective. The library is used for homework clubs after school and some pupils use it at lunchtime, but it is not used effectively as a learning resource centre.

54. Routine financial matters are efficiently managed within school. The finance officer regularly generates reports for the headteacher and governors, which facilitate budget monitoring at all levels. Expertise in financial planning is reflected in the effective management of the school's limited budget. Financial management by departments is generally efficient. All departments keep within their budgets, but the resource requirements identified in their development plans are not often costed.

55. Overall, the school gives good value for money. Good quality teaching and very good relationships between staff and pupils ensure that throughout the school pupils make good progress in their academic and personal development. Although attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is below average, the attainment of pupils on entry to the school is very low and these results indicate value added by the school.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

70. ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE, INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

70. English

56. The attainment of pupils by the end of Key Stage 3 and in GCSE examinations indicates some value added by the school as their results exceed predictions based on their attainment on joining the school. On entry to the school, pupils' attainment in English as indicated by the end of Key Stage 2 national assessments and the school's own testing procedures is well below average both for schools nationally and for secondary modern schools.
57. Results of the National Curriculum standard tests in 1999 indicate that, at the end of Key Stage 3, the percentage of pupils achieving the national expectation of level 5, at 40 per cent, was well below both the national average for all maintained schools and that for secondary modern schools. The percentage of pupils exceeding the national expectation was average for secondary modern schools. Results in 1998, when 58 per cent of pupils reached level 5 or above were much higher and at the average for secondary modern schools. Problems with staffing, that have since been resolved, have been identified by the school as a significant factor in the decline. Over the four year period between 1996 and 1999, there is no clear trend as results have fluctuated considerably.
58. At Key Stage 4, although the percentage of pupils achieving at the higher grades A*-C in 1999 in English GCSE rose from 23 per cent in 1998 to 32 per cent, these results were well below the national average and below in comparison with secondary modern schools. Results in English literature dropped from 28 per cent in 1998 to 12 per cent. The school has attributed this decrease in literature to staffing difficulties last year and also to unsuitable choice of texts, both of which have now been addressed. Over the past four years, GCSE results at the higher grades A*-C have shown an overall improvement in English and a decline in English literature. Over the same period, almost all pupils entered for English GCSE have achieved an A*-G grade. Results in media studies have improved significantly over this period from 13 per cent of those entered gaining A*-C grades in 1995 to 40 per cent in 1999. The number of students taking GCE English literature at A-level has been small, but in both 1998 and 1999, all candidates passed successfully.
59. Current attainment at Key Stages 3 and 4 reflects similar levels to these test and examination results and overall is below national expectations at each key stage with few pupils achieving at the higher levels. Speaking and listening skills are below expectations at Key Stage 3, but pupils make steady improvement. Year 7 pupils are able to sequence the events of 'Romeo and Juliet', but their reading is hesitant and they have difficulty with words, such as 'feud' and 'disguise'. High attaining pupils in Year 8 read more fluently and with some expression. They understand and can use the language of Shakespeare, for example 'hast' and 'lest'. In Year 9, more able pupils are able to read in character and very successfully bring to life the witches in Shakespeare's Macbeth. They understand and can demonstrate how language and style create images, and they are able to reflect on the writer's presentation of ideas. Lower attaining Year 9 pupils read with hesitation and have limited strategies for identifying unknown words. While some higher attainers at Key Stage 4 read with understanding and confidence, many less capable pupils read hesitantly.
60. Standards of writing are low on entry and pupils' handwriting is often not legibly formed or joined. Pupils make basic spelling and punctuation errors, and their presentation is often

unsatisfactory. Standards of writing and spelling remain below expectation through the key stage, but show steady signs of improvement by the end of Year 9, when pupils are able to write in a range of styles and high attainers produce imaginative, extended pieces of writing. Year 10 pupils recognise and use the features of persuasive language. When studying poetry, higher attaining Year 11 pupils can use textual evidence to substantiate their own views and discuss the effective use of imagery. Pupils are able to use information technology for word processing and illustrating media assignments and for writing formal letters.

61. Speaking and listening skills are below expectations at both key stages, but by the end of Key Stage 4, pupils have some confidence in reading and speaking in front of an audience and making group presentations. For example, in media studies, Year 10 pupils were able to identify and explain orally aspects of 'The Truman Show' video they were watching.
62. A-level students have a satisfactory understanding of imagery, language and characterisation in their study of King Lear. Students preparing to retake GCSE English can identify and discuss the use of imagery and structure in poetry. At GNVQ Advanced Level, students demonstrate, through role play, a clear understanding of ways in which to deal with customer complaints.
63. Progress throughout the school is satisfactory and sometimes good. At Key Stage 3, progress ranges from satisfactory to good, but is satisfactory overall. For example, Year 8 pupils develop a gradual awareness of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Similarly, at Key Stage 4, progress in lessons is always satisfactory and occasionally good. Year 11 pupils develop a growing understanding of how the poem 'The Writer' is structured and the use the poet makes of images. Pupils in Year 10 are able to identify and begin to use a variety of techniques in presenting information. Satisfactory progress is made post-16. For example, GNVQ students acquire a sound understanding of customer care requirements. Improvement in the reading and spelling skills of Year 7 pupils is supported by regular use of a commercial software package. The school's weekly reading programme during form tutor time is helping to develop pupils' ability to both enjoy and sustain periods of silent reading. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are well supported and are making at least satisfactory, and sometimes good, progress. For example, in Year 10, a visually impaired pupil was able to write work set on the blackboard when it was dictated by a special needs assistant and could read the text of a worksheet which had been enlarged for him. In a Year 7 class, a pupil whose home language is not English, was helped to participate in reading aloud the witches' ingredients in *Macbeth*.
64. Pupils' response in lessons is always satisfactory and frequently good at both key stages and in the sixth form. Sometimes, it is very good at Key Stage 3. Pupils are well behaved and attentive. They are willing to contribute to class discussions and responsive to the teacher's questions. They work sensibly in groups or independently in silence, completing tasks set for them. In whole class sessions, they listen to what other pupils have to say and are appreciative of the work and contribution of others. As pupils in Year 9 participate in role play, they begin to empathise with characters in an increasingly mature way. Year 10 pupils work enthusiastically on group presentations.
65. Teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good and is good overall at both key stages and in the sixth form. Teaching is very good in a fifth of lessons, good in almost half the lessons and satisfactory in the remainder. The good and very good teaching is characterised by teachers' high expectations of work and behaviour, supported by their probing questioning, emphasis on pace, good relationships with pupils and their strong classroom management. These qualities are evident across the school and in sixth form teaching. Teachers use introductory sessions effectively to review and build on what pupils already know and value pupils' contributions to discussion. Teachers and support staff work closely together and support staff provide good

support, for example, by participating in reading Macbeth and in the preparation of worksheets for EAL pupils. Teachers set homework regularly as an integral part of their lessons. Their marking is thorough and they give useful guidance to pupils on how work can be improved, in addition to setting them individual targets. Sound assessment procedures and effective moderation of work at Key Stage 4 ensure standardisation of marking within the department.

66. The department comprises a hard working, committed team of teachers who are ably led. Newly qualified teachers in the team are well supported. The department's documentation, including policies, development planning, schemes of work, procedures and guidance is comprehensive and clearly presented. Analyses of results from year to year are increasingly being used to demonstrate the progress made by pupils and to identify areas for focus. Monitoring occurs through staff meetings, exercise book checks, through looking at teachers' record folders and observation of colleagues' teaching by the head of department and senior management. Liaison with local primary schools is currently being developed, particularly with regard to literacy and information technology. Accommodation has improved since the last inspection with the carpeting of teaching areas, new curtains and redecoration programme. In classrooms, there are good quality displays of pupils' work and information providing support and stimulation. Learning resources are adequate. Theatre trips and visits to Canterbury and London enrich pupils' learning experience.

Literacy across the curriculum

67. The school has adopted a number of strategies to improve literacy across the school. The introduction of the commercial software has improved pupils' levels of performance in literacy and the weekly silent reading session for all pupils is useful. There is a whole school policy on spelling and some departments, for example, science and design and technology, do conduct spelling tests on their subject specific vocabulary. Year 7 pupils have fortnightly literacy lessons and a member of the English department has responsibility for Year 7 literacy. The school is, however, in the early stages of its literacy initiative. As yet, there is no whole school policy on literacy nor any strategic overview which would ensure that the school's existing, proposed and future developments are co-ordinated to maximise pupils' progress. There are plans to reorganise and improve the school library, but at present it does not make a significant contribution to literacy development as a learning resource centre.

82. Mathematics

68. The attainment of pupils by the end of Key Stage 3 and in GCSE examinations indicates significant value added by the school as results achieved by pupils exceed predictions based on their prior attainment. On entry to the school, pupils' attainment in mathematics is well below average both for schools nationally and for secondary modern schools. In 1999, at the end of Key Stage 3, results in National Curriculum standard tests were below average compared with all schools, but they were broadly in line with the average for secondary modern schools. Over the period 1996 to 1999, there has been a gradual rise in the proportion of pupils achieving the national expectation of Level 5, with the school's upward trend being faster than the national trend. In 1999, 50 per cent of the pupils reached Level 5 or above with 20 per cent exceeding this level. The work of current Key Stage 3 pupils indicates similar standards. Higher attaining pupils in Year 7 recognise equivalent fractions and have a clear understanding of decimal place value; middle ability pupils can identify fractions and shade portions of a whole; lower attaining pupils are aware of the importance of writing down all details, observations and patterns when conducting an investigation into odd and even numbers. In Year 8, higher attainers are capable of solving simple algebraic formulae, involving negative values; middle ability pupils can determine simple rules from a pattern of results; lower attainers can create a net design to produce a cuboid and they are also able to draw lines of symmetry for the letters of the

alphabet. High attainers in Year 9 are able to calculate the length of a hypotenuse by using Pythagoras' theorem and can apply their knowledge to practical situations. Middle ability pupils use protractors and compasses competently to construct triangles given two angles and the length of one side. Lower attainers are able to calculate the mean average of a series of large numbers using a calculator.

69. Since the previous inspection there has been considerable improvement in GCSE results. Over 90 per cent of the year group are normally entered for the examination. The proportion of pupils gaining an A*-G grade has risen at a rate faster than the national trend. In 1999, the proportion of those entered gained A*-G grades, at 97 per cent, exceeded national averages for all maintained schools. However, the proportion of pupils gaining A*-C grades is well below the national average. After increasing rapidly from 1995 to 1998, when 23 per cent of the pupils achieved A*-C compared with 44 per cent of boys nationally, this proportion decreased to 16 per cent in 1999. Post-16 students study mathematics as a component of GNVQ Key Skills. The level of attainment of these students is below national expectations. Higher attainers in Year 10 can identify and create complicated number patterns and explain their thinking and they are able to create formulae from a sequence of numbers. Lower attainers are able to draw lines of symmetry. Higher attainers in Year 11 can solve simultaneous equations; middle ability pupils are able to plot and interpret straight-line graphs based on algebraic formulae and lower ability pupils understand ratio, but several have difficulty with the simplification of numbers. Post-16 students are able to produce spreadsheets, although their recall of some topics covered in previous years is weak.
70. Progress at Key Stage 3 is satisfactory, and is good on occasions, particularly in Years 7 and 8. At Key Stage 4, progress is satisfactory and is occasionally good in Year 10. Measurement of progress by the school, using clear criteria, indicates that 72 per cent of pupils made satisfactory progress or better when comparing their Key Stage 3 National Curriculum standard test results and their consequent GCSE results in 1999. In 1998, 86 per cent made satisfactory progress or better. The progress of pupils with special needs and those with English as an additional language, is good at both key stages. These pupils receive effective additional support in the classroom.
71. Pupils' attitudes to learning are satisfactory throughout both key stages. In the majority of the lessons, pupils are attentive to the teacher, respond intelligently to questions and concentrate well on their work. They take a pride in the presentation of their work, work sensibly and cooperatively when marking the work of others or sharing ideas or textbooks. Pupils enjoy demonstrating their knowledge at the blackboard. A small number of pupils respond immaturely by calling out answers and are attention seeking rather than considerate and cooperative in their actions.
72. Overall, teaching is good. Teaching is at least satisfactory in all lessons. It is very good in a tenth of lessons and good in a further third. In all lessons, teachers have good relationships with pupils. In the best lessons, teachers have detailed lesson planning, high expectations, good subject knowledge and sustain a good pace. They use the blackboard effectively and have developed a good question and answer technique that encourages pupils to expand on their ideas. Teachers take every opportunity to improve and consolidate pupils' understanding of the basic four rules of number. The regular use of short mental arithmetic tests is an effective practice that could be implemented beneficially throughout the department. Requiring pupils to make statements at the ends of lessons about what they have learnt during the lesson is another useful strategy adopted by a few teachers. In less satisfactory lessons, the pace is slow and teachers do not insist on appropriately drawn graph work. Assessment procedures are good. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and often write helpful comments to which pupils normally respond. Teachers set appropriate homework and challenge higher attainers through suitable extension activities. Since the previous report, mathematics is now taught by fewer

staff, who through their conscientious approach and their love of the subject have greatly improved the attitude and motivation of many boys towards mathematics. They offer extra support to pupils after school and at lunchtimes, in order to build confidence and better motivation towards high examination performance.

73. Most issues arising in the last report have been addressed. The head of department is currently compiling a staff handbook for the department. It is planned to include a complete listing of resources and a scheme of work for Key Stage 3 in a more accessible format, which ensures full National Curriculum coverage, and expects members of the department to make use of information technology in their teaching. Accommodation has been improved through carpeting and the display of pupils' work, but the rooms are relatively small and storage space is limited. Problems created by bright sunlight necessitate the frequent use of curtains, but teachers sometimes use these unnecessarily. Resources are generally adequate, although in some classes, such as in Year 7, pupils share textbooks. The current departmental development plan has appropriate short term targets linked to school priorities, but it needs to be extended to a longer period and include suitable criteria for evaluation.

Numeracy

74. Commercial software to improve pupils' basic numeracy skills has been successfully introduced, but there is no school policy for numeracy. Within their schemes of work and development plans, departments have not developed strategies to address the urgent need to improve numeracy. Regular mental test work in a number of mathematics lessons, at both key stages, requiring both aural and written response contributes to pupils' progress. Pupils use their numeracy skills in numerous subjects, for example, in calculating gross and net pay in business studies and in the interpretation of the results of scientific investigations, but in general their weak numeracy skills inhibit progress in several curriculum areas.

89. Science

75. The attainment of pupils by the end of Key Stage 3 and in GCSE examinations indicates significant value added by the school. On entry to the school, pupils' attainment in science is well below average, both for schools nationally and for secondary modern schools.

76. At the end of Key Stage 3, the percentage of pupils reaching the national expectation in 1999, although below average, was a significant improvement on the previous year. The percentage of pupils exceeding the national expectation was well below average in both years, reflecting the intake of the school. When compared with national benchmarks, these results are average for secondary modern schools. Similar standards are reflected in the work of pupils in class. Higher attaining pupils in Year 7 understand classification of animals into groups. Lower attaining pupils can understand that humans get energy from food and that different foods provide different amounts of energy. They can select the food providing most energy from information tables. By the end of Key Stage 3, high attaining pupils can draw, label and describe the operation of a typical hinge joint, such as the elbow. They can relate the properties of elements to their uses and understand the processes involved in the weathering of rocks. Lower attaining pupils can understand the difference between series and parallel circuits and draw reasonable circuit diagrams. These pupils nearly always describe what they see in experiments rather than explaining their observations, for example, 'A fuse makes things stop working'.

77. At Key Stage 4, GCSE results show significant improvement over the last few years, which is faster than the national trend. In 1999, almost all pupils entered gained A*-G grades. The proportion of pupils gaining A*-C grades, at 35 per cent, although below the national average

for all maintained schools, was above average for secondary modern schools. High attaining pupils can draw complex electrical circuits and understand the principles of a transistor amplifier. They can balance simple chemical equations and deduce the atomic structure of an isotope from its formula. They can investigate the effect of temperature on the action of salivary amylase, showing understanding of the nature of the investigation and of the underlying theory. Lower attaining pupils have satisfactory practical skills and can make appropriate observations during their experiments. They recognise that the rate of photosynthesis depends on light intensity. They understand the concept of a fair test and the importance of collecting accurate data in an investigation. However, they need prompting to interpret data correctly. Their written work is sometimes inhibited significantly by their weak communication skills.

78. Progress in lessons and in the longer term is always satisfactory and often good or very good. Higher attainers consolidate their knowledge and increase their understanding so that they are able to cope with tasks which require them to think about the subject in contexts which are unfamiliar, for example, in understanding the relationships between transport mechanisms, homeostasis and control and their importance in the maintenance of life. Other pupils do not develop sufficiently the skills of critical thought and evaluation which would allow them to apply their knowledge in a wider variety of contexts. In all years, particular attention is given to supporting pupils with special educational needs and, throughout the school, these pupils make good progress.
79. The attitudes of pupils to their work are generally good and, in some classes, very good. Pupils of all abilities are keen to take part in discussions and listen with respect to each other and their teacher. Pupils of all abilities sustain their concentration well. Pupils generally work well together, although when in groups of three or more, some pupils may not take an active part. Pupils use apparatus safely and sensibly.
80. The high quality of teaching is a strength of the department. Teaching is at least satisfactory in all lessons. It is good in a third of lessons and in two-fifths of lessons, it is very good. Teachers are all appropriately qualified and have a good subject knowledge. Their expectations of higher attaining pupils are high and they challenge pupils to think carefully and communicate their ideas in proper scientific terms. Teachers encourage good participation by sustaining very good pace and supporting discussion through a wealth of relevant and excellent examples, for example, on the adaptation of animals to their environment. Teachers plan their lessons effectively with appropriate material, realistic goals and a good variety of well timed activities to sustain pupils' interest. Teaching is less effective when pupils are required to follow instructions leading to a predictable outcome rather than being encouraged to think carefully about underlying concepts. Teachers are aware of the particular needs of pupils for whom English is an additional language and of those with special educational needs, and they make appropriate adjustments to the curriculum. Teachers set homework regularly. Their marking is of a high standard and their constructive comments provide clear guidance that pupils use to improve their work.
81. The science curriculum and procedures for assessment meet statutory requirements. Many pupils use information and communications technology in the production of their work and the science department has a number of appropriate activities involving the use of computers, but the use of information and communications technology to support the science curriculum needs to be extended. The department has comprehensive systems in place for assessing pupils' work, for setting targets and for monitoring pupils' progress. Resources available to the department are generally adequate. Although most laboratories are bright and provide an attractive environment for learning with good displays, at least one is in need of refurbishment and another is too small to accommodate large classes comfortably when practical work is being carried out.

Information and communications technology

82. Overall attainment at the ends of Key Stages 3 and 4 is in line with the national expectation. Attainment of post-16 students on GNVQ courses is above average. National Curriculum teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 are in line with the national expectation.
83. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils are confident with the use of word processing software. Although their typing skills are slow, they can create a text file, have knowledge of the cut and paste procedure to edit their work and use the spell-check facility. Pupils are familiar with the construction of a database and can enter the necessary information, although some pupils experience difficulties retrieving and filtering the information. Pupils have satisfactory knowledge of spreadsheets and are able to use the simple formulae for mathematical calculations. When using a desktop publishing program, pupils can position art images and re-adjust the size to fit a publication.
84. In the 1998 GCSE examination, almost all pupils entered gained A*-G grades, but the proportion of pupils attaining A*-C grades, at 38 per cent, was just below the national average of 44 per cent for pupils in all maintained modern schools. The results for the 1999 examination were considerably lower, with no pupils gaining A*-C grades as the school did not ensure that coursework met the full requirements for the examination. With the exception of the 1999 results, the overall trend in GCSE results is upward.
85. All students entered for Advanced GNVQ information technology in 1999 achieved at least a pass grade, and more than half gained a distinction. In the intermediate course, 70 per cent of students obtained a pass or better. These results are an improvement on the previous year and are above national averages.
86. At the end of Key Stage 4, pupils have sound knowledge of a range of applications and use them with confidence. They use word processing software to support their evaluations at the end of assignments and have a good understanding of the mail merge facility for letter writing. Pupils use desktop publishing effectively to improve the presentation of their work, for example, when producing a flow chart. Pupils have a good understanding of a database. They enter the necessary information, create fields and can successfully retrieve selected information. Pupils understand the use of control and measuring, using computer commands to operate the opening of a gate. The attainment of sixth form students is above average. Students have good knowledge of a range of applications and their use in a wider context. They have a good understanding of spreadsheets, databases, word processing, desktop publishing for publications and multi-media presentations. They apply these skills effectively to support their assignments. Students use Internet facilities competently and can successfully search for information. Attainment at all key stages has improved since the previous inspection.
87. Pupils' progress is good at both key stages and in the sixth form. Pupils enter the school with limited previous experience, but with tasks to match their ability, they soon gain confidence learning the basics of word processing. This is supported by subjects across the curriculum, particularly in English. Pupils in Year 8 learn to create databases and spreadsheets as part of their studies in science and mathematics. By the time pupils reach Year 9, their knowledge has been extended using a variety of applications with understanding. This good progress continues during Key Stage 4 through well established schemes of work that promote progression and understanding combined with regular access to computers to practise and refine their skills. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve the targets set for them. Pupils for whom English is an additional language progress well with the support of other pupils who speak the same home language.

88. Pupils have a good attitude to their work. They enjoy working on computers and show a high level of interest. They are confident to discuss their work and previous experience and generally behave well. On the occasions when pupils have to share computers, they are sensible, help each other and show respect for equipment. Pupils concentrate well during lessons and settle to work quickly. Many pupils attend the extra-curricular sessions at lunchtime and after school. Students in the sixth form have a very mature approach to the subject and are justifiably proud of their achievements.
89. The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory in almost all lessons and is good in more than half. Most teachers have good knowledge and understanding. They plan their lessons appropriately to meet the needs of the pupils and develop their skills progressively. Teachers circulate well in lessons giving support, keeping pupils on track and demanding high standards of behaviour. Teaching is good where teachers demonstrate skills, such as searching for information on the Internet, give pupils clearly defined targets and make clear evaluations at the end of lessons. This strategy has a positive effect on pupils' progress. Teaching is less satisfactory when lessons lack specific objectives and pupils are not given clear targets to achieve by the end of the lesson.
90. The curriculum is broadly balanced and meets statutory requirements at Key Stages 3 and 4. It is well supported by detailed schemes of work which promote progressive development of skills. However, opportunities for pupils to study multi-media presentation at Key Stage 3 are limited. Overall management of the subject is good and has improved since the previous inspection. Although the areas of study to be taught across subjects at Key Stage 3 are defined, closer monitoring is needed to ensure that all the strands of the National Curriculum are given equal emphasis. The weekly session for pupils in Year 7 to improve their computer competence is too short and gives pupils only a limited opportunity to consolidate their skills. The technician provides good support for teachers and pupils. Although there has been a programme for in-service training, some staff still lack specific skills and confidence. The resources for the subject have improved considerably since the previous inspection and make a major contribution to pupils' progress.

Religious education

91. By the end of Key Stage 3, the attainment of pupils in lessons is below that expected of pupils at this age, except in sets containing higher attaining pupils, where attainment levels match national expectations. In a significant number of classes, low literacy levels have a negative effect on pupil achievement but, by the end of the key stage, most pupils have acquired an adequate knowledge and understanding of the major features of Christianity and are able to reflect on the customs and beliefs of other major world religions. This represents a significant improvement in attainment since the previous inspection. Standards of attainment are also below national norms at Key Stage 4 and, at present, no public examination is offered in the subject, although the school provides its own certification.
92. Progress is satisfactory at both key stages. The Kent Agreed Syllabus is implemented fully and pupils are developing appropriate skills in the interpretation of religious beliefs and practices, for example, Year 9 pupils examine and discuss, in a mature fashion, the monastic life of a Bhikku in Britain today. Higher attaining pupils make good progress through extension work which has been introduced in response to an issue arising from the previous inspection on the lack of challenge for pupils. Year 10 pupils have improved their writing skills and produce some good essay work, for example, on the role of Muslim women. Lower attaining pupils, however, are sometimes struggling to cope with the material provided and, in particular, their

written work is often poor.

93. Pupils' attitudes to learning are satisfactory and, on the whole, they behave well and listen attentively to the teacher. Pupils are willing to voice their opinions and engage readily in lively debate, unlike the previous inspection when pupils were passive during lessons. There are occasional instances of immature behaviour but, for the most part, pupils show commitment to learning and good levels of concentration.
94. The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory in all lessons and weaknesses identified during the previous inspection, such as weak time management and lack of variety in teaching method, have all been addressed. Teaching is good or better in a third of lessons and very good in half of these. The specialist teacher has good subject knowledge and supports non-specialist teachers well with appropriate materials. All teachers plan their lessons well and, although textbooks are still used extensively, they also use a variety of other techniques to raise pupils' interest and support their learning, for example, in Year 9, teachers make effective use of class discussion, paired work and examination of artefacts to investigate the concepts conveyed by different Buddha images. They conduct lessons with pace and enthusiasm and make the aims of the lesson clear to pupils at the start, so they know what they are expected to do. Teachers do not always allow sufficient time to reflect on the progress made in the lesson by revisiting these aims at the end of each session. Teaching in the subject would also be improved by providing pupils with more opportunities for independent learning on individual tasks.
95. Many of the concerns expressed in the previous report about the organisation of the department have been addressed successfully and there is now more coherence in the subject, although there is now a need to establish success criteria in development planning. Management is sound, but there is a considerable teaching, marking and administrative workload borne by the acting head of department as the only subject specialist. Statutory requirements are now met at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, where religious education is delivered through the personal and social education programme and through conferences. New assessment procedures are being put in place to monitor pupil progress more effectively. The marking of pupils' work is now thorough and informative. Resources are much improved and the use of display is commendable, but there is still a need for a regular programme of educational visits and for the use of more artefacts in the classroom. Information technology is beginning to make an impact within the curriculum, but it is underused. The subject makes a strong contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural life of the school, particularly in the areas of spirituality and multicultural education. There is an urgent need to raise the profile of religious education within the school, especially at Key Stage 4, in relation to providing the opportunity for pupils to study the subject at public examination level.

OTHER SUBJECTS

Art

96. Attainment in art is good at A-level and GCSE results have been good over the last few years, with 71 per cent of a small entry gaining A*-C grades in 1999. This was well above the national average for all maintained schools and a substantial improvement on the previous year's result. At A-level, the very small groups of students have recorded good results. For example, in 1999, two of the three students entered gained C grades and the other a grade E. In the previous year, the three candidates gained B, C and D grades. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 has improved since the previous inspection, but is still below average. Pupils enter the school with low levels of artistic attainment and only a small number of pupils demonstrate sensitivity and artistic flair in their sketchbook and class work. Year 9 pupils find it difficult to create three-dimensional forms in their drawings; most produce schematic outlines to which they tentatively add tone and shade.

97. Pupils' progress in their studies at Key Stage 3 is generally good but, occasionally, is unsatisfactory. In the best lessons, pupils improve their painting skills and their spatial awareness and conceptual visualisation of proposed work. They develop their compositional skills, for example, through a project to create a magazine cover. Through sketchbook work, they improve their ability to depict humans in correct proportions. Within class, pupils take note of points raised and respond to advice given by their teachers. At Key Stage 4, pupils' progress is always satisfactory and sometimes good. Pupils make careful and determined advance on their project work. In the A-level course, students improve their drawing skills, leading to the production of large dynamic drawings. They improve their intellectual and artistic interpretative understanding and their ideas of contemporary art practice. Overall, the progress of A-level students is very good.
98. Most pupils have an enthusiastic attitude to art. Year 7 pupils clearly enjoy art, and they contribute well to class discussion, although they need to improve their self discipline. By Year 9, their enthusiasm is undiminished and they demonstrate a determination to rise to the significant challenge put before them. Key Stage 3 pupils have a very positive approach to both classwork and homework. At Key Stage 4, some lower attainers in Year 10 do not respond well to the demands placed upon them. Year 11 pupils respond very well to their studies. They are able to sustain deep concentration in their work and respect the advice and support offered to them by their teachers. A-level students make an excellent response to the demands of the course. They work diligently to the best of their ability and, although they are nervous of defending their own work in a group situation, they can debate and sustain their points of view.
99. Virtually all teaching is satisfactory, most is good and half the teaching is very good. The best lessons are characterised by the teachers giving clear guidance on the task and clearly stating their quality expectations. At Key Stage 3, these strategies raise the standards of many pupils from well below average on entry to average at the end of the key stage. Teaching is less satisfactory when pupils are allowed to collect resources whilst a briefing is taking place with a consequent lack of focus upon quality issues. At Key Stage 4, teachers have a good understanding of examination requirements and focus appropriately on quality outcomes. They give constructive individual help to pupils. Teachers make relevant reference to the work of Hepworth, Moore, Garbo and other contemporary sculptors to raise standards of three dimensional work. Teachers have high expectations and set challenging standards for the quality of observational drawings. They also make high demands on A-level students to respond critically to their own and others' work. Teachers use their professional experience well to provide very good advice and support for students in their work.
100. The curriculum meets statutory requirements with a good balance between investigating and making activities and raising pupils' knowledge and understanding. However, only a small amount of three dimensional work is included. The integration of art appreciation is very good and a strength of the department, although a wider selection of exemplar artists, particularly females, and an acknowledgement of contemporary art would enhance this. Information and communications technology is not yet embedded in the department's activities. Assessment procedures are clear. Pupils' progress is monitored closely and this is extended to effective target setting. The art department provides an effective learning environment. All available space has been utilised to display pupils' work of high quality, patterns and images from art history and other cultures and artefacts collected as stimulus materials. Since the previous inspection, problems with resources for ceramics have worsened as the pottery kiln is not in use. Overall, the department offers very good value in terms of raising the attainment of pupils. Issues which need attention include a sharpening of development planning, extension of computer use and a programme of monitoring to ensure consistent use of sketchbook homework.

Business studies

101. Attainment of students at the end of the Advanced GNVQ Business course is above average. Of the seven students completing Advanced GNVQ in 1999, five achieved merits and one a pass, which was well above the national average pass rate. Since students enter the course with generally lower GCSE point scores than the national average, these results indicate significant value added by the GNVQ programme. Current students are working at least at the level of national expectations and some of the work of Year 13 students is at merit and distinction level. In particular, their action plans, which are integral to gaining the higher grades, are well constructed. Students are able to make competent, articulate class presentations, for example, about the advantages and disadvantages of paper-based and computer-based office systems, and understand issues of security, cost, storage and fitness for purpose. The discrete timetabled provision of English and mathematics ensures that students are able to achieve appropriate standards in these key skills.
102. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is below average. Although GCSE results in 1999 were an improvement on results in previous years, the proportion of pupils entered who gained A*-C grades, at 27 per cent, was significantly below the national average of 52 per cent for pupils in all maintained schools. Overall attainment of current Key Stage 4 pupils is just below the national expectations, but the knowledge and understanding of several pupils are at a higher level. Pupils have a good understanding of business terminology. They are able to differentiate between wages and salaries, gross and net pay and profit, but some lower attainers have difficulty in making the appropriate calculations when presented with numerical questions.
103. Sixth form students make good progress as they have a clear idea of what they are required to do in order to improve. They learn to integrate effectively the grading themes of planning, evaluation and information handling into their assignments and their portfolio construction is assured. Year 13 students have developed the necessary high level planning and research skills to gain the higher grades, although their research is too restricted to school-based activities. At Key Stage 4, pupils make satisfactory progress. They learn basic business terminology, which they apply more thoroughly in assignments and homework as the course progresses. Literacy levels are generally satisfactory for the majority of pupils, but their spelling is often poor. The shortage of text books at GCSE is detrimental to the progress of some pupils.
104. Sixth form students show a mature, conscientious approach to their work, although a few are too passive in question and answer sessions. All students are able to work individually to good effect. Working relationships between teachers and students are excellent and pupils respond constructively to the atmosphere of friendly, but secure control. Emphasis on action planning and the booking in system for completed assignments work to good effect and students generally meet deadlines. At Key Stage 4, pupils are generally well behaved. They are attentive to exposition and to each other's presentations, and readily offer answers to questions. Year 10 pupils engage very enthusiastically in role play activities, such as acting the roles of management, workers and customers in a 'customer complaints' scenario. Teachers' relationships with pupils are firm, but affable, and pupils respond well to having their contributions valued by the teacher and fellow students.
105. The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory in all lessons and in two-thirds of lessons it is good or better. In a sixth of lessons, the teaching is very good. All teachers have a sound knowledge of the subject and prepare interesting and appropriate lessons. At Key Stage 4, teachers maintain a brisk pace to lessons and maintain control of lively classes through firm, but relaxed, management of their behaviour. In good lessons, teachers relate examples to real life and summarise at the end of lessons what pupils should have learnt. Teachers give

appropriate support to lower attainers, but the lack of additional classroom support for pupils with special educational needs or for those pupils for whom English is an additional language hinders the progress of these pupils. Teachers set homework regularly and their marking is thorough, giving pupils suitable guidance on the improvement of their work. Teachers have high expectations of sixth form students. They give students good feedback on their work and continuous encouragement through regular discussion of each assignment. They reinforce the importance of meeting deadlines very effectively through the central issuing of receipts for completed work and make excellent use of a central database.

106. Although the department is well led and has many strengths, for example, the tracking of student performance, there are several weaknesses which need to be addressed. Most importantly, there are no explicit links with industry or local businesses to bring greater relevance to the curriculum. Whilst computing facilities are excellent, the general level and quality of other resources for business studies are poor. For example, the absence of class text books at GCSE adversely affects the progress of pupils.

Design and technology

107. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 has fluctuated in recent years. In 1998, the proportion of pupils entered for GCSE that gained A*-C grades was, at 44 per cent, just above the national average for boys in all maintained secondary schools. Results fell sharply in 1999, when only 20 per cent of those entered gained A*-C grades, which was well below the national average. A period of staff illness and the departure of two experienced teachers are contributory factors in this fall. Overall attainment of Year 10 pupils is below average. Pupils have good understanding of the design process, but their graphic communication skills are poor. The attainment of pupils taking the short course is very poor, especially where pupils are returning to the subject after some time without design experience. Overall, pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is below the national expectation, but some pupils attain good standards. On entry, Year 7 pupils demonstrate very poor graphic communication skills and often very poor handwriting. Their ideas of design and their technical knowledge and understanding of processes are low. In some Year 8 classes, pupils demonstrate practically that they can use tools safely and confidently in the construction of answers to a demanding brief. By contrast, Year 9 pupils do not consider sufficiently issues of quality in their making and have difficulties in drawing adequate plans.
108. At Key Stage 4, pupils taking the full GCSE course make satisfactory progress. Pupils gain the understanding of the processes that they need for their projects and apply this knowledge to their work. During Year 10, pupils steadily improve their making skills using a variety of tools and materials. In Year 11, many pupils refine their practical work before it is graded for GCSE. The progress of higher attainers occasionally falters, as they are not challenged through extension tasks. Progress at Key Stage 3 is erratic, ranging from good to unsatisfactory. Pupils improve in their practical making skills, but do not take sufficient time to ensure good quality in the items they make. Pupils with special educational needs are often supported well by teaching assistants or targeted by teachers for additional individual help. Their progress is similar to that of other pupils of the same age.
109. Pupils generally respond well to the work asked of them, but there are exceptions, such as technical drawing in Year 9, where their response is lacklustre as they are not inspired by the activity. In electronics, pupils demonstrate considerable interest and work quickly and with enthusiasm. At both key stages, there is good rapport between staff and pupils. Pupils assist willingly in the distribution and collection of work, tools and task sheets. They regularly cooperate in small teams and assist each other in their projects.
110. The majority of the teaching is satisfactory, and a third of teaching is good or very good. All

teachers have good knowledge and skills of resistant materials and technical drawing, but some have insufficient expertise in computer-aided design, graphic communication and control technology. Teachers generally have appropriate expectations of pupils within the constraints of the limited curriculum. Teaching is most effective when the teacher identifies learning objectives to the class and relates these to overall aims for the project, such as in electronics or in a disassembly activity. Teaching is less satisfactory when pupils are simply given a list of activities to complete with insufficient focus on the underlying purpose of the lesson. Teachers are inconsistent in their lesson planning and sometimes include outdated activities, such as engineering drawing and routine woodwork projects. Homework is not used consistently across different specialist areas to reinforce the skills, knowledge and understanding that pupils learn in class. Teachers provide good support for literacy, for example, through spelling tests in electronics. Teachers monitor pupils' progress at Key Stage 3 through use of an excellent assessment system.

111. Although the design and technology curriculum is varied, it does not meet National Curriculum requirements at Key Stage 3, as there is no component in either compliant materials (textiles) or food. Computer-aided design and control technology have been taught in the past, but resources are not currently available. The department lacks computer-aided manufacture equipment. The department has organised visits to science and technology centres, both locally and abroad, to raise pupils' interest and motivation.
112. Accommodation for design and technology is very poor. It is principally a group of woodwork and metalwork workshops in a seriously dilapidated condition. The workshops are poorly lit and all rooms contain worn out furniture that is unsuitable for the design curriculum. Some of the machinery is unreliable. There is a lack of specialist rooms for graphics, computer aided design, textiles or food. The electronics room is a poor adaptation of a workshop. The design block has a leaking roof and is not always properly cleaned. Despite the best efforts of teachers to improve the appearance through displays of pupils' work, the accommodation presents a depressing and unsuitable environment for learning. Wood, metal and electronic components are in good supply, but textbooks are not suitable for current courses. Available equipment and resources are well managed and maintained by the technician and teaching staff. Since the previous inspection, the accommodation has worsened in all respects except display, where staff have made a valiant effort. The department is in need of a major refurbishment and the curriculum needs to be revised to meet National Curriculum requirements.

Geography

113. In 1999, GCSE results in geography were well above the national average, with 68 per cent of those entered gaining A*-C grades compared to a national average for all maintained schools of 56 per cent. In previous years, GCSE results have been below the national average. However, there have been great fluctuations in the numbers taking geography at Key Stage 4. The attainment of current Key Stage 4 classes is below national expectations. A small number of current Year 11 pupils have the knowledge and conceptual understanding to develop their own investigation of geographical questions, to form independent conclusions and present them appropriately. Most pupils can interpret geographical evidence, such as photographs and graphs, and form conclusions when guided by questions or a structured activity. Most pupils have competent mapwork skills.
114. Attainment is below average at the end of Key Stage 3 when compared to all maintained schools. Pupils are familiar with the variety of places studied, including the local area, Italy and Bangladesh. Most pupils have some basic skills in interpreting maps of various scales and obtaining information from atlases. They are able to draw and interpret diagrams and graphs, such as population pyramids, and rates of births and deaths. There are good opportunities for using information technology, and pupils gain the required skills of accessing

information and analysing geographical evidence. Pupils can access information from CD-ROMs and the Internet and they use ICT to produce written work and graphs. They have a good vocabulary of geographical terms. They have some knowledge of the effect of geomorphological processes on landscapes, such as rivers and coasts, which is supported by experience of fieldwork in Folkestone and on the River Darent.

115. The progress made by pupils is satisfactory overall and better at Key Stage 3 than at Key Stage 4. At Key Stage 3, pupils gain new map and graphic skills and consolidate those already learned. They gain knowledge of places and geographical processes. Pupils make good progress and their level of attainment is raised through a structured curriculum and good teaching. At Key Stage 4, pupils develop an understanding of conceptual issues, such as cause and consequence in their study of themes and places. They gain knowledge of a broad range of geographical patterns and processes and most pupils make satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and teachers ensure that any written material is explained and discussed with them to help their understanding. Their progress is good at Key Stage 3 and satisfactory at Key Stage 4. Pupils develop skills of research and enquiry, and learn various techniques for presenting geographical material.
116. Pupils show interest in the subject and the work they are doing and concentrate well on tasks. They listen attentively, ask questions and volunteer opinions with confidence. Their behaviour is good and they show respect to the teacher and to each other. Pupils lose concentration and have a tendency to fuss when instructions have not been clear or they have not been given sufficient information to perform the task required.
117. The quality of teaching is good overall throughout the school. Teaching is good or better in seven-tenths of lessons and satisfactory in the remainder. The commitment, experience and good specialist knowledge of the subject teachers are strengths of the department. Teachers establish an atmosphere of friendliness and humour and pupils are encouraged to do their best. Teachers manage pupils very well and relationships are good. They use a range of teaching methods, including ICT, and provide a stimulating environment for pupils. Teachers maintain a brisk pace to lessons and their timing is good. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, but they need to be more precise in their planning to match learning objectives to pupils' different levels of knowledge and understanding. Precise targets would enable teachers to make more effective day-to-day assessment of pupils' learning. In their marking of pupils' work, teachers are generally effective in providing pupils with feedback about how they could improve.
118. The curriculum and assessment procedures at Key Stage 3 meet statutory requirements. The departmental scheme of work makes good provision for continuity in pupils' learning and for strengthening their knowledge and skills. The department has good procedures for end of unit assessment. The department is very well led and is addressing the issues necessary for raising standards. It has the capacity to make the required improvement provided that development planning is broadened to include all aspects of the department's work and lessons are learned from the focused teaching and precise objectives that led to the exceptionally good GCSE results in 1999.

History

119. In recent GCSE examinations, results in both the A*-C and A*-G range have been in line with national averages, although the number of entries has been small. In both 1998 and 1999, half the pupils entered gained A*-C grades. In lessons, attainment is mostly below the levels expected for the pupils' ages at both key stages, although, in some classes where literacy skills are higher, attainment is in line with the norm. In general, most pupils begin Year 7 with very low literacy levels and a poor knowledge and understanding of history. Despite this, many

pupils soon begin to acquire historical skills, particularly those associated with the evaluation of sources of information. Oral attainment is satisfactory, but the quality of written work by lower attaining pupils is often poor and they would benefit from a wider range of learning resources. Overall attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is below average. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils are more adept in extended writing and in examining sources in depth. For example, Year 10 pupils are able to use sources very skilfully to exemplify the effect of The Blitz on civilian life in World War 2.

120. The progress of pupils is satisfactory at both key stages. From the beginning of Year 7, most pupils improve their subject knowledge and understanding and higher attainers, in particular, are soon able to engage in writing for a variety of purposes. In this context, Year 9 pupils produce some good extended writing on the effects of the Industrial Revolution. At Key Stage 4, pupils are encouraged to develop independent learning skills and this has addressed an issue arising from the previous report. The progress of lower attaining pupils is slowed by their weak writing skills for which they need more support, such as more frequent use of writing frames. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well in lessons and are making satisfactory progress despite their learning difficulties.
121. At both key stages, pupils show enjoyment of the subject and behave well in lessons, although there are some minor disruptions due to lack of concentration. There are lively class discussions and pupils are eager and willing to voice their opinions. The rapport between teachers and pupils is friendly and based on mutual respect. Concentration levels are maintained well during most lessons and pupils can also work well in pairs or small groups. They are less confident in committing their ideas to paper, however, and teachers need to encourage greater depth in written work.
122. Overall, the quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory and it is often good or very good. Teaching is very good in a quarter of lessons. Teachers have good subject knowledge and strong classroom organisational skills and they enable pupils to respond with confidence to their questions. Teachers set clear aims and objectives for lessons and encourage pupils to reflect on their progress at the end of sessions.
123. The previous report noted some shortcomings in teaching; in particular, an over-reliance on textbooks and unclear lesson objectives. The textbook is still the main point of reference in most lessons, but teachers now employ a wider variety of teaching techniques as well, which improves the interest, enjoyment and motivation of pupils. For example, a Year 9 lesson on the origins of the slave trade, included class discussion, video extracts, source examination and role play. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and set them targets, but they do not always give pupils sufficient specific advice on how they can improve their work.
124. The management of the department is sound with clear documentation and a detailed development plan, although clearer success criteria need to be established. There is an effective system of assessment to track pupils' progress. Resources have improved since the previous inspection and there is a good programme of historical visits. Information technology is playing an increasing part in the work of the department. Overall, sound progress has been made since the previous inspection and the department is clearly capable of further development. A major challenge now is to raise levels of literacy and to encourage more pupils to study the subject beyond Key Stage 3.

Modern foreign languages

125. GCSE results for French in 1999 showed a marked improvement over previous years, justifying

the change to a more appropriate syllabus. All pupils entered gained an A*-G grade and the proportion of those entered gaining A*-C grades, at 30 per cent, was in line with the national average for similar schools. A further 35 pupils from Years 10 and 11 were awarded a Certificate of Achievement in French. The department has done well to enable certification for the whole range of abilities. Results in Punjabi have usually been above national averages in recent years. In 1999, five of the seven boys entered for GCSE Punjabi gained A*-C grades, the other two gaining lower grades. Some of the course work completed by current Year 11 pupils reflects similar high standards. Pupils at Key Stage 4 have good reference skills, understand grammar concepts and produce written work appropriate to their abilities. However, many pupils translate word for word because they do not have spontaneous oral skills to recall whole phrases or structure. When reading, their pronunciation and intonation is very English. Lower attaining pupils preparing for the Certificate of Achievement have particular weaknesses in writing.

126. At Key Stage 3, the reading and writing skills of pupils are better than their speaking and listening skills. Although overall attainment at the end of the key stage is below average, it is commensurate with pupils' prior attainment. Higher attaining pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 have reached a level which is a good foundation for the GCSE. Skills to support writing are well developed, but oral skills are weaker and pupils are over-dependent on reference materials. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and benefit from studying French.
127. Progress across both key stages is generally satisfactory and higher attainers make good progress when strategies to support them are adopted. Progress is inhibited in some groups of average and lower ability by an over-emphasis on formal aspects of grammar and writing and the volume of content where the reinforcement of a more limited range of topics would enhance both confidence and skills. Year 10 pupils make good progress in learning Punjabi script. Progress at both key stages, particularly in the development of oral skills, is restricted by the low time allocation for the subject, which is significantly below average in all years. Approximately 40 pupils from Years 7 and 8 take the opportunity to improve their standards by participating in an annual exchange visit to Cambrai.
128. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory in almost all lessons and often good. In the good lessons, pupils have a mature approach to their work, they work independently when required and have constructive relationships with their teacher. Pupils are mutually supportive, respond well to challenge and really enjoy game activities. On occasions, where behaviour is unsatisfactory, pupils lack motivation and have low self-esteem.
129. The quality of the teaching is at least satisfactory in all lessons and, in a third of lessons, it is good. Teachers are competent in their subject knowledge and well organised in their planning, which shows good sequencing of a variety of activities. Their good relationships with pupils are a strength of the department. They know the pupils well and establish a strong ethos of encouragement, often with nice touches of humour in lessons. Teachers manage the occasional challenging behaviour of pupils well and show sensitivity to pupils' needs. In the best lessons, teachers make suitable demands of the pupils through matching tasks well to their abilities and interests, and by setting time limits. All teachers use the target language, but lessen the challenge to pupils by frequent translation and a too-ready acceptance of responses by pupils in English. Some of the teaching makes content the objective of the lesson and fails to take account of the necessary development of skills. Teachers assess regularly and keep good records. They mark pupils' books thoroughly and require pupils to correct their spelling and make corrections to their written work. When they use the school stamp, teachers set very appropriate targets for improvement, but this practice is not used consistently by all teachers.
130. There is a good balance of experience in the staff and they work well as a team. The

departmental handbook is comprehensive and offers good guidance to teachers. The curriculum meets statutory requirements, although the time allocation of two hours per week for each year group is significantly below the national average and restricts pupils' progress. Use of information and communications technology is programmed suitably into schemes of work and pupils make use of the Internet, for example, in a weather topic. The department has addressed all issues arising from the previous inspection. Attainment has been raised and resources have been improved so that almost all pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11 have their own textbook. The display in every teaching room is attractive with much key information. The department has introduced monitoring and evaluation procedures in accordance with school policy, but teachers would benefit from more time for mutual observation and the observation of good practice elsewhere. The departmental development plan addresses school priorities, but the department needs to develop a policy and strategies for increased use of the target language. For several years, the department has run exchanges with a school in Cambrai with Years 7 and 8.

Music

131. Standards in music have improved since the previous inspection, but attainment at both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, as indicated by National Curriculum teacher assessment and GCSE results respectively, is still below national expectations. At Key Stage 3, pupils are beginning to read formal notation, can recognise the notes on the keyboard and can play simple melodies from memory with rhythmic qualities. Some Year 9 pupils can fit a melody to a percussion accompaniment with accuracy with some varying the melody. Pupils have opportunities to compose their own music but, because of their lack of general knowledge, their compositions are lacking in structure, form and creative development. Although there is provision in the schemes of work for the listening component of the National Curriculum, pupils' knowledge of the historical development and styles of music is limited.
132. Key Stage 4 pupils who are instrumentalists have a sound knowledge of the main elements of music and use their knowledge to develop their compositions. However, most pupils have limited understanding and their creative work is underdeveloped. Their performing skills are better. For example, the individual and ensemble performances of Year 11 pupils are rhythmically good and well established. Pupils' listening skills are underdeveloped. Although they have knowledge of the main historical developments in music, they experience difficulty with the listening element and identifying rhythmic patterns. In the 1999 GCSE examination, of the five pupils entered, all gained A*-G grades, with two gaining A*-C grades. These results were an improvement on previous years.
133. Pupils make good progress at both key stages. They enter the school with limited previous experience, but with the emphasis on practical music, they progress in most aspects. They gain technical knowledge and this contributes to their performing skills. They develop their listening skills and gain knowledge of different styles of music. Progress with creative work is slower. Pupils at Key Stage 4 use their previously gained knowledge to develop their performing skills on the keyboard. The progress of pupils who play musical instruments is good. Although pupils with special educational needs do not receive extra support, teachers are aware of their needs and by getting them to work with higher attainers they ensure that they make good progress and achieve the targets set for them.
134. The attitude of pupils in lessons is good. They have a positive approach to the subject and enjoy practical lessons. They listen carefully to instructions and take an interest in the subject and are attentive when other pupils are performing. Generally, their behaviour is good but, occasionally, the conduct of a minority can be unsatisfactory. Pupils use instruments with care and are keen to discuss their previous musical experiences. On the occasions when

pupils have to share keyboards, they are sensible and help each other during practice sessions.

135. The overall standard of teaching is at least satisfactory and it is good in a third of lessons. Teachers have good knowledge, convey their enthusiasm to pupils and use their expertise to improve the music. They have good discipline and keep pupils on task. When teaching is good, teachers explain the purpose of the lesson clearly at the start and set clear targets for pupils to achieve. The planning of lessons is satisfactory with appropriate activities to cater for all levels of ability. Teachers use a variety of suitable strategies that include the highlighting of good work with frequent stops to reinforce skills. Teaching is occasionally weakened when the assessment at the end of a lesson is too long, resulting in pupils becoming restless. Teachers' management skills are good. They deal sensitively and effectively with unacceptable behaviour. The standard of teaching has improved since the previous inspection, as teachers have higher expectations of pupils.
136. The curriculum meets statutory requirements, but the time allocation in Year 9 is low and restricts progress. A greater emphasis is needed on creative and composition skills, as these are underdeveloped within the curriculum. Pupils at Key Stage 4 have the opportunity to use information technology for their compositions, but this facility is under-used at Key Stage 3. The leadership of the department is good. The head of department has worked hard to successfully raise the profile of music in the school. The accommodation of the department is spacious with ample areas for group and individual activities. However, the environment is poor, with worn carpets and untidy décor. Resources are adequate, but the recording and playback equipment is still poor, affecting unfavourably the assessment of pupils' work and their listening skills.

Physical education

137. At Key Stage 4, pupils have the option to study GCSE physical education. Since the previous inspection, the proportion of pupils entered gaining A*-C grades increased steadily to reach 52 per cent in 1998, which was just above the national average for all maintained schools. The proportion gaining A*-C grades fell to 23 per cent in 1999, which was well below the national average. Most GCSE pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding of the syllabus requirements, such as an understanding of safety in sport and safety equipment used for a variety of sports and physical activities. In their practical lessons, they have a secure grasp of the importance of tactical considerations in, for example, football. The attainment of the majority of 16 year-olds in lessons meets national expectations. A significant number of pupils, particularly those in GCSE groups, demonstrate a higher level of performance. Their performance is more consistent and effective in, for example, football and basketball where they use increasingly advanced strategies in competitive play. This is having a positive impact on overall standards of attainment in the core curriculum course that all pupils follow.
138. At the end of Key Stage 3, the attainment of Year 9 pupils meets national expectations in games and gymnastics. Pupils are able to develop successfully sequences using flight from apparatus in gymnastics, but in basketball, footwork skills and team formation and techniques are not well developed. Most pupils have a secure understanding of the need for appropriate warm-up before physical activity. Many are able to suggest exercises as well as naming the muscle groups being stretched.
139. The attainment of most pupils on entry to the school is below that expected for their age. From Year 7, pupils settle down and make steady progress. In badminton, for example, they develop power in stroke play and are able to sustain a rally. In rugby, pupils develop their handling and

passing skills and techniques. At Key Stage 4, all pupils continue to refine their individual and teamwork skills in games. In football, for example, they develop their understanding of strategies and tactics through playing 'conditioned' games. Some Year 10 pupils do not make sufficient progress in basketball games because of their weak passing, dribbling and shooting skills. GCSE pupils make satisfactory progress in both their theory and practical lessons in relation to the syllabus requirements. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and integrated in lessons. They make progress in line with their capabilities.

140. Most pupils have a positive attitude to the subject, both in their lessons and extra-curricular activities. However, in many lessons, there are usually three of four non-participants and, in occasional lessons, as many as a third of the class can be non-participants and reluctant to be as fully involved as they should be. Most pupils respond well to the teachers' expectation of good discipline, behaviour and commitment to practising and refining skills. When given responsibility for leading aspects of their warm-up or coaching and evaluating one another, most pupils show respect for the efforts of their peers. All handle and move equipment safely and sensibly. Most Key Stage 3 pupils cope well with the long two hour double periods, but towards the end some become a little irritable and lose concentration. This inhibits the progress they should be making.
141. The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory and it is good in almost half the lessons. All lessons have a clear structure and teachers share learning objectives with pupils at the start. This ensures pupils are aware of what is expected of them. Teachers demonstrate skills clearly and break them down into simple steps, for example, when teaching the techniques and skills required for passing, so that pupils know what they have to do in order to make progress. Through effective questioning, teachers establish the extent of pupils' knowledge and understanding, and encourage pupils to listen carefully and reply using correct terminology. All teachers allow pupils to plan and perform, but in many lessons, they do not give sufficient time for pupils to evaluate the performances of each other. This strategy is used well in gymnastics where pupils coach and evaluate one another when developing sequences using flight from apparatus. Teachers boost the confidence and motivation of pupils through praise and by conveying the expectation that they can all gain success. Pupils are challenged in the good quality lessons to deepen their knowledge and understanding as, for example, in Year 10 rugby when experimenting with the tactic of deep running in attack. Teachers' use of time over the long two-hour double periods at Key Stage 3 is not always effective. Some lessons are slow to start and the pace throughout is also somewhat slow on occasion. Though non-participants are usually involved in planned observation tasks, they are not always as fully involved as they should be. For the GCSE course, teachers set appropriate homework which they mark regularly, but their use of the target setting sheet in Year 11 GCSE folders is not well developed as targets tend to be vague and open-ended and not as helpful to pupils as they could be.
142. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Though assessment procedures are in place, the lack of collation of this information does not allow for effective curriculum planning. A strength of the department is the extra-curricular provision that further increases pupils' experiences. The activities provided include both recreational, inter-class and inter-school competitive fixtures. Individuals have had recent success at district cross-country, and teams have had success at district level in cricket and football. On-site indoor accommodation is inadequate for the curriculum on offer and the age range of pupils. However, the school uses an adjacent sports hall to ensure curriculum coverage and supplement the available accommodation.
143. Since the previous report, little has changed. There is still some under-achievement at Key Stage 3 and GCSE results, in terms of A*-C grade passes, remain below national averages. Most pupils are well motivated and though provision for non-participants may have improved, they are still not always as fully involved as they should be. Though the Community Sports

Leadership Award was introduced for post-16 students, it was not run last year, is not yet in place this year, but is planned for January 2000. There remains a strong emphasis on extra-curricular activities and improvements have been made to the hard play area and in the maintenance of the purpose-built gym. Leadership and management are developing, and improvements in curricular provision, including the introduction of an ICT element and assessment procedures, have been made.

158. **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

158. **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

144. The inspection was carried out by a team of twelve inspectors. During the inspection period, this team spent a total of 49 inspector days in school and observed 167 lessons, 14 registration sessions and seven assemblies. All full-time and part-time teachers of National Curriculum subjects, vocational courses and religious education present during the week were observed at least once, and many several times. The teaching of every A-level and GNVQ subject offered by the school was observed at least once. Planned discussions were held with more than 20 members of staff, including all senior teachers, heads of all departments, the coordinator for English as an additional language (EAL), the coordinator for special educational needs (SEN), the chair of governors and three other governors, the two deputy headteachers and the headteacher. A variety of extra-curricular activities was observed.
145. Inspectors examined all the available work of a broad sample of pupils from each age group and inspected the written work of many pupils during lessons. Inspectors held discussions with pupils from Years 7-13. Informal discussions took place with other pupils and non-teaching staff. A large amount of relevant documentation provided by the school was analysed, both before and during the inspection. The Registered Inspector held an evening meeting attended by 36 parents prior to the inspection. The team considered 546 responses from parents to a questionnaire about the school.

160. **DATA AND INDICATORS**

160. **Pupil data**

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
Y7 - Y13	829	29	410	133

160. **Teachers and classes**

160. **Qualified teachers (Y7 - Y13)**

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	46.54
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	17.7

160. **Education support staff (Y7 - Y13)**

Total number of education support staff:	25
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	595

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes:	73.5
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Average teaching group size:

KS3	24
KS4	21

160. **Financial data**

Financial year:	1998/9
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	£
Total Income	2037566
Total Expenditure	2072137
Expenditure per pupil	2684
Balance brought forward from previous year	148346
Balance carried forward to next year	113775

160. **PARENTAL SURVEY**

Number of questionnaires sent out:	824
Number of questionnaires returned:	546

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	16	65	13	5	1
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	30	59	5	5	1
The school handles complaints from parents well	18	52	22	7	2
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	25	59	10	5	1
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	32	54	8	5	1
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	30	62	4	4	1
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	26	56	15	3	1
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	25	60	7	7	1
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	23	59	133	4	1
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	21	55	13	8	2
My child(ren) like(s) school	30	52	10	5	2