

INSPECTION REPORT

ST GEORGE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Leaside Way

LEA area: Southampton

Unique reference number: 116507

Headteacher: Mrs Helen Knight

Reporting inspector: Sheila Browning
1510

Dates of inspection: 15 – 19 May 2000

Inspection number: 199108

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	11 to 16
Gender of pupils:	Boys
School address:	Leaside Way Swaythling Southampton
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr G Doyle
Date of previous inspection:	December 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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John Bald	Team inspector	English	English as an additional language
Brenda Loydell	Team inspector	Mathematics	
Gerald Griffin		Science	Curriculum
Ian Waters	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	Resources for learning
Neil Cowell		Geography	
		Special educational needs	
Deidre Kay	Team inspector	Music	Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
		Equality of opportunity	
Carol Worthington	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
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Katie Barratt	Team inspector	History	
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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7 - 11
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed ¹	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	12 - 16
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?	16 - 18
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?	18 - 21
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	21 - 23
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	23 - 24
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	24 - 28
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	28
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	29 - 32
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	33 - 50

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St George is a small secondary school of 685 boys aged 11-16. It is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic school. Attainment on entry to school at age 11 is reasonably well balanced, with a significant number of slightly above average level pupils. This profile varies from year to year. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is 17.5; this is broadly in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils receiving free school meals, at 10.5 per cent, is below the national average. Pupils come from diverse cultural backgrounds. The percentage of pupils with English as an additional language, at 3.3 per cent, is relatively high but most of these pupils are proficient in English.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good and effective school that performs well academically. The headteacher provides clear and focused leadership. The school's aims, Roman Catholic ethos and values successfully underpin its work. Teaching and learning are good overall. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. The personal development of pupils and relationships are good. Attendance is well above the national average. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum and demonstrates a commitment to the provision of equality of access to the full range of the curriculum for all its pupils. It gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- The proportion of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSEs at grades A* to C is well above the national average; at the end of Key Stage 4, standards in mathematics and geography are well above average and standards in English, science and modern foreign languages are above average; at the end of Key Stage 3, standards in mathematics are well above average and standards in English, science and geography are above average.
- The overall quality of teaching and learning is good.
- The headteacher provides strong, focused and constructive leadership and educational priorities are supported well through the school's financial planning.
- Very good opportunities are provided in accelerated GCSE courses in mathematics and art; provision for personal development and for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good; careers education, including work experience, is a strength.
- Pupils enjoy school, they are interested and involved and attendance is high; their positive attitudes contribute to learning in most classes; behaviour and relationships are good.
- Parents are supportive and have positive views of the school.

What could be improved

- Standards in music at both key stages and in information technology across the curriculum.
- The role of senior managers and middle managers is insufficiently developed and lacks rigour in areas of delegated responsibility, for instance in accountability, monitoring, evaluating and supporting teaching and learning development.
- Assessment information is not used effectively to inform teaching and curriculum planning.
- Accommodation is poor, particularly in the specialist areas of music, art, physical education and special educational needs.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made significant improvement since it was last inspected in December 1997. The school is now voluntary aided. Good effective structures now in place are starting to improve the school further. New management organisation and administrative structures are in place. Good procedures for monitoring by senior managers and curriculum leaders are in place. Links between the governing body and senior managers are clearly specified and communications are much improved. The curriculum provides equal access across subjects. Vocational links with business and the local community have improved. On-going staff development contributes to improved teaching and learning. The management of the education of pupils with special educational needs has been improved. Admission figures now relate to the capacity of the building and facilities. The school continues to improve the accommodation in close partnership with the local education authority and diocesan board. Standards of achievement have mostly been maintained and have in some cases improved.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 16 and 18 year olds based on average point scores in GCSE and A-level/AS-level examinations.

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	all schools			Similar schools	
	Year-1997	Year-1998	Year-1999	Year-1999	
GCSE examinations	n/a	A	B	B	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E

The 1999 Year 9 National tests show that well above the national average proportion of pupils achieve Level 5 in mathematics and above the average achieve Level 5 in English and science; and the proportion at Level 6 is above the national average in mathematics. When compared to similar schools, standards in mathematics were well above average and English and science they were broadly in line. Performance data show an improving trend in line with the national picture. Standards in numeracy are good. In literacy they are satisfactory though there are some inconsistencies. Standards in information technology (IT) are as expected for pupils of this age. Standards of work seen overall are above

average. Standards are well below those expected for pupils of this age in music. Pupils are making good progress. The achievement of pupils with special educational need in relation to their overall prior attainment is generally good at both key stages.

In 1999 the proportion of pupils who achieved five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C and grades A* to G was above the national average. Almost all pupils entered achieved passes in five or more subjects. The strongest subjects were English, mathematics, science, modern foreign languages, geography and religious education. Results reflect an improving trend and the standards seen during the inspection. Standards are well below those expected in music. The average total GCSE point score per pupil was above the national average. The results showed improvement upon the pupils' prior attainment at Key Stage 3 and attainment on entry to the school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Most pupils' attitudes to school are good; they are keen to learn and are responsive.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good around the school. Classroom behaviour is generally good.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development and relationships are good.
Attendance	Attendance is well above average.

Most pupils work hard and are co-operative. In a minority of lessons, attitudes are unsatisfactory and limit learning, normally when work is not at the level of the pupils. Pupils have some opportunities to develop independent studies, but have fewer opportunities to discuss and develop their own critical skills.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged 11-14	Aged 14-16
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good

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

Teaching is good overall. It is satisfactory or better in nearly 95 per cent of lessons of which 62 per cent are good and better and 22 per cent are very good or better. Some six per cent of lessons across the school are unsatisfactory or poor, chiefly due to low expectations, resulting in limited learning, or work not well matched to the individual needs of different pupils. The skills of communication, including literacy, are taught satisfactorily and numeracy is taught well. Skills in information technology are not sufficiently taught across all subjects, and this particularly limits progress among pupils with special educational needs. A third of the teaching in science at Key Stage 3 is unsatisfactory. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of their subjects. Teaching methods are usually effective. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. In most lessons pupils gain and advance their knowledge and understanding. Most work with concentration, and are interested.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Broad and relevant. Design and technology does not cover the National Curriculum requirement of control technology. The use of information technology across the curriculum is underdeveloped. Accelerated GCSE courses in mathematics and art contribute positively to standards. Careers education, including work experience, is a strength.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Pupils' needs are adequately met and they make good progress. Specialist provision for teaching of reading and spelling at Key Stage 3 is insufficient.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Few of these pupils are in the early stages of learning English. Provision is satisfactory overall, and good in some cases.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall good. Religious education was not inspected. Opportunities for spiritual and social development are good. Provision for moral development is very good. Cultural provision is satisfactory overall.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures are good. The school takes good care of pupils' welfare. Assessment procedures are extensive, but are not used consistently.

Poor accommodation and facilities prevent pupils from having really good opportunities in music, art and physical education. Pupils are involved in many aspects of school life. Extra-curricular provision is satisfactory. The school manages to give a good Catholic background to learning. Cultural provision, although satisfactory, lacks focus to promote and celebrate cultural diversity. Support and guidance provided for pupils are good. The school works well in partnership with parents. The parents' involvement in the school is good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership of the headteacher is a strength. The headteacher, governing body and staff create a very good ethos. The aims of the school are clear and effective. The senior and middle managers' roles are underdeveloped, although improving in terms of accountability. Monitoring of lessons and assessment are at very early stages of development.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governing body is very supportive and actively involved in the strategic and decision making processes.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school uses a range of tests to establish pupils' levels of ability and rates of progress. The results of are not consistently used to build on and inform standards, teaching and learning.
The strategic use of resources	Overall satisfactory. Accommodation insufficiencies impede teaching and learning. Time is used effectively. The school applies the principles of best value well. The school gives good value for money.

The headteacher provides clear and direct leadership and management. Leadership has led the pace of change. Senior and middle managers are developing in their roles. Governors are more actively involved in leading the school forward than they were. The professional development of staff is being addressed well. Accommodation, staffing and resources are satisfactory overall and some improvements have recently been made to accommodation. The science and technology area is undergoing refurbishment. Additional space has led to some improvements in music and art. Further improvements are planned.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school expects the boys to work hard and achieve their best. • The pupils like school. • The boys are making good progress. • The school helps the boys to become mature and responsible. • The school is approachable with questions or problems. • Teaching is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework consistently set. • The school working more closely with parents. • Behaviour in the school. • Leadership and management. • Provide a more interesting range of activities outside lessons.

In addition to the 100 questionnaires, 24 written comments were received from parents. Many were very positive about standards achieved and the good quality teaching. Some parents were unhappy with the lack of frequent homework and some inconsistencies dealing with complaints and communications with parents. The inspection team confirmed the parents' positive views. The school is working more closely with parents and the information about how their children are getting on is improving. Behaviour overall is good, but in some lessons it is inconsistent, when pupils are sometimes inconsiderate in their actions. Behaviour in lessons usually reflects the quality of teaching and level of work provided. No evidence of bullying was apparent; when instances do occur they are dealt with appropriately. Parents are concerned about homework, and the setting of homework is inconsistent and marking varies from good to poor. Some parents are dissatisfied with extra-curricular opportunities; the inspection team found these to be satisfactory. A significant minority of parents, some 30 per cent, are not happy about the management of the school; the inspection team found the headteacher to have significant strengths and the governors to be increasingly effective.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The 1999 national tests show that at the end of Key Stage 3 pupils achieve well above the national average in mathematics and above average in English and science. Performance data and the 1999 results generally show an improvement on those for 1998 and exceed national averages. When compared to similar schools standards in mathematics were well above average and in English and science were broadly in line. The school's targets are based on an accurate summary of pupils' prior achievement. They are realistic and challenging and are appropriate when compared with those of the local education authority and those nationally. Standards are appropriate in all of the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.
2. Results in the General Certificate for Secondary Education (GCSE) show a steady rise over the past three years. In 1999 the percentage of pupils who achieved five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C and A* to G was well above the national average. Almost all pupils entered achieved passes in five or more subjects. The strongest results at GCSE were in the core subjects of mathematics, English language, English literature and science, and in geography, modern foreign languages and religious education. Weaker subjects, although in line with national averages, were design and technology and physical education. GCSE results in music were well below the national expectations and music was their worst result for most boys. Some of the entry numbers for subjects such as statistics were quite small and should therefore be treated carefully. The average total GCSE point score per pupil shows an overall rising trend well above the national average. Results reflected the pupils' prior attainment at Key Stage 3 and their attainment on entry to the school. Results for 1999 are broadly similar to the previous year for the percentage of pupils who achieved five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C.
3. At the end of Key Stage 3, standards in numeracy and literacy and in most subjects are above the national average. Teachers assessed a much higher proportion as reaching Level 6 in science than those who achieved that level in the test. Standards in design and technology, although assessed by teachers to be below national averages, show improvement. Standards of work seen are above average in English, though its quality is inconsistent, particularly among lower-attaining pupils, reflecting variations in the quality of learning in lessons. Standards in reading and writing are above national average levels overall. Speaking and listening skills overall are in line with those seen in most schools nationally and do not reflect the above-average standards seen during the last inspection. Standards in mathematics are well above the national average. Setting by prior attainment increasingly throughout Key Stage 3 helps all pupils to improve. Lower attaining pupils in smaller groups are well supported. Year 9 pupils are effectively stretched and challenged according to their ability. Understanding in many topics, for example algebra, trigonometry, problem solving and recording data, are well developed and pupils calculate probabilities accurately. Standards of work seen in science at the end of Key Stage 3 are above those seen nationally. Pupils have a good understanding of biology, chemistry and physics. Written work, criticised in the last report, is now of a good standard with accurately labelled diagrams.

Practical skills are satisfactory; pupils have a clear understanding of a 'fair test' and can make satisfactory predictions.

4. Standards in art are in line with national norms. Pupils develop a satisfactory understanding of different skills, experiment and explore and show a developing knowledge of art from different periods and cultures. In design and technology, due to the disruption of building works, teachers have been unable to teach and assess the full curriculum because control technology has not been part of it. The school has plans to address this very soon. Pupils show competent use of tools and accuracy when cutting joints. Several pupils with special educational needs showed they have been more significantly affected by the disruption and are unsure of the correct equipment. In geography, a significant majority achieve levels at or above the nationally expected levels. At Key Stage 3, pupils understand how conflicting demands on an environment arise and why attempts are made to plan and manage areas vulnerable to development. Pupils show good knowledge and improved understanding of geographical features. In history, standards are as expected, for pupils of this age. Standardised teacher assessments showed an above average number achieving above expectations in word-processing, data analysis and the use of spreadsheets. No level was attained for control and monitoring so a national comparison cannot be made. Generally standards in information technology are as expected for pupils of this age. Most subject inspectors, however, report below average skills in the use of information technology across the curriculum. In modern foreign languages, standards in French are broadly in line with national expectations. German is a second language and understanding is generally good. Oral skills vary from good to weak. Much of the written work is not developed into extended writing. Higher attaining pupils in French have a good knowledge of the perfect and future tenses. In music, the standards most pupils reach are well below expectations in all aspects of the course. Underachievement is associated with pupils' lack of basic skills, inadequate coverage of the curriculum and limited time for music at Key Stage 3 up to September 1999. In physical education, standards match expectations. A significant minority of pupils achieve good and sometimes very good standards, demonstrated by the successes of teams and individuals at district, county and national levels.
5. At the time of inspection Year 11 were on study leave. It was therefore not possible to observe lessons for this year group. However, judgements on standards were informed by work scrutiny and other sources of evidence. In numeracy and literacy, standards are above the national average at the end of Key Stage 4. Standards of work overall are above average. In English, in most lessons pupils express opinions clearly, and give relevant and often perceptive answers to teachers' questions. In mathematics, achievement improves as pupils progress through the school, being highest in Year 10, many of whom are taking early GCSE entry. Evidence of the quality of Year 11 work showed some very interesting and innovative investigations. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils have further extended their knowledge and understanding in all areas of science and they make good progress.
6. In art, pupils work to a good standard. Progress is particularly marked in Year 11, when pupils work more independently and produce imaginative, creative and individual work, often of a high standard. In design and technology, standards show improvement on the previous year, despite the disruptive effect of the building work. Many high quality projects were seen: mobile phones in graphics, food projects, a solar powered lamp and an electronic metronome. In geography, Year 10 coursework is good, but Year 11 attainment is lower than in other previous years.

However, there is good progression of learning, building on firm foundations from earlier years. In history, standards are in line with the national expectations.

7. Work in information technology is as expected for pupils of this age and shows satisfactory knowledge of systems, though word-processing is sometimes marred by spelling mistakes. In modern foreign languages, standards are above average in French and German. Understanding of the foreign language is good. In music, standards are well below expectations in all aspects of the course; poor accommodation limits achievement and progress. In physical education, standards of performance, fitness and stamina are mostly good and better than at Key Stage 3; there is clear evidence of progress by pupils at all levels of ability in all lessons.
8. Pupils speak confidently where opportunities are given and they generally listen attentively. Much of the writing shows originality and imagination and is generally well presented. The general presentation of written work in mathematics is poor and in modern foreign languages is unsatisfactory. In most subjects pupils use subject specific terminology well and with understanding. Standards achieved overall are sufficiently high, with the exception of music, control in design and technology and information technology across the curriculum. The learning of pupils with English as an additional language is satisfactory overall, and good where teachers or other pupils speak the pupils' first language to a good level.

Literacy

9. Overall, the contribution of work in other subjects to literacy is satisfactory, but it is not consistent. For example, work in science develops technical vocabulary well but does not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to write about their work. Work in geography makes a very good contribution to pupils' literacy skills, and there is an effective contribution to writing from work in history and in religious education in Year 7.

Numeracy

10. Levels of numeracy are good, improving through the school from Years 7 to 11. Frequent practice in mental calculation and recognition of number bonds occur in mathematics lessons, often as a starter to a lesson dealing with other topics. Mathematics Attainment Target 2, number and algebra, is well covered in each key stage, and collecting data and drawing graphs (part of mathematics Attainment Target 4) is a strength.
11. In science the use of numeracy by all pupils was very good, but particularly in older year groups and in the correct use of units of measurement. There is direct reference in science teaching to knowledge of angles, types of triangles in looking at shapes of prisms, and the use of co-ordinates. Geography and science significantly develop the excellent knowledge and understanding of different types of graph and pupils' skill in drawing graphs. A Year 10 geography lesson on a farm in a National Park used maps on different scales for comparison, and pupils fully understood the concept of scale. A geography worksheet on topological maps and networks was seen well completed in the analysis of work. During the inspection, there was evidence, during a physical education lesson of accurate measurement of lengths and heights. Measuring also featured strongly in design and technology lessons, as well as scale drawing in graphics lessons for all year groups. The standards of teaching and learning of numeracy are good across the curriculum.

Pupils with special needs

12. The achievement of pupils with special educational need, taking into account their learning difficulties, is generally good at both key stages. However, there are some inconsistencies in the learning and progress of lower attaining pupils, particularly in spelling and in learning more complex words in reading. Weaknesses, particularly among lower-attaining pupils, are not consistently followed up and dealt with in later work.

High attainment

13. Higher attaining pupils make good progress in both key stages. Although pupils achieve good results at the end of Key Stage 4, the number of A and A* grades is not significantly high. In mathematics, art and geography these pupils are challenged well. In science, higher attaining pupils are not always given sufficient challenge to enable them to gain top grades. Higher attaining pupils in French show a good knowledge of different tenses.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. The last report commented on the good attitudes of pupils. While pupils' attitudes are still generally good, there are some inconsistencies in behaviour in a minority of lessons. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour were good in just over half of the lessons seen and in the majority of the remainder they were satisfactory. Attendance is very good.
15. The attitudes of pupils around the school are good. They are eager to come to school, show enthusiasm towards school life and are interested in taking part in the activities which the school provides. Pupils willingly take visitors to the appropriate classroom or part of the school, to which they wish to go. In interviews they were eager to talk about the school and to offer their opinions about school experience. They are also keen to talk about their favourite and least favourite subjects and why they like or dislike them. It was not possible to interview Year 11 pupils as they were away on study leave. Answers to the parents' questionnaire indicated that the great majority of pupils like going to school. Lesson observations showed that attitudes were good in over half of those seen.
16. Pupils' overall behaviour is generally good. In lessons and around the school behaviour is mostly good. A minority, however, particularly in some lessons, are disruptive and this tends to detract from the overall picture. Inconsistencies in behaviour are often linked to the quality of teaching, the teacher's expectations, the pace of the lesson and the level of work set for pupils. Overall pupils are polite and friendly. They hold doors open for adults and each other and the phrases 'excuse me', 'thank you' and 'you're welcome' are frequently heard. A small number of parents, both at the meeting and through the questionnaires, expressed concern at the behaviour of some pupils. During the inspection there were no instances of racism or sexism observed and bullying was not much in evidence. There were a few instances of name calling and teasing. Pupils interviewed, except for some in Year 8, said that when bullying occurs it is dealt with quickly by staff. Bullying was the main topic for discussion in personal social and health education (PSHE), during the inspection week, as the school is in the process of reviewing its policy. Most parents, at their meeting, believed that incidents of bullying are dealt with promptly

by the school. There were over 40 fixed term exclusions in the most recent reporting year, with the same number of pupils being responsible for those incidents. Due to the school's inclusion policy, the number is being reduced in the current year. However, two of this year's exclusions have been permanent. The parents of the two excluded pupils have not exercised their right to appeal. Pupils are aware of the impact their actions have on others, including negative impact.

17. The pupils' respect for feelings, values and beliefs, is good. This is engendered by the Roman Catholic ethos of the school and is re-inforced through the many opportunities pupils have to reflect on events within and outside the school. These include the liturgical life of the school, the opportunities to go to summer camp as well as the visits to war graves in Northern Europe. Pupils take advantage of opportunities for sharing responsibilities and there is evidence that this responsibility increases as pupils grow up through the school. Pupils in Year 11 were away on study leave, so there was no opportunity to observe responsibility being taken by the most senior pupils. They carry out the typical duties like giving out books and papers in the classroom. However, a good example of major responsibility being taken by pupils was the relief they supplied at lunchtime by staffing the front office. This they did with efficiency, giving visitors and callers a welcoming introduction to the school. Pupils were also seen assisting the caretaker. Relationships between adults and pupils across the school are good.
18. The attendance of pupils as recorded in the most recent reporting year is very good, being well above the national average, which is an improvement since the last inspection. The high attendance level is helped by the fact that most pupils arrive by school or public transport and because parents are supportive. Some of them travel a considerable distance. Unauthorised absences are well below the national average. Pupils with special educational needs have similar attendance to other pupils. Registers are called promptly using electronic registration sheets, which are marked correctly in line with normal requirements. Pupils arrive at school on time and, if lateness occurs, it is nearly always because of transport difficulties. On one day, during the inspection, an accident on the motorway caused many of the pupils from the eastern side of Southampton to be late. However, the high level of attendance and the usually prompt arrival of pupils at school have a positive effect on pupils' attainment and progress.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

19. The quality of teaching and learning in the majority of lessons is good. In 62 per cent of the lessons seen teaching was at least good or better, and in 22 per cent it was very good or better. The remainder were judged to be satisfactory apart from a minority of lessons some six per cent. The best lessons were characterised by: teachers confident in their subject knowledge; effective planning with focused teaching objectives; good class management; and good use of time, learning support staff and resources.
20. The few lessons judged to be unsatisfactory or poor were chiefly characterised by low expectations, resulting in limited learning. Work was not matched closely enough to the individual needs of different pupils because it was either insufficiently challenging for higher attaining pupils or at too high a level for lower attaining pupils. A few examples were seen in English, science, information technology and music. St George is a small school and within the classes there is a wide range of attainment. Inconsistencies in behaviour were often linked to the quality of

teaching, pace and level of work set. Teachers' management skills, though satisfactory, are not yet always fully effective in engaging the small but significant minority of pupils who in a few lessons are disruptive, for example in English, science and design and technology at Key Stage 4. The many temporary staff changes have affected teacher continuity. This, the poor accommodation in some specialist areas and the building works have had a detrimental impact on standards, teaching and learning.

21. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge. All teachers show a good range of basic teaching skills although information technology is insufficiently addressed across the curriculum. The use of subject specific terms is a good feature of most lessons. Teachers develop literacy and numeracy skills appropriately. Some good examples of discussion, debate, sharing of opinions and views and group work were seen in several English, history and art lessons. However, this is not a general strength of teaching. Planning is generally good and effective and is reinforced through the schemes of work.
22. Expectations of pupils' learning are satisfactory. In the best lessons teachers set challenging tasks, as in English, mathematics, science and geography. Work is usually matched to the ability of the pupils. The range of teaching methods, used, although satisfactory, is too often teacher directed and does not always encourage pupil participation sufficiently. Pupils responded best when there were a variety of activities, including practical work and discussion. Explanations are clear and questioning is effective. The school recognises that a wider range of effective teaching strategies will raise standards further. A range of visits and visitors to the school enhances the curriculum and promotes pupils' learning.
23. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is generally satisfactory. Teachers are aware of the special needs of pupils and take them into account in preparation of work and by giving additional support during lessons. Where a few pupils with the greatest deficiencies in reading are withdrawn from classes to receive additional tuition, they learn well. Specialist teaching using a structured reading programme to develop word skills is effective. Good relationships and good teaching promote confidence, and very positive attitudes encourage pupils to work hard and strive to achieve. There are plentiful examples across the curriculum that pupils with special educational needs also make generally good progress where they are well supported in classes by learning support assistants.
24. Teachers generally use their time efficiently through careful planning and well-managed lessons. In design and technology, the double lesson proved too long for some pupils, especially those of lower attainment, and some lessons were seen to end before time. Appropriate resources are used to support pupils' learning. Insufficient use is made of information technology to support other subjects.
25. On-going assessment of pupils' learning needs and developmental needs is satisfactory at Key Stage 3 and is good at Key Stage 4. Most teachers give continuous feedback, support and encouragement. This enables pupils to improve their learning. Assessment data and end of key stage results are effectively analysed but are not yet used consistently. Teachers over-estimate pupils' attainment in science at Level 6. Homework is set inconsistently and marking ranges from useful comments to none. Homework is used well by some teachers and then makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning.

26. Pupils settle well to the activities set by the teacher. Productivity is appropriate although in some information technology lessons older pupils regard time in the computer room as more of a recreation and, for example, were unwilling to do much work on questionnaires for their design and technology work.
27. In the majority of lessons pupils gain and advance in their knowledge, skills and understanding. Learning is good at both key stages. Older pupils are more involved with their own learning and demonstrate well-developed learning skills. Pupils explore ideas at appropriate levels. Pupils' intellectual, physical and creative efforts are developing appropriately well. Most pupils work with concentration and show interest and are encouraged by good relationships and a positive attitude to learning. When given the opportunity pupils work well together, in small groups, in pairs or as individuals. Teachers clearly state the learning objective for each lesson, and these are shared with the pupils. Older pupils have a greater understanding of what is required for them to improve their learning.
28. The learning of pupils with special educational needs is good in mathematics, science, information technology and geography, satisfactory in English and history but unsatisfactory in music. There are examples of particularly good learning in art, design and technology and physical education. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Individual education and behaviour plans are effective in ensuring that teachers know the needs of particular pupils, but subject teachers do not always develop sufficiently subject specific targets for these pupils. The school has a high number of pupils with English as an additional language (EAL). The language competence of these pupils is sufficient, and does not impede their learning.

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

29. The curriculum has sufficient breadth and balance. However, the National Curriculum requirement for control technology is not taught in design and technology. The school is developing the work-related curriculum and already has in place a successful National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) in building studies in Key Stage 4. Higher attaining pupils are entered early for GCSE in art and mathematics. This allows them to extend their learning and gain additional qualifications during Year 11. Because of limited indoor physical education accommodation, the opportunity to learn gymnastics is restricted. The foundation course in Year 7 is unsatisfactory because planning is too loose and teachers have insufficient guidance about aims and targets. The school is discontinuing this course. Improvements to timetabling have been made since the last inspection. There are some problems with the spread of lessons during the week in English, French and history.
30. Extra-curricular activities are satisfactory overall and good in physical education. Well over half of all boys participate in a sports club. There is a small but active choir and a well attended daily homework club. Pupils are offered the chance to gain the Trident Gold Award in Year 10. Many pupils attain it by undertaking a successful work experience, completing a personal challenge and participating in some voluntary work in the community.

31. Provision for teaching literacy is satisfactory overall with good contributions from some subjects, notably geography. The school has begun to make arrangements to co-ordinate literacy across the school, but these have yet to be implemented and weakness in literacy among lower attaining pupils is not yet consistently addressed throughout the school. Teachers are training for delivery of the National Numeracy Strategy, and are planning implementation for Year 7 next year.
32. The school ensures that pupils with special educational need have full access to all activities, opportunities and events. Staff provide good role models who make moral expectations explicit.
33. Some pupils do not receive their full information technology entitlement in Years 8 and 10. Plans for the development of information technology skills through other subjects of the curriculum have not been successfully implemented because of a shortage of computers and lack of teacher expertise.
34. The school has successfully addressed the equal opportunities issues raised in the last inspection report. Any pupil who wishes to take German as a second language may begin in Year 8. There is a satisfactory range of options at Key Stage 4, including a work-related course and there are plans to introduce General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) this September. The placing of all lower attaining pupils in single award science at Key Stage 4 is now discontinued. The school has plans to offer all pupils dual award science. Because of insufficient computers, not all pupils who opt for GCSE information technology have their choice met.
35. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is satisfactory. Materials are good and well matched to the age of pupils. The police assist with the drug education programme. Sex education is co-ordinated with science and follows the policy of the governing body. At Key Stage 3, PSHE largely focuses on personal relationships but there is careers input in Year 9 which looks at subject choices and job pathways. In Key Stage 4, there is a significant careers element. Time is spent preparing for and evaluating work experience. Opportunities post-16 are well reviewed using JIG-CAL and speakers from colleges and training organisations.
36. Careers education is good. The PSHE input is enhanced through a well-attended Year 10 'Looking Forward' evening where future options are discussed with pupils and their parents. In partnership with Rotary, the school offers pupils the opportunity for 'mock' job interviews. Some 30 pupils applied this year. There is a well stocked and well-used careers area in the library and careers software is present on the school's internet for use by pupils.
37. The school enjoys constructive relationships with feeder primary schools. For example, there have been joint training days on teaching methods and special educational needs. Pastoral links are strong and this helps promote the smooth transfer of pupils. The school promotes good dialogue with colleges and training organisations through PSHE and careers.
38. The school is beginning to make use of the local environment to enhance the curriculum and it has plans for further work. Strong links with a local motor company have provided opportunities for design and technology pupils to visit the factory and arrangements are being made for information and communication technology pupils to use the company's robotics laboratory. Plans are also being made for GCSE geography classes to undertake studies there. The school

environment, Southampton City and a nearby beach are all well used by geography for fieldwork. There are visits to the First World War battlefields to enhance the teaching of twentieth century history.

39. Provision for pupils' personal development is good. At the last inspection provision was judged to be very good. Religious education has not been inspected on this occasion. Opportunities for spiritual and social development are good. There is very good moral provision and cultural provision is satisfactory.
40. The school's aims include clear objectives for promoting spiritual, moral and social opportunities. Parents support the school's beliefs and values and their view of the school as a caring community is fully justified. Individuals are valued and given a wide range of support. This ranges from excellent provision for liturgies, masses and counselling by the chaplain, and an improved pastoral system since the last inspection, to the provision of daily breakfasts. Pupils are well inducted into the Catholic ethos of the school. Pupils with a range of special needs are generally well supported. Equal opportunities are promoted, as in a Year 9 PSHE lesson and an annual Year 9 industry day.
41. The school fully meets the requirements for a daily act of collective worship through assemblies and tutor times. However, opportunities are missed to improve the quality of assemblies, for example through pupil participation and the use of music.
42. Spiritual provision is good overall. There is very good provision for pupils to explore their beliefs and values through annual retreats for all years and a biennial trip to Spain. There are high quality opportunities for reflection and both individual and community participation in religious liturgies and masses, some of which are voluntary and are very well supported. Opportunities for reflecting on self and on others occur in history, where the Holocaust is well-taught, and in English and history where empathy skills are fostered through studying slavery and writing poetry on war. Pupils consider the Niagara Falls with awe and wonder in geography and sensitively reflect on suffering in symbolism in art. Overall, however, a spiritual focus in lessons is left to chance rather than planned.
43. Moral provision is very good. The school's good moral code and Catholic ethos provide the setting in which good behaviour is promoted well through the life of the school. Mutual respect among pupils and with adults is fostered. Staff generally have high expectations of behaviour as in science, art and modern foreign languages. Prefects and staff are generally good role models. Studies of moral issues in geography and English are well-managed as Year 8 pupils focus on riches and poverty and the ethics of advertising.
44. Social provision is good. The school promotes very good opportunities for pupils to assume responsibilities, as in the Year 7 foundation course, Year 8 guides for visitors, the work of the Quality Council for Years 9 to 11 and the role and training of Year 11 prefects. Relationships are good. A team and community spirit is fostered well through liturgies, year group and subject trips and a trip to Westminster for the Quality Council. An appropriate range of clubs, including sports, is provided. Generous support for charities is co-ordinated by lower school pupils and this includes an ongoing link with Bamenda in Cameroon and fund-raising for particular local and personal needs. Parish links have improved since the last inspection. There are also strong community links through work experience, Year 11 interviews with the rotary club, mentoring by local businesses to motivate pupils and

technology links with a local motor company. There are some good opportunities through paired and individual work to develop effective collaborative and team work in science, information technology, physical education, geography and English. However, pupils are generally not given sufficient opportunities to take the initiative and assume responsibilities in lessons.

45. Cultural provision is satisfactory overall, although there is a lack of focus on celebrating different cultures within the school. This was a concern at the last inspection. Regular French and German exchanges, technology visits, annual Year 7 visits, for example to Kew, and music events this year help pupils to appreciate their own and European cultures. The internet is used well to foster understanding of local and overseas cultures. There is also a required world focus in art, music and English.
46. There is no explicit focus for spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision in curriculum planning. 'Time Trial' and 'The Dreamer' were very successful innovations this year which promoted a team and community spirit and created good opportunities for spiritual, moral and cultural reflection. The school plans to build on these successes, including raising the profile of expressive arts.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

47. The school provides and cares for its pupils well and, as in the last inspection, considerable importance is attached to caring for pupils. The monitoring of pupils' academic performance and personal development and the educational and personal support and guidance, are good. Procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are satisfactory.
48. The school has proper child protection procedures and a designated officer, who is also responsible for the school's befriending and counselling service. Staff receive formal training and are kept informed of child protection issues. The school has a good relationship with the education welfare service, and with the local authority social services department. At any one time there are always a small number of pupils on the 'at risk' register.
49. Overall, the procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare are satisfactory. There are good procedures for the management of pupils who are sick or who receive injuries while at school. An appropriate number of members of staff have received training in first-aid. Procedures are in place for recording accidents and for ensuring that pupils needing medication while at school receive it. Good procedures are in place for safety on school trips. A senior teacher with overall responsibility carries out risk assessment and, before major school trips, a parents' meeting is held so that queries can be raised and dealt with. Because a number of pupils arrive at the school early, due to the bus schedules, breakfast is available for them at school, an example of the school's caring ethos. The local education authority has recently carried out a full health and safety audit of the school. A number of issues were identified, many of which relate to the age and state of the premises, which need to be addressed. It has instructed the school to draw up a health and safety action plan. The first recommendation was to appoint a co-ordinator with responsibility for health and safety matters which has been done.
50. The school has very good procedures in place for monitoring attendance. An electronic programme is used for recording attendance. Procedures for recording

lateness are very effective and involve pupils signing a lateness sheet under the supervision of a senior member of staff. Pupils with attendance problems are known well by the school and first day contact is made if any of these pupils fail to turn up. Registers are called before lessons in each class to identify any post registration truancy, which is rare. The school has a close relationship with the education welfare officer, who visits the school regularly.

51. Procedures in place for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are good. There is a comprehensive behaviour policy in place with a wide range of both merits and detentions available. Recording merits, as well as detentions in pupils' diaries encourages good behaviour. The school has a process whereby it informs parents in writing of any particularly good work or behaviour by a pupil. A few of the pupils from Years 7, 8 and 9, on interview, said that the awards 'weren't worth it!'. Merits can also be taken away for inappropriate behaviour. Instances of poor behaviour are logged. Forms are sent by the relevant teacher to the head of department, form tutor or head of year as appropriate, with a copy to the head of special educational needs. Since returning to the local education authority, the school has started to use the Pupil Support Service. Fixed term or permanent exclusion is only used as a last resort.
52. The school is in the process of reviewing its anti-bullying policy. This has now been redrafted and has gone through a full consultation process with staff, pupils and parents. During the inspection, the result of this consultation was seen being discussed by the form and year tutors and being the subject of a questionnaire for pupils in PSHE lessons. Ultimately the school aims to have a 'no blame approach' as one of a range of strategies used. The school takes the issue of bullying very seriously and is doing all it can to try to eliminate it, and no major instances were observed during the inspection.
53. The school's procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory, but the resulting information is not used consistently and effectively to inform and guide curricular planning. A wide range of assessments are used during pupils' progress through the school, starting before the end of Year 6 at primary school. Tests are recorded using an electronic program and assessment levels are communicated to parents and pupils through the school's reporting system, each term, if no major problem is identified. Baseline assessments include Key Stage 2 results and Cognitive Assessment Test (CAT) scores, but the effectiveness of assessment across the school is teacher dependent. For example, the assessment in design and technology is good at Key Stage 3 and very good at Key Stage 4, while in music it is poor. In mathematics, assessments are made each term using tests, class work, homework and projects. Overall, the system is extensive for collecting and tabulating data and using a good range of information but there is too little reference to National Curriculum levels. While there is sound benchmarking, predictions based on this process are less than adequate. In the Year 7 foundation course, pupils' self-assessment has good features but the quality of marking work, across the school, is inconsistent.
54. Procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress are satisfactory and those for monitoring personal development are good. All information is collected on pupils as they pass through the school. Pupils are known well by their form tutors, the heads of departments and the heads of years. This enables information on individual pupils to be shared and acted upon, where a problem arises. The pastoral care

provided by the school is good. It is supplemented well by the befriending and counselling services given by the school chaplain. This service is available not only for pupils but also for staff and parents. The school also uses the service of two independent counsellors and, where necessary, will access the local education authority's own support service.

55. The statutory requirements for the special educational needs Code of Practice are complied with, including the carrying out of annual reviews. All individual education plans are scheduled for termly review; this is good practice. Through their link teachers, each department has access to pupil information for all staff including academic profiles which monitor progress of pupils with special educational. Testing of Year 7 pupils together with primary school records and liaison, ensure that appropriate provision is made as soon as possible. Procedures for the inclusion of pupils on the register of special educational needs are clear. There is limited provision for the needs of those pupils whose reading is poor. Tracking and analysis of pupils' progress is good and demonstrates the effectiveness of the work of the department. Pupils make sufficient progress for almost half to be removed from the register of special educational needs each year.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

56. The parents' overall views of the school are positive. The school's links with parents are effective and the impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is good.
57. Information from the parents' meeting and questionnaire show that the parents have a positive view of the school. The great majority of parents, many of whom live a considerable distance away, choose to send their children to this school. They are mostly aware that the school has good GCSE results. The majority of parents think that pupils are making good progress, that the teaching is good and that the school expects pupils to work hard and achieve their best. They also believe that the school helps pupils to become mature and responsible. They expressed some concern about behaviour, the inconsistency of homework and the range of activities outside lessons. The few parents who commented on the backs of questionnaires raised a wide range of issues including concerns about the management, the behaviour of pupils and the lack of response to concerns raised. On inspection the positive views of parents were confirmed.
58. The school provides parents with a wide range of good quality information about the school and about pupils' progress at the school. The information includes a full and comprehensive school prospectus and a detailed annual report from the governing body, both of which contain the relevant statutory information. The school also sends out regular newsletters, which keep parents informed about events and parents' evenings at the school. To ensure that these newsletters reach parents there is a return slip to confirm that the parent has received it. There are regular meetings and communications with parents to inform them about their children's progress. This information is also recorded on progress sheets and full reports. The progress sheets issued in the autumn and spring term give a summary of pupils' progress at those times, while the end-of-year reports are full and comprehensive and contain the statutory information on attendance. However, information on future targets is not yet fully developed. Parents are also kept fully informed about curricular and other matters. An example is the parents' evening held to inform parents about the NVQ course available to Year 10 and 11 pupils,

and this is followed up by an opportunity to visit the City College to talk to tutors responsible for running the course. The school also holds a parents' evening when planning a major school trip so that any safety and other concerns can be answered.

59. Despite the school's wide catchment area some parents are able to make a good contribution to children's learning at school. For instance parents respond to requests to help in the school with the foundation course. A number of parents also accompany pupils on school trips. Although there is an inconsistency in the use of the school diaries, where they are used, parents enter comments and sign them in the appropriate places and, in that respect, are involved with pupils' work at home. The 'Friends' of St George School are active in supporting the school and raise funds for buying equipment. Among their annual events is the Summer Fayre at which pupils also run a stall. Parents, who run businesses, donate vouchers to the events. Parental links are also much in evidence where a pupil has a problem, whether behavioural or otherwise. Parents are kept informed, as well as being asked to attend meetings at the school and to be a party to any contract between school, pupil and home. In this respect, the befriending and counselling service run by the school chaplain plays a positive role. He personally attends any such meetings as well as attending statement reviews.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

60. Governors are very supportive of the school. Since the last inspection the school has moved from being grant maintained to voluntary aided. Over half of governors are new to the school, new terms of reference and an effective committee structure are in place. They are developing as a team and fulfil their responsibilities well. Governors are fully involved and informed of developments through the headteacher and through their designated links and visits to the school. Statutory requirements are not fully met in only one aspect of curriculum provision, namely control in design and technology. Plans to address this are in place. Governors bring a wealth of expertise to the school which is harnessed to good advantage. They understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are starting to be involved in monitoring and evaluation. Their strategic role has increased considerably; the change of governors and the reorganisation of the governing body committees mean that they have yet to produce a five-year strategic plan. Since the last inspection, the management of special educational needs has been rationalised and improved, however, the deployment of staff has yet to be considered. The school operates a very successful policy of full integration, which is a very good feature of the school.
61. The headteacher has been in post for 16 months. Her leadership has been positive and she has skilfully ensured a clear educational direction founded upon a secure belief in the future success of the school. She has very clear focused goals, has raised the morale of staff and engendered the trust of staff, parents and pupils at a time of significant change for the school. The school has clearly stated appropriate aims and is largely successful in achieving them. The strategic direction of the school is focused on improving pupils' attainment, teaching and learning.
62. Once in post the headteacher successfully set about rebuilding the collapsed infrastructure of the school management systems, including administration and financial management. Changes to the structure of senior management have led to it being reduced from a team of seven to a headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior teacher. Both the deputy headteacher and senior teacher welcome the

challenges that their more demanding roles bring. They are willing and are beginning to develop in their management responsibilities. This was not required of them under the previous management. Due to the previous lack of experience and opportunities afforded, senior managers do not yet ensure rigour in areas of their delegated responsibility. This is also true of those in middle management positions. Staff have experienced considerable changes from a non-consultative management to an empowering one, and for some this transition has been difficult. The improved monitoring and evaluation has highlighted areas of weakness in management. The emphasis the headteacher has placed on developing management responsibilities at all levels as a major priority for further improvement and the professional development of staff are beginning to address these weaknesses. Consistent and rigorous accountability by those with management responsibilities for the effectiveness of standards, teaching, learning, curriculum and whole school policies are rightly being recognised as priorities.

63. The school develops and implements academic and curricular targets. Heads of Year have been appointed since the last inspection. Staff continue to develop a range of skills at all levels to manage the challenging behaviour of a significant minority of pupils. Further work has yet to be done to implement the pastoral policy consistently across the school. The school's strategy for appraisal and performance management is, overall, satisfactory.
64. The urgent need to address staff development has meant a shift in immediate priorities. As a result, some targets in the school development plan have been completed. Timescales and priorities for development have been adjusted to get the best practice in the school at both management and classroom level. The overall performance of the school is monitored within a positive framework; the priorities for development are good. Staff work together developing whole school policies, which link into educational improvement and ensure pupils' learning, as for example the teaching and learning group. Standards have also been agreed for the classroom, behaviour, teaching and learning so that progress can be measured.
65. Staff expectations of their own professional development have been raised through working with the headteacher and this has enabled them. Departments produce useful action plans which take account of performance and whole school targets for development. However, the sharing of good practice across the school is still developing. Assessment data is collected but it is not yet used formally or consistently to support teaching and learning, and to raise teacher expectations. The action taken to meet the school's targets is good.
66. The match of qualifications and experience of teachers to the school's curriculum is satisfactory. However, the school has suffered from temporary staff shortages, particularly in science and physical education, which have affected standards. The science department is well supported by technicians. The well managed learning support assistant team is a strength in enhancing pupils' learning and ensuring their welfare. Improved identification and a greater number of pupils with special educational needs have resulted in an increased demand for specialist teachers which is not met. Staffing is not generally sufficient to allow all pupils with limited reading to have remedial teaching from a specialist teacher. The special educational needs co-ordinator has other timetabled duties which reduce her availability to teach pupils with special educational needs and to manage the department. Arrangements for the professional development and performance management of staff are good. The school has close links now with the local

education authority and all departments have linked with inspectors, and the school is in its second year of self-evaluation. A good draft staff development policy is in place. Training is planned, and after consultation it is linked to the priorities of the school and personal professional development. The school has several initial trainee teachers. Currently there are three newly qualified teachers and several teachers are new to the school. Induction is generally satisfactory although in the music department aspects are unsatisfactory. During the inspection, several posts were being covered by temporary staff due to various long-term and temporary absences, and particularly effectively in history.

Accommodation

67. Since the last inspection there have been substantial alterations and refurbishment to the building to improve the accommodation which had suffered from long-term neglect and lack of investment. The science and technology building has undergone refurbishment and an additional technology classroom has been built. An additional temporary classroom has slightly improved music facilities. Minor improvements have been made to one art studio. Another still suffers from inadequate lighting and both lack sufficient storage areas. Funding has been made available to improve the condition of the gym. Accommodation for special educational needs for interviews, withdrawal and storage is poor and adversely affects the overall quality and quantity of supportive learning experiences on offer to pupils. Overcrowding restricts pupils' access to resources including information technology provision in the special educational needs office. Disabled access to most parts of the school is satisfactory but some curriculum areas still cannot be reached. The overall quality and size of the accommodation is detrimental to teaching and learning and constrains the learning in art, music, physical education and special educational needs. The school is in discussion with the local education authority and diocese board with regard to further improvements. The accommodation is adequate, and the school is clean and well maintained. Display, which celebrates pupils' achievement, is inadequate in many classrooms. In public areas it is better.

Resources

68. The school has rectified all the insufficient resources in curriculum areas which were mentioned in the last inspection report. Budget funding has been enhanced by grants from the Department for Education and Employment, which have enabled departments' capitation to remain at the same level this year as in the previous year, and to provide funding for the refurbishment of the science and design and technology block. Any surplus or excess on budgets is appropriately carried forward.
69. Provision for learning resources is at present satisfactory overall and is adequate to meet the curriculum needs in most subjects. Although improvements have been made in music, the department still has insufficient untuned percussion to meet the National Curriculum requirements and insufficient text books to support teaching and learning at Key Stage 3. Many subjects lack computer access in their departments. The low level of use of information technology in lessons limits the progress which pupils with special educational needs can make. There is opportunity for access to computer spelling programs in lunchtimes and pupils use this opportunity well.

70. The learning resource centre has moved to a larger room since the last inspection, when it was described as very small. There is an appropriate range of books but they are small in number and there is some limitation in access. Stocks are enhanced by loans from the local education authority library service, as at the last inspection. Statistics for borrowing from the library show that it is very low at Key Stage 4 compared with Key Stage 3. Its use during the week of the inspection was restricted because of GCSE oral examinations in adjacent rooms.
71. Excellent use is made of the local environment by the geography department – the school, the motorway, the airport, Marwell zoo and Christchurch Bay. Good use is made of Winchester Cathedral by the history department. Visits take place to local exhibitions and art galleries.
72. The finance committee monitors expenditure closely to ensure that resources are used to improve standards. The principles of best value are adhered to and applied when purchases are made.

Finance and efficiency

73. Since the appointment of the current bursar, just under a year ago, the school has introduced a five-year financial plan, which enables it to plan ahead. The school has good financial arrangements in place, with the bursar being responsible for the day-to-day monitoring of the school's finances. The educational priorities of the school are well supported through the school's financial planning. The finance and premises committee of the governing body usually meets twice for every full meeting of the board, and the bursar produces print-outs for all these meetings to keep governors up-to-date with the state of the school's finances. Departments, the headteacher and the finance committee receive monthly statements of expenditure. The governing body reports to parents about the provision and effectiveness of work for pupils with special educational needs appropriately and efficiently. Spending to meet special educational needs in subjects is not identified.
74. A small amount is carried forward each year but this remains constant, so that pupils at the school during any one financial year receive the benefit of the whole of any one-year's budget. The bursar and the chairman of the finance and premises committee monitor expenditure regularly. Fifteen per cent of the school's capital spending on premises comes from the diocese, which recoups this from the parents.
75. The school's accounts have recently been audited and the school still has two weeks before it has to reply to the comments and recommendations made in that audit. Most of the recommendations relevant to the school's needs are in the process of being put in place. The current arrangements are the most appropriate. Overall, the school applies the principle of best value well.
76. The school has a leasing arrangement in place for its information technology equipment, which is due to end next year. There is also a leasing arrangement on-going for the security and other equipment. The school receives only a small amount in specific grants and this is used appropriately. The level of administrative staffing at the school is small and works effectively. Taking into account the contextual factors of the school, its overall effectiveness and examination results as against the unit cost being in the upper quartile for secondary schools, the school provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

77. In order to raise further standards of work and quality of education provided, the governors, headteacher and senior managers should:

1) Improve standards of attainment by:

- fulfilling the National Curriculum requirements for music and for information technology across the curriculum;
- focusing on the improved use of information technology across the curriculum and providing staff development in its use;
- meeting statutory requirements for control in design and technology, at both key stages.

The school has plans to address these matters in the school development plan.

2) Develop the role of senior and middle managers by:

- ensuring rigour and consistency in areas of their delegated responsibility, requiring them to improve monitoring and evaluation of what needs to be done and helping the teachers to do it. (Paragraphs 62, 64).

3) Use assessment information effectively so that it supports teaching and curriculum planning. (Paragraphs 53, 65, 83, 95, 125, 135, 153).

4) Improve the accommodation particularly in the specialist areas of art, music, physical education and special educational needs. (Paragraphs 67, 101, 107, 154, 161).

The school is working in close partnership with the local education authority and diocese over this.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	156
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	40

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	20	40	32	4	2	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	685
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	67

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	120

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	58

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.7
National comparative data	7.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	1.1

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	154	n/a	154

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	112	118	102
	Girls	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	112	118	102
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	73 (70)	77 (76)	66 (68)
	National	63 (65)	62 (60)	55 (56)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	27 (28)	48 (50)	19 (40)
	National	28 (35)	38 (36)	23 (27)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	112	133	106
	Girls	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	112	133	106
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	73 (67)	86 (81)	69 (67)
	National	64 (62)	64 (64)	60 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	39 (37)	45 (54)	37 (35)
	National	31(31)	37 (37)	28 (31)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	125	n/a	125

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	74 (97)	120 (118)	124 (125)
	Girls	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	74 (97)	120 (118)	124 (125)
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	59 (56)	97 (98)	100 (100)
	National	47 (46)	90 (88)	96 (93)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	41 (43)
	National	38 (37)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	1
Indian	6
Pakistani	4
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	212
Any other minority ethnic group	460

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7– Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	41.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.6
Average class size	21

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	330

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other	3	
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	40	
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

Financial information

Financial year	1999
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	£
Total income	1871688
Total expenditure	1898895
Expenditure per pupil	2769
Balance brought forward from previous year	92581
Balance carried forward to next year	65374

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	685
Number of questionnaires returned	100

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	26	52	14	8	0
My child is making good progress in school.	38	39	13	4	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	19	42	23	10	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	16	41	24	16	2
The teaching is good.	21	58	16	1	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	24	45	22	7	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	33	43	18	3	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	32	12	2	4
The school works closely with parents.	10	48	34	4	4
The school is well led and managed.	19	41	20	10	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	34	42	13	7	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	17	29	26	10	17

Other issues raised by parents

Some 24 written comments were also received from parents. Many were very positive about the standards achieved and the good quality teaching. A few were concerned about declining standards, a lack of communication between school and parents and inconsistencies in setting homework.

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

ENGLISH

78. Standards in national tests for fourteen-year-olds and at GCSE are above national average levels. The overall standard of work observed during the inspection was also above national average levels, though its quality was less consistent, particularly among lower-attaining pupils. This variation reflects variations in the quality of learning in English lessons, which is generally very good among higher-attaining pupils and satisfactory among those of lower attainment. Standards in national tests reached by pupils joining the school had been falling over the three years prior to the inspection, and were below national average levels in 1999. The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. The learning of pupils with English as an additional language is satisfactory overall, and good where teachers or other pupils speak the pupils' first language to a good level.
79. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in English lessons are generally good, but range from very good among almost all higher-attaining pupils, to unsatisfactory among a minority of lower-attaining pupils, who are too easily distracted from their work. Pupils throughout the school respond well to a strong and clear lead from their teacher. They have good attitudes to homework and to GCSE coursework.
80. Standards in reading and writing are above national average levels overall. Teachers' emphasis on organising writing into paragraphs, and on critical examination of texts in reading, enables pupils to write well-constructed essays and stories, and to support arguments well with evidence from texts. The quality of learning is most consistent at Key Stage 4, where it benefits from well-planned lessons, with well-chosen themes, such as the personal experience of war, and very good marking. Higher-attaining pupils learn well at Key Stage 3, but there are inconsistencies in the learning and progress of lower-attaining pupils, particularly in spelling and in learning more complex words in reading. Work at Key Stage 3 is marked consistently, but weaknesses, particularly among lower-attaining pupils, are not always followed up and dealt with in later work. While the learning of pupils with special educational needs is good in some individual cases, and satisfactory overall, some pupils with spelling difficulties are not making the progress they should.
81. In most lessons, pupils make constructive contributions to discussion. They work well in groups, paying attention to each other, listen well to teachers' questions, and give relevant and often perceptive answers. In a significant minority of lessons, however, the development of speaking and listening skills among lower-attaining pupils is hampered by weak concentration, and occasionally by misbehaviour. Overall, speaking and listening skills observed during the inspection were in line with those seen in most schools nationally and did not reflect the above-average standards seen during the last inspection.
82. The quality of teaching ranges from excellent to satisfactory, and is good overall. With some exceptions, teaching is most successful with higher-attaining pupils, who respond well to its carefully structured intellectual challenge, supported by well-designed, short tasks and carried through at a brisk pace. Teaching successfully uses structures which enables lower-attaining pupils to learn at a satisfactory pace, and has good emphasis on aspects of English, such as note-making, which contribute to success at GCSE. However, learning tasks in these lessons are not

always matched closely enough to individual learning needs to ensure a good rate of progress among pupils with literacy problems. Teachers' management skills are satisfactory, although sometimes they are not fully effective in engaging the small but significant minority of pupils who only work at a satisfactory pace in response to a particularly strong lead.

83. GCSE courses in English and English Literature are well-organised and contribute to high standards. However, the scheme of work and assessment procedures at Key Stage 3 do not match work closely enough to individual learning needs, and do not use National Curriculum level descriptions to track and promote progress. Resources are adequate, but the school makes very little use of information and communication technology in teaching English, and pupils have limited access to the school library. The newly appointed head of department is addressing these issues in the context of the revised National Curriculum, and has appropriate priorities for her role in the co-ordination of literacy work in the school. Work in English is enhanced by a good programme of theatre and cinema visits, and a lunchtime learning club is well attended by pupils wishing to practise their literacy skills.

MATHEMATICS

84. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is well above the national average, and well above results for similar schools, judged by the proportions of pupils reaching National Curriculum Level 6 and above and at least Level 5. The average points score is also well above the national average. At the end of Key Stage 4, the percentage of GCSE A* to C grades is well above the national and similar schools averages, the average points score and percentage of GCSE passes are also above national results. The standards achieved in mathematics are a strength of the school.
85. The analysis of pupils' work and observation of lessons show that achievement improves as pupils progress through the school, being highest in this Year 10 cohort, many of whom were preparing to take GCSE mathematics this year as an early entry. Evidence of the quality of Year 11 work was seen in the GCSE coursework, with some very interesting and innovative investigations, such as finding a formula for the gradient of curves. Many pupils who achieve higher level GCSE grades in Year 10 also take statistics in Year 11, an improvement since the last inspection, and they achieve very good results, with 100 per cent higher grade passes after a year's course.
86. The prior attainment profile of cohorts varies, with Year 7 being lower than others, though their Key Stage 2 results are still slightly above national expectations. Setting by prior attainment increasingly throughout Key Stage 3 helps all pupils improve. Lower attaining pupils are in smaller groups, often with learning support assistants as well as the teacher providing valuable individual help with specific difficulties. There is an emphasis for all pupils on developing numeracy, with frequent mental calculation practice and number bond recognition 'starters' to lessons, for example the game 'Countdown'. Games are used to advantage to promote interest and enthusiasm and develop understanding in many topics, for example in Year 8 Probability with a 'Horse Race' game with two dice, and in another lesson coin tossing, recording results and drawing bar charts. Year 9 pupils are stretched and challenged with set 1 (highest attainers) they solve simultaneous

equations algebraically as well as drawing graphs, sets 2 and 3 learn about and use Trigonometry, and set 4 (average prior attainment) understand and use Pythagoras' Theorem.

87. The majority of teachers are very well qualified and experienced, and all teaching is satisfactory or better, with about three quarters being good or better and about a quarter being very good. All teachers show interest and enthusiasm for mathematics, and this is reflected in most pupils' excellent attitudes to mathematics, which improve with age and maturity. On the whole there are very good relationships between pupils and teachers, relaxed and friendly but disciplined, with evident mutual respect. Teachers have good pupil management skills, and behaviour in lessons is very good. Pupils usually maintain concentration throughout lessons, especially where there are a variety of activities, including practical work and discussion in pairs. The best lessons end with a summary, and review of pupils' learning, volunteered from them, with good time management allowing a fast pace and an ordered dismissal.
88. Planning and preparation of lessons is good, aided by very comprehensive schemes of work, compiled jointly by the department, and used well as a working document. The majority of pupils have their own text book, frequently and willingly used, an improvement since the last inspection. There is still no provision for the use of computers within the department and limited access to the whole school facility, which prevents the effective delivery of the information technology component of the National Curriculum. Apart from this element, the full range of the National Curriculum is covered well, including the skills of using and applying mathematics to all topics, seen in lessons as well as in separate investigations. There are termly assessments including end of topic tests, classwork and homework, which is completed conscientiously by most pupils, and marked regularly by teachers, often with constructive comments. Classwork though is rarely marked by teachers and books show poor presentation and less order, with no comments for pupils to know how to improve. This was commented on in the last inspection, and the one before that, and has still not been addressed. There is some development towards pupils' self-assessment, but targets for improvement are not made explicit.
89. Monitoring of teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection, with the help of the local education authority and at the instigation of the headteacher. The head of department has observed some lessons this year, and has scrutinised a sample of books, with rigorous monitoring of the newly qualified teacher and the initial teacher trainee. There is a good assessment system of pupils' tests, projects and homework, with termly reports, and teachers' mark books are well kept up to date. The handbook has some very well written policies, such as mathematics across the curriculum with guidelines on drawing many types of graph, but needs updating. Storage facilities have not improved since the last inspection, and prevent easy access to the many good resources. Display was commented on in the last inspection, and although facilities are now good, more pupils' on-going or past work needs to be displayed. Stability within the mathematics department has been an advantage over several years, with a suite of five classrooms and an office, albeit on two floors, and a core of three very good teachers with departmental or whole school responsibilities.

SCIENCE

90. Attainment in science is above national averages at Level 5 at the end of Key Stage 3 and this is confirmed by assessment tests. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 6 and above is slightly below national figures. In 1999, 68 per cent of pupils passed GCSE with grade A* to C which is above national figures and the school average. The average points score for science and the number of boys attaining grades A* to F are also above national figures. These results have been similar over the last three years although there has been a small fall in the numbers attaining an A* grade.
91. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils have a good understanding of biology, chemistry and physics. Pupils make good progress during this key stage. Written work, criticised in the last report, is now of a good standard with accurately labelled diagrams. Practical skills are satisfactory and pupils work safely when handling apparatus. They have a clear understanding of a 'fair test' and can make predictions based on sound science. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils have further extended their knowledge and understanding in all areas of science and they make good progress. Pupils' practical skills are good and they work with a high degree of independence. GCSE practical projects are of a good standard overall with higher attaining pupils often gaining maximum marks.
92. At both key stages, pupils' literacy is well promoted. They have a very good command of technical language. They write well in short sentences but have too few opportunities to write longer, in depth, accounts. Numeracy is also well promoted. Pupils can accurately express results as graphs and use the correct scientific units. Wherever possible, pupils are encouraged to use knowledge gained in mathematics lessons in science. The last report found that there was poor use of computers in science; this is still the case. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in science because they are well supported by learning support assistants and by well constructed written material that meets their needs. Higher attaining pupils are not always given sufficient challenge to enable them to gain the top grades.
93. Overall, pupils' attitudes are satisfactory. They enjoy science, are keen to answer questions and enjoy good relations with their peers and the teachers. At Key Stage 3, pupils behave well in many lessons but in one quarter behaviour is unsatisfactory. In these lessons, pupils do not readily listen to the teacher. At Key Stage 4, attitudes are always at least satisfactory and they are good or very good in half of all lessons.
94. Science teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. At Key Stage 3, in two thirds of lessons teaching is satisfactory or better, with one third being very good. The remaining one third of lessons have unsatisfactory teaching. At Key Stage 4, teaching is always satisfactory and in three quarters of lessons it is good or very good. This picture reflects the current staffing difficulties. Although the school has employed temporary staff to cover the absence of regular staff, staff absence has had an adverse effect upon the learning of some pupils. At both key stages, teachers are well qualified and teach to a high standard. Teachers present a good level of challenge to pupils through skilful questioning and effectively planned practical work. Marking, raised in the last report, is now good and teachers' comments clearly show pupils how they can improve. Work sheets are well presented but not always sufficiently demanding for higher attaining pupils. In the

very best lessons seen, learning is accelerated because teaching inspires pupils through well-structured introductions. Clear challenges are set for the lesson. A brisk pace ensures pupils cover a lot of work. Each part of the lesson is clearly linked. There are high expectations for behaviour. In these best lessons pupils review what has been achieved in a lesson summary. In unsatisfactory lessons the teacher wastes too much time getting pupils to be quiet and listen. Introductions do not sufficiently engage pupils and learning targets are not always clear.

95. The management of the department is good. Relations with senior management have greatly improved since the last inspection and are now very good. Regular assessment in science is well used at both key stages to inform pupils of their attainment. The department's comprehensive records of attainment are not sufficiently used to track progress or inform teachers' plans. The laboratories have recently been refurbished and now offer satisfactory accommodation. Teaching and learning is very well supported by the sterling work of a technician. Storage, a problem during the last inspection, is now satisfactory. Some sharing of good classroom practice takes place; marking is regularly reviewed and standards here are rising in some lessons. Some lesson observation has happened but this is yet to have a real impact on standards.

ART

96. Recent GCSE examinations show that results in A* to C grades are above national averages. Pupils are often entered early for GCSE and are successful, most recently this includes A/AS level. In lessons and work seen during the inspection, standards of achievement are in line with national norms by the end of Key Stage 3. In most lessons, pupils develop a satisfactory understanding of different skills and techniques. Pupils use subject-specific terms accurately. As their work progresses, they still rely on second hand resources rather than being sufficiently confident to use original ideas and develop personal interpretations. They are often reliant on the teacher providing stimuli and the way forward. Pupils explore and experiment with a range of media, as for example, in Key Stage 3 when colour mixing for a jungle painting. They draw plants from observation with increasing accuracy, and successfully add features to create an imaginative carnivorous plant; such work is directly influenced by Henri Rousseau. Year 8 pupils, informed by studies of Aboriginal symbolism, construct a modern cardboard symbol design; they realise that art styles and designs can merge to create new ideas. These studies also increase their understanding of positive and negative shapes. Year 9 pupils increase their knowledge of history by looking at images of twentieth century war and the Holocaust. Through drawing or cutting, they simplify these images to produce war recruitment posters. At Key Stage 4, there are good examples of large-scale three-dimensional figurative studies, functional objects, and artefacts. Drawing and painting shows influence from the study of art and artists from different periods and cultures. Some of the critical studies of different artists and research of art from different periods and cultures are of a good standard, particularly those at the end of Key Stage 4. Standards are maintained at Key Stage 4 in Year 10, where pupils build on their knowledge and skills. The leap in progress and attainment is marked at the end of the key stage in Year 11; here some of the work is of a very high quality.
97. The quality of teaching is often satisfactory and occasionally good. Lesson planning is clear and appropriate. The aims of the lesson are shared and are reinforced. Specialist teachers have a secure understanding of subject knowledge.

The teaching of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory and is developing appropriately. Good opportunities are provided to share views and develop pupils' critical analysis, as for example when discussing in Year 9 art produced by the German Expressionists and surviving artists from the Holocaust as a response to their experiences. Independent learning and research skills, although encouraged, are not as well developed until the latter part of Key Stage 4. Teachers have good expectations of behaviour. At Key Stage 3 and in Year 10 expectations of work are accepting rather than demanding. The working atmosphere in studios is positive and productive. Display does not generally celebrate pupils' success or enhance and stimulate. Work about the school is of a good standard and reflects well some of the quality of work achieved.

98. Pupils make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 3 and towards the end of Key Stage 4 good progress is made. Higher attaining pupils are encouraged to develop skills and pupils have good opportunities for early GCSE entry. Lower attaining pupils are well supported, teachers take great care to promote their confidence and skill development. Learning support assistants when observed contribute well to their progress. Pupils respond positively, they enjoy the subject. Access to information technology is very limited, most research is undertaken at home and this work contributes well to their portfolios.
99. The department is well managed and subject documentation is useful. Schemes of work provide a satisfactory balance of both attainment targets. Explaining and encouragement are constant and good features in lessons. Pupils generally understand how well they are progressing, particularly those pupils studying for GCSE. Useful evaluation sheets support and involve pupils in their own assessment. The use of sketch books is not fully developed. This was noted in the last inspection. Homework is set and marked suggesting ideas for improvement. Information and communication technology is not accessible and is rarely used. The accommodation, although improved in one studio, is poor and constrains standards, teaching and learning. Space, working surfaces and storage are insufficient. Both studios are unsatisfactory and one studio has poor light.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

100. Standards of achievement are close to the national average for the subject as a whole, and similar to those observed in the last inspection. GCSE results in 1999 were about average with 37 per cent gaining A* to C grades. All candidates achieved A* to G grades in food technology; the resistant materials results were lower last year because the group had three teachers which affected continuity.
101. In 1999, standardised teacher assessments at Key Stage 3 showed attainment below the national average for boys, 44 per cent of pupils achieving Level 5 or better. Results in 1998 were similar, but in neither of these two years have teachers been able to assess the full curriculum because control technology has not been part of it. Although this is still the case, current predictions suggest improvement in the current year, and inspection findings agreed with this. Boys were competent in the use of tools in the workshop in a Year 9 lesson, even though they have had little experience this term due to the disruption of building works. Many worked to a tolerance of one or two millimetres when cutting mortice and tenon joints, and were keen to improve the accuracy of their work and to achieve an A grade from the teacher's assessment. Pupils with special educational needs, however, showed they have been more badly affected by the disruption this term, unsure of the

correct equipment. Nevertheless they were seen to make good progress, motivated well by the teacher's insistence on quality.

102. Although Year 11 boys were on study leave, it was possible to judge the standard of their work from the samples seen and from teachers' predicted grades based on coursework and mock examinations. These predictions show approximately 50 per cent A* to C grades, an improvement on last year, despite the disruptive effect of the building work: rooms have not been available, boys have not been able to use power tools to finish their projects and many have had to use their own computers. However, many high quality projects were seen, including those by pupils with special educational needs: mobile phones in graphics, food projects for a fast food outlet, a well finished solar powered lamp in electronic products together with an electronic metronome.
103. The quality of teaching at both key stages is all satisfactory or better. Of the nine lessons observed - mostly in Key Stage 3 - two were very good, three were good and the rest satisfactory. A particular strength in teaching is subject knowledge, especially where teachers are working within their own specialisms. Their expectation is high with regard to the standard of finished work with an emphasis on quality.
104. Teaching of basic skills of literacy and numeracy is sound, stressing correct terminology and accurate measurement, and the department also makes good use of the information technology facilities, for example in designing electronic circuits and nutritional analysis, as well as for presentation. Planning is generally good, and in the best lessons, objectives are clear. This was remarkably impressive in a very good lesson where pupils were making a mould before forming a plastic blister pack. The teacher pointed out exactly what the requirements were and assessed on the spot, which motivated the pupils to improve their product.
105. Effective teaching methods with a good mix of practical and theory were observed in Key Stage 3. In a very good lesson on food technology, a Year 8 class had to prepare and make a fruit crumble, having already analysed the ingredients and chosen them for their nutritional content. They then had to evaluate their product and method of making it, working to a tight time scale. Evaluation was particularly well addressed by the teacher's attention to technical vocabulary, to which boys responded well and made good progress in this technique. Management of pupils is usually very good but there are some behavioural problems to be addressed with some groups, particularly in Key Stage 4. Time management is good. All lessons start promptly, though some were seen to end before time. The double lesson proved too long for some pupils, especially those of low ability. Many such pupils in Year 7, for example, were not well motivated to complete work on packaging in their torch project during the second half of a double lesson. The teacher had to work very hard to keep them all on task.
106. Assessment is good and thorough. Examples of very good assessment were seen in all practical woodwork classes in which Key Stage 3 boys themselves are encouraged to assess their own product with respect to quality. This prepares them well for Key Stage 4 where boys interviewed were especially appreciative of the thorough assessment of their coursework - both theory and practical - which enables them to understand how to improve their grades. Recording of assessment data is thorough, but the school has changed from one system to another, and at present their incompatibility causes difficulty in tracking pupils' progress. It is also

difficult to establish a baseline for assessment because boys come from so many different primary schools and St George does not run its own tests on entry to school. Homework is satisfactory, mainly consisting of continuation of project work. Many pupils work in the workshops after school.

107. The curriculum is not yet satisfactory at either key stage because the requirement for control technology is not met in full. However, the school knows this and has it in hand; equipment is already in school, waiting for building work to be completed. The disruption caused this year by the building programme has drastically affected the continuity of the curriculum at both key stages. Many arrangements have had to be altered at extremely short notice.
108. The department nevertheless has maintained a wide range of extra curricular activities. The technology club came fourth in the HMS Collingwood challenge to produce an amphibious buggy. There are close links with a local motor company, and boys have been taken to observe and carry out simulated mass production. The school has just secured a place on a pilot computer aided design and manufacturing programme which will widen the curriculum further in control technology.
109. The head of department has very good vision for the development of the subject and leads well, ably supported by her staff who are a good team: they have faced the adversity of disruption well together. Since February, formal classroom monitoring and evaluation of the subject have been impossible, but staff have made sure that the full syllabus has been covered at GCSE. Teachers have never been able to cover the Key Stage 3 programme of study because of accommodation and resources. Staffing is satisfactory but there is some overlap of expertise within it.
110. Whilst the accommodation has been in the process of refurbishment, teachers have had to work under poor conditions for two terms; the technician has not had preparation room facilities. The department has done very well to maintain standards during this time. Equipment for control technology is now in the building, but teachers have not yet had the time to train how to use it. Resources are adequate, although most have been stored during refurbishment. However, there are insufficient text books and the food technology room remains in need of modernising.
111. Since the last inspection, standards have remained similar. The issues of accommodation, and control technology are now being addressed.

GEOGRAPHY

112. Attainment at GCSE in 1999 for grades A* to C, at 75 per cent, is well above the national average 53 per cent. All pupils entered gain a grade A* to G which is better than the average nationally for all schools. Boys do better in geography than in other subjects. Pupils now achieve higher grades though still not A*. The very small number entered for Certificate of Achievement all achieve distinction or merit grades. Since the last inspection there is a big improvement showing a trend better than that found nationally.
113. At the age of 14, teacher assessment, based on standardised tests, indicates good attainment. Three quarters achieve levels at or above the nationally expected levels

compared with just over half of boys nationally in 1998. Inspection evidence endorses this level of achievement.

114. At Key Stage 3 pupils in Year 7 learn about patterns of settlement and accurately describe the characteristics of villages and towns and offer explanations for their differences. They identify nucleated and linear settlements correctly and use these terms in their work. Year 8 pupils handle a range of resources with confidence and use their knowledge of their home region to locate the Fawley oil refinery from a satellite photograph. By Year 9, pupils show in a study of the Peak District National Park that they understand well how conflicting demands on an environment arise and why attempts are made to plan and manage areas vulnerable to development.
115. At Key Stage 4, attainment by the present Year 11 is lower than in other years. The coursework element of their GCSE is generally below the standard achieved by the department. Year 10 coursework is good. Year 10 have good geographical skills handling maps of different scales and when studying changes and diversification in farming. Higher attaining pupils confidently use grid references and identify their case study farm. Pupils use choropleth maps correctly to show population density in Brazil. They understand diagrammatic modelling well to show urban growth and use systems diagrams to show industrial processes. They have good experience of topological maps and networks. There is good progression of learning, building on firm foundations in earlier years.
116. Teaching is a strength. All teaching is good, very good or excellent and better than at the last inspection. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and high expectations which foster high achievement. Their expertise gives geographical breadth to lessons and challenges higher attaining pupils. All lessons are planned well and time is used very productively. Management of pupils is very good in all lessons and this is a great strength. Varied tasks and resources are a good feature in all lessons and this improves pupils' learning. Opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning has been improved since the last inspection through homework, fieldwork and coursework. There is still a need for fewer passive tasks and more involvement in active learning through group work, role play and enquiry. Oral work is good. Skilful use of open questions assesses learning and ensures understanding of concepts by pupils of all levels of attainment. Pupils with special educational needs are supported in tackling challenging tasks and learn well. Construction and interpretation of graphs and statistical data and use of co-ordinates and scales in mapwork improve pupils' numeracy. Emphasis is given to the use of correct subject vocabulary. Displays of key words support pupils in employing appropriate terms correctly and this raises geographical and literacy standards.
117. Relationships are good and pupils respond well to firm direction. Staff, including learning support assistants, share commitment to improvement of the subject. The department is well managed, ensuring clear educational direction for the subject.
118. The department recognises it needs to raise achievement by using information technology which has not been sufficiently improved since the last inspection. The library has insufficient books, and internet and computer resources to support the current curriculum. Improved target setting and frequent marking does not ensure that pupils, including those with individual education plans, know what geographical criteria they need to address to raise the standard of their work. Greater insistence on geographical detail and accuracy is required to achieve the highest GCSE

grades. Performance targets are not yet in place which take account of variable profiles of different years.

HISTORY

119. Examination passes at A* to C have fluctuated over the past three years. The 1999 pass rate was 47.5 per cent against a national pass rate of 52.4 per cent for boys, and there was no significant difference between history results and those of other subjects in the school.
120. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with national expectations. Pupils across the higher and middle attaining ability range analyse carefully and draw conclusions accurately from historical evidence as seen in lessons on the Holocaust in Year 9. Pupils in Year 8 demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of the role of trade in the seventeenth century; middle and lower attaining pupils in Year 8 understand well the concept of stereotype and they apply this to their work on the Slave Trade. Pupils in Year 7 can accurately explain aspects of the Norman Conquest but their overall attainment is limited by the restricted coverage of the National Curriculum in this year group.
121. Attainment towards the end of Year 10 is in line with national expectations. Pupils have a good understanding of the origins of the Cold War, the significance of Appeasement during the 1930's, and a satisfactory knowledge of the main events of World War I. No evidence was seen of current Year 11 lessons, due to study leave, nor of their written work this year.
122. Pupils with special educational needs made satisfactory progress across both key stages with several good examples seen in lessons in Year 8.
123. Teaching is at least satisfactory and often good. Subject knowledge is secure in teaching across both key stages and including that of temporary staff currently employed by the school to cover the absence of regular staff. Most lessons are well paced and soundly structured, offering stimulating evidence to pupils to advance their understanding. Teaching reinforces prior learning. Good examples were seen in a Year 8 lesson on the Slave Trade and in a Year 9 lesson on the Holocaust, where film material was used to explore contemporary and present day understanding of issues. Original research by temporary staff effectively linked the experience of Russian Jewish emigrants on the Titanic to anti-Semitic events before Hitler. A well-designed writing frame enabled Year 8 pupils to analyse the civilizations of pre-colonial African people; and a Year 7 group developed an enquiry based task through a well-constructed role play about the Black Death. This range of well presented stimuli are not always followed up by consideration of the tasks to be undertaken by pupils to support and extend their learning, nor by specific and cross departmental strategies to extend pupils' literacy, numeracy and study skills. The management of pupils is a strength in the department but the teaching of the key elements of the curriculum is not fully established and they are not made explicit to pupils.
124. Pupils respond positively to teaching across both key stages. They participate enthusiastically in discussion but they are not asked to contribute beyond a factual or simple analytical level. Pupils co-operate well with staff and, in the two examples seen of group work in Years 7 and 9, with each other. There is a sound basis for

further imaginative engagement of pupils and for the development of their independent learning.

125. Documentation of schemes of work and departmental contributions to many whole school policies are established. The department is fully engaged in the assessment procedures of the school but there is no evidence of the use of data to inform curriculum planning nor of the monitoring and evaluation of work in the department, for example in the consistency of marking of pupils' work. Some pupils' work has not been marked due to the recent absence of several staff.
126. The subject contributes positively to the spiritual, moral and cultural life of the school, particularly in the emphasis upon the issues raised by the Holocaust and the Slave Trade and in the yearly Battlefields visit to Northern France. The library offers a range of good quality texts for pupils' research but the use of information technology has not been developed. Temporary staff are well prepared for their lessons.
127. Since the last inspection there has been an improvement in the accommodation, the consistency of attainment in both key stages, the qualifications of staff to teach at Key Stage 3 and in the quality of teaching.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

128. Standards of achievement are about average in both key stages, similar to those found in the last inspection. Only a small number take the GCSE course. The number of A* to C grades has been low over the past two years. However, in Key Stage 3, standardised teacher assessment showed an above average number achieving Level 5 and above in word-processing, data analysis and spreadsheets in 1998 and 1999. No level was attained for control and monitoring so a national comparison cannot be made.
129. During the inspection standards were seen to be about average in both key stages in information technology lessons and examination coursework. Most subject inspectors, however, reported below average skills in the use of information technology across the curriculum at Key Stage 4 particularly. The exception is design and technology where some coursework projects by boys currently in Year 11 showed good use of information technology both in food technology to analyse nutritional data, and in presentation of graphics. Although no Year 11 pupils were seen, predictions based on their marked coursework and on the results of mock papers show over 70 per cent predicted to achieve A* to C grades this year at GCSE, a substantial increase.
130. Standards in current work at the end of the skills course in Key Stage 3 in word processing, data analysis and spreadsheets were above average, but the control and monitoring strands have still not been covered. The recent purchase of suitable equipment and upgrading of the network will allow these parts of the curriculum to be met from September. During the inspection, it was more difficult to judge skills accurately since all pupils were learning new systems. Year 9 boys in a higher band, for instance, observed working on spreadsheets for their certificate of achievement, showed below average skills, but a Year 10 class was well on course for their record of achievement, though word-processing was sometimes marred by spelling mistakes. A GCSE project on a subaqua club showed satisfactory knowledge of the information technology systems that could be used in such an

enterprise. Lack of information technology, across the curriculum means that the progress made by pupils with special educational needs is severely hampered, particularly in presentation of work.

131. The quality of all teaching is satisfactory. One very good lesson was seen in Year 10 where boys were producing identity badges. As a result of the teacher's clear instructions, they made good progress during the lesson, by the end of which they had successfully organised text and photographs taken with the digital camera. Attitudes to the subject are generally positive, but some older boys regard time in computer room as more of a recreation and, for example, were unwilling to do much work on questionnaires for their design and technology projects.
132. Specialist teachers have very good subject knowledge, but do not teach all the skills programme. Some teachers are allocated information technology as a means of developing their skills. Consequently, the lack of continuity of expertise leaves both teacher and pupils learning together.
133. Planning is usually good, but teachers are not always strict about timing. At least two classes were seen where the amount of work that boys did was not sufficient to fill the lesson. Other lessons, though, showed a good sense of pace with clear objectives that were fulfilled during the lesson, to which pupils responded positively.
134. Assessment of the examination courses is satisfactory, but some project marking does not always include suggested improvement targets. Assessment is not yet undertaken by departments for the particular information technology skills pertinent to their subject. Pupils are usually given satisfactory homework to do with research for their projects or examinations.
135. The curriculum at present is not satisfactory; it does not meet full National Curriculum requirements in control and monitoring at Key Stage 3, nor in the use of computers across the curriculum at Key Stage 4. However, equipment is now available to address the control and monitoring strands. Boys do not have equal opportunity to use the computers to gain a qualification at Key Stage 4 since resources can only cater for about half the year at a time.
136. The department has undergone much technical upheaval recently. Nevertheless, the head of department has good vision for the development of the subject and there is a good development plan to address the shortcomings. Enough computers are available to run the skills courses but there are insufficient in subject departments, and teachers are not yet sufficiently trained in the use of information technology in their own subjects.
137. Use of new technology in the school is satisfactory. The school is in the second year of the national grid for learning. Computers are used for administrative purposes now and the assessment manager software is in place though not yet used to its full extent since data from the previous system has not yet been entered into it. The internet is starting to be used and is very popular; multimedia software is also available. There is evidence of some departments using computers more, for example for the Key Stage 4 geography project, boys had used the Southampton website to produce some attractive work. There is evidence of 'Powerpoint' presentations and some use of the Internet by the languages department. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory and the school is now in a position to develop well.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

138. The proportion of pupils gaining grades A* to C in the GCSE examinations in 1999 in French and German was well above the national average for boys in all maintained schools. The proportion gaining A* and A grades in French and A grades in German was also above the national average. The proportion of pupils gaining grades A* to G was above the national average in both languages. There is no clear trend over the last three years, but the 1999 results rose from the previous year. In German the trend has been downward. In school, boys perform better in French than in all other subjects except mathematics; in German, their performance is not as good as that in many other subjects.
139. During the inspection week, Year 11 boys were on study leave and department teachers were involved in oral examinations. All teachers were observed teaching their respective classes, but only at times when they were available. Specialist supply cover had been arranged to take classes for the teachers involved in the orals.
140. By the end of Key Stage 3, boys' attainment in French is broadly in line with the national standard; German is a second language begun with limited time allocation in Year 8 by the two option sets. Understanding is generally good. Most pupils understand the foreign language used by the teacher in the classroom well and they are able to use their knowledge to obtain information from cassette in listening exercises. Middle-attaining pupils in a Year 9 French lesson understood the difference between the use of the present and future tenses in a new lesson dealing with the weather. Year 8 middle-attaining pupils had few problems in a lesson conducted almost entirely in French. Oral skills vary. Pupils speak in chorus and practise pronunciation, but in some classes teachers do not encourage speaking by individual pupils. Pupils in the second German set in a Year 9 class developed their oral skills well during the lesson and by the end of it were using plural adjectives with correct agreement. Middle-attaining pupils in a Year 9 French class used the present and future tenses well for weather. In several other classes, oracy was weak. Pronunciation is generally satisfactory, sometimes good. In their written work, pupils write about themselves and leisure activities with some proficiency. Much of the writing, however, consists of word lists or exercises, which are not then developed into short passages of extended writing. Higher attaining pupils in French in Year 9 have a good knowledge of the perfect and future tenses
141. Pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 4 is above average in French and in German. Understanding of the foreign language is good. Lower attainers in a Year 10 French lesson understood and named 17 different ailments and illnesses at the completion of the topic. In a Year 10 German lesson pupils could pick out the key words from a cassette about jobs. Oral skills vary widely, but most pupils will speak when given the opportunity, either to reply to a question or to repeat a phrase. Year 10 higher-attaining pupils in French and in German spoke confidently – in French using past and future tenses, in German using a good range of adjectives to describe personal qualities. Scrutiny of written work in Year 10 showed a range of writing and varying accuracy. Higher-attaining pupils in French showed a good knowledge of different tenses used in conjunction with topic-related vocabulary. The general presentation of written work at both key stages leaves much to be desired. Many pupils fail to complete corrections.

142. The quality of teaching and learning in the majority of lessons is good; one lesson with higher-attaining pupils in French in Year 10 was excellent. Teachers' subject knowledge is very good, and they make good use of the foreign language in the classroom in most lessons; this aids pupils' understanding. Lessons are well planned with a variety of tasks and skills to maintain pupils' concentration, interest and productivity. Effective strategies, such as chorus work, use of flash cards and the overhead projector, worksheets and question-and-answer sessions, help pupils to consolidate or develop past work or to learn new material. Classroom management is very good. The full range of teaching styles can be inhibited at times by pupils' attitudes, especially in lower-attaining groups. Teachers have high expectations, challenging higher-attaining pupils well and supporting lower-attaining pupils well. Marking is not regular and consistent across the department. Homework is set regularly to extend or to consolidate the work completed in class. Relationships are generally good.
143. Progress by most pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory at Key Stage 3 and good at Key Stage 4. Teachers know their pupils well. In a Year 10 French set pupils gave a good response to chorus work and showed a good understanding of leisure activities. The teacher ensured that all pupils had a question to answer. The response to written work was less enthusiastic, and pupils were not as productive in this task.
144. Attitudes and behaviour are mostly good. They are very good in the higher-attaining classes, particularly in French and German in Year 10. Pupils responded quite well to the specialist teachers supplying cover for the teachers involved in oral examinations. Very good classroom management and support in a Year 10 French lesson helped to promote good behaviour. Pupils in Year 10 responded well to work with computers.
145. Management and leadership of the department are very good. There is effective monitoring of teaching and good communication. Progress since the last inspection has been good. The department works well and is committed to high achievement. Teachers are producing high standards for boys, which is not the national picture for boys in modern languages, particularly in French.

MUSIC

146. In 1999, the GCSE A* to C grades in music were well below the national expectations, although this shows a slight improvement on results for 1998.
147. By the end of Key Stage 4, the current GCSE results are predicted by the school to be well below the national average. The majority of Year 11 entries are pupils with special educational needs for whom this course does not suit either their abilities or aptitudes. Two early entries are on line to attain at least average grades. There is insufficient evidence available to judge strengths and weaknesses for any aspects of teaching and learning in Year 11.
148. By the end of Key Stage 3, the standards most pupils reach are well below expectations in all aspects of the course. At both key stages, most pupils have poor skills in listening to and in evaluating music using specialist vocabulary. Their knowledge of notations is poor, except for the small number who have instrumental lessons. Some Year 7 pupils made good progress during the inspection in studying the blues and achievement in a Year 9 lesson was satisfactory in an introduction to

Indian music. But all pupils show very limited knowledge and understanding of musical styles and genres. Higher-attaining pupils, who are mainly instrumentalists, have some success in composition at both key stages, as they have a natural flair, but composition techniques are not understood. No information technology skills have been taught using the resources available, seriously handicapping the development of skills, particularly in composition and especially for the current Year 10. Most pupils are confident performers.

149. Progress is satisfactory in about half of the lessons seen, but it is unsatisfactory for the remainder. It is unsatisfactory over time at both key stages and for most pupils, except for some higher-attaining pupils who make satisfactory progress. Underachievement is associated with pupils' lack of basic skills, inadequate coverage of the curriculum and limited time for music at Key Stage 3 up to September 1999. Also, infrequent homework does not consolidate and develop knowledge and skills in music and literacy. Many pupils have poor attitudes; this hinders learning and progress. They are often poor listeners and lack concentration and self-discipline, particularly in independent learning. Of the lessons observed in Year 8, some pupils were particularly badly behaved, a minority were rude, disrespectful and quarrelsome. Poor accommodation limits attainment and progress in creativity and experimentation. Standards and progress have declined since the last inspection.
150. In instrumental lessons and in the choir, standards are above expectations and progress is good, linked with skilled teaching and a high level of pupil interest and application.
151. Teaching is barely satisfactory overall and at each key stage. It is very variable at Key Stage 3, ranging from some good teaching to a significant proportion of unsatisfactory and poor lessons. This is a decline in teaching quality since the last inspection. In the best lessons, learning objectives are clear and sequenced learning is consolidated at each stage. Also, there is good stress placed on pupils' use of specialist vocabulary and there are good opportunities in a Year 9 lesson to develop a spiritual and social awareness in the study of Indian music. New staff this term have been given insufficient information on pupils' previous work, there are no assessment or homework records and they have no information on pupils with special educational needs. Consequently, tasks are set which are beyond the skills and understanding of most pupils and individual needs are not addressed. Despite this, teachers are doing their best under the present difficult circumstances; however, some poor teaching was seen. Here, there was no focus on learning objectives or lesson planning and no purposeful, energetic use of expertise and time to ensure pupils learned. Homework is being used appropriately this term by the new staff to develop good learning habits.
152. Since the last inspection there has been increased time for music at both key stages and more resources aid learning, especially keyboard provision. The department has insufficient untuned percussion to meet National Curriculum requirements for world music, and textbooks are insufficient to aid learning at Key Stage 3. Currently there is no head of department and the full-time, temporary, newly qualified teacher and part-time head of department designate joined the school just prior to the inspection. Teacher inexperience and lack of stability have some negative effects on learning. There was poor management of the hand-over to new staff and inadequate induction procedures. There is still no department handbook, schemes of work for Key Stage 3 are barely adequate and there are none for Key Stage 4. A

continuing major deficiency is the lack of assessment procedures to enable the tracking of pupils' progress and target setting to raise standards.

153. Increased provision for instrumental teaching enriches learning for the 40 pupils who study 6 instruments, and there have been 2 concerts this year in which pupils participated very successfully. Parents recognise and are supportive of improvements in the development of music. The headteacher has made satisfactory arrangements for the management of music in the current circumstances. She is very committed to the successful future of music, with experienced staff already appointed for September and plans to improve the inadequate accommodation.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

154. Standards of attainment match the national average. A significant minority of pupils attain good and sometimes very good standards, as is demonstrated by their results in examinations and the successes of teams and individuals at district, county and national levels.
155. GCSE results in 1999 matched the national average for grades A* to C but were below for A* to A. Similar results were gained in 1998 but standards were higher in the previous year. All pupils examined in these years gained grades A* to G. The results in 1999 were lower than the average gained by the same pupils in the other subjects for which they were entered.
156. Attainment of the majority at Key Stage 3 matches national expectation. Quick understanding of explanations and demonstrations leads to sound development of techniques of fielding and batting in cricket, basic ground strokes in tennis and basic skills in a range of athletic events. Most pupils are well co-ordinated and have good striking and throwing skills but few catch with confidence. A small minority has poor levels of fitness and stamina. From early in Year 7, higher attaining pupils become able to assess factors which lead to success or failure in their own performances and those of others. Examples of pupils establishing good knowledge and understanding were evident in a Year 8 class identifying how fast finishers might be beaten in middle distance races and a Year 9 class devising successful strategies for a game invented to improve fielding skills in cricket. Pupils are encouraged to provide coaching comments to their fellows but most need more guidance and practice. Staff changes and re-grouping of pupils have led to pupils, for example in some Year 9 cricket classes, having very different backgrounds of experience.
157. At Key Stage 4, standards of performance, fitness and stamina are mostly good and better than at Key Stage 3. Catching continues to be a weakness. Levels of knowledge and understanding are satisfactory but some pupils forget skills learned in earlier years, for example in relay racing, so that progress is slowed. Pupils following GCSE courses demonstrate sound levels of understanding and good practical skills. They can explain the value of preparatory exercise before strenuous activity with satisfactory use of appropriate terms of basic anatomy and physiology. Pupils communicate clearly and with good levels of accuracy in written work. Frequently, answers are expressed too briefly for pupils to show how much they know.
158. Achievement in both key stages is good. The progress of pupils and particularly that of the most able and the least able is helped by the understanding that teachers have of their different needs which leads to the setting of different targets for different groups, for example when learning to pace a middle distance race. There is clear evidence of progress by pupils at all levels of attainment in all

lessons. They are careful in listening to instructions and observing demonstrations and they work hard by practice to consolidate and develop their skills. High levels of enjoyment almost always result in good learning but, occasionally, as was observed in a Year 7 tennis class, pupils' enthusiasm has to be controlled so firmly that progress is slowed. Good learning is supported by the good quality of the relationships pupils have with each other and with their teachers. The progress of some classes has been disrupted by the absence of teachers and the need to make short-term temporary appointments. Pupils always have positive attitudes to their work and aim to match the high expectations teachers have of their effort, behaviour and progress. Although strongly competitive, pupils value each other's efforts and practise the principles of fair play so that learning is encouraged.

159. The quality of teaching is mostly good, often very good and never less than satisfactory. Lessons are well-constructed and linked to previous and future learning. They contain a variety of activities which increases interest and end with a judgement of the quality of what has been learned which reinforces learning and identifies future targets. Teachers explain tasks clearly and demonstrate techniques effectively. They make good use of questions both to test pupils' understanding and to encourage them to think. Specialist teachers are versatile which reduces the need to change classes and improves the continuity of teaching. Teachers have good understanding of individual strengths and weaknesses and are equally supportive of pupils at all levels of attainment. They are confident, firm and skilful in their management of pupils so that positive relationships and attitudes develop. There is good consistency in the teaching of the same skills by different teachers which supports the progress of learning better than was the case at the time of the previous inspection. Staff changes and absence in recent years have had adverse effects upon the learning of some pupils.
160. The department benefits from good leadership and a widening range of management skills. The school has good outdoor facilities but indoor provision is restricted to one gymnasium and the hall does not offer flexible additional space. This restriction is the main reason for a lack of balance in the curriculum particularly for Key Stage 3, with an over-emphasis upon games and an insufficiency of gymnastics. The school plans to widen provision at Key Stage 4 through use of community facilities. The department offers a good range of opportunities to take part in games and other physical activities outside lessons to which pupils make a good response. The subject does not make a planned contribution to the development of pupils' skills in information and communication technology. The school has no access to a swimming pool to enable all pupils to achieve survival competence in water.
161. Since the time of the previous inspection, the tennis court has been resurfaced but missing fencing has not been restored. Heating in the gym has been improved but, although planned, the floor has not yet been resurfaced and the walls still need re-decoration as does the gym corridor. The take-off into the long jump pit is a potential danger in damp weather. Some schemes of work have been made more appropriately challenging. The department has the ability to raise standards further if the current balance of specialist staff is maintained and the balance of curriculum provision is improved. Recording of pupils' levels of attainment is restricted to skills of performance although schemes of work also refer to planning and evaluation skills. As yet, recording achievement in these skills does not sharpen the ways they are taught and learned.

FOUNDATION PROGRAMME

162. The Year 7 English, history and religious education curriculum is managed as a Foundation programme, unified by common aims. Each class is taught all three subjects by the same teacher. The school aims to give each Year 7 pupil a good basis for learning and for personal development.
163. The outcomes for pupils from the use of the Foundation programme have important strengths. Year 7 are supported carefully so that they learn how to co-operate with others in their new school, and they establish a rapport with the key staff who teach them for 20 per cent of each week. A good basis is secured for pastoral support. Progress and attainment in English and history is a balance of strengths and weaknesses. The overall quality of written work improves well during Year 7, in large part because of well-organised, consistently applied strategies which improve pupils' writing skills. Attainment in history has weaknesses because the coverage of the required National Curriculum for history is incomplete, compared to what is expected for Year 7. Pupils' knowledge of what they do cover is satisfactory. Pupils' understanding and extent of historical insight is below the level expected by the end of Year 7.
164. English and history topics are planned as half-term units. The documentation for these elements of the Foundation programme is clear but lacks detail, for example too little is said about what level of attainment should be expected of pupils. The documentation about the broader objectives of the Foundation programme mentions a good range of important elements, but too briefly and only in general terms. For example, important references are made to general aims for developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development, including the overall Catholic ethos of the school. However, strategies are not defined to show how the aims will be secured.
165. The Foundation programme is timetabled to be taught and led by expert and experienced staff. The existing resources of the school are enhanced well by visits. Good use is made of these visits, helping both progress in subjects and as a key element in securing progress in pupils' personal development. The current weaknesses in the Foundation programme were noted in the previous inspection. Initially, after the previous inspection, the school unwisely relied on informal monitoring of outcomes. Later it sought an external view. A decision has now been taken to discontinue the Foundation programme linkage between English, history and religious education because standards are not high enough and the potential benefits for pupils are not secured to a sufficient extent.