

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **THE HOLY FAMILY RC SCHOOL**

Keighley

LEA area: Bradford

Unique reference number: 107428

Headteacher: Mr C M Davis

Reporting inspector: Mr J Plumb  
16930

Dates of inspection: 25–29 September 2000

Inspection number: 223713

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	11 to 18 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Spring Gardens Lane Keighley West Yorkshire
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Dodd
Date of previous inspection:	6 February 1995

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Mrs B Loydell 18967	Team inspector	Mathematics	Assessment
Mr S Innes 3943	Team inspector	English	
Ms V Blackburn 27050	Team inspector	Science	Post-16 provision
Mr M Roberts 8672	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
Ms J Simms 10053	Team inspector	Art and design	
Mr V Harrison 17359	Team inspector	Design and technology	
Ms J Boulton 18888	Team inspector	Physical education Equal opportunities	
Mr R Donne 7483	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
Mr F Peacock 8360	Team inspector	Music Special educational needs	
Mr J Kidd 24127	Team inspector	History	
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The Holy Family School is a Catholic voluntary aided school that provides full-time education for pupils and students aged 11–18. It has achieved language college status and has recently joined with a neighbouring school to provide a very broad curriculum in the sixth form. There are 932 pupils on roll, about average in size for a school of this type. Numbers have risen since the last inspection and this has increased pressure on what was already unsatisfactory accommodation. There are significantly more girls than boys. There are 104 students in the sixth form. Thirty pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds and 53 pupils have English as an additional language, a figure above the national average. Pupils come from a wide range of social backgrounds. Just fewer than 15 per cent of pupils have special educational needs, a figure broadly in line with the national average. Thirteen pupils have statements of special educational needs. About 12 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, a figure broadly in line with the national average. Attainment on entry for the current Year 7 is broadly in line with the national average, but the attainment on entry for the 1998–1999 Year 11 group was below the national average. The school has set realistic targets to raise standards for the year 2001. The commitment to teaching about the love of Christ pervades all activities in this Christian school.

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

The Holy Family School is a very good school. Leadership is very good. Teaching challenges pupils and is consistently good throughout Key Stages 3 and 4 and very good at post-16. Standards are high enough except in aspects of design and technology in Key Stage 4. The school provides very good value for money.

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

- The test results for 14-year-olds in English, mathematics and science in 2000 are good as are the GCSE results for 16-year-olds.
- The quality of teaching is a strength and contributes to the good learning for pupils.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership.
- Relationships and the Christian ethos make this a very successful school.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development is very good.
- Attitudes and behaviour in lessons are very good and contribute to good learning.
- The language college is very good.
- The sixth-form provision delivered in partnership with a neighbouring school is very good and enables students to access a wide range of courses.

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

- The provision for design and technology in Key Stage 4 is not good enough.
- Provision for physical education in Key Stage 4 is not as good as it could be because insufficient time is allocated to it.
- Provision for art in Key Stage 3 suffers from lack of depth and non-specialist teaching.
- The personal, health and social education programme is not securely in place in Key Stage 4.
- Literacy strategies across the curriculum are too narrow.
- Assessment levels could be shared more clearly with pupils.
- The accommodation is unsatisfactory and impedes learning in a number of subjects. This does not reflect on the headteacher and governing body, who have done everything within their powers to improve the accommodation.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There have been very significant improvements since the school's last inspection in February 1995. The school has gained language college status and the recent link with a neighbouring school to improve the sixth-form provision is very good. The tests results for 14-year-olds and the GCSE results improved very considerably between 1999–2000. The quality of teaching has improved and is a strength. Improvements have occurred in all the areas for action identified in the last inspection except for appraisal, which has been overtaken by the new government requirements. Serious deficiencies in the accommodation remain despite the hard work of the headteacher and governors to address the problems. The capacity for further improvement is very good.

## 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			
	All schools			Similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
GCSE examinations	D	C	D	D
A-levels/AS-levels	E	D	C	

**Key**

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

Results in the national tests for 14-year-olds have been variable in relation to the national average in English, mathematics and science over the last three years. In 1999, science results were below the national average. English and mathematics were above the national average. The English results in 1999 were above the average for similar schools; in mathematics they were in line but well below in science. In 2000, the results were above the national average in all three subjects, which shows a significant improvement in science. GCSE results in 1999 were below the national average and well below the average for similar schools, which are based on the number of pupils who are eligible for free school meals. However, using a prior attainment analysis the GCSE results were below average for similar schools in 1999. However, this was a 'blip' due to low attainment on entry for this group and a hard core of eleven disaffected pupils (although there is evidence to demonstrate that the school did everything possible to support these pupils). The GCSE results for the year 2000 are much better than those for 1999. Measured against pupils' starting point, they show that the school has been successful with these pupils. Post-16 students, given their prior attainment, achieve good results in A-level and GNVQ.

Standards of work seen across the school are high enough measured against pupils' prior attainment in all subjects. Standards are high in music in Key Stage 4 and at post-16. Pupils with special educational needs achieve good standards in reading, writing and the application of number. Standards for pupils with English as an additional language and also for those who are gifted and talented are high enough.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Attitudes to learning are very good.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in and out of lessons is good overall. In classrooms behaviour is often very good.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships, including race relations, are very good. Pupils' personal development is good.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 11-14 years	aged 14-16 years	aged over 16 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Very 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 a strength of the school and makes a significant contribution to pupils' good and very good learning. The teaching of English and mathematics is good overall in Key Stages 3 and 4 and often very good in English. Teaching in science is always at least satisfactory in Key Stages 3 and 4 and two-thirds are at least very good. Teachers' good subject knowledge inspires pupils to learn. The quality of teaching is always at least satisfactory. Teaching is at least good in 75 per cent of lessons and at least very good in just under 30 per cent. In 4 per cent of lessons, teaching is excellent and inspirational. The very best teaching occurs in the sixth form.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	In Key Stage 3 the curriculum is good except for insufficient time allocation for art. There are shortcomings in Key Stage 4 as statutory requirements are not met in design and technology; there is no programme of personal, health and social education, and activities in physical education are not studied in sufficient depth. The curriculum in the sixth form is good overall and includes vocational courses, but lack of a physical education programme reduces the breadth.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils and students with special educational needs is very good.
Provision for pupils with	The provision for pupils with English as an additional language is

English as an additional language	good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development is very good. Provision for their social and cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for monitoring pupils' progress are good. Arrangements for promoting personal development are very good. There are some shortcomings with assessment. In particular, National Curriculum levels are not shared with pupils in all subjects.

Links with parents are very good. There is a very good working partnership with parents.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	A significant factor in the success of the Holy Family School is the very good leadership provided by the senior management team, and especially by the headteacher.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are effective and supportive. They meet their statutory responsibilities well except for ensuring the provision of design and technology in Key Stage 4.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The monitoring and evaluation of the school development plan are good. Systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning are not sufficiently formalised.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes very good use of its resources. It applies the principles of best value well.

With some exceptions, the school is well staffed in most subject areas to provide for good and very good teaching. The provision of resources is at least adequate in all subject areas except music. Resources for information and communication technology and modern foreign languages are very good. Accommodation is unsatisfactory and in some respects poor and, if it were not for the total commitment of all staff, it would seriously impede learning rather than having the small negative impact that it makes currently.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The sense of community.</li><li>• The fact that each child is valued as an individual.</li><li>• The range of extra-curricular activities.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The lack of funding and unsatisfactory accommodation.</li><li>• The fact that lunchtime is too rushed for their children.</li><li>• Insufficient range of examination options at Key Stage 4.</li><li>• Poor extra-curricular music provision.</li></ul>

Inspection findings support parents' positive views of the school. Parents' concerns about unsatisfactory accommodation, the rushed lunchtime and some shortcomings in the curriculum in Key Stage 4 are justified.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Attainment on entry to the school for the current Year 7 is in line with the national average. However, attainment on entry for the 1998–1999 Year 11 group was below the national average because a significant number of Catholic parents chose local grammar schools for their children at the end of Year 6 in that particular year. In addition, despite strenuous efforts on the part of the school, there were eleven severely disaffected pupils in the 1998–1999 Year 11 group and their poor attendance and social problems had a negative impact on the GCSE results for that year.
2. Attainment in the 1999 National Curriculum assessment tests at the end of Key Stage 3 in English was above the national average and also above the average for similar schools. In the mathematics tests, results at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999 were above the national average and in line with the average for similar schools. However, science results in the same year were below the national average and well below average when compared with similar schools. In the year 2000 NCATs, results were above the national average in English, mathematics and science, showing a significant improvement in science.
3. At the end of Key Stage 4 in 1999, the proportion of pupils who attained 5 GCSE passes at A\*-C (35%) was below the national average (46.6%) and well below the average for schools which have a similar number of pupils eligible for free school meals. However, the school meals factor is less reliable when applied to a Catholic school. This is because relatives within the church often see it as their duty in Christian love to pay for the meals of a child who would otherwise qualify for free meals. In addition ethnic minority families who may be eligible often choose not to take up the option of free school meals. However, when compared with schools which are similar on the basis of prior attainment the proportion of pupils who attained five passes at A\*-C in 1999 was still below the average for similar schools. In the previous year (1998) the proportion of pupils who attained five A\*-C passes at GCSE was in line with the national average. The GCSE results for the year 2000 confirm a very significant improvement from 1999, with 44 per cent attaining five passes at grades A\*-C. The average points score has increased from 33 in 1999 to 37.5 in 2000. Due to the inspection taking place in September 2000, the national averages are not yet published and so comparisons cannot be made. It is, however, very clear that GCSE results have improved very significantly between 1999–2000. This reflects the good teaching and target setting within the school. Girls perform better than boys at GCSE, but this must be seen in the context of 56 per cent girls and 44 per cent boys on roll.
4. In the sixth form in 1999 at A-level, a significant number of students attained course expectations and some exceeded them. The average points score of students entered for two or more A-levels in the last three years has fluctuated but was in line with the national average in 1999. In the same year, four post-16 students achieved a merit in the Business Intermediate GNVQ and one achieved a pass. The results for A-level against other schools have not yet been published for the year 2000. At GNVQ one student achieved a distinction in the Advanced IT course.
5. In English, standards in speaking, listening and reading are above the national average throughout the whole school. In writing, standards are in line with the national average across the school, but they vary more widely than in the other key skills in the subject.

Attainment in mathematics is above the national average in Key Stages 3 and 4 but slightly better in Key Stage 3. In post-16 standards are high in mathematics. In science, attainment is above the national average in Key Stage 3. In Key Stage 4 one third of pupils demonstrate attainment above the national average but attainment is in line overall. In post-16 attainment is in line with or slightly above course expectations.

6. In art and design and technology, attainment is in line with the national average in Key Stages 3 and 4. In post-16 in art, standards are at the expected level. In geography standards are in line with the national average across the whole school. In Year 12 students have just started on the new A/S-level course, for which no comparisons are yet available. Attainment in history is above the national average at the end of Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. Post-16 attainment has been below the national average for the past three years but the department has modified the syllabus and work seen in lessons shows that standards are rising.
7. In information and communication technology, pupils at the end of Key Stages 3 and 4 are working above the national expectation. Post-16 students attain good standards and those working for GNVQ attain standards above the national average. Attainment in modern foreign languages is in line with the national average across the school. Standards in Italian are outstandingly good but the sample is too small to be statistically viable. In music, standards are in line with the national average in Key Stage 3 and above at the end of Key Stage 4 and in post-16, with some students achieving very high standards against their prior attainment. Standards attained in physical education are in line with the national average at the end of both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4.
8. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in reading and the application of number. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress in all of their subjects in Key Stages 3 and 4. Post-16 students with English as an additional language make very good progress. The school is at an early stage of targeting gifted and talented pupils but inspection evidence shows that these pupils are challenged and make good progress in their learning across the school.
9. Progress in literacy and numeracy across the school is satisfactory but the range of strategies to promote literacy across the full range of subjects is currently too narrow. Not all subjects at present make a big enough contribution to the development of pupils' number skills. A significant number of subject departments make good use of computers to support their teaching. As a result pupils make good gains in their development of information and communication technology skills across the curriculum, but this is not true of all subjects. For example, the geography department does not make sufficient use of computers to support its teaching.

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

10. The high standards identified in the previous report have been maintained and some times improved upon in the period covered by this inspection. The very good relationships and the very positive attitudes to school are among its major strengths, contributing in large measure to its very warm and welcoming ethos, and to the raising of standards. The good quality of the behaviour and personal development reflect the high expectations of the school's managers, and is supported by attendance that remains well in line with the national average. Ninety-three per cent of parents responding to the parents' questionnaire report that their children like coming to school, a view confirmed by the pupils themselves at a meeting with the inspectors. Pupils across the subjects and year groups show high levels of enthusiasm and interest in their work. They listen attentively and work productively in small groups, applauding the

achievements of their peers as when a statemented pupil succeeded in expressing himself in front of the class.

11. The shared values throughout the school create high expectations that are reflected in behaviour that is good overall. In the classroom, it is often very good and sometimes excellent. Such good behaviour, confirmed by 90 per cent of parents responding to the parents' questionnaire, greatly aids access to the curriculum. Pupils can recall few incidents of bullying and add that any isolated incidents are quickly and firmly dealt with. They have no memory of racist or sexist problems. The very few fixed term exclusions, well down on previous years, reflect the good levels of behaviour in the school as well the success of the pupil mentoring project. Pupils are polite, courteous and friendly. They move around the school in a generally disciplined and orderly manner, in spite of the peak hour congestion in certain areas due to the inadequacies of the accommodation. Pupils demonstrate their respect for the environment by volunteering for litter duty during lunch breaks.
12. The very good relationships throughout the school, including race relations, characterised by politeness and mutual respect, create a harmonious working environment that lays a firm foundation for learning. Pupils declare that they like their teachers, while these latter act as good role models with a sense of purpose, enshrining the school's Christian values so dear to parents.
13. Pupils achieve a good level of personal development. They enjoy being given responsibility in the daily life of the school, such as a runner or a monitor, assisting in the school's chapel, or helping to prepare the school open day. One pupil, upon seeing an inspector looking lost, spoke to him with politeness and great confidence, and insisted on escorting him to his destination. Pupils also look out for one another, and the 'buddying' system is used effectively by older pupils to help and support the younger ones. Pupils act responsibly in lessons, contributing to discussions and working productively in teams to present their work to their peers. A strong sense of teamwork and loyalty was seen in a football match where the team captain showed good leadership qualities, but was also humble enough to apologise to his team mates for letting them down when he made a poor pass. Pupils in this school community demonstrate their sense of citizenship by caring for others in the community beyond the school. On the annual national pilgrimage to Lourdes in France, they care for the sick and the elderly in the group. They generously support fundraising events in the school for the poor and disadvantaged in society, and they make regular donations to the Catholic Fund for Overseas Development (CAFOD). Importantly, the pupils are aware of the responsibilities that accompany their status as secondary school pupils. One reflected in his record of achievement: 'This year has been different from last year. I'm no longer in Year 7, and people expect a lot more from me. I'm proud to be in the top set because it shows that I have worked hard.' Another wrote: 'I can't say that I'm an angel, but I can be good when I try. I like having lots of responsibility to make me more independent.' In their daily acts of collective worship and in the quiet moments spent in the school chapel, pupils reflect upon their duties and responsibilities as citizens and as members of a Catholic school community. Such a growing self-awareness and sense of personal responsibility has a good impact on learning.
14. The school's satisfactory attendance rate of 91.4 per cent in the year 1998/99 was broadly in line with the national average, as were the rates of authorised and unauthorised absence. Punctuality at both morning and afternoon sessions is good, with little time being lost between activities. This level of attendance and punctuality to lessons ensures full access to the curriculum for nearly all pupils and students.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

15. There has been a very significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. Teaching is a strength of the school and contributes to pupils' and students' good and very good learning. There has been a noticeable improvement in the promotion of pupils' independence, for example through the teaching of investigation skills in geography and through the delivery of GNVQ courses recently introduced in Year 12 in partnership with a neighbouring school. All teaching is at least satisfactory. Just under four-fifths of teaching is at least good and three-tenths of teaching is at least very good. There is a small amount of inspirational teaching across a number of subjects, including mathematics, information and communication technology, history, modern foreign languages and music. The best teaching occurs in post-16, where three-fifths is at least very good and well over nine-tenths is at least good. Teaching is good overall across both Key Stages 3 and 4, but it is marginally better in Key Stage 4.
16. A number of significant features contribute to the good and very good teaching. Except for the non-specialist teaching in art in Key Stage 3, teachers in all subjects have a good knowledge of the subjects that they teach. Expertise was weak in some aspects of design and technology in Key Stage 4 prior to the inspection, but the staffing problem was addressed before the inspection team arrived. Teachers' planning is a strength. The short-term lesson plans, with well-planned learning outcomes for all pupils, enable teachers to address successfully the needs of all pupils and students, including those with special educational needs and those who are gifted and talented. Teachers manage pupils with challenging behaviours extremely well, for example in art. They use encouragement and humour effectively to inspire pupils to learn, for example in modern foreign languages.
17. Teachers' methods and organisation are good and each approach is fitted to its purpose. In introducing an information and communication technology lesson about programming, the teacher used the pupils to control each other's movements about the room by verbal commands which were gradually simplified to represent computer-style instructions. In a GNVQ business studies lesson for Year 12 students, the teacher organised the classroom as a company and motivated the students to learn through presenting them with interesting problem-solving activities based on real case-study materials. Teaching in most subjects is brisk and the resources available to teachers are used well. Although the inadequacy of the accommodation hinders the quality of teaching and learning, for example in science and art, difficulties are often overcome by the hard work and commitment of the teaching staff working in an effective partnership with the technician staff. Expectations are high and almost all teaching challenges pupils and students through good questioning to extend their thinking. Questions are used skilfully to confirm and extend pupils' understanding in English. In modern foreign languages, 'quickfire' question and answer sessions on recent learning reinforce memory recall and prepare the ground for further learning to maintain continuity.
18. The teaching of basic skills across the curriculum is satisfactory overall in Key Stages 3 and 4, and good in post-16. Strategies for the teaching of literacy skills across the curriculum in Key Stages 3 and 4 are too narrow and this is a weakness. The delivery of numeracy skills across the curriculum is in an early stage of development, as is recognised by the school. Better use is made of computers to teach information and communication technology (ICT) skills across the subjects, but computers are not sufficiently used to support the teaching of geography.
19. Good use is made of day-to-day assessment and this is an improvement since the last inspection. Assessment is used well to inform lesson planning and short-term learning

outcomes. However, not all teachers apply National Curriculum levels when marking pupils' work. As a result, the pupils do not know what standard they have reached, and this is a weakness, for example in science. Good use is made of homework across the subjects and the inspection team judged that parents need not be worried on this score. Homework is used well to consolidate learning and also to develop pupils' independent research skills.

20. The teaching of speaking, reading, writing and the use of number to pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers use the specific targets on individual education plans well when teaching pupils with special educational needs. They are well supported in lessons by very good learning support assistants, and the quality of support given to them individually and in small withdrawal groups is very good. Pupils with English as an additional language are taught well and do not have any problem accessing the National Curriculum because of having English as an additional language. The approach, using a learning mentor, for gifted and talented pupils is at an early stage of development, but all teachers do extend the highest attainers very well through giving them challenging work, for example in mathematics.
21. A very significant strength of the teaching is that teachers have a good understanding of individual pupils' strengths and weaknesses. They use their knowledge of individual pupils to ensure that they are challenged. Teachers support the pupils very well both in and outside of the classroom.
22. The quality of teaching in the new affiliated sixth form is very good and often inspirational and this has a very positive effect on learning in the sixth form.
23. The good and very good teaching has a positive impact on pupils' and students' learning. Their acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding is good in Key Stages 3 and 4 and very good in post-16. Pupils' intellectual, physical and creative effort is satisfactory in Key Stage 3, good in Key Stage 4 and very good post-16. Pupils' and students' productivity and pace of learning are consistently good across the school. In history, inspirational teaching encourages pupils to learn from one another and to elicit information from a wide range of sources. Pupils' and students' interest, concentration and independence are good at Key Stages 3 and 4 and very good post-16. The teaching of newly introduced vocational courses at post-16 has made a very significant contribution to increasing students' independence and this is a strength. Inspirational teaching in music and history enables pupils to make very good gains in their development of independent performing and research skills. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of their own learning in Key Stages 3 and 4 is satisfactory. As they are seldom told at what National Curriculum level they are working, they often do not know. Post-16 students have a much better understanding of their own knowledge and learning.
24. The learning of pupils with special educational needs is good in Key Stages 3 and 4 and very good in post-16 due to the good and very good teaching that they receive. Pupils with English as an additional language make good gains in their learning in Key Stages 3 and 4 and excellent gains in their learning in post-16.
25. In all subjects there are many examples of good and very good, and also a few examples of excellent, teaching. A few of these are set out below.

26. In the very best teaching observed in every year in English except for Year 7, teachers have very good relationships with pupils, who respond positively to their high expectations of effort, behaviour and attainment so that they make very good progress. Because teaching in history places emphasis on the story of history, pupils develop a deeper understanding of why people in the past made the decisions they did. In other words, pupils are learning to judge the past on its own standards and values. In a very good information and communication technology lesson, the teacher used newly acquired technology to take students step-by-step through a complex process, manipulating a picture of what appears on a computer screen, through the 'Windows' facilities into a word processed document. In music, the teacher celebrates pupils' success and this motivates them to learn and develop very positive attitudes in the subject.

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

27. In the first three years the school offers all subjects of the National Curriculum, together with religious education and personal, social and health education. In accordance with the denominational nature of the school, religious education takes up ten per cent of the timetable. The resulting shorter than average time allocation to other subjects has no effect on the quality of learning in most of them. However, the allocation of only one lesson per week to art leaves insufficient time for complete delivery of all strands of the subject.
28. The Key Stage 4 curriculum, although offering all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education, together with business information studies and some vocational courses, has some shortcomings. The allocation of only one lesson per week to physical education leaves insufficient time to study all activities in depth as required by the new National Curriculum orders, although the statutory curriculum is enhanced by the opportunity to pursue the accredited GCSE course in the subject. The timetable adjustments brought about by the recent introduction of joint sixth-form teaching with a neighbouring school have resulted in a temporary abandonment of the personal, social and health education programme at this key stage. While many of the strands of this programme, such as sex education, drugs education and citizenship, are delivered satisfactorily through religious education, certain aspects such as careers education and guidance, receive less prominence than formerly. The fact that some pupils do not follow a course in design and technology at this key stage constitutes a breach of statutory requirements.
29. The school offers a rich and varied curriculum in the sixth form, with a significant increase in the number of subjects since the previous inspection. Teaching is organised jointly with the partner high school. A broad range of A/S-level, A-level and GNVQ courses offers students a wide choice. The school concentrates on the more traditional courses and the partner school gives emphasis to a wide range of vocational courses, although both types of course are taught in both institutions. While the absence of a physical education programme in the sixth form is not a statutory breach, it does reduce the breadth of the curriculum on offer.
30. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs throughout the age range. Their teachers know them well and there is effective liaison between subject departments and the learning development department.
31. Language college status has brought significant opportunities for the development of language teaching. These include the introduction of Spanish and additional teaching

groups in other languages as a result of extra staff appointments.

32. The school's literacy strategy is not yet fully in place. While there is a particular emphasis upon teaching key words and concepts and the use of writing frames in such subjects as English and geography, the teaching of literacy skills is inconsistent across the curriculum. The school is addressing the improvement of numeracy. Pupils are given opportunities to develop their computer skills during discrete information and communication technology lessons at Key Stage 3, but opportunities to practise these skills in other subjects and at other key stages are not yet fully co-ordinated.
33. The school's curriculum is effectively supplemented by other opportunities. Pupils contribute in a variety of ways to the local community. Activities include working for the Faith and Light Group, Help the Aged and sixth-form community service. The sixth form have also helped organise the Deanery Sacrament of the Sick. The school has a tradition of taking pupils on a variety of excursions. They include overseas destinations for outdoor pursuit experience, foreign exchanges to France and Germany, an annual Lourdes pilgrimage and an annual Year 9 activities holiday. Several lunchtime and after-school activities are offered by subject departments. In physical education the range of extra-curricular activities is limited by inadequacies in outdoor and indoor facilities. However, within these limitations, provision and pupils' participation rates are good. Included among a range of other activities are successful drama productions, Theatre in Education performances and workshops, visits to theatres, museums and art galleries, and revision clubs operating in the run-up to public examinations. All pupils have access to these opportunities, which help to raise both motivation and standards. This equality of access and opportunity extends effectively to all areas of the school's provision.
34. Careers education and guidance begin in Year 8 as part of the personal, social and health education programme. Delivery of careers education is less complete than formerly because of the temporary abandonment of this programme. However, there is a good programme of work experience, and effective liaison with Careers Bradford ensures that the quality of careers education and guidance in the school is satisfactory. There is a very good careers section within the school library. Links with local industry and commerce are well established with employers visiting the school and pupils and teachers visiting employers' premises. Other links that contribute significantly to pupils' learning include those with local church organisations, and such diverse organisations as museums and the local professional Rugby League Club. The recently established inter-school co-operation at sixth form level has brought students into closer contact with students from other faiths and has led to strong links with the local Muslim community, to the mutual benefit of all.
35. The school has good relationships with partner institutions. It has maintained and improved upon the quality of its relationships with its partner primary schools. There is good exchange of information about new Year 7 pupils and a well-planned programme of visits to the schools. There is now an annual joint training day for teachers and opportunities for professional development within the senior management teams of all schools. The recent launch of the affiliated sixth form has resulted in much improved relationships at the post-16 stage.
36. The extensive links that the school has established with the local and more distant communities make a good contribution to their academic progress and to their personal development. The school's Catholic status instantly places it within membership of the Keighley Catholic Schools Partnership and of the diocese to which it belongs. The school has a long history of mutual support with the surrounding parishes and the feeder schools, sharing common bonds and values that unite Catholic families and

create high expectations within the school. Members of the sixth form work with local charities on a community service project. Help the Aged, Gingerbread, Kiddicare, Barnado's, Sue Ryder, CAFOD and Whinburn Special School have all benefited from their support. The National Pilgrimage to Lourdes involves some 150 members of the school community in assisting the sick and disabled people who make the journey. Pupils are also involved in residential activity weeks, exchanges with foreign schools, Penfriends International, lecture trips, theatre trips and museum visits. The school's recently acquired affiliation status with a neighbouring school has introduced both pupils and staff to a new group of people who share neither their culture nor their beliefs. This is proving to be a mutually enriching experience that is having a telling and beneficial impact on local community relations.

37. Deficiencies evident in the curriculum at the time of the previous inspection have been addressed effectively. The successful introduction of the affiliated sixth form has been of obvious benefit to both schools, but the timetable adjustments that have been made necessary by this introduction have produced some unwelcome effects on the Key Stage 4 curriculum, especially in personal, social and health education, albeit temporary in nature.
38. The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development, and good provision for their social and cultural development. The driving force behind this provision is the Catholic faith upon which the school's ethos is firmly based.
39. The very good provision for spiritual development is rooted in the religious life of the school. The daily act of collective worship in each class gives pupils a regular opportunity to reflect on their lives and the way in which they relate to Christ. Weekly spiritual themes are developed in the regular assemblies and in the frequent celebration of the Eucharist, while pupils are encouraged to spend time in personal reflection in the quiet surroundings of the school chapel. Good quality music is used for listening tests at Key Stage 4, while the dance element of the curriculum for girls helps to cultivate a sense of the spiritual. Pupils in a geography class gazed in awe upon an imposing landscape during a field trip, and responded similarly to dramatic environments seen in satellite photographs.
40. Very good provision is made for pupils' moral development. The school's high expectations for both staff and pupils are reflected in the tone of the detailed staff handbook and in the school prospectus. Teachers lead by example, showing a good balance of self-restraint, firmness, tolerance and fair play. The school's personal, health and social education (PHSE) supported by the religious education curriculum develops a set of values relating to self, others, society and the environment. They include self-respect and self-discipline, care, respect, loyalty and trust. However, current Key Stage 4 pupils do not receive a PHSE programme. Pupils understand the school's code of conduct, which is fairly and consistently applied, and which receives much praise from parents. Indeed some Muslim parents were heard to say that they are happy to send their children to the Holy Family School because they know they will be safe there.
41. Good provision is made for pupils' social development. Good behaviour and industry are recognised and publicly rewarded. Success is celebrated in assemblies, while tolerance and care for others are actively promoted through fundraising events. In lessons such as physical education (PE) pupils work well in groups, and the many extra-curricular activities and clubs involve teamwork, leadership and competition with others. Geography provides many opportunities for interaction on field trips, while in design and technology (DT) pupils are taught to share equipment, and to be polite and considerate when working with others.

42. Good provision is made for pupils' cultural development. They gain a variety of experiences in music, literature and art, while history and geography introduce them to life in other times and places. In a mathematics lesson, the teacher used French and German names for numbers and digressed to discuss Descartes as a philosopher and mathematician. In a lesson with mixed faith pupils, they were invited to pray to whomever they called God. In post-16 GNVQ classes, students from European and Asian cultures worked in close collaboration when addressing business and commercial issues, while the school's new status as a language college has created new opportunities for the meeting of diverse languages and cultures. These developments constitute a real improvement on the arrangements noted at the previous inspection. Muslim pupils also now have a prayer room made available to them during the month of Ramadan.

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

43. The school has developed good procedures for child protection and for ensuring the welfare of the whole school community. They spring from the school's strong Catholic ethos and are embedded in its main aims and in a range of detailed policies, which are subject to regular review. Parents at their meeting with the inspectors declared this to be one of the things they liked most about the school.
44. There are good procedures for monitoring progress and very good arrangements for promoting personal development. Homework is regularly given and marking includes constructive comments from the teacher, though parents are divided as to whether an appropriate amount of homework is given. Pupils are routinely involved in their own assessment, and the Excellence in Cities Initiative has enabled the school to launch Learning Mentor and Gifted and Talented programmes. The school's practice of rewarding effort as well as achievement helps to motivate all pupils and thereby helps to raise standards. The good practice of setting targets for pupils is not completely effective because some of the targets are insufficiently precise. For example, they do not always identify what a pupil needs to know in order to reach a higher level. The procedures for monitoring personal development are good. The well-constructed student planners are much appreciated by pupils, and are well used. Pupils showed them off proudly to the inspectors.
45. The very good procedures for promoting discipline and good behaviour result in an orderly school community and provide a solid platform for learning. However, the observations of the inspectors indicate a need for greater consistency in their application, especially when pupils move around the school between activities.
46. The very good procedures for monitoring and improving attendance have been further strengthened through the launching of a joint strategy with the Education Social Work Service. The initiative is well supported by the year tutors and class teachers, who were seen to compliment year groups on recent improvements in attendance. The procedures for recording and reporting attendance meet statutory requirements.
47. There are good procedures for promoting wellbeing, health and safety. The relevant policies are in place and are regularly updated by the premises committee of the governing body, who conduct termly risk assessments. Termly fire drills and evacuation procedures ensure that all are familiar with escape routes, and the current programme of upgrading fire doors provides added protection.
48. The school's designated person for child protection demonstrated familiarity with the

local education authority (LEA) procedures, and other adults in the school were able to identify him in that capacity. The nominated first aider has received appropriate training and she, along with several others in the school, holds a current certificate of competence. Appropriate records of accidents are maintained and pupils know what action to take in the event of an accident.

49. The school prepares its pupils to address the many new issues confronting today's teenagers by reinforcing the values outlined in its policy on personal, social and health education and citizenship, but this is currently not being taught in Key Stage 4. Many of the issues are dealt with in the context of religious education (RE), which is inspected separately because this is a voluntary aided school. While most pupils accept this approach, some sixth-form students would welcome talks from more specialist speakers on some sensitive subjects requiring great expertise. The school's managers have agreed to pursue this matter.
50. Pupils report that they feel safe and well cared for in the school. The managers report that, in the wake of Dunblane, appropriate measures have been taken to improve security, including greater staff vigilance in checking the identity of visitors.
51. A well written whole-school assessment, recording and reporting policy guides the work of all teachers through the heads of department. Although the principles, procedures and format of assessment are good, they are inconsistently applied, and effectiveness varies. Marking and recording of marks are good overall, but generally pupils are insufficiently involved in knowing the criteria by which they are to be assessed, in monitoring themselves and in taking responsibility for their own learning. Targets are set by departments but these tend to identify the level which each pupil should aim for at the next stage. Formative and qualitative targets to help pupils know how to improve, and thus raise achievement are not set consistently throughout the school. Value-added data are collected, using National Curriculum key stage results, GCSE results, and measures such as the MIDYIS, YELLIS and ALIS systems. Data are efficiently collected and kept on a central computer database, distributed to departments to use, and also monitored by the senior management team. There is little monitoring of the achievements of different groups of pupils, whether by gender, prior attainment or ethnic group. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) keeps good records of pupils on the special needs register, and assessment is used well to identify and monitor the pupils with special educational needs.
52. The degree to which assessment information guides planning is inconsistent across and within departments. In geography it was felt that the choice of new textbooks was guided by assessment results. In information and communication technology, assessment is used constantly to review what is taught. In design and technology, assessment guides the review of schemes of work, although at Key Stage 3 assessment is not linked to National Curriculum levels, neither is it for physical education. Evidence from several departments showed that assessment did not guide curriculum planning sufficiently, whether in individual lessons or on the larger scale of schemes of work content and teaching and learning methods.

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

53. The very good links with parents acknowledged at the previous inspection continue to be a strength of the school, making a very good contribution to the promotion of high educational standards.
54. The parents' very positive views of the school are underlined in the comments of the 53

who attended the meeting with the inspectors. They describe the Catholic ethos of the school as a living ethos in which spiritual wellbeing, Catholic values and pastoral care of their children are very important to them. They are very pleased with the regular flow of information from the school, and with the way that the senior managers respond promptly to any concerns expressed by them. The subject of homework is one about which parental opinion is divided, some thinking that there is too little, others that there is too much, and yet others suggesting that there is too little information about it. Comments on the student planner on the other hand were very favourable. The inspection team concludes that parents have no reason to be concerned about the setting of homework and its use to raise standards.

55. Of the 23 per cent of parents responding to the parents' questionnaire, more than 90 per cent agree that their children like coming to school; that they make good progress; that they behave well; and that they become mature and responsible. They say that it is a well-managed school that has high expectations of their children and enjoys a productive partnership with parents. Between 15 per cent and 20 per cent of respondents (a small percentage of the overall number of parents) expressed some degree of dissatisfaction about homework, about extra-curricular activities, and about the quality of information provided by the school.
56. The school's very effective links with parents are reinforced by their shared values of Catholicism and by membership of parish communities that promote both family and school partnerships. The good quality information from the school includes governors' annual reports to parents that meet statutory requirements, a comprehensive, user-friendly prospectus, and regular, informative newsletters giving details of current and planned events. The twice yearly parents' evenings are linked with pupils' reports that comment on application as well as achievement, and in which provision is made for parents and pupils to add their own comments. Parents comment too on the benefits of the student planner as a medium of communication between school and home. In all these areas the effectiveness of the school's links with parents contributes significantly to raising standards. However, the reports do not provide sufficiently specific enough targets to support parents in helping their children to improve their work.
57. Parents make a good contribution to their children's learning both at school and at home, substantially improving access to the curriculum. Their commitment to the school was borne out at the Year 7 Induction Mass on a murky September night, for which almost three hundred parents and supporters turned out. The school's managers are fulsome in their praise of the parents' positive impact on school life, citing the language college and the affiliated sixth-form initiatives as examples of the benefits of their much valued support. Parents are very supportive of the school through the fundraising efforts of the parent teacher association (PTA) and the parishes, and through the active involvement of groups of parents in school events and activities such as football coaching. At home and in the parishes, parents support their children's learning by ensuring that they get to school on time, helping with homework, writing comments in the student planner and in school reports, and by responding to the school's frequent pleas for help.

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

58. A significant factor in the success of the Holy Family School is the very good leadership provided by the senior management team, and especially by the headteacher. Since the last inspection there has been a very significant improvement at middle management level, particularly in departmental development planning and the linking of these plans with the whole-school development plan. There have been significant improvements in

respect of all of the key issues identified in the previous report. The one exception is appraisal, and this is because performance management has superseded it.

59. The headteacher, deputy headteacher, director of studies, systems manager and bursar work as an effective team and provide a clear educational direction for the school. The headteacher is a visionary who has a clear educational philosophy which has been successfully communicated to all staff. He has an open door policy and is consultative and friendly. As a result of his open management style all staff in the school, including learning support staff, consider that they are involved in important decision-making about the future direction of the school and so feel valued. Consequently they are all keen to move in the same direction to promote a caring school, and a good learning environment where all pupils are treated as individuals. The whole staff expects the highest standards of work and behaviour from all pupils.
60. Recent exciting innovations include the gaining of language college status and the affiliated sixth-form provision with a neighbouring school. Despite a serious lack of funding in the first year of gaining language college status, improved standards have been achieved across the whole school in almost all subjects since gaining this status. The affiliated sixth-form provision has resulted in a post-16 curriculum that offers greater breadth and balance. A particular strength of the provision is this range of vocational courses. In this deeply Christian school, the vision drives the budget, but the headteacher is very astute in enabling the vision to be realised in practice. The director of studies is a new position, funded from an additional one-off sum of money from the DfEE. He has a vision and a commitment to improve the curriculum and grasps the importance of providing a cost-effective post-16 curriculum. His plans include developing the PHSE curriculum, including citizenship, throughout the school, and also exploring imaginative ways of keeping a very wide range of post-16 courses that are cost effective and do not have a negative impact on the quality of educational provision in the lower part of the school.
61. The monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance are satisfactory overall. The monitoring of the school development plan and the departmental development plans is more formalised than the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. However, the headteacher visits classrooms frequently and has a good picture of what is going on across subject departments. The monitoring of teaching and learning by heads of department is very variable, and some engage in this activity with greater rigour and enthusiasm than others. There is no formal system to ensure consistency in this very important activity at middle management level. Although middle managers have had many opportunities for development since the last inspection, there has not yet been any specific training of the skills required to carry out effective classroom observations. Heads of department do not currently set the members in their departments specific targets to improve their quality of teaching. This is planned for within the whole school context of the development of performance management systems. Heads of year effectively monitor the provision to meet the pastoral needs of pupils. There is always a very detailed analysis of examination results and the information gained from this exercise is used effectively to determine strategies to raise standards.
62. The long-term strategic plan is very good in setting appropriate targets for whole- school development and improvement. The yearly plan is also an effective tool for the management of change, and departmental plans dovetail into the school development plan. This is a noticeable improvement since the last inspection. However, given the low level of funding, it is not expedient for the long-term development plan not to be much more closely linked to financial planning. Linking the school development plan to

financial planning more closely on the document would also result in a much more transparent explanation of where funds go for all to see very clearly. At a glance, all colleagues could then see where the funds have been targeted, and also just how meagre they are.

63. The management of pupils with special educational needs is very good. Excellence in Cities funding has been used well to develop a learning mentoring system and a provision for gifted and talented pupils. The management of the provision for pupils with English as an additional language is also good.
64. The school's aims and values are very good and they are highly valued by parents. The overarching aim focuses on a commitment to the teaching of Jesus Christ, and the love of Christ pervades the school. This agape love is realised in practice and pupils develop self-confidence as a result. The love of Christ is the driving force behind and within (through the Holy Spirit) the senior management team and they lead by the example of Jesus and set a very positive tone in this Christian school. Consequently relationships, including race relationships, are very good in this school. Asian parents stated that they chose this school for their children because of the very good relationships. Hence the culture exists where there is a deep commitment to challenging and extending all pupils to achieve their very best in an environment where it is very safe to make mistakes. All staff work extremely hard and they are successful in building up the confidence and self-esteem of every pupil in a range of imaginative ways.
65. The governing body is effective and supportive. Governors visit the school regularly and are kept well informed about what is happening in the school. Acting as the critical friends, they ask hard questions of the headteacher, for example over the dip in the NCAT result in science in 1999. A good structure of sub-committees supports the governing body in meeting its statutory responsibilities. They meet all of these well except for the provision of design and technology in Key Stage 4, and this is due largely to staffing difficulties which are being resolved. The governors doggedly and persistently put pressure on the LEA and the Diocese for additional funding and constantly make requests for improvements to the unsatisfactory accommodation.
66. With some exceptions, the school is well staffed in most subject areas to provide for good teaching of its current curriculum. Likewise, non-teaching staff, such as classroom assistants, technicians and administration personnel, are also well matched to the school's requirements. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by suitably qualified staff both in lessons and in various withdrawal sessions. Pupils with English as an additional language are very well supported and they achieve high standards. The exceptions to this good provision lie in the physical education (PE) and the design and technology (DT) departments. In PE, the lack of a head of department has adversely affected the department's provision. Two newly qualified teachers have been running this department, with insufficient support from the school's management. Non-specialist teaching exacerbates these difficulties, and the staffing of PE is unsatisfactory. In DT the long-term absences which caused the staffing difficulties encountered during the week of inspection are being addressed. At present however, staffing does not provide pupils with the continuity and progression they need, particularly in practical work. In most other areas, well-qualified staff teach their own subjects with clear positive effects on the standards pupils attain. The proportion of non-specialist teaching in art has reduced, but where this still occurs in Key Stage 3, standards are affected.
67. The school's procedures and arrangements for induction of staff new to the school are satisfactory. Some staff, including newly qualified teachers from this year and last in

several departments, speak very highly of their induction experience, and of the support they received from the school's management. Others, though, have had unsatisfactory experiences in this regard, particularly those in the PE department. Consistent application of the school's policies and procedures are not currently ensured.

68. Staff have had no recent appraisal, and performance management systems are not yet in place. Staff in-service training (INSET) is linked to the priorities of different departments, with staff applying individually for courses they select. Evaluations of these courses are at department level, with central records of INSET kept by the deputy head. These systems are under review as performance management develops. At present the areas of appraisal and staff development are satisfactory, and performance management systems are planned to link them more closely together.
69. Accommodation is unsatisfactory. Although there have been some improvements since the last inspection, significant weaknesses remain.
70. The growing popularity of the school has generated increased numbers of pupils. This has led to an overall shortage of classrooms. As a result teaching often occurs in any available room regardless of its location or suitability, and a number of the rooms are too small for some of the classes using them. There is a shortage of specialist teaching space, particularly in English, geography, history, modern foreign languages and physical education. Physical education suffers the most disadvantages because its indoor resources, the gymnasium and the hall, are used for other activities, often at the same time, and the limited outdoor playing areas are often waterlogged. The styles of teaching in these subjects are limited and this restricts the use of specialist resources. Consequently, in English, modern foreign languages and physical education this has had an adverse effect on pupils' standards of attainment. Accommodation for information and communication technology and mathematics is reasonably good. In art, design and technology and science, it is satisfactory but even so there are minor problems. In the science department the laboratories are small and there is insufficient room for storage and preparation work by the technician, for whom there is no designated fume cupboard. Accommodation is in four separate blocks, and at lesson changeover, the major movement of pupils and teachers about the site, makes for severe crowding in some corridors and stairways. Failure to implement a recent major refurbishment programme to its agreed schedule, responsibility for which lies with agencies outside the school and its governors, has exacerbated all these difficulties.
71. Close to the buildings, the site is poorly maintained and offers an outwardly untidy and overgrown appearance. This is evident from the first impressions gained on passing the caretaker's house at the front of the school through to the playing fields at the rear. Broken paving stones and loose rubble where pupils walk and play and lifted or tilting paved areas constitute hazards. Weeds grow out of most of the pathways. Where some of the shrubs that formerly decorated the paved areas have died off, the empty spaces remain. There is a great deal of litter.
72. The external appearance is matched by the drab state of much of the school's interior. The changing rooms are too small for the size of the teaching groups and the girls' room has a leaking roof and missing floor tiles. There are exceptions, such as the newly refurbished rooms in Ryan block, the learning development suite and one of the information and communication technology rooms, but generally, the rooms and corridors are depressing and unattractive. It might be worse but for the various self-help schemes, which members of the staff have undertaken.
73. The playing fields and associated grounds of the school are also poorly maintained. The

grass has not been cut for several weeks and there are sections of overgrown shrubs and weeds that have not been treated for some time. The playing areas show marked signs of wear and tear but they have not been repaired. Weeds are growing on the all-weather pitch. The tennis courts are no longer fit to use for teaching or playing. The need for their repair has been acknowledged but appears to have a low priority in the local authority's budgeting. The natural slope of the ground means that rain water drainage is mostly towards the school buildings. The drainage system is inadequate to cope with this and although it is only September, the playing areas are already waterlogged. There are insufficient drains where the playing areas meet the buildings so that heavy rainfall causes flooding by the 'Bungalow'. Where they have been provided, drains are ineffectual because some of them are higher than the water they are supposed to drain and at least two are clogged with litter. The all-weather pitch is at the level to which much of the playing fields drain. This adds to the rate at which its surface is eroded and its main drain readily becomes clogged with eroded material. General observation suggests that some features of the site have been unsatisfactory for so long that one might question their adequacy at the time when the school took responsibility for it under local management schemes.

74. The governing body of the school and its senior management team has spent much time discussing the problems associated with accommodation and in trying to find ways to improve it. They have explored every possible avenue to raise additional funds and on occasions have themselves made personal contributions, both physical and financial, to make things better. They have used their limited financial resources very carefully but effectively in trying to improve the stock and the general image of the school.
75. The provision of learning resources is at least adequate in all subject areas except music. There are too few up-to-date classroom instruments to be used in music lessons. Spending on resources has increased since the previous inspection and most subjects have a good stock of books and equipment. However, in science pupils have to share textbooks and there are insufficient microscopes for whole-class usage. Significant improvements since the last inspection are seen in the provision for information and communication technology and modern foreign languages, and both areas have excellent resources. Modern foreign languages has twenty-five discreet computers, video conferencing and satellite television resources. The ratio of one networked computer with access to the internet to every seven pupils is above the national average. A few subjects, for example physical education, geography and music do not have sufficient access to computers. Geography fieldwork is well integrated into the curriculum across both key stages and the range and extent have improved considerably since the previous inspection. The local museum is almost adjacent to the school and provides an excellent facility for research and enquiry for geography, history and science departments. The school visits the museum at least four times a year. The art department has sufficient resources for current needs but they do not give pupils the rich, varied and imaginative provision necessary for greater awareness of the subject. The resources for pupils with special educational needs are very good and include networked computers with appropriate Programmes of Study. The school has significantly improved its resource provision and this has had a positive effect on pupils' learning and standards attained.
76. Financial planning is good. However, the documented school plan is not sufficiently costed as a document so that it is clear to see just how low the level of funding for the school is. Despite a very low level of funding from the LEA and the slowness in implementing essential work for the language college, there is a dogged determination on the part of the headteacher and the governors to make their Christian vision happen. To their credit, their vision has happened in reality, because they have been prepared to

roll up their sleeves, bring a digger in over the weekend and carry out essential work themselves.

77. Through prudent budgeting coupled with additional funding from the Excellence in Cities grant, funding for the language college status and an additional sum from the DfEE, the school is on course to transform a negative carry forward from last year into a position where it carries forward a five per cent surplus at the end of the next financial year. This is a major achievement and confirms the expertise of the headteacher and governors in setting a budget without making staffing cuts. The headteacher and governors set and manage the budget well. They are well supported by a bursar who monitors expenditure very carefully. She keeps a tight reign on the spending of departments. Care is taken to ensure that financial planning takes into account unforeseen developments as well as those identified. This calls for close co-operation and sensitivity between staff and governors. The headteacher is expert at 'tapping' pockets of funding from a whole range of charitable trusts and this skill has truly been a saving grace for this Christian school.
78. All staff, including the learning assistants, are effectively and efficiently deployed. However, there have been some problems with staff responsible for the care and maintenance of the buildings and the site. The school receives a range of grants and these are used efficiently and appropriately for the purposes for which they are designated. The headteacher and governors are well supported by a very efficient and highly professional bursar and also by high quality administrative staff. They provide very good experience and serve as a first point of contact for parents, carers and all visitors to the school. This supports all staff very effectively and efficiently. The minor points in the most recent auditors' report have been addressed. The school applies the principles for best value well, for example in the recent revised provision of school dinners.
79. Taking into account the quality of teaching, behaviour, the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and the improvements since the last inspection achieved in the context of a very low level of funding, the school provides very good value for money.

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

80. The governors, headteacher and senior management team should give attention to the following points to improve further the quality of education provided and to raise standards for all pupils and students:
  - i) Improve the quality of provision and raise standards in design and technology in Key Stage 4 by:
    - ensuring that all pupils take a design and technology subject in Key Stage 4 so that statutory requirements are met;

- providing a broader design and technology curriculum in Key Stage 4 by introducing another option.  
(This weakness is identified in paragraphs 28 and 113).
- ii) Improve further standards in art in Key Stage 3 by:
- ensuring sufficient time is given for the delivery of the Key Stage 3 art curriculum;
  - providing specialist staff for the teaching of the subject in Key Stage 3.  
(This weakness is identified in paragraphs 16, 27, 103 and 105).
- iii) Improve the quality of provision for physical education in Key Stage 4 by:
- ensuring sufficient time is provided for the subject so that it can be taught at greater depth.  
(This weakness is identified in paragraphs 28, 164 and 165).
- iv) Ensure that a personal, health and social education programme is planned and delivered in Key Stage 4 and that the requirements for the delivery of the programme for citizenship are planned for. (This weakness is identified in paragraph 28).
- v) Improve the teaching of literacy across all subjects by increasing the range of strategies. (This weakness is identified in paragraphs 18 and 85).
- vi) Share assessment levels more clearly with pupils so that they know what standard they are working at, and use these levels in consultation with them to set specific targets to raise their standards. (This weakness is identified in paragraphs 51, 52, 89, 93, 99, 113 and 166).
- vii) Continue with the same determination to improve the unsatisfactory accommodation and, by so doing, further improve the quality of learning throughout the school, thereby raising standards even further, particularly in art, German, music and physical education, where weaknesses in the accommodation have a negative impact on learning. (This weakness is identified in paragraphs 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 89, 93, 107, 145, 158 and 166).

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	166
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	48

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	25	49	22	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	803	104
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	90	19

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	12	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	135	3

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	55

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	20

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	7.8
National comparative data	5.7

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.7
National comparative data	0.5

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	64	96	160

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	43	41	34
	Girls	80	69	44
	Total	123	110	78
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	77	69	49
	National	63	62	55
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	33	43	14
	National	28	38	23

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	43	41	39
	Girls	85	72	53
	Total	128	113	92
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	81	71	58
	National	64	64	60
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	33	43	23
	National	31	37	28

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	72	73	145

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	23	59	64
	Girls	28	66	68
	Total	51	125	132
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	35	86	91
	National	46.6	90.9	95.8

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	33
	National	38

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	0	n/a
	National		n/a

### Attainment at the end of the sixth form

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	13	16	29

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	18.5	13.8	15.9	n/a	n/a	n/a
National	17.7	18.1	17.9	2.7	2.8	2.8

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number in their final year of studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	0	n/a
	National		82.5

<b>International Bacculaureate</b>		<b>Number</b>	<b>% success rate</b>
Number entered for the International Bacculaureate Diploma and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all they studied	School	n/a	n/a
	National		82.5

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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	0
Indian	3
Pakistani	52
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	1
White	845
Any other minority ethnic group	2

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

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	5	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

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

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	47.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.2

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Education support staff: Y7 – Y13**

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	208

#### **Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	72.3
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#### **Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11**

Key Stage 3	26.3
Key Stage 4	24.0

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	1,799,014
Total expenditure	1,874,353
Expenditure per pupil	2,065
Balance brought forward from previous year	-75,339
Balance carried forward to next year	124,348

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	* 637
Number of questionnaires returned	150

\* 637 because at time sent out could not send to incoming Year 7 and could not send to sixth form

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	43	50	6	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	45	49	5	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	33	57	4	1	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	53	15	5	2
The teaching is good.	29	63	5	1	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	47	10	5	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	31	7	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	32	3	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	45	37	14	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	56	39	2	1	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	51	41	5	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	34	37	15	4	10

Not all columns add up to 100 because some parents return questionnaires with some questions that are left unanswered

### Other issues raised by parents

A few parents expressed concern that at times some of the office staff are brusque with their children and that this upsets their children.

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

### **ENGLISH**

81. Standards of attainment are above the national average. Test results at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999 were above the national average and well above the average of pupils in similar schools. The trend of improvement over recent years, including 2000, is greater than the national trend. Boys' results match national figures but girls attain more highly by a wider margin than is found nationally. At GCSE in English in 1999, results were below average for grades A\*-C but above for grades A\*-G. Girls attained more highly than boys. In 2000, the proportion gaining A\*-C was in line with the national figures for 1999. In English literature, the proportion gaining grades A\*-C matched in 1999 national figures; with boys attaining more highly than girls, and in 2000 it was well above the proportion gaining these grades nationally in 1999. In both years, however, the proportion entered was well below national averages. At Advanced level, results have been consistently good in recent years with almost half the students gaining grades A or B.
82. In lessons observed, pupils in each key stage and at all levels of attainment demonstrated good listening and speaking skills. They listen carefully to teachers and to each other with good understanding. If unsure, they ask for advice or further explanation. From early in Year 7, pupils speak clearly and confidently and, when given appropriate opportunities, contribute well to discussion. In all years, the quality of discussion with teachers and between pupils contributes significantly to effective learning and encourages pupils to make their own judgements. A very good example was observed in a Year 11 class exploring aspects of a story by Penelope Lively and arriving at well-reasoned conclusions and perceptive insights, which are confidently and clearly expressed. These same qualities, developed further by additional experience and accompanied by a similar kind of intellectual excitement, are also evident in the sixth form, particularly in Year 13.
83. Pupils at all levels of attainment read aloud willingly, sometimes hesitantly, but with above average levels of accuracy. The ability to read expressively is less well developed, though it improves as pupils move through the school. At the end of Key Stage 3, most pupils read with good understanding and recognise important details. A significant minority understand implications without reliance upon teachers' guidance. These skills are further developed in Key Stage 4 where more challenging texts are encountered. Pupils have an improved understanding of how writers achieve their effects and some seek to use these techniques in their own writing. In the sixth form, students demonstrate appropriate skills of textual analysis and good levels of understanding.
84. Standards of written work are satisfactory but are more widely variable than the other key skills of the subject. All pupils take pride in the presentation of their work. In Key Stage 3, a significant but small minority have very good skills of organisation and expression of their ideas. They are able to draw upon wide vocabularies, vary sentence patterns with sophistication and employ other techniques encountered in the texts they read. The majority write competently for a good range of purposes and express themselves clearly, usually with accurate spelling and in properly constructed sentences. Lower attaining pupils become able to communicate at least their main

sense in recognisable sentences and with increased accuracy of spelling. In the mixed ability teaching groups in Year 7, pupils exhibit widely different levels of previous learning and experience of major elements of the National Literacy Strategy. This lack of a shared body of knowledge presents difficulties for teachers and slows the progress of pupils at all levels of attainment. Good progress made in Key Stage 3 is consolidated during Key Stage 4 and, particularly for higher attainers, is extended as they improve their skills, draw upon wider vocabularies, and organise lengthy essays effectively. The best writing in the sixth form is characterised by precise relevance, use of appropriate evidence to support judgements and clarity of expression. The accuracy of written work improves during the key stages, but errors of spelling of words in common use, confusion of capital and lower case letters, faults of basic grammar such as agreement of subject and verb continue to reduce the quality of the work of some otherwise capable writers even at the end of Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form.

85. Work done in other subjects makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' progress in English. The school has a policy for spelling which is generally effective and especially so for lower attainers. Most teachers ensure that pupils understand, use and correctly spell technical terms and language encountered in their subjects. Many subjects provide opportunities for pupils to read aloud and to hear skilful readings by teachers and to engage in discussion. Especially in English, geography and history, pupils are given opportunities for and guidance on writing at length. The school does not have a structured policy for the further development of literacy skills with clearly identified strategies which can be implemented in all subjects.
86. The quality of teaching and learning in English is good. It is often very good, and always so in the sixth form, and never less than satisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge and a shared aim to help all pupils to reach their full potential. Pupils behave well. Examples of excellent attitudes and behaviour were noted in Year 9 and Year 11. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning and the quality of their relationships with each other and with teachers contribute to the good quality of their progress in most lessons. The progress of pupils with special educational needs and of those for whom English is an additional language is good because of the high quality of the specialist support given to them and the good understanding that class teachers have of their needs. In one Year 8 class, the poor behaviour of a small minority disrupted teaching and reduced the progress of the class. Another lesson in Year 8 provided a very good example of teachers' contributions to the spiritual and cultural experiences of pupils as the class considered how different societies have attempted to explain the origins of life. Homework is set regularly and relates well to work done in class.
87. In the very best lessons, observed in every year except Year 7, teachers have very good relationships with pupils, who respond positively to their high expectations of effort, behaviour and attainment so that they make very good progress. Teachers have good understanding of individuals' strengths and weaknesses and ensure that they are fully challenged by the tasks set for them. Lessons are well constructed and conducted at a crisp pace, often with precise time limits for each component so that learning is efficient. Teachers encourage all pupils in their classes to offer suggestions, opinions and judgements so that they contribute actively to their own learning. They use questions skilfully to confirm and to extend pupils' understanding. Their enthusiasm for the subject is infectious and in such lessons teachers work in partnership with pupils to explore ideas and techniques. Teaching is less successful when the pace of lessons is too leisurely to provide appropriate challenge for at least some pupils or when teachers provide too few opportunities for pupils to be active participants in their learning.

88. The head of department provides very good leadership. He is well supported by other teachers so that, since the time of the previous report, good progress has been made in raising standards of attainment particularly in speaking and listening. More use is now made of information and communication technology. The quality of marking, though mostly good, continues to be inconsistent. Except in Year 7, there is now almost no evidence of higher attaining pupils being inappropriately challenged. In a small minority of lessons, pupils still have too few opportunities to contribute to their learning. Further progress is being made despite the very large size of many teaching groups which often restricts opportunities for class or group discussion. There is a lack of appropriate strategies to meet the needs of pupils entering Year 7 with unusually different levels of earlier learning. There is a need for a whole-school policy to further improve standards of literacy.

## **MATHEMATICS**

89. At the end of Key Stage 3 the results of the National Curriculum tests were above the national average in 1999, and in line with similar schools. The 2000 results were also above the national average. At the end of Key Stage 4 in 1999 the percentage of A\*-C grades at GCSE was below the national average (41.4% compared to 45.6%), although passes (A\*-G grades) were greater than the national average. The GCSE results in 2000 were much improved. At both key stages higher attainers achieve well, with a large proportion at Levels 7 and 8 at the end of Key Stage 3, and A\* and A grades at GCSE. Girls generally achieve much better results than boys. Results at A-level and further mathematics are good, but the numbers involved were too small in 1999 and 2000 to compare nationally.
90. Attainment seen in lessons and in the analysis of work samples was in line with the national average overall, and on the whole better in Key Stage 3 than 4. The National Numeracy Project strategies have improved the calculation skills in Year 7. Pupils in a Year 8 lower set were competent with and enjoyed using their calculators to find square roots, and a Year 9 top set understood and could use methods to find the  $n$ th term of linear and quadratic sequences. In Key Stage 3, the lowest prior attainers are taught by the special needs co-ordinator with great success in improving their numeracy skills and confidence in mathematics. A Year 10 third set tackled problems involving Pythagoras's theorem with enthusiasm and understanding. Good achievement was observed in the Year 11 second set using Cartesian and Polar grids to plot the Sine graph, and in the fourth set, aiming for intermediate level, being introduced to the Sine function. Sixth-form work observed was of a high standard in A-level and further mathematics groups.
91. Since the previous inspection, standards overall have improved, with more students taking A-level in Years 12 and 13. Setting across the year in both Key Stage 3 and 4 has enabled a better matching of work to prior attainment, although there are some anomalies, especially where, exceptionally, pupils' behaviour and attitudes impede their progress. On the whole pupils behave very well, and show interest in and enthusiasm for mathematics. The use of 'Starter' exercises at the beginning of lessons works well, and helps to develop numeracy skill and speed. Although there is more use of discussion than at the time of the last inspection, this is not yet widespread. There are still too few opportunities for pupils to show initiative and take responsibility for their own learning. Improvements in resources include a textbook for each pupil, and more practical equipment, although this is underused. Achievement overall is affected by the lack of information and communication technology, which is still not fully developed in mathematics, although provision has increased and development is planned.

92. Teaching is good overall across the whole school and very good in the sixth form. The team of dedicated teachers are well qualified, with varied experience. On the whole teachers have high expectations of pupils, although some classes across the ability ranges are not stretched enough, or challenged to produce high quality work. The best teachers taught topics to beyond the expected level, improving learning, particularly of higher attainers, and the identified gifted and talented pupils. A fast pace, with varied activities structured within a lesson, helped many pupils learn better. Teaching methods, which improved learning, included recapitulation and review, eliciting responses from pupils, and the use of starters in a '3-part' lesson as recommended by the National Numeracy Project. A weakness was the frequent absence of a summary or evaluation at the end of lessons, for the pupils to recognise what and how much they had learnt. Good ongoing assessment was seen with answers to classwork and homework given immediately and the pupils contributing. Homework was set regularly and usually completed well. On the whole pupils and sixth-form students were keen to learn, showing interest and concentrating throughout their lessons. Behaviour was good, although exceptions were seen of individually disruptive and difficult pupils who were dealt with sensitively by teachers. Teachers knew their classes well, mutual respect was evident, and the good relationships between teachers and pupils, and among pupils, aided learning. A feature of the best teaching and learning was the cultural dimension, referring to historical developments or people, developing human interest and general knowledge, and a multicultural awareness.
93. Leadership and management within the mathematics department are good, with a well-constructed handbook and detailed schemes of work. The setting arrangement across the years works well and is flexible, but unfortunately at present it prevents sufficient monitoring of teaching and learning in the classroom. Pupils often mark their own work, with books seen regularly by teachers and marks recorded. Some teachers make comments in pupils' books, but this is inconsistent and not constructive enough to help pupils know how to improve. Pupils need to know the criteria by which they are assessed, and to have qualitative as well as quantitative targets set. The rooms used for mathematics lessons are a good size and close together, but the repair and maintenance of these rooms and their furniture are unsatisfactory and the poor environment impacts negatively on the quality of the learning experiences.
94. The National Numeracy Project has been adopted wholeheartedly by the mathematics department, who have all undergone training in the strategies involved. Links with feeder primary schools are now good, and a Numeracy Summer School was held for Years 6 and 7 this year, as well as a master class for higher attainers. Key Stage 3 results have steadily improved. Calculation and graphic skills are well taught, and recognised as good by many departments, such as design and technology, geography, science and ICT. Examples observed include angle measure in using the LOGO program in ICT lessons; plotting accurate line graphs and reading scales in science, and in DT measurement and drawing as well as collecting, presenting and interpreting data. In the PE department there was no promotion or development of numeracy, although measuring, counting and recording are important. Art was observed to include enlargement in several lessons in different years, and it was recognised that pupils' mathematics skills were sound and secure. Development of numeracy across the curriculum is the next stage. A survey is planned by the acting head of department, with the aim of improving consistency, and emphasising the importance of numeracy to all subjects, and the contribution, which all subjects can make to improve pupils' skills and enjoyment of all aspects of mathematics.

## **SCIENCE**

95. The attainment of pupils in public examinations in science is rising, but there has been no consistent pattern over the last three years. At the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999, the percentage of pupils attaining Level 5 and above was below the national average and well below for Level 6 and above with girls attaining slightly better than boys. This was a drop from the previous year. In comparison with similar schools based on free school meals, these results in 1999 were well below national averages. The teacher assessed levels for the same year were close to the national average for both Levels 5 and 6 and above. The results in the year 2000 are much improved, with the percentage attaining Level 5 or above just exceeding the national average and the proportion attaining Level 6 and above almost doubling from the previous year. These results reflect the work done by the science department to raise the attainment of pupils at Key Stage 3.
96. At Key Stage 4 there has also been an inconsistent pattern of attainment. In 1999 the proportion of pupils attaining the higher A\*-C grades at GCSE in the double award science was below the national average, with boys' and girls' results being very similar. Results in science were below others in the school, a change from the previous year when they were above. In 2000, results in double award science are much improved with girls attaining more of the higher grades than boys. Attainment at A-level in the three science subjects is in line with course expectations, but a variety of small entry numbers in each subject makes comparisons difficult.
97. The department has analysed its results in public examinations and identified areas where improvement could take place. This has led to strategies such as matching teachers to specific groups and a mentoring system for certain targeted pupils, both of which have had a positive effect on the results in 2000. Attainment in lessons is slightly better than the national test results indicate, and this reflects the work done by the department particularly at Key Stage 3. In over half the lessons observed attainment was above national averages, as when Year 7 pupils could read complex scales on measuring instruments, and plot a graph of temperature changes connecting points with the best fitting line. At Key Stage 4, in one-third of the lessons, pupils, mainly in the higher groups, demonstrated attainment above national average, such as being able to describe in detail why deforestation takes place and its impact on the environment. In the sixth form attainment is in line with or slightly above course expectations.
98. Pupils' achievement in science varies from group to group and within groups. Those in the top sets in Year 9 are achieving well and can, for instance, describe energy transfers in various situations and calculate their percentage efficiency. In the sixth form many pupils in each subject are achieving well, both in the A-level subjects and also in advanced vocational science. Here students measure and explain the readings taken of blood pressure and describe the heart traces in an electrocardiogram. Where achievement is not satisfactory, it is because pupils are unsure of what is expected of them or the higher attaining pupils are not given sufficiently challenging work. Pupils with special needs achieve well when helped by support assistants, or when given specific work matched to their needs. However, those with mild learning difficulties do not achieve as well as they could if they have neither support nor matched resources. Pupils with English as an additional language were all achieving in line with the rest of the group.
99. The teaching in all the lessons seen was at least satisfactory. Two-thirds of teaching seen was at least good. This is a much improved profile compared to the last inspection. The few very good lessons seen were predominately in the sixth form and in Key Stage 4 and were characterised by teachers using their very secure subject knowledge to challenge pupils' understanding by skilful questioning. This helps pupils learn effectively, as they are made to think for themselves and can develop their

understanding. Learning is not so effective in lessons where the pace is slower and where teachers' questions are put generally to the class instead of being more rigorously focused on individuals. The good lessons all have similar features: they are well planned with the work set in context of previous lessons; the aims and outcomes of the lessons are shared with pupils; the pace is good and a variety of tasks both practical and written is fitted into the fifty-minute periods. Sometimes the pace of the lesson, and consequently the practical work covered, is hampered by the inadequacies of the accommodation and its services, which in turn affects the learning process. However, the very good support given by the technical staff to the practical work of the department is a key factor in the smooth running of many lessons. All staff in the department mark pupils' work regularly with consistent application of the department marking policy, awarding grades and merit stamps for good work and writing evaluative comments. However, pupils are not sufficiently aware of the standard they have reached, particularly in relation to national levels, and are not given clear ways to improve. Homework tasks vary in quality, with several instances where work was to be finished. The best examples extend the lesson content, as for instance when Year 8 pupils were given the opportunity to use their understanding of magnets to design a recycling plant.

100. Pupils respond well to science and behaviour is generally good. During practical activities, they work collaboratively and safely despite being in rather cramped laboratories. Pupils sustain concentration and application to task despite in many cases using resources such as microscopes which are in need of upgrading. Written work is generally well presented and complete, both boys and girls taking pride in their work. The few examples of incomplete and untidy work seen were by pupils of below average attainment levels.
101. The department has moved on considerably since the last inspection with improvements in teaching. The department does not share good teaching practice by a formalised regular system of monitoring. The staff in the department have a shared commitment to improving the attainment of the pupils, but do not develop skills of speaking, listening and reading. There are too few opportunities for group discussions, reporting back and reading both in class and at home. At the moment, many pupils have to share textbooks in class and this does not lend itself to developing these skills. Schemes of work are now standardised, which was criticised at the last inspection, and now include the opportunities and tasks to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. The opportunities for using information and communication technology are also specified in the schemes. However, except in the sixth form, there was little evidence in the classroom or in books of information and communication technology being used as a tool to aid learning.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

102. GCSE A\*-C results rose to above average after the last report, but by 1999 they had fallen to 31 per cent against the national average of 61 per cent for this type of school. This decline came about after a cut in curriculum time and when a large proportion of pupils were taught by non-specialists. After the school's appointment of a second specialist to the department, results rose significantly in 2000, but are still below the national average. Attainment seen in present Year 10 and 11 classes shows the nationally expected range, demonstrating the great improvement evident in the last two years. Small numbers have recently taken A-level, and results have reflected the expected range.
103. By Year 9, pupils' attainment is broadly average. In Years 7 to 9, pupils still have much less than the recommended time allocated to their art curriculum. This, combined with

other timetable constraints such as single, Fifty-minute lessons and time lost through other factors of school life, makes it very difficult for the department to teach pupils all they need to develop the expected level of skills and understanding in Key Stage 3. Moreover, some classes still have non-specialist teaching, and do not experience the specialist benefits accruing to others. Much better department planning now ensures that the range of the Key Stage 3 curriculum is covered, but given the limitations mentioned above, pupils are unable to develop the depth of study expected. Those who continue into Years 10 and 11 often, therefore, still lack this depth, disadvantaging their subsequent studies. This weakness manifests itself through inadequate creative, individual response in GCSE work, even where pupils' technical skills are very good. Single lessons are particularly disadvantageous for GCSE pupils, who need time to research, develop and experiment visually with ideas. The department understandably places much more emphasis on teaching technical, two-dimensional skills, especially painting and drawing, because of time constraints, so this is where pupils' strengths lie. Other aspects, particularly three-dimensional work and ICT, are largely lacking in pupils' curriculum. Almost no pupils choose to develop skills other than painting and drawing in their GCSE work. In their chosen media, pupils' standards in Year 11 now match national expectations, and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress.

104. The unusual examination chosen for the sixth form results from an assessment of pupils' strengths based on their previous experience, and from further constraints such as resourcing levels and the accommodation available. Coursework contributes less than usual to students' final results. Standards seen in this coursework show average attainment in Year 13, with somewhat higher potential in the new Year 12 AS-level students.
105. Pupils' attitudes to art are satisfactory in Key Stage 3. They regard art as painting and drawing because of the lack of richness in the curriculum that the department can provide. The greatest casualty resulting from the constraints placed on the department is the development of pupils' creativity and imagination, especially for those whose skills could be developed through other media. Pupils generally work well and compliantly, however. In Key Stage 4, more pupils are now opting for art, indicating increasing popularity. The highest attainers amongst these, the gifted and talented pupils, need now to develop a greater degree of independence and individuality in their work to reflect their personal development.
106. The quality of teaching is good. It is never less than satisfactory, and sometimes very good. That the department has improved as it has, is because of this good teaching. Very good management of challenging pupils allows most to learn well in almost all lessons. The very good teaching encourages experimentation, individuality and free expression of ideas. In satisfactory lessons, skills teaching remains good, but the approach can be too prescriptive, stifling pupils' self-expression. Teachers co-operate well together, and with teachers from the partner school in sixth-form teaching. Pupils benefit greatly from this, as contrasting teaching styles allow them insight into different aspects of the subject. More observational drawing would improve standards, even within the current constraints. Further opportunities to discuss work in class would also benefit pupils' understanding, though this is difficult to incorporate into a single, short lesson.
107. Department management is good and has secured significant improvement since the last report. Although new rooms are planned, the nature of the interim accommodation needs to include sufficient storage to keep pupils' work safely, and to enable suitable

preparation of lessons.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

108. The 1999 GCSE results showed a mixed range, with resistant materials above the national average for A\*-C grades but with food technology and graphics both below the national average for A\*-C grades. Overall, results were at the national average for both genders. Similar results were obtained in 2000 with a slight improvement in graphics. The department performed favourably when compared to the school's own results and those of similar schools. An improvement in results is seen from 1997 and appropriate targets are set for 2001.
109. Current attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is satisfactory overall and matches recent teacher assessments. Girls perform slightly better than boys and results are in line with national expectations for pupils achieving Level 5 plus. Improvement is seen through the key stage, with design folders showing a range of good and weak design skills, research, analysis and evaluation. The better folders show a range of presentational skills, drawing techniques and use of information and communication technology. The weaker folders often lack depth of research, limited graphical and written skills and work is sometimes incomplete.
110. Current attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is in line with the national average with levels of achievement considered against prior attainment often good. The better work is seen where pupils use a range of presentational and graphical skills, photographs and information and communication technology to illustrate and develop ideas. Good work is seen in resistant materials and graphic design folders. Where work is satisfactory or weaker, it is mainly due to limited research and a failure to use a range of presentational skills. Some work lacks quality and can be untidy. Practical solutions including modelling, are of a good standard overall. Attainment in GNVQ Art and Design is up to course expectations with key skills well developed.
111. The quality of teaching is good overall with marginally better teaching at Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 4 the majority of teaching is satisfactory with a proportion of good teaching seen. The better lessons have good pace, use appropriate teaching strategies and use subject knowledge to expand or develop ideas. These were seen in a Year 8 lesson where pupils were interpreting orthographic projection in working drawings, a Year 9 lesson where pupils increased their learning of producing a cold dessert, and in a Year 11 lesson where pupils were engaged purposefully in fabric printing. Satisfactory lessons have good features but sometimes lack real pace or challenge. On occasion, pupils are off task and this inhibits their learning. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make similar progress to all other pupils and achievement is often good with application and perseverance.
112. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good overall. They work well in pairs or groups and share workplaces willingly. Most are interested in the subject and can discuss their work confidently. There are instances of distraction and inattention with pupils being off task. Some pupils have difficulty in recalling previous work and in understanding the application of designing in a wider context. Speaking and listening skills are usually satisfactory. Key words used in technology are on display in each room to support language development. Relationships are good in all areas.
113. Assessment procedures are in place but are not used sufficiently constructively in helping to raise standards and monitor progress. At Key Stage 3, assessment is not

linked to National Curriculum levels and pupils do not know the levels they are working at and how to improve. At Key Stage 4, progress is not sufficiently monitored. Not all pupils in Key Stage 4 follow a design and technology option and this is a breach in the statutory requirements. Marking is usually consistently carried out. Homework is not always set in all areas.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

114. GCSE results in 1999 were well below the national average in terms of passes at grades A\*-C. National averages for the year 2000 are not yet available, so accurate comparisons are not possible for that year. However, as a result of an improvement of six per cent in this range of grades since 1999, it is clear that the 2000 results will be closer to, but still below, the national average. The results for the years 1997 and 1998 were well above the national average, and at the time of the previous inspection were average. The recent variation in pass rates has been due largely to changes in staffing. Evidence from the current inspection suggests that a recent influx of new staff and improvements in teaching will result in pass rates in line with the national average in 2001. In recent years, girls' results have been better than those of boys by roughly the same margin as the national gender difference. Results at A-level have shown a distinct improvement since the previous inspection. All students obtained pass grades in 1999 and 2000. There has been no consistent gender difference from year to year at A-level.
115. By Year 9, the attainment of the majority of pupils is in line with the national age-related expectation, with substantial minorities above and below. Most pupils can extract relevant information from a range of sources, including textbooks, worksheets, the Internet and CD-Roms to produce good quality enquiry work. Such research activity was well illustrated in a Year 9 class embarking on an enquiry into regional differences in Italy. Higher attaining pupils produce well-written notes, but a small minority has difficulty with any task requiring lengthy passages of writing. All pupils draw clear annotated maps and diagrams and can draw simple graphs to summarise statistical data.
116. Attainment for the majority remains close to the national expectation in Year 11, with more pupils above average than below. Most pupils produce good quality coursework, which includes clear descriptive writing and makes good use of computers to enhance presentation of text and graphs. They frequently use simple correlation techniques such as scatter graphs to establish trends in their gathered fieldwork data. The quality of this coursework indicates that pupils have been well grounded in fieldwork methods, including the gathering and analysis of data to test hypotheses. They have a good knowledge of geographical models and their usefulness, as seen when Year 11 pupils were writing up their urban studies coursework. As at the previous key stage, a small number of lower attaining pupils find difficulty with writing at length.
117. Students in Year 12 have just started on the new AS-level course, for which no national comparisons are yet available. They make good use of their previous learning and were observed to use the technical vocabulary of hydrology accurately in a lesson on the discharge of water from river basins. From the evidence of completed assignments, the attainment of most Year 13 A-level students is in line with national expectations, with a small minority above. In a lesson on methods of setting up investigations, they quickly picked up the significance and usefulness of different sampling techniques. Their coursework is particularly good, frequently using advanced statistical methods when testing hypotheses. Most students have yet to reach the necessary fluency in essay writing to assure them of obtaining the highest A-level grades. Throughout the school

there is no significant or consistent difference in the observed levels of achievement between boys and girls.

118. Pupils' attitudes to learning are overwhelmingly positive. They work collaboratively when required and help each other, as was seen in a Year 9 lesson when pupils showed concern for, and gave valuable help to, a recently arrived East European refugee with little spoken English. On only one occasion was the flow of a lesson disturbed by uncooperative behaviour.
119. The overall standard of teaching is good, with about one-sixth satisfactory and nearly one-third very good. On average, teaching is better in the sixth form and at Key Stage 4 than in Key Stage 3, though very good teaching is apparent at all key stages. All teachers have secure knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject. They provide a good atmosphere for learning by maintaining good discipline in most lessons. Potential misbehaviour is dealt with skilfully and without confrontation. The best teaching has brisk pace, challenges the pupils and matches tasks to the needs of all pupils. These qualities were apparent in a Year 10 lesson on population structure, when pupils were presented with the difficult tasks of comparing, drawing and interpreting population pyramids for different countries. A Year 7 lesson on the value of photographs as a geographical resource included graded tasks designed to challenge different ability levels. Pupils respond positively to these challenges by staying on task and concentrating well. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their prior attainment; teachers know them well and they receive valuable support from special needs staff. In the few merely satisfactory lessons, tasks are not well matched to individual need and content leans too heavily on textbook and worksheet exercises. Most lessons start with a clear statement of aims, followed by a thorough review of recent learning. Pupils respond well to these reviews, recalling and consolidating their earlier learning. Their learning is assisted further by frequent opportunities for collaborative work. Opportunities for pupils to engage in independent learning are far more frequent than at the time of the previous inspection. Teachers assist slower learners to improve literacy by employing such strategies as the use of writing frames, key word lists and opportunities to read aloud.
120. All the points for improvement raised during the previous inspection have been addressed. The quality of teaching has improved greatly; it offers more variety and is now less didactic. However, the use of computers to support learning in geography is not fully developed. The department is well managed, works well as a team and provides a well-balanced curriculum.

## **HISTORY**

121. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly in line with national norms but at the end of Year 9 it is slightly above and the majority of pupils, including those with learning difficulties, have made good progress in acquiring both historical knowledge and skills. Pupils give thoughtful ideas about what made the Roman army powerful. They can also define and use in context words such as plebeian and patrician which are relevant to the study of Roman government. Pupils enjoy their lessons and play a very active part in them. At the end of Year 11, attainment is above expectations in terms of work seen and is just above in GCSE examinations. Fifty-six per cent of pupils gained A\*-C grades in 2000, which confirms a rising trend from 42 per cent in 1998. Pupils are becoming adept at analysing a variety of sources in their search for the truth. Moreover, they can give examples of different kinds of evidence which are useful to historians when they are, for example, researching into medicine and health in prehistoric and Ancient Egyptian times. The majority of pupils are articulate and they use the language of history

accurately. They are not afraid to engage in historical debate with their classmates. Results at A-level have been below national averages for the past three years, but the department has now modified the syllabus and, in work seen and lessons visited, standards are now rising. A-level students are able to display a deep knowledge of aspects of modern German history and they make insightful comments on Bismarck's domestic policy, for example.

122. The very high quality of teaching is the major strength of the department. Teaching was never less than satisfactory. It was good or better in 80 per cent of lessons and in 40 per cent it was very good or excellent. Pupils remain fully on task because teachers insist on high standards of behaviour and industry, treating their pupils with respect and dignity. Teachers are aware that their pupils have different learning needs and they modify their teaching methods and resources accordingly. The role-play in Year 7 when pupils take an active part in a mock Roman election, the discussion of Tudor techniques of execution in Year 8, and the consideration of Ancient Greek ideas on medicine and healing in Year 10 are all good examples of impressive teaching and its positive impact on the progress of pupils. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and they emphasise the importance of literacy in every lesson. Teachers display good subject-knowledge and they fascinate their pupils with anecdotes and stories, always relevant and often amusing. Lessons are a constant dialogue between teachers and pupils; pupils are aware of the importance of historical skills but they also know that history, in the final analysis, is a story about people.
123. The quality of teaching is such that it encourages full pupil participation in lessons and thus provides pupils with many opportunities to learn from each other. Pupils elicit information from a wide variety of sources and teachers spend considerable time modifying teaching materials in order to cater for pupils of all attainment levels. The word walls and the display of historical words are very effective in allowing all pupils to take advantage of the history curriculum. This initiative also supports pupils when they are writing assignments and attempting to use the correct historical phraseology. Because of the emphasis on the story of history, pupils are developing a deeper understanding of why people in the past made the decisions they did. In other words, pupils are learning to judge the past on its own standards and values.
124. The behaviour of pupils and their attitudes to study are overall very good and sometimes excellent: pupils smile and get on very well with each other. They are delighted when their classmates experience success and they take great pride not only in their own work, but also in that of others. High standards of presentation in exercise books are a real feature. Pupils volunteer to read aloud in class and are often desperate to answer questions, in the confidence that their contributions, even if less than accurate, will be appreciated by all. They are generally fascinated by the subject matter and are grateful to their teachers, of whom they speak very highly. Pupils with learning difficulties are so motivated during lessons that they ask to receive different kinds of worksheets in order to gauge how well they are doing in relation to pupils of higher attainment. The mutual respect and care evident in all lessons are augmented by the work of the talented support staff who are most effective in assisting pupils to make progress.
125. The history curriculum is broad and balanced, fully meeting requirements. There is great emphasis on literacy, including presentation, and very good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils in the department have opportunities to use information and communication technology (ICT) and teachers are committed to arrangements for easier access to the ICT rooms in the main school building. Assessment of pupils' progress is well developed and teachers use information gathered to modify the curriculum and methods when needed. Books are marked

regularly and in accordance with the school policy. The overall contribution of the history department to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is quite profound. Teachers are very good role-models and they insist on good behaviour, mutual respect and courtesy. Furthermore, the department welcomes historical theatre groups into the school and also delivers a very wide range of fieldtrips, residential visits and revision conferences.

126. The resources for learning are adequate and are augmented by the industry of the staff. Particularly effective are the materials used in the sixth form, when students consider their own progress and complete individual action plans. Advice given by teachers on revision techniques is of a high order in this key stage. Accommodation is good, and although the history area is a considerable way from the main school building, the classrooms are adorned with pupils' work, historical words and posters.
127. The head of department leads the area with skill and sensitivity. All members of the history team are talented teachers who are very industrious and fully supportive of each other. They care deeply for their pupils and for their colleagues. The department has made very good progress since the last inspection and has real capacity for continued success.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

128. Students' attainment in information and communication technology on entry to Year 7 is very low. By the end of Year 9, their standards are well above the national average. Thirty-one of the more able Year 9 students were entered in 2000 for the 'Short' GCSE course, of whom 54 per cent passed at A\*-C and 100 per cent passed at A\*-E. This success in Years 7 to 9 has a positive effect on standards in succeeding years, so that at the end of Year 11 they are also above national expectations – well above for a substantial minority of students. In 1999 the pass rate at A\*-C was well above the national average. This was sustained in 2000, although at a slightly lower level. This is a very significant improvement in standards since the last inspection.
129. The rate at which they learn and the high standards achieved are the outcome of good teaching, the quality of which was never less than satisfactory. In more than three-quarters of lessons it was good and in almost a third it was very good and occasionally excellent. Teachers have forged good relationships with their pupils and for the most part this has a positive effect on their behaviour. In an atmosphere that supports learning, pupils respond well to teaching and achieve high standards, higher than those reported previously. Teachers' strong class management skills have a positive effect on behaviour and their subject knowledge is motivating. Together these combine to have a very positive effect on learning and progress. Lessons are organised to cater for pupils of all abilities. Extension work is available for those who are of above average ability but there is always sufficient work to motivate those who are below average or who have learning difficulties. This is augmented by good individual support to pupils, particularly for those with special educational needs or for whom English is an additional language. Lessons are mostly conducted at a brisk pace with challenging work that stretches pupils of all abilities.
130. Teachers use a variety of styles to motivate learning. In introducing a lesson about programming, the teacher used pupils to control each other's movements about the room by verbal commands, which were gradually simplified to represent computer-style instructions. In another, a teacher used newly acquired technology to take pupils step by step through a complex process, manipulating a picture of what appears on a computer screen, through the 'Windows' facilities into a word processed document.

131. In Year 7 students learn of the need for disciplined computer room behaviour. More practically, they learn quickly how to use specific keys on a keyboard and how to access the school's computer system. In the process they learn about the importance of data security and the need for passwords. Between Years 7 and 9, they are exposed to a wide range of computer applications, which they learn to use readily and effectively both in information and communication technology and in other subjects of the curriculum. Pupils using LOGO in Year 8 very quickly compose simple programs to control the movements of a robot in an introduction to the concept of computer control. In doing this they reinforce simple geometry, as they have to calculate angles accurately in order to move the robot correctly. Pupils' behaviour is good in the great majority of lessons and very good in almost half. When behaviour is occasionally less than satisfactory, more teaching time is spent in establishing and maintaining control. Although the lesson ends with all pupils having made progress, including those who have sought to be disruptive, the level of learning and progress is lower and does not correspond to the quality of the teaching. By Year 9, pupils are so confident and experienced that they can decide what applications to use in their assignments and tackle them very well. Pupils of all abilities are already working at National Curriculum levels that are beyond the national expectation. Those with learning difficulties and special needs may work more slowly, but they are using their skills to make the same decisions to the same level of competence. By the end of Year 9, pupils have become skilled users of information and communication technology with a high level of keyboard competence, and can readily access the Internet and CD-Rom resources to support enquiry work, particularly in geography, history and modern foreign languages.
132. Pupils in Years 10 and 11, building on the work of previous years, are confident and competent in using fully the capabilities of 'Windows' and are beginning to incorporate theoretical knowledge with their keyboard skills in assignments that are commercially realistic. As part of their coursework, they produce very detailed User Guides, helpfully illustrated to show what users would actually see on their screens as each computer command is executed.
133. In the sixth form, standards are good and the attainment of students working for GNVQ is above the national average. Not only is the teachers' knowledge of their subject very high to support their students' studies but so also is their knowledge of economics. That is appreciated by students, the nature of whose studies is heavily slanted to the commercial usage of computer applications. In one lesson students in Year 12 learned about the internal structure of a business organisation and students in Year 13 discussed what information would need to be transferred between the several departments of a company and how best it might be done.
134. In contrast to what was previously reported, pupils undertake a great deal of independent learning. It is a major feature of assignments in Years 7 to 9, coursework for GCSE and GNVQ and enquiry work related to other subjects of the National Curriculum. Teachers of design and technology, history, English, mathematics and modern foreign languages exploit information and communication technology well in lessons, but it is less well used across the rest of the curriculum. Learning is planned progressively through Years 7 to 9 to cover all the strands of the curriculum and this is reinforced in the GCSE and GNVQ coursework assignments. Assessment procedures are good and pupils are well aware of the level of their skills and what they have to do to improve.
135. Management in the department is very good. Teachers and technicians work together as a supportive team both in and out of the classroom. The leadership has a clear

vision of the way ahead and this has led to excellent forward planning. It accounts for the considerable quantity of high quality equipment that pupils can use in their lessons and independent work, which was not the case at the last inspection. It bears considerable responsibility for the high standards achieved by pupils.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

136. GCSE results show an upward trend since the previous inspection. In 1999 French results at A\*-C were above the national average and the results in 2000 were the highest ever achieved. However, attainment in German in 2000 fell six per cent below the level of 1999, when it was close to national averages. This decline stemmed largely from serious accommodation problems affecting both teaching and learning and from an unusually large entry across all ability levels. Both languages have consistently exceeded national averages at A\*-G. Modern languages outperform most other subjects in the school. Girls outperform boys but by a smaller margin than is found nationally. At GCE A-level, entry numbers fluctuate but both languages have enjoyed a 100 per cent pass rate since the previous inspections with a good proportion of higher grades having been achieved.
137. Attainment near the end of Year 9 for the majority of pupils is average. Listening and comprehension skills are well developed, thanks to extensive use of the foreign language in class. Imaginative learning games are a regular feature in lessons whether in French, German or Spanish. They help pupils to rehearse recent learning and contribute to the enjoyment of the lesson thus increasing motivation. Speaking is more variable both in length and accuracy. In a few instances, the toleration of minimal length answers leads to unfamiliarity with basic sentence patterns, which is a weak foundation for later progress. Pronunciation and intonation is at least satisfactory and frequently good as a result of pupils receiving ample opportunity to read out aloud in class, which also boosts oral confidence. Writing helps to reinforce what has been introduced and practised orally with due emphasis on grammatical accuracy.
138. Attainment near the end of Year 11 for the majority of pupils is above average. Speaking standards have improved since the previous inspection, thanks to ample practise in lessons and to the focus on basic grammatical structures and patterns in written work. Teachers now use a range of self-generated and published materials to supplement the course book, which is often targeted at the differing abilities in the class. The good foundation laid in earlier years in listening and speaking is systematically developed to cope with increasingly sophisticated vocabulary and expression. This was shown clearly in a Year 10 class where pupils were able to learn, at considerable speed but nevertheless thoroughly, how to describe personal characteristics in German. The variety and length of written tasks increases significantly as pupils progress through the key stage.
139. Attainment near the end of Year 13 is above average. In Year 12 teachers and pupils work hard together to bridge the considerable gap between GCSE and A-level. Examination results and the growing numbers studying languages at this level illustrate their success. In a Year 13 German class, students spoke German quite naturally and fluently to their teacher and to one another. They completed successfully a number of computer-based language tasks and a supplementary exercise provided by their teacher, based on a challenging text on terrorism.
140. Written coursework demonstrates good standards of accuracy, an interesting range of topics and evidence of personal initiative and research in approaching potential sources and in exploiting the rich information store of the internet.

141. In relation to their prior attainment pupils achieve at least as well as expected and progress well. Homework makes the link between recent and new learning and it is conscientiously marked. Teachers' comments, which are often in the foreign language, show clearly where improvements can be made. Regular and frequent practise in listening and speaking together, with the attention paid to points of grammar contributes significantly to efforts to raise literacy standards. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported. Teachers know their pupils very well and provide pupils at both ends of the ability range with appropriate learning materials and extra tasks. Classroom support on an individual or small group basis is regular and effective. Two statemented pupils in Year 11 (skillpower) with severe auditory and speech difficulties are making slow but steady progress in basic French thanks to the skill and effort of their teacher in producing an array of good quality learning aids.
142. Pupils behave well throughout the school in lessons. Attitudes are good and in Years 12 and 13 they are very good. Most pupils are keen to learn and raise their hands to volunteer answers in lessons. They also offer readily to go to the front of the class to quiz their peers in the foreign language. Paired work is often very productive as pupils support and encourage each other well. Pupils enjoy good rapport with their teachers and often visibly enjoy their lessons so that learning becomes a pleasure rather than a chore. They relish the prestige of their school's language college status, and enjoy lessons in their excellent computer suite where they combine language and computer skills. In a small minority of classes the odd disruptive pupil can pose problems which are usually speedily dealt with. In Year 7 in particular, there are occasional signs of immature behaviour.
143. Teaching is good in four-fifths of lessons, of which about one-quarter are very good. No lesson is unsatisfactory. This is a clear improvement compared with the previous inspection which is partly the outcome of the lesson observation programme. Many lessons start at a challenging pace which is sustained throughout so that maximum opportunities exist for learning effectively and efficiently. Quickfire question and answer sessions on recent learning reinforce memory recall and prepare the ground for further learning to maintain continuity. In the best lessons there is an appealing balance between sheer hard work and humorous touches and exchanges which is greatly appreciated by the pupils. Teachers are fluent practitioners, they prompt, praise and encourage and move actively around the classroom monitoring pupil progress and helping where appropriate. They give willingly of their free time to supervise and guide pupils enjoying independent work on the computer language programmes at lunch time. They make good use of technician support to guarantee the smooth running of language learning on computers.
144. In a small minority of lessons, proceedings get off to a sluggish start largely because of pupils drifting in late from distant corners of the school because progress through overcrowded corridors is very slow. In a few instances pupils are not challenged to be more ambitious when they give minimal answers, and vocabulary is not taught in context to enable better recall and increased awareness of any grammatical irregularities.
145. Departmental leadership is very efficient and team spirit is strong. There is a good blend of experience and recently qualified staff and valuable support from foreign language assistants in each of the three languages taught. Staff development activity is regular and appropriate to teacher and/or department needs. Curriculum opportunity in choice of language and in flexibility is rich in comparison with many other schools. A well-established programme of visits to France and Germany is popular with pupils. Teachers record both formal and informal assessment in detail and track pupil

performance in the four essential language skills. The department is currently conducting an interesting experiment in single sex teaching to evaluate any potential benefits regarding raising standards. Some pupils are not too clear about where they stand and how to reach higher levels. A sharper focus on National Curriculum levels is required to help remedy this. The suited accommodation refurbished so far is of very good quality, but the other rooms used in various parts of the school have very poor acoustics and constitute a poor learning environment for languages. Resources are very good both in course and reference books and in modern computers and language software. Video conferencing facilities and satellite television have been ordered to raise the provision to a level of excellence.

146. In summary, the department has a number of significant strengths in key areas and is thus very well placed to continue its improvement.

## **MUSIC**

147. Teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 were below the national average but observation, scrutiny of work and discussions with pupils suggest that attainment is generally above the national expectation.
148. Since the last report, music results in Key Stage 4 have been above the national average. In 1999, 83 per cent of candidates gained A\*-C passes at GCSE against the national average of 64.7 per cent. There were 100 per cent passes at grades A\*-G. The school figures for 2000 show a 100 per cent pass rate for all candidates at grades A\*-C. These results show a continuous improvement although the number of candidates in each year was small. There are a total of 22 pupils currently studying music in Key Stage 4.
149. In 1998 the two candidates who took A-level music gained grade D passes. However, there were no A-level candidates in 1999 or 2000. The numbers studying A-level music at present in Years 12 and 13 total 11.
150. Since the last report, standards in Key Stage 3 have improved and more pupils are motivated to do well in music. For example, Year 7 pupils are keen to sing rounds in parts with style and good tone, whilst Year 8 pupils work with purpose chanting verses about the environment to pre-selected keyboard rhythms. Year 9 pupils prepare for a performance of a keyboard duet based on the primary triads with their partners. They concentrate hard to achieve good synchronisation of parts and perform with pleasure when their turn comes round. Learning could be further advanced by the purchase of sufficient good quality resources such as tuned and untuned percussion instruments.
151. Pupils in Key Stage 4 understand monophonic and polyphonic textures and relate this to their study of plainsong. Knowledge of medieval modes and notation leads them to the study of motets. There is a good standard of listening skills and pupils recognise and comment upon Brahms' Hungarian Dances. The standards of work are much higher than reported at the time of the last inspection.
152. The standard of work in Years 12 and 13 is high, with all students able to work independently. Some students have good keyboard technique and work through a sequence of melodic and harmonic progressions, as with one student improvising soul music on piano. Others display their analytical skills by making a study of Chopin preludes and Lloyd Webber musicals. At the time of the previous inspection there was no A-level teaching taking place.

153. Musical language is used regularly in lessons throughout all key stages and pupils use it when appraising their work. Group improvisations are performed to the class and are appraised. Success is celebrated and this reinforces a positive attitude to music. Both higher and lower attainers are able to succeed in music, as are pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. Learning support assistants play a large part in encouraging pupils to do well as when assisting one pupil with severe hearing impairment to make progress in playing a simple keyboard tune.
154. The quality of teaching and learning in music is very good at Key Stages 3 and 4 and good at post-16. This is a great improvement on the last inspection. Teachers have high expectations of learning and behaviour. Clear targets are set and searching questions remind pupils of past work and give a focus for the future. The brisk pace of many lessons ensures a good learning environment in which pupils can thrive. A-level music students who are part of the gifted and talented cohort are expected to gain 'A' and 'B' grades in the examination next year. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and this leads to very confident teaching that inspires and motivates pupils. Much reinforcement takes place during lessons and time is left at the end for appraisal and summing up. Occasionally negative behaviour occurs when tasks are not sufficiently understood. In all lessons, but particularly at Key Stage 4 and post-16, pupils and students are encouraged to become independent learners. They are effectively prepared for examinations. Teaching is aimed at inclusiveness. This is verified by the achievement and enjoyment of pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language.
155. Attitudes to learning are positive throughout all key stages, with co-operation and good behaviour evident in most lessons. Teachers have the knack of encouraging pupils to be on task almost all of the time. Rare instances of inattention occur when tasks are not carefully matched to the needs of all. In Key Stage 3, pupils are eager to settle down to work, hoping to achieve a worthwhile mark in assessments. They have good listening skills, support their peers when performing and raise their hand to answer questions. Pupils work in pairs or groups, discussing and negotiating the shape and content of their compositions. Practical work is done with pride and pleasure. Most pupils enjoy music and concentrate on improving their skills and understanding. They work together in a focused and determined way. Pupils in Years 10 to 13 are independent, self-reliant and confident learners. They have a good rapport with their teachers and this becomes obvious in the relaxed but purposeful manner in which all work together. Many share ideas and support their colleagues.
156. There is very strong leadership and management of the music department. This gives clear direction and leads to close monitoring of the work. Both teachers monitor each other's lessons from time to time but this is not sufficiently formal and is not written down. The qualifications and experience of the staff match the needs of the curriculum. The scheme of work addresses all statutory requirements with the exception of information and communication technology. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language receive good support from music staff and learning support assistants.
157. The department has advanced a long way since the last inspection due to the vision of the head of department. Singing is being developed in Year 7 and in the songwriting modules in Years 8 and 9. There is still scope for more development. At the present time there is no music adviser to support teachers. Because of this it is important that the head of department attends music INSET to keep up-to-date with developments and to avoid isolation. Many pupils learn instruments privately and they come together for carol concerts and shows. This enhances the standing of music. These instrumental

rehearsals should be placed on a more permanent footing and become a regular feature of the music department activities. The recorder band and senior and junior choirs rehearse at lunchtime.

158. Due to the lack of small practice rooms already mentioned in the last report, and joint access to the corridor by the religious education (RE) department, no area exists for group work other than in the classroom. This lack of accommodation also places a constraint upon pupils learning to play instruments in school. In spite of this, music is a successful subject department.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

159. Results have improved significantly since the previous inspection and attainment in the GCSE examinations in 1999 was just below the national average. The achievement of pupils in the 2000 examinations compares favourably with all other subjects in the school.
160. At the end of Key Stage 3, pupils attain levels that are in line with those expected nationally. In football and rugby boys have acquired good ball skills and most perform them consistently with control. They can apply basic rules and understand the co-operative aspect of team play. Girls in Year 9 play football with stamina and control. In gymnastics, girls have good planning strategies and are able to analyse their own and others' work, but their body tension, control and skill levels are limited. Boys and girls work constructively in small groups and most are able to warm up effectively and independently.
161. At the end of Key Stage 4, pupils are attaining in line with national expectations in both GCSE and core physical education. In one basketball lesson, the majority of boys and girls knew the basic rules and tactics, but few passes reached the targeted player because of the pupils' inability to find space. Over half the boys have advanced football skills and they can apply tactics and strategies in a game. A few boys in Year 10 are able to take the role of coach and captain and organise their teams effectively. Girls have a good sense of rhythm in step aerobics and a few girls have the confidence to lead and help others. Boys and girls are not able to develop and monitor their own training exercises but they do have a good knowledge of mobility exercises.
162. A few individual pupils and teams achieve high standards in district competitions in rugby league, cricket, football, athletics and netball. The opportunities identified by the department for gifted pupils include: extra-curricular activities in chosen sports; outside coaches and referees coming in to the school; and the identification of appropriate sports clubs in the local area.
163. The majority of teaching is good. In one-sixth of lessons seen during the inspection teaching was sound and one-sixth was very good. Teachers have good subject expertise and are prepared to demonstrate to give pupils a first-hand picture of performance techniques. This helps pupils to improve their skills. Lessons are thoroughly planned and give the pupils a variety of progressive, more advanced skills. Objectives are shared with pupils at the start of each lesson and teachers finish with a short summation. These strategies are especially helpful for pupils with special educational needs and ensure they make the same progress as other pupils in the group.
164. The very good teaching addresses the planning, performing and evaluative strands of the National Curriculum in the appropriate balance in each lesson. In a basketball

lesson, pupils were asked to plan their teams' attacking tactics and in gymnastics, girls gave feedback on one another's planned sequences. The teaching in Key Stage 4 is often very performance based. One reason for this is the very short time allocated to physical education at this key stage. Pupils only have one fifty-minute lesson each week. This significantly hinders their progress and does not allow the Programmes of Study to be taught in sufficient depth.

165. Pupils enter the school with below average attainment levels in Year 7 and, as a result of the good teaching and their enthusiastic, energetic attitudes, pupils' progress is good. Teaching at Key Stage 4 is equally good, but pupils make only satisfactory progress. They are not able to progress at the same rate as pupils in Key Stage 3 because of the limited time on activity. Pupils are well behaved and have very good relationships with one another and their teachers. Their enthusiasm for the subject is illustrated by the quarter of the year group who opt to study GCSE. Pupils' homework and tests are well marked with constructive comments, but their class work is not monitored sufficiently to give them a good basis for revision. Most pupils' files are appropriately organised and the girls' work is well presented. In a few lessons pupils are very directed by their teachers. However, teachers are not able to use a variety of teaching methods because they teach all the GCSE theory lessons in the hall or dining hall. Here there are no boards, overhead projectors or display material, and staff and pupils walking through to the chapel frequently interrupt teaching.
166. At the time of the inspection there was no head of the department. Two newly qualified teachers were responsible for the majority of the teaching. They had been in post for two terms and their teaching had not been monitored. The curriculum meets statutory requirements in Key Stage 3 but the time allocation and balance of activities is uneven. The lack of specialist facilities leads to more games than movement activities being planned. There is no physical education in the sixth form which considerably limits the breadth of their curriculum. Assessment procedures are not yet established to meet the new National Curriculum orders. The accommodation for physical education is poor. Water from the land above drains onto the all-weather pitch. The surface of the courts is hazardous and the netting surrounding them is worn and dangerous. Weeds grow abundantly around all the outside facilities and all the facilities have an air of dilapidated decay.