

# INSPECTION REPORT

**ST. FRANCIS XAVIER SCHOOL**

Richmond

LEA area: North Yorkshire

Unique reference number: 121715

Headteacher: Mr. R. W. Sparks

Reporting inspector: Dr. A. Swallow  
12524

Dates of inspection: 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> October 2000

Inspection number: 223921

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	11 to 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Darlington Road Richmond North Yorkshire
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Dr. James Whiston
Date of previous inspection:	23 <sup>rd</sup> September 1996

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Dr. A. Swallow 12524	Registered inspector	Modern foreign languages	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school
			The school's results and pupils' achievements
			Teaching and learning
			Leadership and management
			Key Issues for action
Mrs. G. Barker 9176	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			Pupils' welfare, health and safety
			Partnership with parents and carers
Dr. D. Allenby 24260	Team inspector	Equality of opportunity	
		Special educational needs	
Mr. D. Burbidge 22531	Team inspector	Science	Quality and range of opportunities for learning
Mr. L. Hesketh 12600	Team inspector	Art and design	
		Design and technology	
Mrs. S. Johnson 30187	Team inspector	History	
Mr. D. Kennard 15280	Team inspector	Geography	
		Information and communication technology	
Mr. C. Maynard 28429	Team inspector	Music	
Mr. I. Pickles 4081	Team inspector	Physical education	
Mr. G. Price 19214	Team inspector	English	
		Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	
Mr. N. Waller 15970	Team inspector	Mathematics	Teaching and learning

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Francis Xavier is an 11-16 voluntary aided, joint Roman Catholic and Church of England school, situated in the town of Richmond, North Yorkshire. Currently, there are 390 pupils on roll and numbers are still increasing. 65 pupils are on the special educational needs register; 8 have statements. This is higher than at the time of the last inspection but low in comparison with national averages. The school population remains largely rural and is drawn from over 30 primary schools. There are only three pupils for whom English is an additional language. Overall, there are significantly more girls than boys. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is still well below the national average. Attainment on entry to the school remains high and well above average when judged against national Key Stage 2 assessment data. The majority of pupils remain in education or training at the age of 16.

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

This is a school with considerable strengths. Standards have continued to rise, overall, since the previous inspection and, when pupils leave, their attainment is above average in almost all subjects. The school's provision for moral and social development is very good, contributing significantly to pupils' general personal development, which is high. The leadership of the headteacher succeeds in creating a caring ethos in which pupils attain well. The school provides satisfactory value for money. Although standards are high, there remains a number of significant areas of the school's work which require urgent attention if these standards are to be further improved.

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

- Key Stage 3 National Curriculum test scores and GCSE attainment at 5+ A\*-C grades are significantly higher than national averages; attainment in English, mathematics and science at Key Stages 3 and 4, and in geography, history and information and communication technology (ICT) at Key Stage 4, is high.
- There is a strong ethos of care and arrangements for ensuring the welfare of pupils are very good.
- The quality of pupils' relationships, behaviour and attitudes to learning, is very good; attendance is high.
- Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good.
- The subject knowledge and expertise of all teachers is good.
- Provision made for the teaching of numeracy, is good.
- Financial control and administration are strong.
- Provision made for pupils with statements of special educational needs is good.

### What could be improved

- There are weaknesses in planning at all levels: whole-school; subject schemes of work; and individual lessons.
- There is no substantial provision for a formal, taught programme of social and health education to complement work across the curriculum.
- The monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching, pupils' learning and attainment, is not sufficiently systematic.
- Assessment processes are weak, these include teachers' detailed marking; the monitoring of pupils' progress; and the subject content of annual reports to parents.
- There are weaknesses in the provision for higher and lower attaining pupils, in particular the overall co-ordination of special educational needs.
- The quality of accommodation in the majority of subjects and especially in physical education, design and technology, art and design, music, science and English where standards are now being hindered.
- Specific aspects of the governing body's annual report to parents.

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

### HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has addressed 3 of the 6 key issues from the last inspection in September 1996. Standards are higher at Key Stage 3 and at GCSE and aspects causing concern in Key Stage 3 music, design and technology and art and design have been remedied successfully. Very good progress has been made in providing the statutory entitlement of the ICT curriculum, particularly at Key Stage 3. Senior leaders have begun to use assessment data to identify trends and to set targets for raising the attainment of individual pupils in many year groups. Some of these targets are insufficiently challenging. The use of regular assessment processes across all subjects, including the marking of pupils' work, the monitoring of their progress and the precise reporting of this progress to parents, is still in need of improvement. Although accommodation for supporting pupils with special educational needs has improved, there are still insufficient resources to help them make progress across the school and teachers' use of individual education plans remains ineffective. The quality of the written school improvement plan is still weak, with no clear practices for monitoring and evaluation, and insecure links with departmental and financial planning. Action points do not focus sufficiently on sustaining and improving further attainment, particularly in relation to the higher and lower attaining pupils.

### STANDARDS

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

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

Key Stage 3 standards in English, mathematics and science are rising more quickly than the national picture and are well above national expectations and attainment in similar schools. Teachers' assessments show attainment to be above average in all other subjects. Pupils make more than average progress over the key stage. The school is adding value here. Standards of written work in all subjects are high. Pupils' handwriting is clear and they pay

good attention to the presentation of their work. Their use of punctuation and understanding of grammar is very good. Pupils' listening, speaking and reading skills are good and improve as they move through the school. The development of numeracy skills in mathematics is very strong and provides effective access to number work in other subjects.

GCSE outcomes at the higher levels, A\*-C, continue to rise and are above average in the vast majority of subjects, except in music where they are in line with expectations and in art and design where they are just below. However, they are not as high as in similar schools. A small number of pupils do not make as much progress as might be expected, given their starting points, in English and science. Work in lessons is good in all subjects. Extended writing is accurate, use of language is appropriate. Pupils read fluently and can explain points of view with clarity and confidence. Higher and lower attaining pupils are not always sufficiently stretched by the work they are given. Attainment at 5 or more A\*-G grades is well above the national average and in line with outcomes in similar schools. Attainment at 1 or more A\*-G grades in 2000 is in line with national figures and also with similar schools. The school exceeded targets set for 2000 GCSE 5 or more A\*-C and 1 or more A\*-G grades, but the current targets set for 2001 A\*-C and A\*-G are insufficiently challenging.

### **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Very good: the vast majority of pupils are enthusiastic about learning, work very hard to do well and enjoy coming to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good: the vast majority of pupils behave in a highly responsible manner, are very courteous to visitors and show high levels of respect for teachers, other adults and their friends.
Personal development and relationships	Very good: pupils are keen to do well in lessons. They act responsibly as prefects and take part very willingly in the range of activities outside lessons. They are vigorously supportive of the school.
Attendance	Very good: attendance figures are above national expectations in all year groups. Levels of authorised and unauthorised absence are well below national averages.

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

<b>Teaching of pupils:</b>	<b>aged 11-14 years</b>	<b>aged 14-16 years</b>
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, confirming the beliefs of parents. It is better at Key Stage 4 than at Key Stage 3, but there are no significant weaknesses in any one subject. At least satisfactory teaching occurred in 95 per cent of lessons; in 55 per cent teaching was good or better; it was very good or better in 16 per cent. Teaching was unsatisfactory in less than 5 per cent of lessons. The quality of teaching in English, mathematics and science is good. Pupils' learning reflects the teaching and is good. The vast majority of pupils use their reading and research skills well, are proficient with number, and work hard in class and at home. A strength of the school is teachers' knowledge and

understanding of their subjects and the quality relationships forged with pupils. There is still much to do, however, to improve the quality of lesson planning and schemes of work to ensure that the higher and lower attaining pupils are stretched sufficiently.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory: there are real strengths, not least in the work on literacy and numeracy development. Provision for ICT and music has improved significantly since the last inspection. However, there are now other elements in design and technology and in art and design, and in physical education, that need to be addressed. The absence of a formal programme of social and health education is a significant weakness in ensuring the delivery of all statutory elements.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Unsatisfactory: although the curriculum is inclusive, the learning opportunities are far too variable because work is not always tailored to pupils' individual learning needs. This results from poor progress in the development and review of individual education plans since the last inspection. Provision for pupils with statements of special educational need however, is good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory: provision for moral development is very good. Pupils have high standards for themselves and the ethos of the school emphasises this aspect. Social development is very good. A strong sense of community is fostered throughout the school. Cultural development is satisfactory. Most provision pertains to the western tradition; there is limited reference to other cultures. Although the spiritual ethos of the school is strong, planned curriculum provision for the spiritual development of pupils is less than satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory: there is a very strong sense of care and support for pupils, but procedures for monitoring their learning and for using assessment data to ensure that all fulfil potential, are unsatisfactory.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Good: parents are fully justified in the high levels of confidence that they have in the school's work. The school seeks their views regularly and acts upon them. Communications are satisfactory overall, although annual reports of pupils' progress and the governors' annual report, do not fulfil statutory requirements.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good in helping to create a positive ethos for learning and development; less than satisfactory in formal planning for improvement and in curriculum planning as evidenced by subject schemes of work and teachers' lesson plans.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory: they support the school strongly, holding the school to account for examination results and acting as a critical friend. Weaknesses are in the understanding of standards of teaching and learning, arrangements for annual reports of pupils' progress and for the governing body's annual report to parents, and for the monitoring of the school's improvement since the last inspection.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory: formal structures for monitoring standards in lessons are only recently in place. There is no systematic cycle of school meetings. The analysis of pupils' performances, the monitoring of their progress and the use of data to ensure potential is achieved, are key areas of weakness.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory: financial control is efficient. Specific grants are used effectively. The school seeks best value in the use of finances, although the absence of desirable outcomes in whole-school planning documents, limits the effectiveness by which the impact of spending can be monitored.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The way the school expects their child to work hard and do his or her best.</li> <li>• The good quality of the leadership and management.</li> <li>• The ease with which they feel able to approach the school with questions or a problem.</li> <li>• The good quality of the teaching.</li> <li>• The progress that their child makes.</li> <li>• The way the school is helping their child to become mature and responsible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons.</li> <li>• The closeness with which the school works with parents.</li> <li>• The amounts of work done at home.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree generally with parents' views. The pupils do work hard. The vast majority like coming to school, are well supported and are making good progress. Teaching is good and the all round developments that pupils make are strong. Overall, the range of extra-curricular activities and visits, outside of lessons, is good. The amount of work that pupils do at home does contribute significantly to the good progress that they make.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Analysis of data shows that, although pupils' performances at intake in English, mathematics and science are higher than national expectations, attainment during Key Stage 3 rises more quickly than would be expected and that the school is adding value. GCSE outcomes at the higher levels, however, are not as high as might be expected in all three core subjects, given the results at level 5 and above in the Key Stage 3 national tests. Overall, pupils learn effectively in most lessons and learning is good in half of the lessons. Generally, it is much better at Key Stage 4 than at Key Stage 3. In just over three quarters of lessons pupils attain in line with national expectations, and higher in over one third of lessons. Generally, attainment is significantly higher in lessons at Key Stage 4 than at Key Stage 3. Planning across the curriculum does not yet target sufficiently the needs of the higher attaining pupils to ensure that their progress and final achievements are in line with their potential.

2. At the end of Key Stage 3, pupils' standards in English, mathematics and science were well above average, and above average for similar schools, in the 2000 National Curriculum tests. Since the last inspection, available data indicates a rise in standards in all three subjects which is faster than the national pattern of improvement. Boys and girls' performances are significantly higher in all three subjects than the national picture. The progress that boys make in English is in line with national rates, over the past four years, and much higher in mathematics and in science. 2000 teachers' assessments show attainment to be above average expectations in all of the core subjects, design and technology, modern foreign languages, history, geography and ICT.

3. At the end of Key Stage 4, pupils' average GCSE points in 2000 were well above national averages, as was the percentage of candidates obtaining 5 or more higher grade A\*-C passes. Improvements over the four years since the last inspection for both higher grade passes and average points scores have risen at a slower rate than the national trend. Outcomes are amongst the lowest 40 per cent of similar schools, nationally. Based upon average GCSE points scores, girls' attainment is better than boys, but the performances of both boys and girls is higher than national outcomes. Attainment at 5 or more A\*-G grades in 2000 was well above the national average and in line with outcomes in similar schools. Attainment at 1 or more A\*-G grades in 2000 was in line with national figures and also with similar schools.

4. In the 2000 GCSE examinations pupils' performances in English, mathematics, science, history, geography and design and technology were well above national results; they were also above national figures in modern foreign languages, information communication technology and business studies. Performances in music were in line with national expectations; in art and design they were just below.

5. Ambitions for further improvements are justified, as there is, for example, no whole-school policy on stretching higher attaining and gifted pupils, and little evidence in teachers' planning of specific strategies to meet the needs of all pupils. Although the school has set targets for 2001 GCSE outcomes at 5 or more A\*-C, 5 or more A\*-G and 1 or more A\*-G grades, the targets for A\*-C performance are insufficiently challenging. As yet, the school is not making sufficient use of internal assessment data to complement external analyses. Procedures to track high attaining pupils and those at the margins of under-performance, are unsatisfactory, at all levels, in order to monitor systematically individual rates of progress.

This is a major contributory factor towards why the school's performance against similar schools nationally is so low.

6. Good attainment in lessons at the end of Key Stages 3 and 4 bears out the national test and GCSE results' patterns. Across the curriculum, and especially in English, levels of literacy are above average. Pupils are able to meet the reading demands in all subject areas, although some lower attaining pupils have difficulty with geographical terms. In ICT pupils with low reading levels are well supported. There is a wide range of reading in history and music. A good variety of writing is evident in ICT, geography and music. Extended writing takes place in mathematics and also in history and geography, where writing frames are used to help lower attaining pupils to structure their written work. The importance of accuracy in spelling and punctuation is stressed in mathematics, science, history and geography. Many departments focus pupils' attention on important technical vocabulary through display of key words, building of word banks and explanation of terms.

7. Standards in mathematics have continued to improve since the previous inspection, with achievement well above national norms. High attainers have good number skills, confidently manipulating fractions and solving linear equations. Average attaining pupils construct pie charts and identify different types of correlation. All pupils have a good understanding of geometrical properties. Lower attaining pupils, including those with special needs, have basic number skills, can calculate the areas of plane figures and interpret data from simple charts. Pupils' mental agility is sound and frequently good. The good standards of numeracy work in mathematics gives pupils access to number work in other subjects of the curriculum. Evidence of the effective use of numeracy is plentiful and ranges from the use of graphs and statistical data in geography and business studies to the manipulation of algebraic formulae in science. Pupils can read scales and convert between different measures in science, geography and design technology. Numeracy is a strength of the school.

8. Attainment in science is above average overall. Throughout Key Stage 3 pupils make satisfactory progress or better in all lessons. By Year 9 pupils further develop their knowledge of atoms, elements and compounds and are able to write equations of simple chemical reactions. Lower attainers are able to use food pyramids to model feeding relationships. Higher attainers in Year 11 confidently plot graphs related to temperature and rate, to support their investigation of rates of reaction. Lower attainers investigating Ohm's Law, quickly discover the relationship between resistance, voltage and current. Basic numeracy skills are good.

9. In geography, standards achieved by pupils aged 14-16 are good and occasionally very good. Pupils aged 11-14 work at the expected level in the great majority of cases. Recent improvements in resources and teaching approaches put attainment levels above those at the time of the last inspection. Attainment in history is well above national averages and continues to improve. Throughout Key Stage 3 pupils further their historical knowledge, develop the capacity to extract information from a range of sources and construct reasoned arguments to explain links between cause and effect. At Key Stage 4, GCSE coursework planning achieves high standards.

10. Improvements in standards since the last inspection in ICT have been very good. Despite the current low starting point, by the end of Key Stage 3 pupils work at the expected levels in the great majority of cases and often above. Performance at Key Stage 4 is also improving, largely due to the change to the total examination option, within which boys' attainment has increased significantly. Even greater progress has been made in providing high quality facilities to the other subjects of the curriculum.

11. The attainment of pupils in music at Key Stage 3 is mostly in line with national expectations with several achieving above. By the age of 14, the majority of pupils can compose and perform in a variety of musical styles, are confident when using musical vocabulary and can accurately use staff notation in their compositions. They have experience and knowledge of music from a variety of periods and cultures. The requirements of the National Curriculum are now being met. This was a key issue in the last inspection. Pupils in Key Stage 4 have very good compositional skills and they use information communications technology effectively to record their work. Their performance skills are above average and their listening and appraising skills are also very good.

12. Standards in design and technology are well above the national average at the end of both key stages. Most pupils are tackling tasks which are appropriate for their ability, and are successful in gathering the relevant information needed to influence future designs. Practical skills are not always well-developed in resistant materials at Key Stage 3 and sometimes higher attaining pupils are insufficiently stretched.

13. Standards in art and design are in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages. In Key Stage 3, work is predominantly of a two-dimensional nature and uses artists' output from a range of movements to inform and focus understanding. In Key Stage 4, pupils are particularly strong in their work on still life. Line, tone and colour, applied through the use of chalk and pastels, is a strength. Programmes of work provide a good foundation for pupils to learn key skills and techniques before working their own creative responses to a theme.

14. Attainment in French, by pupils aged 14, is just above national expectations in written work, but only in line with expectations in speaking, listening and reading. In German, it is below national expectations, but this is because of the limited number of lessons in Years 8 and 9. Pupils are generally quick to assimilate new vocabulary, but are not provided with sufficient opportunities to use new words and phrases in full sentences, in specific contexts. The level of most of the linguistic tasks at Key Stage 4, however, allows the majority of pupils to achieve appropriately in all four skills.

15. Progress made by pupils on the special educational needs register is unsatisfactory and has not improved sufficiently since the last inspection. The progress these pupils make is still far too variable in lessons throughout the school. As a result of good teaching in many classes, pupils make progress that is often satisfactory and sometimes better. In some classes teachers have high expectations that pupils with special educational needs will make good gains in learning alongside higher attaining pupils. In English in Year 11, for example, pupils with special educational needs analysed and made judgements about trailers for films, receiving support from an assistant to enable them to be included in an effective learning environment. In a Year 10 science lesson, pupils with special educational needs learned very well what they should do to achieve higher grades at GCSE following an experiment on diffusion of gas particles. Too often, however, teachers have low expectations of pupils' learning resulting in their making poor progress. Pupils with special educational needs are sometimes given undemanding work such as completing worksheets with single words in Year 7 or copying short phrases from the board in Year 9. These activities do nothing to extend their learning particularly when they are set at levels that extend neither their basic skills nor understanding of the subject. Pupils' progress is poor in lessons provided specifically to give them additional study support time. Individual educational plans have not yet been reviewed. As a result, there is no regular monitoring of pupils' progress against the targets in the plans as required in the Code of Practice on the identification and assessment of special educational needs. This weakness in the schools' provision for pupils with special educational needs results in many of them making insufficient progress against their targets. Some pupils, however, who have been assessed under statutory procedures, make good

progress so that statements are no longer required to support their learning.

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

16. Pupils are purposeful in the way that they move around the school and cope with the difficulties of the building. Good habits of behaviour are established when they start in Year 7 and pupils display a knowledge and understanding of the expected conventions from an early stage. Year 7 pupils, in their first term, use their planners efficiently to reflect on their work.

17. A feature of the school is the quality of the relationships and the inter-weaving of the formal and informal. There is a mutual respect between staff and pupils. This is apparent in the vast majority of lessons where there is a willingness on the part of pupils to co-operate, volunteer answers and to ask questions. Both pupils and teachers are prepared to listen and to support one another. There is a spirit of tolerance and patience. However, wider opportunities for pupils to learn about the importance of respect for the differences between people outside of the formal assembly programme, are not well planned. Pupils have a desire to learn, which is discernible in the way in which they pay attention to the presentation of their work and respect the resources that the school provides. Concentration levels are high. This attitude is reinforced by the interest shown by parents, apparent from the views expressed in the annual parental surveys commissioned by the school, the questionnaire returned to the inspection team and outcomes of the parents' meeting.

18. Lunch time activities are well supported and pupils take advantage of opportunities such as an outward bound course to extend their knowledge. Although there is an extended catchment area, the school is able to maintain several sporting teams and an orchestra. In spite of the cramped nature of the accommodation, there is little uncontrolled behaviour. It is mostly very good with few instances of bullying. When instances do occur, they are dealt with quickly and sensitively. There are no recorded incidences of racial and sexual harassment. Exclusion is infrequent and well below the national average. There are no permanent exclusions. The student council offers all age groups an opportunity to select representatives to act as their 'voice' with the management of the school. The present office holders display a real interest in the role and a responsible attitude towards its opportunities. The house system channels a competitive spirit and helps encourage pupils to work to gain merits which lead to awards for the house. House captains have a role in running sporting activities. A large number of Year 11 pupils are prefects and behave in a responsible and mature way as they help maintain discipline and a safe flow around the school at critical times.

19. When pupils develop an interest they are encouraged to pursue it. An example is the small group of library monitors who have made a useful contribution to the running of the library in monitoring use, preparing books, keeping the shelves tidy and attending to displays. Charities are supported and the music department organises Carol singing and other events to raise money.

20. Attendance figures are very good and have improved since the last inspection. Levels of authorised and unauthorised absence are well below national averages. Sometimes transport arrangements cause late arrival but this is not allowed to disrupt activities. Otherwise, punctuality is generally good. Registers are properly maintained and are now stored securely within the school office.

### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

21. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, confirming the beliefs of parents. It is better at Key Stage 4 than at Key Stage 3, but there are no significant weaknesses in any

one subject. Of the 130 lessons evaluated, teaching was very good or higher in 16 per cent; good in 39 per cent; satisfactory in 40 per cent and unsatisfactory or poor in less than 5 per cent. Pupils' learning was similarly rarely less than satisfactory and good overall. Teaching and learning is never less than satisfactory and often good in English, mathematics, science, music, physical education, geography and ICT.

22. Generally, teaching and learning benefit from the pupils' good attitudes and behaviour in class and around the school. Whilst the quality of teaching and learning is at a similar level to the previous inspection, improvements have been made in the teaching of literacy, numeracy and ICT. Numeracy teaching is now a strength of the school. Teaching emphasises spellings, the use of language and the application of number across the curriculum to enable more pupils to access number work in other subjects.

23. A strength of the school is the teachers' knowledge and understanding of their subjects. They are good at Key Stage 3 and very good at Key Stage 4. There is very good knowledge and understanding in, for example, mathematics, where pupils emulate teachers' enthusiasm for the subject and consequentially their learning is good, and in science where GCSE grades are used to raise expectations. Other subjects follow this pattern.

24. Teachers' planning is only satisfactory. There is little formal lesson planning and an over-reliance on published texts. The better planning identifies clear learning objectives, contains activities that ensure pace and variety and includes opportunities to check pupils' outcomes. Many mathematics lessons, for example, are aligned with the National Numeracy Strategy, having a mental warm up, a series of main activities and a review of learning at the end. Some science lessons are planned according to the syllabus and offer challenging activities for pupils. There is good short-term planning in music and in history. Planning to meet the needs equally of higher and lower attaining pupils, is more variable. This is one area that the school needs to develop to ensure that planning stretches the higher attaining pupils and supports the weaker ones.

25. Teachers' expectations of pupils are good overall, but better at Key Stage 4 in most subjects. Teaching methods are generally satisfactory and mirror closely the degree to which the high expectations are matched to a variety of teaching approaches, enabling most pupils to make appropriate progress. There is growing use of the school's new "interactive white board technology" with teachers introducing topics via a multi-media presentation, injecting good pace and motivation into the lessons. However, too frequently, teaching is over-directive, stifling discussion and limiting the opportunity to develop thinking skills. Extension activities and homework sometimes consists of "more of the same" rather than testing pupils' application of learned skills.

26. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils. In class they insist on and achieve high standards of behaviour that enables good learning to take place. Teachers use time and resources well, even when they are teaching outside of the limited specialist areas. Since the last inspection, teachers are using computers more effectively for research and to model events not otherwise practicable. Lower attaining pupils are supported by teachers on the new "Success Maker" suite of computer aided learning programs which enables them to learn basic skills at their own pace. Technician staff are used effectively. Revision clubs run by teachers make learning more relaxed and are a valuable contribution to the standards achieved.

27. Teachers offer significant levels of help and encouragement to pupils. They mark pupils' work regularly, record outcomes and report concerns to parents, which is highly appreciated. The quality of teachers' oral feedback to pupils during lessons is frequently good, but the planning for and on-going assessment of pupils' work is unsatisfactory. There are insufficient comments, when assessing pupils work, to tell them about the progress that they are making or to enable them to aspire to higher levels. There is little marked work on display that pupils can use to reference their performance and so improve their work. Rarely are targets for improvement set when marking.

28. The formal teaching of personal, social and health education is unsatisfactory. Pupils are not provided with sufficiently planned opportunities to learn about healthy and safe lifestyles, and to learn about the importance of respect for the differences between people.

29. Since coming into post, the present co-ordinator for special educational needs has ensured that individual education plans have been written for all pupils appropriate to their needs. These plans provide useful information on pupils' difficulties and needs. Targets usefully provide guidance across subjects to help pupils learn more fully, such as 'follow with finger when listening to text'. Action indicates how parents and external services will be involved. Pupils place targets in their planners. Although they are infrequently used in their short-term planning, many teachers know some of the individual targets set for pupils. However, improvement in the effective use of individual education plans has been unsatisfactory since the last inspection. Despite this being a key issue, individual education plans have not yet been reviewed at termly intervals as recommended in the Code of Practice. Teaching, therefore, insufficiently focuses on pupils' precise current needs. Teachers do not record small gains in pupils' progress and subsequent teaching does not build on pupils' gains against their individual targets.

30. The Local Education Authority (LEA) provides teaching assistants and support teachers for some pupils with special educational needs at stages 3 and 5 of the Code of Practice. This additional support is deployed with good effect. For example these staff help improve pupils' reading and comprehension skills in Key Stage 3. It is a weakness, however, that additional staff are too often not well briefed by class teachers about what they are expected to do in lessons.

31. The teaching of careers education is limited in Year 9. In Year 10 it is centred on work experience which is well organised in co-operation with external agencies, and is followed up in Year 11 English lessons as part of formal assessed coursework. Time for careers education and guidance is limited in Year 11 and is insufficient to provide more than an introduction to sources and an understanding of the transition to training, further education and the sixth form. Some attention is given to revision techniques with a helpful booklet. Resources are well deployed and include the imaginative use of Theatre in Education to support careers choices. Relations with the Careers Service are positive.

32. The general ethos of the school encourages good learning. Pupils are keen to acquire new skills and knowledge and are willing to work at a good pace to achieve these outcomes. They concentrate well, apply themselves conscientiously and show interest and enthusiasm in all aspects of their studies. Pupils' knowledge of their own learning is unsatisfactory, but it is better at Key Stage 4 when teaching is focussed on the requirements of GCSE.

33. Learning overall is a strength of the school and is best demonstrated when teachers allow pupils to think and learn for themselves through carefully planned activities. Teaching and learning together contribute to the progress that pupils make across the key stages and to the good standards achieved in national tests and examinations at the ages of 14 and 16.

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

34. The statutory curriculum provision is satisfactory at both key stages. It has improved since the last inspection by complying with the requirements for ICT and music and meeting most of the demands of the national curriculum in design and technology and art and design. However, there are elements within the curriculum of the latter two subjects, and in physical education, that remain to be addressed fully. Planned provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is a significant weakness that was not evident during the previous inspection and provision for pupils with special educational needs is still unsatisfactory overall. Strong features of current curriculum provision are the effectiveness of the strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy, which enable all pupils access to the whole curriculum. There is also a good range of extra-curricular activities.

35. The length of time that pupils study in class matches recommendations and there are generally appropriate allocations of time to subjects. Shortage of time for modern foreign languages and the balance of time spent on the different disciplines in design technology are decisions made by the school in its efforts to provide a broad curriculum. The use of the gym for examinations has a significantly negative effect on continuity and progression within physical education.

36. At Key Stage 3, pupils take the required range of subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. In addition, some can learn an extra modern language in Year 8. There is a taught course for all pupils in ICT which is an improvement since the last inspection. The organisation of classes into sets allows some pupils to be taught in smaller classes, giving them access to more individual support when they most need it.

37. At Key Stage 4, the curriculum offers an appropriate range of National Curriculum subjects to General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) level. Courses in English, mathematics, science, modern foreign languages, design technology and religious education are provided for all pupils. Some pupils are formally disapplied from religious education, on parental request, to change their first modern foreign language from French to German. There are no work-related courses at present, but opportunities to study a half GCSE course in ICT and to obtain a computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT) qualification. Other subjects in the curriculum utilise the ICT resources and provision just meets the national requirements. A reasonable range of options is available from which pupils can choose. Business studies is particularly popular and successful and makes a significant contribution to raising ICT skills.

38. It is a strength that the curriculum is organised to enable pupils with special educational needs to be taught in classes of reduced size in Key Stages 3 and 4. This ensures a greater amount of teaching time for each pupil and breadth and balance in their learning. The curriculum is inclusive because pupils with special educational needs are mainly taught alongside pupils who do not have special educational needs and withdrawal from lessons is infrequent. However, the learning opportunities for pupils in classes of reduced size are far too variable because work is not always tailored to their individual learning needs. This results from poor progress in the development and review of individual education plans since the last inspection. Learning opportunities for pupils with special educational needs within an inclusive curriculum, as a consequence, are unsatisfactory. Support in lessons, including that from the LEA, is now equitably distributed across Key Stages 3 and 4 an improvement since the last inspection.

39. Planned provision for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) is a weakness. There is no formal teaching according to the programmes of study, with relevant aspects only mapped across the curriculum. This was last done at the time of the previous inspection. Since then little effort has been made to ensure that these activities are written into subject schemes of work or taught proficiently. Few resources have been provided to support PSHE. However, science does fulfil its obligations by teaching pupils about health and sex education and the local drug awareness team visits to ensure pupils know of the dangers of drugs. There is tutor time available before lessons start, but when it is not taken by collective worship it is not effectively used to support the provision of PSHE. The weekly "News Quiz" is an interesting contribution to cultural understanding, but its organisation in the classroom does not involve all pupils, missing a valuable opportunity for social development.

40. Opportunities for the enrichment and extension of learning and experiences outside lessons are good. As well as attending revision clubs directly linked to classroom subjects, pupils have access to a range of sporting activities. There are opportunities for visits within the country and abroad and to take part in performances of drama, dance and music. The one-week residential outward bound course is a positive feature.

41. There are satisfactory links with the school's significant number of feeder primary schools so that information about most pupils is available before they arrive in Year 7. The school has good links with the local sixth form and colleges. These are well developed to give pupils a good understanding of the wide ranges of options open to them to continue their education or to enter training after Year 11.

42. Parents support pupils learning well, but community links are limited to providing good opportunities for work experience. The quality of careers education is sound. Provision begins in Year 9 and pupils have the opportunity to meet with the careers officer during Key Stage 4. There is a careers section in the library and computer software for pupils to help them make their choices. Pupils also assist with fund-raising for local and national charities.

43. The school has a strong caring ethos that embraces different groups of children from a number of communities. Indeed the school is founded on the affirmation that significant common ground exists between two traditions of faith. Pupils have very positive attitudes to one another and their relationships are also particularly strong. In this context, minority ethnic pupils integrate very well in to the curriculum and the life of the school. Boys and girls work well together positively, without one gender dominating the other. Teachers manage neither gender in a prejudicial way. Pupils with hearing difficulties are fully integrated into classes within the school and given good additional support from specialist services. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in the curriculum alongside other pupils, but their individual learning needs are not yet fully addressed in plans made for them. The learning needs of talented pupils are well met in physical education where staff develop the abilities of

outstanding performers, promoting their involvement in teams at County level. It is a weakness that the learning needs of higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently well identified to enable teachers to stretch them at levels that promote higher standards. The school does not have a specific policy on how to extend the gifted and most able pupils. Nevertheless, academically gifted pupils in the top sets in mathematics are stretched and science uses examination grades to encourage higher attainment. Talented pupils in sport are given good opportunities to improve their skills and are supported later if they have to miss any lessons. Overall, teachers have high expectations that all pupils will attain creditable outcomes in subjects irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, gender or disability and the equality of access and opportunity in the school is good.

44. The spiritual ethos of the school is strong and is inherent in the aims and aspirations fostered by its Christian values.

45. Many teachers, however, are unaware of the contributions that they could make in lessons to pupils' spiritual development owing to the lack of planning. The exception is the thought for the week which is emphasised in assemblies and some tutor sessions. In a small number of lessons pupils clearly develop a sense of curiosity, through personal reflection. For example in science during an experiment when a ring of ammonia gas appeared in the centre of a tube; in geography, pupils are encouraged to reflect on the power of nature for example, after watching a video on earthquakes.

46. The provision for moral development is very good. Pupils have high standards for themselves and the ethos of the school emphasises this aspect. Adults take an effective lead in teaching the principles of right and wrong and their expectations are high. In physical education, there is a very strong emphasis on playing fairly to the rules. In design and technology and science the need for good behaviour in the workshops and laboratories for safety reasons is stressed effectively. On wider issues, the moral aspects of pollution and disasters on human life are highlighted in geography.

47. There is very good provision for social development. A sense of community is fostered throughout the school. The pupils treat the school as an extended family and are fiercely supportive of it. There is a school council to which pupils from all year groups are elected. They are encouraged to use this forum to consult with the head and governors and they respect decisions that go against them. The prefect system works well and prefects are treated fairly by pupils as part of the school hierarchy. There is strong support for school teams and performances with all pupils invited to contribute. Successes of individuals are celebrated generously. Pupils contribute to fund-raising for charities often chosen by them.

48. The school makes satisfactory provision for cultural development. Most provision pertains to the western tradition, but there is limited reference to a wider range of cultural traditions. Pupils are exposed to some good examples of music from around the world and in geography, where pupils study the effects of tourism on different parts of the world. Art and design and design and technology feature the art and foods of other countries. Pupils are given the chance to visit France and Germany and the daily life in these countries is covered by the modern foreign languages curriculum. The school productions suitably reflect the art, music and dance of both local and wider ranging cultures. All Year 9 pupils are given the opportunity to attend a performance of a Shakespeare play as part of their studies in Key Stage 3 English.

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

49. The good relationships which underpin the school mean that the informal oral structures for monitoring pupils' personal development and helping them are a strength. Parents hold the school in high regard for its warm, caring ethos and this is commented on by visitors. There is an atmosphere of trust which is not abused. Tutorial periods and assemblies are used to transmit the ethos of the school and to reinforce the behavioural policy of mutual respect and care. The intent is to create self-discipline. Themes for the week focus attention. The pastoral chain from form teacher to head of year is clear and the policies involved are made public to both pupils and parents in an intelligible form.

50. Discipline is effective and a system is in place which uses 'naming and shaming' as the first step in preventing poor behaviour. Parents are involved and individual learning plans established, in order to prevent matters from escalating. The low level of exclusions and the fact that no member of Year 11 has been referred to the disciplinary board for the last 3 years, suggests that the policy is a success. Good advice is given on bullying, some occurs but action by staff is prompt. Supervision at lunch, break and after school is effective. Attendance is generally well monitored and unauthorised absence checked rigorously.

51. Care is taken within departments to ensure the health and safety of pupils and to teach best practice, rules and procedures are displayed. Congestion in the classrooms does, in some cases, increase hazards. The management team and governors are well aware of this. Fire drills are regular and the building can be evacuated in 3 minutes. The staff are alerted appropriately to any existing medical conditions and are aware of the action to be taken. Regular visits by the school nurse enable both staff and pupils to air concerns. Child protection issues are dealt with efficiently and up-to-date training has been received. All teachers and staff are well briefed. Pupils are prepared to report concerns and posters giving external sources of support are displayed.

52. Good induction procedures ensure that pupils are placed in groups carefully on admission and are setted, when Key Stage 2 results are linked to internal examinations and external tests. Thus, efforts are made to ensure that pupils are working to their own pace and potential. The 'Academic Board' ensures that movement between groups is possible.

53. The school has an assessment policy that is followed consistently by all departments. Emphasis is placed upon the awarding of effort grades and the use of internal tests to determine pupils' performance against target grades. Marking of pupils' work, therefore, although mostly regular and up-to-date focuses upon rewarding pupils' effort. Some examples of subject specific, diagnostic marking, identifying strengths and areas for development were noted on key pieces of work in English and history, but practice remains generally unsatisfactory. Pupils' understanding of current performance and targets for improvement therefore, although better at Key Stage 4 than at Key Stage 3, is weak. The use of whole-school data to set targets, based on 'Midyis' (Year 8) and 'Yellis' (Year 11), combined with internal data, is developing, particularly in geography and information, and communication technology at Key Stage 4. All departments do not yet use data consistently or systematically, however, to monitor pupils' performance against target grades, nor to identify underachievement at an early stage. Mechanisms for monitoring pupils' progress between Key Stage 3 National Curriculum outcomes and Key Stage 4 GCSE results are unsatisfactory. Pupils on the special educational needs register are identified and individual education plans are in place. However, they are used rarely to identify specific work and to plan for pupils' progress in individual subject areas. Assessment overall remains an area of weakness in which the school has made little progress since the last inspection. There is now an urgent need to formalise and extend current procedures and to update the school policy.

54. Provision made for pupils with statements of special educational needs is good. The school fulfils its statutory duty to ensure that the provision in statements is implemented. The co-ordinator for special educational needs ensures that statements and reviews are kept up to date. Reviews of statements enable provision to be re-evaluated in the light of progress made and, as a result of this, some pupils have been found no longer to need statements following their annual reviews. LEA support services help pupils with learning and hearing needs as defined in their statements. Additional staffing provides good levels of support. This could be used more effectively if teachers planned specifically for the use of this support, in advance. Teachers are well aware of the needs of pupils who have statements and of the implications of statements for their teaching.

55. Homework is set regularly, monitored by the headteacher and arrangements are made to allow pupils to study in school if necessary. Computer rooms are open at lunch time for private study. Access is according to a rota. The internet is available for research and proper care has been taken to bar some sites. The library has received a boost in books from parental donations, but is still limited in what it can offer and is not conveniently situated for access during lesson time. It is small, so cannot safely accommodate large numbers. The school planner allows comment by parents on the work undertaken and encourages pupils to reflect on their work and to set themselves targets. In the same way a comment is included from pupils in school reports. This build up of yearly personal statements helps pupils to produce a Record of Achievement and a personal curriculum vitae.

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

56. Shared values and expectations for the development of mature young adults are a strength of the school's relationship with parents. Consultation on areas of concern is encouraged. Parents feel happy about approaching the school with questions or problems. Arrangements are in place for more formal opportunities to exchange views, via the pupils' planners, parents' evenings and an annually conducted survey. The questionnaire returns for the inspection and the opinions of those who attended the parents' meeting with inspectors expressed high degrees of satisfaction with the school and its management.

57. The annual surveys on parental opinions reveal some curricular concerns, for example access to computers outside lessons and the delivery of personal, social and health education. During the inspection pupils were observed working on a regular basis in the computer room with access fairly distributed across the school. In addition, a computer is available in the library. The arrangements for the formal taught programme of personal, social and health education, however, are unsatisfactory and pupils have insufficient opportunities to learn about healthy and safe lifestyles, and to learn about the importance of respect for the differences between people. There is little evidence to support parents' concerns about the regularity and appropriateness of homework. The school homework timetable is generally well adhered to and most subjects set the required amount. There is still room for improvement in the nature of some assignments which tend to reinforce, rather than extend, classroom learning. The governing body is debating parental requests for a change in uniform for girls and for the provision of lockers. This is a responsive school.

58. All children, with their parents, have a short interview with senior staff, before joining the school. Thus, the level of commitment, from the beginning, is high. This is much appreciated by parents and is confirmed by the success of the home school agreement, contained in the school planner.

59. Communication with parents is generally satisfactory. Letters to parents are sent out, as necessary, to cover information on meetings and to secure parental consent for visits and major decisions involving their children. The parents' association issues a regular newsletter. Most parents value the annual reports about their children's progress and consider them adequate. Nevertheless, they do not currently comply with statutory requirements. Comments are mainly about pupils' attitudes to learning, with few examples of subjects identifying specific strengths and weaknesses and targets for development. History is an example of emerging good practice.

60. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved in the annual reviews of pupils with statements. Parents of other pupils with special educational needs have been sent individual educational plans for their children. It is a weakness, however, that they have not yet been invited to review their children's progress, despite the recommendation in the Code of Practice that reviews with parents should be arranged for pupils at stages 1-3.

61. Pupils are required to remain within the school grounds during the lunch hour; this is much appreciated by parents but they express some concern over the arrangements for the provision of lunch. These are not supported by inspectors. A rota system allows preferential treatment for Year 11 pupils and those attending clubs, while all year groups have the chance of early access.

62. Parental willingness to pay a regular termly sum into the school fund and the fund-raising efforts of the parents' association enable the school to offer activities such as swimming, visits to events such as science and engineering days, and to purchase extra resources such as balances for the science department.

63. The annual report to parents of the governing body does not currently meet statutory requirements.

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

64. The headteacher's consultative and open style of leadership has succeeded in creating a caring ethos, in which pupils can feel safe and secure, and in which they can support each other positively to attain high standards. Parents are fully justified in their faith in the capacity of the school to prepare pupils to become mature and responsible citizens.

65. The school has explicit aims and values, including a commitment to encourage the growth of pupils' social confidence and moral courage to face the challenges of adult life. These aims and values are generally reflected in all of its work.

66. The headteacher has priorities for the continued future development of the school. These are shared with the staff and the governing body. At present, the annual improvement plan, which is designed to implement these priorities, is unsatisfactory. There are few targets against which progress can be measured and no specific arrangements for the monitoring and evaluation of this progress. Action points are not detailed enough and do not relate specifically to sustaining and improving standards. The current plan does not provide a firm enough steer for the school's work. A major weakness is the absence of detailed subject improvement plans that make a direct contribution to the whole-school plan and provide a clear sense of direction for the continued promotion of high performance.

67. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher understand fully the concept of school improvement. Nevertheless, much of the current work of the school to monitor and to evaluate standards is informal. Although the school has a draft performance management policy, and has recently introduced a system for the monitoring of classroom teaching and learning, these procedures have been slow to develop. There is a general absence of systematic approaches to the evaluation of planning, teaching and the outcomes of pupils' work.

68. Senior leaders have begun to make use of outcomes from external analyses of pupils' attainments to predict minimum potential and to set targets for improvement. The use of attainment data on entry and information from the Key Stage 3 standardised test scores, is unsatisfactory. It is still not sophisticated enough throughout the school to establish reliably challenging targets for all pupils. Whole-school and departmental assessment and recording procedures are unsatisfactory. Significant ongoing assessment opportunities are not planned in advance, outcomes are not recorded centrally and pupils' progress is not monitored systematically across all years. Targets are not set for all pupils throughout the school and therefore senior and subject leaders cannot identify easily whether individual pupils are on line to achieve potential. Few teachers are regularly using pupils' attainments to help them plan work and to advise pupils about what to do to make better progress.

69. The roles of subject leaders are unclear. There is too much reliance on informal exchanges, at the expense of calendared, formal meetings, with a focus on monitoring performance and on raising standards further. In particular, the special educational needs co-ordinator has too little time to ensure that the school makes the developments urgently required in this area. Although the school sets out to meet the needs of pupils in line with the Code of Practice, it is a weakness that progress in the use of individual education plans by staff since the last inspection has moved at too slow a pace. This is resulting in uneven and uncoordinated provision for pupils with learning difficulties on the special educational needs register. It is a weakness that at present there are no arrangements for monitoring provision for these pupils in classrooms or for school self evaluation to ensure that their needs are actually being met by their teachers. Schemes of work, for the most part, do not contain planned opportunities for the regular assessment of pupils' progress, for the development of their literacy, numeracy and information communication technology skills, for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and specific activities to ensure that all learning needs will be catered for, including those of higher and lower attaining pupils.

70. Governors are fully supportive of the work of the school and analyse carefully the information that they receive about pupils' examination and test results, holding the school to account for the standards that it achieves. They are considering whether these standards are sufficiently high, when making comparison with similar schools. Via a comprehensive structure of committees, they discharge effectively most of their statutory duties. However, the school's annual reports to parents are unsatisfactory in that they do not contain sufficiently precise comments about pupils' strengths and weaknesses, nor do they set specific targets for improvement, in the subjects that they study. The governing body's annual report to parents also fails to meet the necessary requirements. It does not contain targets for Key Stage 4, information regarding pupils' post-16 destinations, and sufficient details about special educational needs, including how resources are allocated and how equality of opportunity is ensured for pupils with disabilities. Governors do not monitor the progress of pupils on the special educational needs register. As a result, they do not yet understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school's provision for special educational needs. Governors are setting appropriate targets for the performance of the headteacher and deputy headteacher, and have taken the necessary steps to introduce a whole-school performance management policy. They link well with the headteacher to provide a sense of direction for

the work of the school. Although many governors are regular visitors, they are not yet secure in their understanding of the general strengths and weaknesses in the key areas of teaching and learning. They have not monitored the progress that the school has made, during the past four years, against all of the key issues from the last inspection.

71. The school has sufficient, suitably qualified and experienced staff, with the majority teaching within their specialisms. Staff required to teach outside their specialist area receive appropriate in-house or external training. The pupil-teacher ratio is broadly in line with national norms, but overall contact time is low when compared with the national average. Appropriate performance management procedures are in place. Job descriptions now require urgent review. The improvements required in the arrangements for staff development, identified in the last inspection, have been largely met. Staff development needs are now linked more closely to whole-school priorities. Further training is still required in the use of assessment data and personal and social health education materials. There is also a need for all staff, including the special needs co-ordinator, to be trained to understand how to support and monitor the progress of pupils with special educational needs, through the use of individual education plans. At present, there are neither systems in place to formally evaluate the quality of courses and training, nor to monitor their impact on standards in the classroom. This weakens the overall effectiveness of staff development procedures. Newly qualified staff are offered appropriate support which follows statutory requirements. Induction arrangements for staff new to the school, other than newly qualified teachers, are more informal in nature, but the senior management team and relevant heads of department offer guidance, as appropriate. Technical staff are well deployed and provide effective curriculum support to the design and technology and science departments. The administration staff are efficient and provide very good support to the staff and pupils of the school.

72. Accommodation in the majority of curriculum areas continues to be cramped and is not conducive to effective learning. Some improvements have been made since the last inspection. The special educational needs department has now a designated room for pupil withdrawal and review meetings; the music department has been allocated an extra practice room, and a dance/drama studio has been created. In most areas of the curriculum, however, poor standards of accommodation are now having a negative impact on learning. Money has been raised by parents to supplement the school's spending and the quantity and quality of fiction and non-fiction books in the library is gradually improving. The range of books to support the various curriculum areas still requires extending in many subjects. The size and location of the room and the lack of a designated full-time librarian still inhibits extensive use of the library for extending pupils' progress through independent learning and investigation. Because of the multi-use of many classrooms, the learning environment for pupils is often un-stimulating. There are some examples of good display in English, mathematics, geography, history, art and design and physical education, but the overall quality of display throughout the school does not promote high attainment.

73. Spending per pupil on resources is above the national average. The allocation of capitation to the various departments is transparent and based on pupil numbers with appropriate subject weighting. However, there are no systems in place to monitor the impact of spending on standards in the classroom, other than through informal discussions. All departments are sufficiently resourced to deliver the National Curriculum. Reading and spelling resources to help pupils with special educational needs are not yet sufficiently improved since the last inspection, and the new room designated for pupils with special needs is poorly stocked. There are still insufficient resources across the curriculum to maximise the potential of pupils with special needs. Lack of clarity about the school's income and expenditure for special educational needs makes monitoring of the use of this budget difficult. The school is unable to evaluate the quality of education resulting from spending in this area and the governors are unable to report annually to parents on how resources have

been allocated each year. Other resource issues, identified in the last inspection, in art and design and music have now been addressed, although the limited amount of equipment in music inhibits pupils' progress. The ratio of computers to pupils is now very close to the national average, but the provision of computers within most subjects is still insufficient to improve ICT skills.

74. The chair of finance, together with the headteacher, prepare a draft budget for the governors. The chair of finance works closely with the headteacher and monitors the budget on a monthly basis via the full governing body. The school has efficient and effective procedures for financial control and is well supported by the administration staff. The most recent audit, in 2000, reports that school procedures are fully compliant with all regulations.

75. The numbers of computers are commensurate with national expectations and are effectively used. The co-ordinator ensures that their use is linked to curriculum recommendations with bookings for 80 per cent of the available access time.

76. Specific grants are effectively used to support the work of the school. Departmental budgets are appropriately allocated by formula, but the lack of formal success criteria in improvement planning limits the effective monitoring of expenditure against outcomes. The school's expenditure is in-line with similar schools. Funds for professional training and for pupils with special educational needs are appropriately allocated. Resources are used to promote high standards. Preferred suppliers limit the risk to the school and there is consultation with staff, parents and governors on curriculum and other issues. Best value principles are applied well. Considering the effectiveness of the school in maintaining good standards from a favourable intake at average costs, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

77. In order to sustain and further improve the school's standards of education, the governing body, in partnership with the headteacher, senior leadership team and general teaching staff should:

- (1) Improve planning, at all levels, to ensure:
  - detailed annual improvement planning includes strategies with a clear focus on raising attainment; specific targets by which success can be measured and clear arrangements for the monitoring and evaluation of progress against these targets; clear links between improvement priorities and spending to evaluate the cost effectiveness of major decisions, specific links between subject plans and the whole-school plan;
  - comprehensive subject schemes of work which contain references to the programmes of study and attainment targets of the National Curriculum; significant opportunities for the assessment of pupils' progress; key activities through which pupils' literacy, numeracy and information communication skills and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural aptitudes can be developed; specific tasks that ensure higher and lower attaining pupils are stretched sufficiently;
  - weekly lesson plans that translate aspects of schemes of work into agendas for classroom learning through precise learning objectives and activities, pitched at appropriate levels, to ensure adequate progress for all pupils;
  - a formal taught personal, social and health education programme which provides pupils with sufficient opportunities to learn about healthy and safe lifestyles, and about the importance of respect for the differences between people.
- (2) Develop the monitoring and evaluation of standards by senior and subject leaders, against clearly shared criteria for improvement. This should focus on:
  - lesson planning;
  - classroom observations;
  - pupils' outcomes.
- (3) Introduce more systematic whole-school assessment processes to:
  - improve the quality of teachers' marking;
  - use learning outcomes from lessons to help with subsequent planning;
  - gather regular information about pupils' progress;
  - provide support for pupils at risk of underachieving;
  - shape the content of annual reports of pupils' progress to parents so that they comply with statutory requirements.
- (4) Make effective provision for higher and lower attaining pupils by:
  - improving the overall co-ordination of special educational needs provision;
  - improving the use that teachers make of individual education plans to ensure more effective pupils' progress;
  - planning appropriate activities that stretch gifted pupils sufficiently.
- (5) Seek to improve and extend accommodation to ensure that learning is not further compromised and standards seriously impaired.

- (6) Ensure that the governing body's annual report to parents meets with statutory requirements by including:
- targets for attainment at Key Stage 4;
  - post-16 destinations of pupils;
  - information about the success of the special educational needs policy, any significant changes made to the policy, details of any consultations with the LEA or other schools and about how resources are allocated to pupils with special educational needs;
  - arrangements for the admission of pupils with disabilities and details about equal opportunities.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	130
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	28

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1.6	14.8	39.8	39.1	3.1	1.6	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	385
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	19

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	8
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	65

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.8
National comparative data	7.9

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	1.1

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	28	45	73

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	22	27	28
	Girls	39	38	33
	Total	61	65	61
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	84 (68)	89 (75)	84 (77)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	58 (25)	71 (53)	63 (32)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	24	25	28
	Girls	38	35	32
	Total	62	60	60
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	85 (78)	82 (84)	82 (75)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	64 (48)	71 (63)	47 (38)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (28)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	28	33	61

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	18	27	27
	Girls	21	32	33
	Total	39	59	60
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	64 (60)	97 (100)	98 (100)
	National	49 (46.6)	88.8 (90.9)	94.4 (95.8)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score	School	44 (43)

per pupil	National	38.7 (38)
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*Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.*

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	3
White	382
Any other minority ethnic group	0

### **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	0	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 – Y11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	22.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.3

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Education support staff: Y7 – Y11**

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	82

#### **Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	72
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#### **Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11**

Key Stage 3	25.3
Key Stage 4	22.2

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	900 700
Total expenditure	908 018
Expenditure per pupil	2 448
Balance brought forward from previous year	59 718
Balance carried forward to next year	52 400

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	390
Number of questionnaires returned	170

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	54	41	2	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	54	38	4	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	54	38	4	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	54	11	0	3
The teaching is good.	58	38	1	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	41	43	12	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	71	25	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	73	26	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	40	43	13	0	4
The school is well led and managed.	68	29	0	1	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	61	33	2	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	19	44	17	5	15

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

### **ENGLISH**

78. Standards of attainment in English are above national levels. Standards of attainment for pupils at the age of fourteen, as measured by 2000 National Curriculum tests, are above the national average and above levels achieved by pupils in similar schools. These results are in line with those for mathematics and science and show an overall improvement over the last four years, although the pattern of results has been uneven. The work of pupils in Years 7 to 9 is above national expectations. Standards of oral skills are generally satisfactory and lower attaining pupils respond well and contribute readily in whole class question and answer sessions. Higher attaining pupils speak well in class when given opportunities to express themselves at length. By the age of fourteen pupils' standards of writing are good. In all years handwriting and levels of accuracy, which were seen to be weak at the last inspection, are now above average. Well-presented autobiographical letters written by lower attaining Year 7 pupils provide a good example of these strengths. Middle and higher attaining pupils are encouraged to write at greater length and produce some very good short stories. In Years 8 and 9 they gain more confidence in their writing and produce good results in different genres, for example, the ghost stories written by Year 8 pupils. Pupils can use ICT in researching and presenting their work. Reading skills are well developed across all attainment levels and from Year 7 pupils are able to distinguish tone in what they read and recognise how language devices, such as different patterns of punctuation, can affect the reading of poetry. Pupils with special educational needs are able to follow and understand narrative and can convey meaning when reading aloud. Higher attaining pupils in Year 9 are able to interpret the complex language of a Shakespearean soliloquy and by the end of this year all pupils are reading a variety of material, including newspaper and magazine articles and other non-fiction texts dealing with moral, cultural and social issues. However, there is only limited evidence of whole text study in years 7 and 8, despite the evidence of good responses in Year 9 to Shakespeare plays and to novels such as Barry Hines' 'A Kestrel for a Knave'.

79. The attainment of pupils at the age of sixteen is above national levels and in line with those achieved by pupils from similar schools. GCSE results in English for 2000 show that the number of pupils gaining A\* to C is above the national average. Numbers of pupils gaining grades A\* to C in GCSE English literature are also above the national average and are improving faster than the national rate. In both English and English literature, however, the number of pupils attaining the highest grades is below national norms. The work of pupils in Years 10 and 11 is above national expectations except in regard to oral skills, which are generally average. Middle attaining pupils are often a little inhibited in expressing themselves in group or class work. Higher attaining pupils display below average performance skills in dramatic group work. By the age of sixteen pupils' standards of writing are generally above average. There are good examples of lively poetry writing by pupils of all attainment levels, for example, the poems about old age written by lower attaining Year 11 pupils in response to their reading of poems by Roger McGough and Jenny Joseph. Many pupils organise their writing confidently, as can be seen in the literature essays comparing two short stories by different writers. They show greater awareness of purpose and audience in their written assignments on advertising and film. Reading standards are also above average. Pupils can read and understand a wide range of literary and factual material. Higher attaining pupils are able to read beneath the surface of Shakespeare's 'A Merchant of Venice' and detect some of the play's underlying themes. All pupils can identify

character and motive in their reading of texts such as 'The Cream Cracker under the Settee' by Alan Bennett.

80. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection. Spelling and handwriting are now above average. Group work is now more widely used, although teachers could develop this still further. The library is now better resourced with a good supply of fiction and more reference books – but it still does not meet whole-school needs.

81. Teaching is generally good and pupils learn well. In two thirds of lessons teaching is good or very good. Teaching in Years 10 and 11 is better overall than it is in Years 7 to 9. Characteristics of all teaching in the department are teachers' positive and friendly relationships with pupils leading to high levels of motivation, their enthusiasm for the subject which encourages positive attitudes for learning and a brisk pace to keep pupils engaged and interested. The best teaching has clear objectives to help pupils reach specific targets, progressive and challenging activities to build on pupils' learning and additional or alternative strategies and materials for pupils of all attainment levels. A good example of this high quality teaching was observed in a poetry lesson for lower attaining Year 10 pupils. Separate targets were set for pupils at different attainment levels, pupils were encouraged to offer their own views about life and death and to respond individually. Writing frames were available for those pupils who needed additional support in organising their written work. The best marking is conscientious, detailed and helpful in pointing out how work may be improved. Teaching is less effective and pupils make slower progress in those lessons where too great a reliance is placed on textbooks for lesson planning. In some cases, a lack of focus on particular learning targets, too little variety in oral work or insufficient regard for the needs of the highest and lowest attaining pupils in a class, impedes progress. The overall use of assessment to monitor pupils' progress and to set meaningful targets, is a weakness, particularly at Key Stage 3.

82. Pupils' attitudes in lessons are invariably good. They listen attentively to instructions and are eager to participate in all activities. They are often keen readers and show enthusiasm in their writing tasks and are generally conscientious about how they present their work. Homework is thorough and handed in on time. Pupils support one another well in lessons, both in group-work and when participating in whole class activities.

83. The department is well led and there is a general commitment to improving standards of learning. There is a readiness to re-think strategies and accept change. Teachers in the department have shown commendable resilience to additional pressures arising from recent staff absences. However, procedures for monitoring teaching and learning across the department and for sharing best practice are too informal. Departmental meetings are not timetabled or recorded and the development plan has no clear focus, success criteria or indications of cost. Resources are effectively deployed. The curriculum fully meets statutory requirements but the drama provision is unsatisfactory. Only pupils in Year 7 have an opportunity to study drama as a separate subject. In Years 7 to 9 the schemes of work have commendable regard for National Literacy Strategy recommendations but rely too heavily on language textbooks. It is left to individual teachers to devise an appropriate balance between language and literature activities and to ensure that there is adequate coverage of whole text study. Poor accommodation has an adverse impact on standards. The support for basic skills which lower attaining pupils receive is not yet best structured to enable them to maximise their progress. Year 7 pupils who use 'Success Maker' do so at the loss of half of their normal English teaching time and this severely disrupts continuity. Although valuable, reading work with split lower attaining

classes in Year 8 is not structured to dovetail with parallel activities or to get the most from reading activities.

84. The whole-school literacy programme, which has been co-ordinated by the head of the English department, is beginning to make a positive impact on pupils' learning. Across the curriculum levels of literacy are above average. Pupils are able to meet the reading demands in all subject areas, although some lower attaining pupils have difficulty with geographical terms. In ICT pupils with low reading levels are well supported. There is a wide range of reading in history and music. A good variety of writing is evident in ICT, geography and music. Extended writing takes place in mathematics and also in history and geography, where writing frames are used to help lower attaining pupils to structure their written work. The importance of accuracy in spelling and punctuation is stressed in mathematics, science, history and geography. Many departments focus pupils' attention on important technical vocabulary through display of key words, building of word banks and explanation of terms.

## **MATHEMATICS**

85. Standards in this subject have risen over the four-year period since the previous inspection. Results of the 2000 tests show that 89 per cent of pupils now achieve the national expectation by the age of 14. This is well above average. In lessons, high attainers have good number skills, confidently manipulating fractions and solving linear equations. They can construct frequency tables and charts and understand the use of different measures of average. Average attaining pupils construct pie charts and identify different types of correlation. All pupils have a good understanding of geometrical properties. They calculate areas and volumes and use Pythagoras well. Lower attaining pupils including those with special needs have basic number skills, can calculate the areas of plane figures and interpret data from simple charts. Pupils' mental agility is sound and frequently good, though their application of mathematical skills to problem solving is not as good as their skills and understanding in number, shape and space and data handling.

86. At Key Stage 4, the improvement since the previous inspection continues, with achievement well above national norms. In 2000, 75 per cent of pupils achieved the higher-grades, A\*-C of GCSE. In lessons, and in their work, average and high ability pupils apply their skills and knowledge to problem solving and are increasingly more adept at explaining, both orally and in writing, how their solutions are arrived at. They continue to demonstrate very good numeracy skills across all areas of their work. Lower-attaining pupils achieve a GCSE pass at foundation level. In lessons, these pupils perform calculations accurately, particularly the area and volume of regular shapes and apply their understanding of statistical methods to analyse data. On occasions, their attainment falls below the level expected nationally, but in line with their potential. Good teaching ensures that their progress is satisfactory. Pupils could do better in some aspects of mathematical reasoning. Too frequently, pupils rush through exercises failing to check their answers for reasonableness or to look critically at their methodology.

87. Standards have improved since the previous inspection. By the age of 14 they are now 22 per cent better and by the age of 16 they are 6 per cent better. Pupils use computers more effectively and are given further opportunities to discuss mathematics and to work in small groups. Lessons now regularly end in a review of learning.

88. The overall quality of teaching is good, contributing significantly to the high standards achieved. It is marginally better at Key Stage 4 than at Key Stage 3. In all lessons, the teaching is satisfactory or better and it is good or better in just over half of lessons. In almost 1 in 4 lessons, teaching is very good. There are high expectations, pupils are continually challenged and are prepared well for examinations. Teachers are hardworking

and have a very good knowledge of their subject. Significant features of teaching and learning are the very good relationships and pupils' attitudes to the subject that enable pupils to work at a very good pace, with interest and enthusiasm. Hence, they make good progress over time. Teaching that does not reach these high standards is due to over-directed lessons with little opportunity for pupils to discuss mathematics and show how much they understand and know. Most lessons are, however, well prepared to a 3-part format that aligns with the National Numeracy Strategy, yet gives teachers the freedom to use a variety of teaching styles. The mental warm-up sets the lesson off to a good start and the review rounds learning and enables pupils to check their understanding. Where objectives and the format of the lesson are given to pupils, and assessment is undertaken during the lesson, expectations are high, learning is very good, pupils are well motivated and very good progress is made. Overall, pupils make good progress in mathematics.

89. The department is led by a committed teacher who has a strong sense of purpose for the subject. There is good support from colleagues though, as yet, informal systems are unsatisfactory to spread the good practice across the department, or to monitor pupils' progress to ensure that the high standards are sustained and improved even further. Resource levels are improving. ICT is being planned for and used to support learning. Pupils research and publish information on great mathematicians via the Internet, use computer-aided learning programs and use spreadsheets for modelling. The contribution of the department to literacy is well addressed. Pupils are asked to use, spell correctly and explain mathematical terminology by giving examples in context. In some lessons pupils are invited to share their working methods to the class. There is also extended mathematical writing in some Year 11 investigations. Most mathematics is taught within a good learning environment, although one set is invariably taught in a non-maths classroom where visual aids and other resources are not readily available. This does limit their achievement. Pupils' work is regularly marked and teachers record this to build up a profile of the pupil. Significant data is held by the department to measure performance. The use of this data is not yet being used sufficiently to set pupils' targets for improvement, nor to help teachers plan their lessons. This is the reason why reports to parents do not meet statutory requirements at the end of Key Stage 3. A new text-based scheme is being introduced at this key stage. The existing scheme and lesson plans will need to be adapted to address both these changes and the National Numeracy Strategy.

90. The good standards of numeracy work in mathematics gives pupils access to number work in other subjects. Evidence of the effective use of numeracy is plentiful and ranges from the use of graphs and statistical data in geography and business studies to the manipulation of algebraic formulae in science. Pupils can read scales and convert between different measures in science, geography and design technology. Numeracy is a strength of the school.

## **SCIENCE**

91. In the 2000 Key Stage 3 National Curriculum tests 84 per cent of the pupils reached Level 5 and above and 63 per cent Level 6 and above. These results are well above national expectations and well above outcomes in similar schools. Teacher assessment closely supports these results at Level 5, but is at variance by an underestimate of 16 per cent at Level 6 and above. Over the four years 1996-1999, outcomes are well above the national average and better than in the other core subjects in the school. All pupils are entered for external examination at the end of Key Stage 4. Attainment is well above national figures and above those for similar schools. In 2000, 96 per cent of pupils achieved grades A\*-C, in double award science. 44 per cent of the entry achieved grades A\* or A. In single science, 62 per cent of the entry achieved grades A\*-C. 100 per cent achieved grades A\*-F. Comparison of these results with their KS3 results shows a value added factor of one level for both boys

and girls.

92. Overall, pupils' classroom attainment is above national expectations. At the age of 14, attainment is in line with national expectations. Throughout the key stage, pupils make satisfactory progress or better in all lessons. Year 7 pupils are able to plan a fair test, and, having identified variables, are able to show the results of their investigation in graph format. They are able to interpret bar charts and straight line graphs. In their study of mixtures, Year 8 pupils are able to separate mixtures by a range of methods. Lower attaining pupils understand separation by fractional distillation. Year 9 pupils further develop their knowledge of atoms, elements and compounds and are able to write equations of simple chemical reactions. Lower attainers are able to use food pyramids to model feeding relationships. Limited extension work was seen for high attainers. In Key Stage 4 all pupils study double award science, in sets, until the end of the autumn term of Year 11, when, after examinations and discussions, pupils decide whether to take single or double award science in the examination at the end of the year. Attainment at the age of 16 is above national expectations. Progress is never less than good and is on occasions very good. Year 10 pupils in their work related to cell structure are able to identify root hair cells. In their study of forces, pupils use Newton meters to confirm Newton's First Law of motion. Lower attainers, in their study of the diffusion, using their knowledge of mass numbers, are very surprised to observe confirmation of their predictions, when observing the movement of gases within a diffusion tube. Higher attainers in Year 11 confidently plot graphs related to temperature and time, to support their investigation of rates of reaction. Other pupils studying osmosis, investigate the effect of the absorption of different concentrations of liquid on the mass of a potato chip. Lower attainers investigating Ohm's Law, overcoming connection difficulties when setting up the circuit, quickly discover the relationship between resistance, voltage and current. The attitudes of all pupils are never less than good and often very good. They are attentive to teachers, handle apparatus with care, and work co-operatively, in a mature manner, when sharing equipment and performing experiments. At Key Stage 4, pupils' management of their loose-leaf work files requires attention in order to maximise best use for revision and examination purposes. Pupils with statements of special educational needs make good progress with support.

93. Since the last inspection the assessment policy has been developed and pupils are frequently informed of their level of working in relation to National Curriculum levels and predicted examination grades. In Key Stage 4, there is now good practice of pupil self assessment with pupils monitoring their own progress. A portfolio of work, to aid teacher assessment, is not yet in place.

94. Overall, teaching is good. In Key Stage 3, it is never less than satisfactory and, on occasions, is good. In Key Stage 4, it is never less than good and, on occasions, excellent. In Key Stage 3, lesson dependence on a commercial textbook inhibits flair in teaching. Planning for weekly learning is unsatisfactory. An enthusiastic and caring staff, with a wide range of teaching experience, has good specialist subject knowledge. Through good relationships, they have high expectations of pupils, especially in Key Stage 4. Special education needs pupils receive good support. Teachers are familiar with the contents and requirements of individual education plans. Using good quality technician support, investigative or demonstration work is used appropriately, and health and safety considerations are always evident. Time and classroom management skills are strengths of the department. Both, literacy, including spelling and definition tests of technical terms, and numeracy skills, are promoted within lessons. Graphical representation of results is frequently seen. However, the use of information technology within the department is unsatisfactory. Marking of work, and its use for day-to-day assessment, is unsatisfactory. Appropriate homework, extending laboratory work, is set according to a timetable. In chemistry, in Year 11, homework necessitates independent study using the Internet.

95. The department is small and has worked to date in an informal manner. The formal monitoring of teaching and pupils' work and formal meetings and planning is now necessary. A scheme of work should be created, in such detail that all requirements of the National Curriculum are met, and are easily identifiable when cross-referenced with teaching resources. A detailed, subject development plan should be produced, and linked to the school development plan. ICT should be further developed and integrated within the subject in both key stages. Accommodation is spread geographically, two of the three laboratories are external to the main building. This is inefficient for storage and preparation purposes. The accommodation is adequate, although, on occasions, crowded with large Key Stage 4 classes. Resources are adequate but the storage area is limited in two laboratories. However, teacher attention to display and storage in each laboratory will enhance the learning environment for pupils. The department, through its assessment procedures, including end-of-unit tests, external results and predictions, possesses much detailed subject information about each pupil. To ensure the highest achievement by pupils, more use and monitoring of this data is required, especially in Key Stage 4, when decisions, related to examination course choice and entry, are finalised. Annual reports of pupils' progress, at both key stages, do not contain sufficient judgements about pupils' progress, nor do they set clear targets for their progress in the subject.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

96. The attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 3, including those with special needs, is generally in line with national expectations. Work is predominantly of a two-dimensional nature and uses artists' work from a range of movements to inform and focus understanding. A Year 7 self-portrait study is particularly effective in broadening pupils' understanding of how portraits from the past can influence work of today.

97. Standards in art and design at Key Stage 4 have been consistently above the national average since the last inspection. However, in 2000 GCSE results at grades A\*-C dropped to 58 per cent, which is slightly below national averages. In lessons, attainment by the end of Key Stage 4 is in line with national norms and pupils are particularly strong in their work on still life. Line, tone and colour, applied through the use of chalk and pastels, is a strength of the work at the beginning of Year 10, and the abstract study of society and culture, through the creation of a mirror, gives a good foundation to Year 11. Programmes of work in both years provide a good foundation for pupils to learn key skills and techniques before working their own creative responses to a theme. The Year 11 visit to a Yorkshire Dales village to study landscape is a good example of this approach.

98. Teaching is at least satisfactory in all lessons observed, and in half of these lessons it is good. Where teaching is good there are clear learning objectives in place, expected outcomes are shared with pupils and good quality exemplars are used to focus the quality of product. Throughout, individual teaching support is constructive and is aiding pupils to produce a better product. In Year 10, where pupils are using pastels to create a still life piece, the teacher is using good expertise to support them to produce a well-balanced study. Where teaching is not as effective, organisation is variable and control ineffective. During demonstrations a significant number of pupils cannot see what is taking place and miss important information. Teachers use praise particularly well in supporting all pupils and this clearly motivates the great majority. A secure relationship between teachers and pupils exists, and a mature attitude is clearly visible when a Year 8 group visits the school garden to gather leaves for a Rousseau study. In all lessons, pupils are encouraged to use appropriate specialist vocabulary and to pay particular attention to spelling and use of simple grammatical structures.

99. Learning is at its best when pupils are clear about that which is expected of them and

when they are given opportunity to experiment and to use their imagination. In a Year 9 project, pupils are producing some free-form lettering using ink and brush. They are comparing this to text that they have gathered from a computer source and are making decisions as to the suitability for its use on the front cover of a teenage magazine. Many of these pupils have a sound understanding of design layout due to completing an analysis of similar magazine front covers for homework. Homework is linked closely to ongoing project work and in many cases relates to the understanding of art history, artists' work or studies for development. In some cases lower attaining pupils are put at a disadvantage due to weaknesses in language and writing skills. Resources to develop understanding of art and its history are wide ranging and used throughout the schemes of work. The great majority of pupils are keen to learn and make progress in developing skills and techniques. A small number are not managed well by teachers and are allowed to distract others. Pace in lessons is inconsistent. Where pupils are highly motivated by the task, are given an open-ended programme, or where the teacher is driving the lesson, pupils' progress is high and there are few difficulties. This is especially the case in a Year 7 portrait lesson, Year 8 Rousseau work and Year 10 still life study. Pupils' attitudes in art and design are generally good and most show enthusiasm for the work being completed. A small number of pupils will challenge authority when control by teachers is inconsistent and high noise levels can have a detrimental effect on the learning taking place. Relationships between pupils are good and the great majority join in tidying the workplace at the close of lessons.

100. The management of the art and design is weak. Neither of the two teachers sharing the post is taking the responsibility for driving the subject forward. This is having a negative impact on schemes of work. At present, there is insufficient three-dimensional studies in place in the lower school programmes of study. The learning environment is in need of urgent attention with many resources in need of secure storage. The improvement plan for the subject is in need of up-dating, in line with the new whole-school format. The use of assessment information to help teachers with their planning and to share specific strengths and weaknesses with pupils, is unsatisfactory. Annual reports of pupils' progress do not meet statutory requirements to evaluate subject specific performance and to set clear targets for improvement in skills, knowledge and understanding. The department has improved the overall level of resources to address the issue identified at the last inspection and statutory requirements are now being met. At present, art and design makes a small contribution to the moral, social and cultural development of pupils. Currently, three projects have a small effect on pupil's consideration of the wider context of life. Much more impact can be generated to broaden understanding of the part that art can play in developing pupils' values. Overall procedures for monitoring and evaluating the work of the department of art and design are unsatisfactory.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

101. Standards in design and technology are well above the national average for pupils at the age of 14 and 16. In 2000, 59 per cent achieved GCSE grades at A\*-C. By the end of Year 9, teacher assessment judges attainment to be well above national expectations and, although continuity in learning is difficult to maintain across Years 7, 8 and 9, owing to the way the subject is taught, pupils are achieving significant success in this subject. Attainment in lessons in Years 7 and 8 is generally in line or below national outcomes. In textiles, pupils' can identify the main components, materials and processes, when designing a case for sunglasses. When they begin to design, they use this information to influence their ideas and to select an eventual solution. In Year 8 pupils are busy designing a bridge. Here, a limited number of ideas show understanding of triangulation as a key component of the work pupils are undertaking. Practical skills are unsatisfactory, with some pupils unsure about how to hold a coping saw when sawing strip material. In Year 9, pupils in textiles are working in line with national averages. They are tackling tasks which are appropriate and are successful in gathering the relevant information needed to influence future designs. The higher attaining pupils in resistant materials, who are designing a cultural clock, are not being stretched sufficiently. They find themselves completing simple colouring tasks and having little understanding of the characteristics of the materials to be used. Attainment in Years 10 and 11 in food technology is in line with national norms. In a Year 11 food lesson, pupils work independently and show understanding to identify the eight legal requirements on a food label. They are also able to identify additives used in a simple orange drink. Year 10 pupils are presently engaged in developing a bread product. Pupils know how to make bread and can change the ingredients to satisfy a range of needs. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress, overall.

102. The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory in the majority of lessons and good in half of lessons. In all lessons teachers are establishing very good relationships with pupils and management of resources and pupils is of a high standard. In the better lessons teachers have clear learning objectives and a range of sequenced activities which are timed in most cases. This is especially so in food technology where a very structured range of activities, ably supported by the technician, is enabling pupils to make good progress. Planning identifies opportunities for all pupils to work independently and to attain their potential. This is not the case across the department where planning is generally unsatisfactory, particularly at Key Stage 3. Individual support provided by teachers is good in all lessons. Pupils are benefiting clearly from the good expertise that all teachers show for their particular specialism. When teaching is unsatisfactory or inconsistent, lesson planning is often weak and provision for higher and lower attaining pupils is not considered. Instead, learning resources reflect the needs of the average pupils. This is evident in a Year 9 resistant materials lesson where pupils have very little opportunity to search, enquire or experiment. Teachers are well organised and make very good use of the two technicians who support the subject. The two teachers of textiles and resistant materials are particularly skilled at managing large Year 8 and 9 groups in the cramped facilities available to them. These rooms are far too small and fall well short of the DfEE recommendations for group sizes of 20.

103. Good learning is taking place in the great majority of lessons. Progress is at its best when pupils are presented with purposeful activities, carefully prepared to extend understanding. In food lessons, pupils show perseverance and initiative; they work at a high pace and receive regular feedback about their strengths and weaknesses. In other lessons, pupils' understanding is being consolidated as they work diligently through design folios, obtaining information from a range of resources, and applying it to their ideas. The lower achieving pupils are limited in their ability to access the resources provided in textiles and resistant materials and teaching strategies do not always cater for the ways pupils learn best.

In all lessons pupils are able to discuss their work with confidence and show understanding when using many of the specialist, technical words. The oral assessment of pupils' work by teachers is generally good, but this is not always supported by marking which helps pupils to improve their outcomes. In many cases, as in the Year 7 bridging unit just completed, work is not marked as it progresses. Assessment procedures are completed in line with the school policy, but are seldom used to help pupils to know how they are progressing against National Curriculum levels. Reports about pupils' progress do not meet with the statutory requirements to evaluate their specific skills, knowledge and understanding. They do not set sufficiently specific targets for pupils' improvement. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning. They are positive in all areas of the subject and show respect for the teachers and technicians. They have good listening skills and respond quickly with enthusiasm when given the opportunity to do so. Pupils work well together and show very good awareness of self and others' safety, especially when working in confined spaces. The great majority of pupils are keen to take responsibility for their own learning.

104. Overall leadership of the subject is satisfactory, although there are clear weaknesses in curriculum development, especially in relation to the schemes of work. As yet, no documentation is available for the new programmes of study for Key Stage 3 resistant materials, control and graphics. Documentation for the food and textiles areas is available, but is not presented in a common format. Written assessment procedures are unsatisfactory as are the methods for recording and the subsequent use of assessment data. The proposed programmes of study for Key Stage 3 are very narrow and, although some progress has been made in addressing the issue of non-compliance with statutory orders at the time of the last inspection, this progress is insufficient to ensure that schemes of work will meet the needs of the new National Curriculum orders. There are no facilities for the teaching of systems and control or graphics. The present accommodation for the teaching of textiles and resistant materials is far too small for group sizes of up to 28 pupils. There are serious health and safety issues with this number of pupils conducting practical activities in these areas. The food area is of good size but is under-resourced to accommodate large group sizes. A number of hygiene issues also exist in this area. The improvement plan for the design and technology is in need of up-dating, in line with the new whole-school policy. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy, although not well planned, are evident in various aspects of the projects being delivered. Teachers are constantly reinforcing language, displays are informed by key words and planners are used for spellings and the recording of new subject based vocabulary. There is evidence in homework of extended writing opportunities and pupils responding with first class projects, as in the Year 8 bridge project and food GCSE folderwork. Numeracy skills can be seen throughout with all areas using appropriate equipment effectively. Pupils are able to use a range of information communications technology skills at home or when access can be gained at school. Two computers are available with limited memory and applications in both the food and resistant materials areas. Teachers and technicians form a strong working relationship, they now need clear direction. Procedures to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning and the attainment of all pupils, are unsatisfactory.

## GEOGRAPHY

105. Standards achieved by pupils aged 16 have improved over the past three years from unsatisfactory to well above average. In 2000, 65 per cent of the pupils achieved 5 or more A\*-C grades which was well above the national average. In lessons, standards achieved by pupils at the end of Key Stages 3 and 4 are good and occasionally very good. In 2000, 86 per cent of pupils aged 14 achieved level 5 or better in geography. In lessons the pupils aged 11-14 work at the expected level in the great majority of cases. Pupils with special educational needs make unsatisfactory progress, overall, although this is better at Key Stage 4 than at Key Stage 3.

106. At the last inspection the subject was praised for the standards achieved and the quality of the teaching. The recent improvement put the standards above those at the time of the last inspection. The subject remains in the hands of an enthusiastic and talented teacher. A good start has been made on using results to help set targets for further improvement. However, there are still outstanding issues from the last inspection. The inconsistencies in marking and the inclusion in annual reports to parents of informative comments about how pupils might make better progress, have not been fully addressed.

107. The quality of teaching is more variable than at the last inspection, especially in Key Stage 3. Amongst the younger classes there is a very small amount of unsatisfactory teaching, but the great majority is at least satisfactory. Amongst the older classes the teaching is often very good and occasionally excellent. The best lessons are intriguing mixtures of traditional maps and books and modern technology. Almost half of the lessons now benefit from shared planning which makes excellent use of projected multimedia materials. The effect of this is to generate very good pace into the teaching, to hold attention for long periods and to motivate pupils from the very start of the lessons. Teachers make very good use of high quality video and of images that include local photographs. These modern tools enable them to vary their methods in order to teach what they have planned, including high-tech quizzes and interactive discussions. They also effectively utilise resources accessed via the Internet. Except in very rare circumstances, teachers have no problems with pupil management, but are able to maximise the support they offer. This is also helped by the detailed knowledge that the teachers have about each pupil, often using the experiences of the last lesson to influence what they do in the next. Pupils respond very well to this quality of teaching and relationships between everybody in the classrooms are good or very good. This enables teachers to extend the pupils in their learning and good progress often occurs. Pupils learn quickly new knowledge about natural hazards such as the earthquakes in California and Japan, or about farming systems in Britain. The very youngest show a good knowledge of their own local area as they prepare for a field trip. They show a well developed sense of concern for the plight of people caught in earthquakes and a high level of awareness of how secondary effects of the disasters might impact on their lives. In most lessons, pupils are encouraged to use appropriate specialist vocabulary and to pay attention to the spelling of key words.

108. The subject is well led and results are improving as is the range in styles of teaching and learning. Changes to the National Curriculum, as well as opportunities for developing the skills of numeracy, literacy and information communications technology, are being incorporated into a vastly improved scheme of work. The subject leader now needs further support to develop the target-setting process to build upon the other good knowledge that the staff has of the pupils. This process can then help to improve the subject improvement plan by providing realistic numerical objectives, and can also sharpen annual reports of pupils' progress to parents. These do not always contain specific details about pupils' subject progress, nor sufficiently clear targets for improvement. General procedures to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning, are unsatisfactory.

## HISTORY

109. The attainment of pupils by the age of 16 is well above national averages with 82 per cent achieving the higher grades of A\*-C against a national average of 61 per cent. This represents an improvement over the past two years when attainment was just above national averages. Attainment against the full range of ability has seen a slight dip this year with 94.1 per cent of pupils achieving A\*-G compared to 100 per cent the previous two years. There are no significant differences between the achievements of boys and girls. As at the time of the previous inspection, the GCSE course is well organised, coursework planning is good, and standards by the end of Key Stage 4 are high.

110. The attainment of pupils' by the age of 14, as indicated by teacher assessment, also remains well above national standards. In lessons attainment is mostly in line with expectations, although above expectations when considering samples of work scrutinised. Throughout Key Stage 3 pupils further their historical knowledge, develop the capacity to extract information from a range of sources and construct reasoned arguments to explain links between cause and effect. Examples of this can be seen in the work of Year 9 pupils when explaining the impact of industrial changes on transport developments. The ability of pupils to understand different historical interpretations and to identify and explain change over time, however, is unsatisfactory. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is generally satisfactory across both key stages.

111. The quality of teaching is sound overall. At Key Stage 4 it ranges from sound to very good and at Key Stage 3 from good to unsatisfactory. This represents a change since the time of the previous inspection when no unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Lessons are planned around key questions and broad objectives that are sometimes shared with pupils, but rarely used to gauge the extent of pupils' learning at the close of lessons. Teachers have good subject knowledge and, as at the time of the previous inspection, continue to use effective questioning techniques to determine the level of pupils' understanding and to consolidate learning. In most instances, knowledge of, and individual support for, pupils also remains good, although the work of support assistants is not pre-planned effectively. In the best lessons the pace of learning is good. There are occasions, however, in both key stages, when the pace of learning is slow. The department is not yet articulating precise learning objectives, or yet using time targets effectively in weekly lesson planning, to maintain the pace of learning, as suggested at the time of the previous inspection. Adaptation of work and resources between different sets of pupils is apparent. On occasions, however, higher attaining pupils are not extended in their learning. When historical enquiry work is set for example, tasks are too highly structured to allow higher attaining pupils to demonstrate their capacity to select, organise, evaluate and synthesise sources to reach substantiated conclusions. The variety of teaching and learning styles also provides pupils with too few opportunities to exercise choices and to demonstrate independence in their learning. This is evident both in lessons and through the scrutiny of pupils' work. When teaching is unsatisfactory, it is due primarily to the negative behaviour of a group of boys and the inability of the teacher to prevent this from disrupting the learning of the remainder of the group. Nevertheless, relationships between pupils and between adults and pupils are positive in the vast majority of instances and, as at the time of the previous inspection, pupils' attitudes to learning overall are good.

112. The development of basic literacy is supported well by the department with all members careful to reinforce and explain key historical language. This has a positive impact on learning with Year 8 pupils, for example, confident in explaining medieval methods of attacking castles using terms such as trebuchet, siege-tower and mangonel. In most instances, a wide range of learning resources, including visits to historical sites such as Richmond Castle, Middelham and Vindolanda, are used effectively to support learning. The use of ICT, however, is unsatisfactory. Since the previous inspection, some gains have been made in the purchasing of resources and examples of the use of computers to support coursework activities in Year 10, are evident. The use of ICT, however, is not yet systematically planned into schemes of work and access to ICT facilities is problematic. It remains, therefore, an area for improvement. Marking of pupils' work, in most instances, is regular and according to school policy. The quality of display in the principal teaching room continues to provide a stimulating learning environment.

113. Management of the department is sound. Assessment procedures represent an area of developing good practice. Key pieces of folder work are annotated to identify subject specific strengths and areas for development and recording procedures are thorough. Formal procedures for tracking pupils' performance, however, are weak and reports to parents lack specific targets for improvement. Schemes of work are also in need of updating to ensure coherence in the development of all historical skills. The departmental plan currently provides a list of key priorities, but lacks details of specific actions, intended outcomes, time-scales, costings and procedures for monitoring and evaluation which are necessary to ensure progress on the issues identified.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

114. Standards achieved by pupils aged 16 have remained above the National Average for the past two years in GCSE business studies and information technology. In 2000, 65 per cent of the pupils achieved 5 or more A\*-C grades. In lessons, standards achieved by pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 are generally satisfactory, but in the GCSE lessons are sometimes better than the expected level. The pupils not taking this course currently follow the CLAIT award. Although pupils succeed at this it does mean that their overall level of attainment is often below that expected by the National Curriculum. Wisely, the course is to be discontinued in favour of a short course GCSE. In 2000, 86 per cent of pupils aged 14 reached Level 5 and above in ICT. In lessons, pupils aged 14 work at the expected levels in the great majority of cases and often above. However, the early progress of the younger pupils is occasionally hampered by the commercial scheme that is being followed. Some of the work is well below the standard expected of 11 year olds. The school has surveyed pupils' knowledge on entry, but has yet to make best use of this to judge the levels at which 11-year-olds need to commence their studies. Pupils with special educational needs make generally satisfactory progress across both key stages.

115. Improvements since the last inspection have been very good. Then, standards throughout the 11-14 age group were judged to be very low and, despite the current low starting point, this has been effectively addressed. Performance at age 16 has also improved since the last inspection, largely due to the change to the total examination option, within which boys' performance has improved significantly. Even greater progress has been made in providing high quality facilities to the other subjects of the curriculum. Access is not yet at an optimum level for all subjects, but many are making good use of what is available. The enthusiastic leader of the subject has mapped the requirements of the National Curriculum and linked teacher training with a well-founded programme of development to

ensure the best possible provision for pupils. The subject now meets statutory requirements in both key stages.

116. The quality of teaching in lessons for 11-14 year olds is satisfactory and good within the limited number of sessions seen with older pupils. Overall, it is good. In the business studies lessons, teaching is good. In many lessons there are very good features, especially where the very positive relationships enable staff to challenge the pupils in the way in which they approach their work with spreadsheets, for example. Teachers demonstrate secure knowledge of how pupils are progressing and often adjust their lesson plans to accommodate identified weaknesses. All staff make good use of new technologies to give alternative access to learning and to motivate pupils. This includes using the interactive whiteboard, as both a demonstration and a group learning aid, as well as the Internet and CD-ROM based resources. Teachers encourage pupils to make appropriate use of specialist vocabulary and to pay attention to the spelling of key words. Planned activities reinforce key problem-solving skills, basic use of shape, space and measurements, and provide ample opportunities for pupils to handle data in a variety of ways. The very few weaknesses in teaching are confined to aspects of marking and reports to parents, which are not consistently helpful in their comments, and gaps in software knowledge which very occasionally hamper pupils' progress. Attitudes to learning are good and often very good. Pupils behave well and spend long periods of time concentrating on their work. They often discuss problems together and help each other out and, in business studies, this is sometimes in larger groups. They build effectively on what they have done before, especially when varying computer models of holiday finance, or redrafting work for presentation to others. In this way they often make good progress. A small number of pupils have difficulty following instructions and this does lead to minor disruptions to their learning.

117. Effective management of the subject is bringing about raised standards and increasing access to high quality resources for all. Schemes of work are being updated to fully incorporate the new National Curriculum requirements, including those of all subjects. The ICT development plan accurately identifies areas for improvement but, as yet, contains no measurable success criteria. The subject co-ordinator monitors assessment outcomes and is beginning to make good use of the data for target setting. Systems for monitoring and ensuring consistency of the intended practice are evident, but are not yet rigorous enough to build on the good base that has now been established.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

### **French and German**

118. Attainment in French, by pupils aged 14, is just above national expectations in written work, but only in line with expectations in speaking, reading and listening work. In German, it is below national expectations, on both accounts, but this is because of the limited number of lessons in Years 8 and 9. In both languages pupils can understand familiar statements and questions then, later in the key stage, simple dialogues, noting main factual details. Schemes of work show that they have fewer opportunities to respond to longer passages, making personal responses and giving opinions. The majority of pupils can take part in simple conversations to exchange at least two or three pieces of information, but the design of teachers' questions and activities often limits responses to short phrases. In many lessons pupils show that they understand written single words and short phrases, using dictionaries well to find out the meanings of unfamiliar language. However, there are few planned activities for pupils to access short factual texts and dialogues. Pupils' written work is generally restricted to the copying of short phrases and the answering of individual questions in simple sentences. Where pupils are given the opportunity to write short paragraphs, substituting key words and phrases to personalise accounts, they do this well. All pupils

entered for GCSE in French and German gain at least a grade A\*-G. A small number are not entered and do not attain a qualification. The number of pupils gaining A\*-C grades in French is now above the national average and trends have improved steadily over the past four years. In German, attainment is close to national outcomes, although there remains very low numbers of pupils who study this language in Key Stage 4. Few boys, in both subjects, attain the highest grades. The nature of most of the linguistic tasks in Years 10 and 11 allows pupils to achieve appropriately. Pupils with special educational needs make generally satisfactory progress across both key stages.

119. Since the last inspection, levels of attainment across both key stages have improved, although the nature of some of the planned activities in both languages, particularly at Key Stage 3, still inhibits learning. This is because teachers are not yet using systematically National Curriculum attainment targets to guide their planning and to record and monitor the rates of pupils' progress. Overall, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to write beyond three or more sentences, although there are good examples with more able pupils in Year 9 and in Years 10 and 11. Teachers' use of French and German in class remains inconsistent. In some lessons, their use of English is excessive and is restricting the development of pupils' listening and speaking skills. Feedback to pupils in exercise books about their written work has not improved. There are insufficient comments to tell them what they are doing well and how they might do better. Similarly, reports to parents still lack in-depth judgements about pupils' language skills and precise linguistic targets to work towards. Although overall teaching strategies are still effective, there has been insufficient development in teachers' information communication technology skills to ensure that computers and other modern technologies are used to enhance pupils' learning.

120. Teaching in both languages is almost always satisfactory, with much good practice. All teachers have substantial linguistic knowledge and understanding and enjoy very good relationships with pupils. All are fully committed and work hard to deliver interesting lessons. They ensure that all four language skills are covered regularly, and provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to practise two or more of these skills in combination. Satisfactory attention is paid to pupils' use of key words and to the accuracy of their spellings; there is a good display of important phrases on classroom walls. The use of the overhead projector is particularly effective. Lesson planning, overall, is unsatisfactory and is preventing teaching and learning from developing further. Current planning is not ensuring high enough levels of work in many lessons and this, in turn, is not enabling pupils to make as much progress as they might, especially at Key Stage 3. In both languages, teachers are not planning from specific learning objectives, but general teaching aims. They are not using sufficiently the National Curriculum descriptors to pitch linguistic activities at appropriate levels and to structure lessons so that pupils of all abilities can make the right amounts of progress. Precise linguistic objectives are not shared with pupils at the beginning of lessons. They are not used during or at the end of lessons, to assess rates of learning. At present, higher and lower attaining pupils in many classes are completing the same work. Pupils have very positive attitudes to foreign languages lessons, but are seldom given sufficient time to practise and develop skills individually, in pairs and in small groups. Many lessons are dominated by excessive presentations and explanations by teachers and whole class question and answer work.

121. The subject currently lacks the leadership and drive which will increase further overall standards and attainment. Annual improvement plans are very weak. Action points lack detail and there are neither criteria for judging success nor arrangements for monitoring and evaluating developments. Schemes of work contain no details about how work will be shaped to take into account the needs of gifted pupils, pupils with learning difficulties and the different learning styles of boys and girls. Arrangements for the assessment and recording of pupils' progress are unsatisfactory. Opportunities for assessing significant tasks are not identified in

planning documents. Targets are not set for all pupils in all year groups. Teachers' assessments of pupils' attainments at the end of Key Stage 3 are insecure owing to insufficient opportunities for them to standardise marking with other teachers in other schools. There are no portfolios of completed work at various levels to assist this process or to share with pupils. Analysis of pupils' examination performances is underdeveloped. There are no specific strategies to improve the numbers of pupils attaining the highest grades, to reduce the numbers who fail narrowly to attain a grade 'C', or to improve boys' attainments. The progress of pupils across both key stages is insufficiently tracked and related to final outcomes. Annual reports of pupils' progress do not meet with statutory requirements. They do not contain sufficient subject information about pupils' strengths and weaknesses, nor do they contain specific targets to develop pupils' linguistic skills. There are no formal systems for the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning across the department.

## **MUSIC**

122. The attainment of pupils in Key Stage 3 is mostly in line with national expectations with several achieving above. By the age of 14, the majority of pupils can compose and perform in a variety of musical styles, are confident when using musical vocabulary and can accurately use staff notation in their compositions. Their keyboard skills are generally at the standard expected for their age as are their listening and appraising skills. They have experience and knowledge of music from a variety of periods and cultures. The requirements of the National Curriculum are now being met. This was a key issue in the last inspection. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils have very good compositional skills and they use information communications technology effectively to record their work. Their performance skills are above average and their listening and appraising skills are also very good. However, GCSE results for the past three years have been variable. Seventy per cent of the pupils entered in 1998 obtained A\*-C grades, this dropped to thirty three per cent in 1999 but rose to fifty per cent in 2000. The national average for 1999 was sixty five per cent. Seventy five per of the current pupils in Year 11 are projected to achieve between A\* and C. Nevertheless, there is a need to devote more time to singing activities, especially in Key Stage 3. Pupils with special educational needs make generally satisfactory progress across both key stages.

123. There has been an improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. It is never less than satisfactory, often good and sometimes very good. The elements contributing to the good and very good teaching include clear aims and objectives in lesson planning, which are shared with pupils and referred to during lessons; opportunities for pupils to assess each other; and lessons in which pupils are encouraged and enabled to use correct vocabulary and terminology. There is high expectation and challenge in Key Stage 4 and pupils are helped to achieve at a high level by skilful and knowledgeable teaching. Pupils in both key stages make good progress in their acquisition of musical skills, knowledge and understanding and opportunities for talented instrumentalists to extend their learning are available through good quality extra-curricular activities. Annual reports of pupils' progress do not meet statutory requirements in that they contain insufficient subject-specific information about pupils' strengths and weaknesses, and targets for future improvement.

124. The teacher in charge of music is enthusiastic and keen to see the department develop further. Schemes of work are being re-written to take into account the new statutory requirements. The examples completed to date are good, but care should be taken to incorporate opportunities to enhance the development of pupils' singing, their spiritual, moral, social and cultural aptitudes, and their literacy and numeracy skills. More formalised opportunities to assess pupils' progress should also be planned. Resources have improved since the last inspection. All pupils now have access to keyboards, the notation programme has been up-dated and a quality keyboard with sequencing facilities has been purchased. Future plans for the department include the purchase of a further keyboard with sequencing possibilities. There are still insufficient classroom percussion instruments, however, mainly due to the lack of storage facilities. This hampers progress as pupils have to share, four or five to an instrument, when composing. Accommodation continues to be an issue. Although some improvement has been made since the last inspection by the creation of a small practice room and the shared use of the dance/drama studio, the main teaching room is cramped. Storage arrangements within this room are unsuitable and give rise to potential health and safety concerns. Pupils have to lift keyboards from above head height and the teacher has to stand on a chair to lift glockenspiels from the top shelf. This lifting and handling risk must be assessed and steps taken to avoid any potential accidents. The department's work is complemented by some quality support from visiting instrumental teachers who teach a range of instruments to a small, but significant, number of pupils. General procedures to monitor and evaluate the quality of pupils' learning, their attainment and the overall effectiveness of the department's work, are currently unsatisfactory.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

125. The standards achieved by the age of 16 are generally in line with or above the national average and overall show a general improvement since the last inspection. In 1999 the small group of GCSE pupils reached very high standards with 100 per cent achieving grades A\* to C. This is a substantial rise and is part of a general upward trend in recent years. Games and orienteering sessions show that pupils have a good knowledge of the activity areas and use that knowledge to advance their skills and understanding. During the orienteering exercises, in particular, pupils demonstrate a high level of responsibility and are able to evaluate the results effectively. They also use fitness work well to understand the effect of exercise on the body and are developing the use of targets to evaluate and improve performance. Pupils make very good progress in their individual studies which are well presented and show significant use of information technology.

126. By the age of 14 standards are generally in line with national expectations. However, a significant number of pupils achieve higher than the national average. This is particularly evident in Year 7 basketball and volleyball in Year 9. In these activities the younger pupils demonstrate good skills in the lay up shot, and an effective understanding of the man to man defence during the game situation, whilst the majority of older pupils are able to dig, set and serve the volleyball with good direction and control. Pupils are generally able to reflect on their practice when the opportunity is presented to them. The standards of boys and girls in dance are good in spite of the cramped accommodation. They understand and can demonstrate the use of body levels, balance and control in the development of a sequence set to music. The standards achieved by the age of 14 also represent a general improvement since the last inspection, whilst good progress within both age ranges is reflected by pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs.

127. The quality of teaching is mostly good and ranges from satisfactory to very good across the school. There have been some improvements in specific elements of teaching since the last inspection. Teachers' knowledge of the subject is good and they use it well in lessons. This gives confidence to the pupils and encourages progress. The use of technical

vocabulary in coaching sessions and in relation to health-related fitness is good. Planning is satisfactory in most lessons and in a limited number it is good, particularly where more care is given to the description of activities which match the lesson objectives and pupils' abilities. In the lessons where this takes place evaluation by the teacher is generally more effective. Teacher assessment is in place but is not yet being used to help teachers to plan their work systematically. Where it is used to develop pupils' awareness, as in dance, it is effective. Teaching makes good use of the departmental guidance and pupil management is very good. This helps to create very positive relationships at all levels and gives a firm basis for pupils' progress. However, further attention needs to be given to the planning, officiating and implementation of tactics and strategies alongside the development of pupil's evaluation of their own performance and that of others. In particular, pupils could be provided with more opportunities to reinforce basic number work in measurements and estimations of distance and speed. Lesson organisation is good with a clear structure that includes the use of warm-up activities. The encouragement of pupils to take responsibility for their own warm-up sessions is particularly effective and the attention paid, by staff, to the safety of pupils is good. Pupils are made aware of how new learning can be applied to present activities and teachers are aware of the need for challenge to improve skill level. Resources are used well and this also helps to encourage pupils' progress. The attitudes, values and behaviour of pupils within physical education lessons are very good and are encouraged by the quality of teaching. Co-operation and the level of participation are high. This has a positive effect on pupils' progress and attainment.

128. The day-to-day leadership and management of the department are good and give clear direction through the production of guidance for pupils and staff. This has a positive effect on the implementation of the lessons and other activities. Long-term planning gives a good allocation of time to the subject and schemes of work are in place. However, there is a need to review the schemes in line with the requirements of the National Curriculum in order to make more effective provision for all elements of the programmes of study. This is particularly true for the boy's curriculum at Key Stage 3 in which the need for a specific fourth activity area, with more depth of content, means that at the present time the department is not fully meeting its statutory obligations. In the same way the department should develop further its assessment strategy to include all four components of the National Curriculum across the age range and to make sure that assessment is used to assist lesson planning as well as a method of reporting attainment and progress. Annual reports about pupils' progress do not meet with statutory requirements. They do not contain sufficiently specific information about pupils' subject-specific strengths and weaknesses, or targets to help them to improve physical education skills and techniques. Progress has been made in the departments' ability to offer some activities to boys and girls, in the same groups, where appropriate. Accommodation for the subject and pupil changing facilities are poor due mainly to a lack of indoor space. The studio is dual use and is only suitable for small groups, whilst the gymnasium is not available for use during public examination times. This lack of space has a negative effect on pupils' progress in specific activities such as dance and fitness work and, over time, will have a similar impact on attainment. The situation has not changed in respect of these issues since the last inspection. The department has a contract for ensuring the safety of equipment but requires a risk assessment for the subject-related accommodation. These issues identified as needing further development should now be included in an effective, and prioritised, improvement plan for the department. The department offers a wide range of clubs and teams for nearly all activities and talented pupils are encouraged to represent their area, county and country, wherever possible.