

INSPECTION REPORT

WALTHEOF SCHOOL

Sheffield

LEA area: Sheffield

Unique reference number: 107127

Headteacher: Mr A. Gardiner

Reporting inspector: Mr C. Sander
4151

Dates of inspection: 12th – 16th March 2001

Inspection number: 224016

Full 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: Community

Age range of pupils: 11 - 16

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Beaumont Close
Sheffield

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Maureen Neill

Date of previous inspection: 2nd February 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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4151	C Sander	Registered inspector		How good the school is. School's results and achievement How well pupils taught How well school is led and managed.
9499	P Daruwala	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils How well does the school work in partnership with parents.
14871	B P Buteux	Team inspector	English English as an additional language	
20716	A R Grogan	Team inspector	Religious Education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered?
20420	S Rawcliffe	Team inspector	Science	How well the school cares for its pupils
8798	D J Maxwell	Team inspector	Mathematics	
31129	J Pickering	Team inspector	Art	
30355	J Harahan	Team inspector	Information and community technology	
20537	K Ball	Team inspector	Geography	
7399	P Roberts	Team inspector	History	
16950	V Orr	Team inspector	Modern language Equal opportunities	
18846	P Priest	Team inspector	Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered?
10739	P Hick	Team inspector	Physical education	
27351	M Stanton	Team inspector	Design and technology	
3055	C Tombs	Team inspector	Special educational needs	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Walthef is a comprehensive school for boys and girls between the ages of 11 and 16 in a very deprived area on the eastern side of the city of Sheffield. It is broadly average in size and the number of pupils has increased by approximately 5 per cent since the previous inspection. Three-quarters of the pupils are of white UK heritage. Approximately 17 per cent of the pupils speak English as an additional language, a high proportion. A small number of them are at an early stage of learning English. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average but lower than at the time of the last full inspection. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is well above average and greater than at the time of the previous inspection. Nearly three-fifths of those at Stages 3-5 on the register of special educational needs have educational and behavioural difficulties. The school provides a behaviour support area for 30 pupils. Very low standards on entry to the school are a constant feature across all year groups. These are well below the average for schools with a similar proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals. The school has received additional funding through Excellence in Cities since 1999 and been involved in the South East Sheffield Education Action zone since 2000. A significant proportion of the school has recently been rebuilt.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an improving school in a very challenging setting that provides an acceptable quality of education with several good features. The satisfactory teaching, leadership and management enable pupils to make satisfactory and sometimes good progress. The achievements, attitudes and personal development of those who attend regularly are generally satisfactory and sometimes good. The school manages well the challenging behaviour of some of its pupils and has good arrangements to avoid their permanent exclusion. The commitment to include all pupils is a strong feature of the curriculum but a well-above-average number of pupils do not attend school regularly. The school's income is higher than many schools nationally because it receives a relatively large amount of extra money to fund special national initiatives and to provide for the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. It provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Results in the Year 2000 national tests and at GCSE in English were in the top five per cent and in mathematics above average for similar schools nationally
- Pupils make good progress in food technology, geography, modern foreign languages and religious education because the teaching is good.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress because they are well supported in their learning.
- Arrangements to monitor the quality of teaching are good.
- There is a strong emphasis on target setting in the school's plans for improvement.
- It makes good provision to support and guide the welfare of its pupils.

What could be improved

- Standards in science are well below average and below those in English and mathematics.
- Poor attendance and high levels of unauthorised absence that slow the progress of many pupils and result in low standards.
- The unsatisfactory quality and range of opportunities and activities for pupils to develop understanding, organise what they need to do and acquire investigative skills.
- The unsatisfactory behaviour of some pupils that too frequently slows the learning and progress of others.
- Unsatisfactory financial planning that is not linked clearly enough to longer-term plans to further improve the school.
- All pupils do not take part in a daily act of collective worship.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school's previous full inspection was in February 1998. There has been a satisfactory degree of progress in addressing the issues then identified. Since then there have also been two monitoring visits by Her Majesty's Inspectorate [HMI]. The school has continued to make satisfactory progress in dealing with the serious weaknesses identified by HMI and is no longer judged to be in that category of schools. There has been a good level of improvement in the quality of teaching. The proportion of unsatisfactory teaching is smaller and the proportion of good teaching is greater than it was twelve months ago. There has been satisfactory progress in promoting literacy skills but only in mathematics and geography is numeracy well taught. The new learning centre is part of the much-improved provision for information and communication technology [ICT] but it provides an unsatisfactory number and range of books for research. Good progress has also been made in developing the arrangements to monitor the quality of teaching. There has been less progress in improving the quality of pupils' learning. Attendance is improving in Year 7 and there has been a four per cent improvement since 1998. Test results at the age of 14 have risen but the improvement in examination results at the age of 16 has been smaller.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 16 year olds based on GCSE examination results.

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

E* indicates that results are in the lowest five per cent nationally.

The evaluation of the school's performance in comparison with similar schools has been raised because pupils' standards are in the lowest 5 per cent nationally when they enter the school at the age of 11 and well below the average for similar schools. The proportion with special educational needs is well above average and many pupils get little help with their studies at home. Standards improve but are well below those expected nationally by the ages of 14 and 16. Progress is satisfactory overall. Pupils achieve well and make good progress in English, design and technology, geography, modern foreign languages and religious education. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress.

Results in the Year 2000 national tests at the age of 14 were well below the national average for all schools. They were below average in English, well below average in mathematics and in the lowest five per cent nationally in science. Compared with similar schools, results overall were in the top five per cent. They were very high in English, above average in mathematics and broadly average in science. They were much higher than the school's own targets in English, slightly higher in mathematics and broadly on target in science. The trend of improvement is better than it is nationally. Statutory teacher assessments in other subjects were also well below average. Pupils make generally satisfactory progress in these subjects but standards of work are well below those expected nationally at the age of 14. They are good in physical education, satisfactory in music, below the expected standard in English, design and technology, geography, history and information and communication technology and well below it in science, mathematics, art and modern foreign languages.

Results in the Year 2000 GCSE examinations were very low. The proportions of pupils who obtained five or more grades A*-C or A*-G were both in the lowest five per cent nationally. These results were below the average for similar schools nationally but were broadly in line with the school's own targets. The trend of improvement is below the trend nationally but the overall points score improved in Year 2000. The girls did much better than the boys. The proportion of pupils obtaining grades A*-C was above the average for similar schools in English and mathematics but below it in science. Pupils' work at the age of 16 is well below the standards expected nationally. It is well below in mathematics, science, art and modern foreign languages and below it in English, design and technology, humanities,

information technology and music. Standards are satisfactory in religious education. There were too few pupils present in lessons to evaluate standards overall in physical education. Progress is generally satisfactory between the ages of 14 and 16. Many pupils make good progress and achieve well in English modern foreign languages, religious education, design and technology and in the geographical aspects of the humanities course. Progress is satisfactory in all other subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory. The majority who attend regularly like coming to school and appreciate what it offers but a significant minority do not value the good range of opportunities available.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. Many pupils are attentive in lessons and are generally well behaved. A minority are noisy and occasionally unruly and disrespectful. The rate of fixed term exclusions is high but the number of permanent exclusions is low.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Most pupils get on well together and develop good relationships with adults and with each other.
Attendance	Very poor. It is particularly low in Year 9 and Year 11. A minority of pupils attend very well but the rate of unauthorised absence is well above the national average. The poor punctuality of a minority sometimes spoils the start of lessons and other pupils' concentration.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 11-14 years	aged 14-16 years
Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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 was satisfactory or better in 92 per cent of lessons. It was very good or better in 14 per cent of lessons and unsatisfactory or worse in eight per cent of lessons. More than half of the lessons were good or better. Teaching was good in food technology, mathematics, geography, modern foreign languages, religious education and physical education. It was satisfactory in all other subjects. The teaching of literacy skills is generally good. Numeracy skills are well taught in mathematics but not in most other subjects. The school meets the needs of its pupils well, including those with special educational needs and those who present challenging behaviour. The teaching of pupils who speak English as an additional language is satisfactory. In the best teaching high expectations, very good planning, the skilful management of pupils and a challenging pace maintain the interest and motivate the pupils to make good progress. This was a strong feature of the best teaching in modern foreign languages, food technology, religious education and geography. Sometimes the range of teaching methods is too narrow and pupils generally have too few opportunities to work with each other or undertake investigations or research, particularly in science and art and sometimes in mathematics.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum is generally well planned to meet the needs of all pupils with good provision for lower attaining pupils beyond the age of 14. It is unsatisfactory in the Behaviour Support Area for pupils between the ages of 14 and 16.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The school identifies needs very promptly and accurately. Pupils are well supported in lessons and in the small groups in which they get extra help
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language.	Satisfactory. There is very good support for pupils who are just starting to learn English. It is generally satisfactory thereafter. None of the support staff for these pupils is a qualified teacher.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory. The lessons in personal, social and health education make good provision for pupils' moral development. There is a satisfactory range of opportunities that promote pupils' social and cultural development. Provision for pupils' spiritual development remains unsatisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. There are good procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare. Pupils' progress and personal development are well monitored. The considerable efforts to build a strong partnership with parents have been largely unsuccessful.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. There is a good level of commitment to raising standards and the monitoring of teaching is very good. Action planning is satisfactory. Priorities are well defined, longer-term targets are set but the steps to reach them are not defined precisely. There is an increasing emphasis on setting targets. The capacity to succeed is satisfactory.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. There is a good range of expertise and an increasingly good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They fulfil nearly all of their many statutory responsibilities but do not make sure that there is provision for a daily act of worship.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. There are good procedures to review progress but some success criteria in the annual action plan are too general to support a full evaluation of the school's effectiveness.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The annual budget plan is well organised but the links between strategic and financial planning are not clearly defined. The annual budget plan is well organised. Best value is not always sought when awarding contracts. There are adequate staffing and resources. The quality and use of the accommodation is generally good.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school's high expectations. • The good teaching. • They can approach the school with confidence. • Their children make good progress • The school helps them to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The behaviour of some of the pupils. • The information they receive about their children's progress.

Only a very small number of parents attended the meeting before the inspection and fewer than 20 per cent completed the questionnaire to express their views about the school. The inspection team broadly agrees with their views. The teaching is good in some subjects and satisfactory overall. This helps most pupils to make satisfactory progress. Some pupils do sometimes misbehave in class but these situations are usually well managed by the teachers. The school is developing procedures to advise parents more frequently about pupils' progress. The satisfactory leadership and management of the school shows a strong commitment to well planned action that has started to improve standards.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The standards that pupils have reached by the time that they enter the school at the age of 11 are very low. Approximately three-quarters of all pupils nationally reach the expected standard, level 4, or better in national tests at the age of 11 in English and mathematics. Less than one half of the pupils have reached this standard when they start at this school in Year 7.
2. The standards that the current Year 7 pupils had reached before they started at Waltheof School were in the lowest five per cent of all schools nationally and are well below the average for schools with a similarly very high proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals. Standards in science were slightly better but still well below the national average for all schools and for similar schools. Nearly two-thirds of the pupils in the current Year 7 had reached the standards in science that are expected nationally, level 4, compared with more than four-fifths nationally.
3. The school's testing arrangements that are administered when pupils enter the school at the age of 11 confirm these low standards. Standards are particularly low in verbal reasoning. Four-fifths of the current Year 7 had a reading age lower than their chronological age. The current Years 8 and 10 had reached similar standards when they started at the school.
4. Two-fifths of the pupils have special educational needs, a high proportion and approximately twice the national average. The number of pupils with statements of special educational needs is also twice the national average. Nearly half of the pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is well above the national average. Many pupils receive only limited support at home with their studies.
5. The standards that pupils reach and the progress that they make by the ages of 14 and 16 need to be seen against the background of their very low starting point at the age of 11 and the particular circumstances of the school. Standards improve steadily overall and pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress by the ages of 14 and 16 although these standards remain well below average when compared with all schools nationally.
6. When the school was previously inspected in 1998 the standards achieved by pupils were requiring substantial improvement. There has been a satisfactory degree of improvement overall. Targets have been exceeded for pupils at the age of 14 and met for pupils at the age of 16.
7. Results in the Year 2000 national tests taken by all pupils at the age of 14 were well below the national average for all schools. They were below average in English, well below average in mathematics and very low in science. Nationally, approximately two-thirds of pupils reached the expected standard, level 5, in these subjects. At this school just over half of them did so in English, nearly two-fifths did so in mathematics and just below a quarter of the pupils did so in science. The very small proportion of pupils who did better than the standards expected nationally at the age of 14 is in line with the very small proportion of pupils who had previously reached above the expected standard at the age of 11. This confirms that higher attaining pupils made satisfactory progress.
8. The results in English were well above the school's target. They were just above it in mathematics and broadly in line with the target in science. When compared with the standards in national tests at the age of 11 and confirmed in the Cognitive Ability Tests [CAT] and National Foundation for Educational Research [NFER] test

results the targets were ambitious in English, realistic in mathematics but insufficiently challenging in science. The level of achievement in English is, therefore, particularly good.

9. When compared with those schools that have a similar proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals the standards reached in the Year 2000 national tests are in the top five per cent nationally. The results in English are very high, those in mathematics are above the national average and those in science are broadly in line with it. At the time of the monitoring visit by Her Majesty's Inspectorate [HMI] approximately two years ago standards compared unfavourably with similar schools. A year ago HMI found that, despite a satisfactory degree of improvement, the standards achieved by some pupils were still not high enough. The results in the national tests in 2000 indicate that this weakness has been addressed well.
10. Both the boys' and the girls' results were below the national average in English, well below average in mathematics and very low in science. The girls did better than the boys in English and performed similarly to them in science. They did less well than the boys in mathematics, where they were significantly adrift of their age group nationally. The girls' relatively low performance in science and mathematics contributes significantly to the overall well below average results in these subjects.
11. Over the last five years results have improved at a faster rate than they have nationally. Over the last three years the gap between the results nationally and those at the school has been very wide, particularly in science. It has however narrowed, particularly this year. The improving performance by the boys in the national tests at the age of 14 is an important feature of this overall picture of steady improvement.
12. Data made available and analysed during the inspection indicates that the pupils who took the national tests in Year 2000 achieved well and had made good progress between the ages of 11 and 14 in English and broadly satisfactory progress in mathematics. They make much slower progress in science. Whereas national test results in science were higher than in mathematics and English at the age of 11, as is the case nationally, they are lower by the age of 14 by a greater proportion than is the case nationally. The results in the cognitive ability tests (CATs) at the age of 11 indicate a higher potential in those aspects of the test that involve non-verbal reasoning.
13. Standards at the age of 14 in pupils' other subjects were very low in the Year 2000 statutory teacher assessments. Nationally, approximately two-thirds of pupils reached standards that are expected at the age of 14. Approximately one third of the pupils did so at this school. There is no statistical evidence to confirm the degree of progress made in these subjects between the ages of 11 and 14 because no formal assessments are made for each subject when pupils enter the school. Aspects of the CAT tests administered at the age of 11 indicate a satisfactory degree of progress between the ages of 11 and 14. The Year 2000 results showed a satisfactory degree of improvement compared with the previous year's assessments and are a further feature of the steadily improving picture in the standards reached at the age of 14. No analysis by gender or ethnicity was provided by the school.
14. Taken as a whole, the standard of pupils' work in the current Year 9 is lower than the Year 2000 statutory teacher assessments. It is well below the standards nationally that pupils are expected to reach. A high proportion of this year group do not attend school regularly and this has an adverse effect on standards.

15. Standards were satisfactory in approximately a third of the 101 lessons for pupils between the ages of 11 and 14 that were seen during the inspection. They were better than the standards expected nationally in physical education, similar to them in music and below them in English, design and technology, geography, history and information and communication technology [ICT]. Pupils' work was well below the standard expected nationally in mathematics, science, art, and modern foreign languages.
16. The pupils' very low standards on entry to the school, particularly in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, the lack of confidence shown in lessons by many pupils of all abilities and the unsatisfactory behaviour of some pupils in some lessons, together with poor attendance of almost a quarter of the pupils are all important factors that contribute to the low standards at the age of 14. These factors are well known to the school.
17. There are also significant weaknesses in the quality and range of how pupils learn that contribute to a pattern of standards that is well below what pupils are expected to reach by the age of 14. The school has adopted the motto 'learning comes first'. It has emphasised this in the priorities of its annual action plan but has placed more emphasis on monitoring the quality of teaching in its quality assurance programme than on identifying the nature and quality of successful learning in its quality assurance programme.
18. In many subjects the need to provide a basic level of knowledge or skill can result in a narrow range of activities that does not require pupils to think, to show understanding, to experiment, to investigate, to take calculated risks or to apply their knowledge in order to show understanding.
19. This is a feature in the teaching of art to pupils between the ages of 11 and 14. The range of activity is narrow in ICT because pupils often cover the same work again as they get older. This reduces their rate of progress because they do not apply the basic skills in an increasingly challenging range of activities.
20. In physical education standards are above those expected nationally at the age of 14 because good teaching encourages pupils to have confidence in order to apply the skills they acquire and to work well with each other in a good range of competitive games.
21. In most other subjects many pupils' own lack of confidence can contribute to a narrow range of learning. For example, in English lessons many pupils are reluctant and have not developed the skills to extend the subject matter of their oral work much beyond references to their personal experiences. They lack the confidence to enter easily into discussion. Their reading lacks fluency because they are insufficiently confident to read ahead and tackle unfamiliar words. By the age of 14, most pupils gain a satisfactory level of basic knowledge in religious education but uncertainty in grasping and interpreting symbolic meaning, as well as basic weaknesses in literacy, result in standards that are below those expected nationally.
22. In mathematics pupils develop a satisfactory grasp of number by the age of 14 because there is a strong emphasis on teaching the basic skills of numeracy. Despite this, the pupils' lack of confidence, or in some cases their lack of interest or concentration, results in a reluctance to apply this knowledge in order to show full understanding. Pupils show a similar lack of confidence in modern foreign languages when they are required to speak and only the small minority of higher-attaining pupils show the perseverance, self-awareness and willingness required to improve their accent.

23. Unsatisfactory behaviour, particularly by lower-attaining pupils slowed the progress of other pupils in almost a fifth of the lessons seen during the inspection. In many lessons approximately a quarter of the pupils who should have been present were absent.
24. An important reason why standards in science at the age of 14 are lower than they should be is because unsatisfactory teaching provides too few opportunities for pupils to learn to think scientifically and undertake investigative work. The pupils' unsatisfactory attitudes and low attendance result in much incomplete or missed work. These factors are of even more significance than the pupils' difficulties in understanding and using the language of the subject.
25. Because standards in art are very low when pupils enter the school at the age of 11, there is a very strong emphasis on teaching the basic skills of painting and drawing in lessons for pupils between the ages of 11 and 14. As a result they have too few opportunities to work with clay and other media by the age of 14. Pupils' best work is imaginative but there is insufficient emphasis on encouraging experimentation and investigation. Similarly, in design and technology pupils are more comfortable when making things, than they are when asked to design or evaluate what they have done.
26. Weaknesses in both literacy and numeracy contribute to the unsatisfactory standards at the age of 14 in geography and history. These are evident in many pupils' uncertainty about chronology and interpreting what they have read about in history, and in their lack of confidence in using scales and six figure references in geography.
27. Between the ages of 11 and 14 pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress because the improved teaching in many subjects is starting to increase the rate at which they learn in lessons. It is not yet providing a sufficient range and variety of activities. The school has made satisfactory progress in addressing the serious weakness identified during Her Majesty's Inspectorate [HMI] monitoring visit in April 1999. Despite the determination and thoroughness of much of the teaching pupils do not yet make good progress because the range of learning is too narrow in some subjects and too many are too frequently absent from school. Some pupils are resistant or reluctant to learn, some others lack self-discipline and a small number show a disregard for other pupils as they set about disturbing lessons.
28. Good teaching of the basic skills of the subject helps pupils to make good progress in several subjects where pupils' factual knowledge and skills are very low at the age of 11. As a result they achieve well in art, design and technology, geography and modern foreign languages. Good teaching in English that places a strong emphasis on the development of basic skills supports pupils' generally good progress. Progress is much slower in science because pupils do not always complete their work, and some topics, for example electronics and genetics, are presented in a way that pupils find difficult to understand.
29. In the 2000 GCSE examinations taken by pupils at the age of 16, results were well below the national average for all schools but in line with the school's target and an improvement on the previous year. Fewer than a fifth of pupils obtained five or more grades A*-C compared with nearly half of all pupils nationally. The proportion of pupils obtaining five or more grades A*-G was very low and in the bottom five per cent of schools nationally, as was the proportion who obtained one or more grades A*-G.

30. Approximately a fifth of the pupils between the ages of 14 and 16 follow a special course called 'Making Connections'. This aims to meet the needs and motivate the interest of lower-attaining pupils who take alternatively accredited courses and do not enter for the full range of GCSE examinations. This is one reason why the proportion obtaining five or more GCSE grades A*-G is very low compared with the national average. The average points score is very low because a high proportion of pupils whose attendance is low do not contribute to the overall total. Just over four fifths of the pupils left the school with some form of recognised qualification at the age of 16 in the summer of Year 2000. Most of those who did not achieve any qualification had very poor records of attendance, and a number had obtained employment when still not legally entitled to do so.
31. Pupils did significantly better in modern foreign languages and religious education and slightly better in English than they did in their other subjects. Over the last three years they have tended to do better in English. They have consistently done less well in science and art over the last three years than in their other subjects.
32. The girls did significantly better than the boys. Nearly one quarter of them obtained five or more GCSE grades A*-C. Fewer than one in ten of the boys did so. Nearly two-thirds of the girls obtained five or more grades A*-G but only a fifth of the boys did so. Four fifths of the girls obtained at least one grade A*-G compared with almost three fifths of the boys. There was no evidence that a detailed analysis of the big gap between the results of the boys and the girls had been undertaken in order to identify areas for improvement.
33. Ethnic minority pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve generally better results. The proportion gaining five or more GCSE grades A*-C, was slightly below the local average. The girls did very much better than the boys.
34. The rate of improvement in results at the age of 16 is below the trend nationally over the last three years. Results declined immediately after the school's last full inspection in 1998. Following the HMI monitoring visits in 1999 and 2000 they have started to improve and the school met its target in Year 2000. The improvement in the average points score in Year 2000 indicates a satisfactory overall level of recent improvement but the proportion of pupils obtaining five or more grades A*-G declined. Over the last three years GCSE results have improved in English, design and technology and art. They have declined in music and significantly so in science. Over the last five years, the trend in the school's average points score has been below the national trend.
35. The Year 2000 results were below the average for schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. When compared with the results that the same pupils obtained at the age of 14 in national tests the proportion obtaining five or more grades A*-C was in line with the average for similar schools. The proportion of pupils who obtained five or more grades A*-G was very low as also was the proportion obtaining one or more grades A*-G. The overall evaluation of these results needs to take account of the school's well planned efforts to provide an alternative set of courses for approximately 20 per cent of the pupils as well as the some pupils' low attendance and lack of interest or perseverance in their studies.
36. The proportion of pupils obtaining grades A*-C in English is very high when compared with those in schools where pupils achieved a similar average points score in the National Curriculum tests, two years previously at the age of 14. It is well above average by this comparison in mathematics but below it in science.

37. Standards between the ages of 14 and 16 are well below average. In almost half of the 65 lessons seen for pupils between the ages of 14 and 16 their work was in line with national standards. However, attendance in many of these lessons was low and their work did not provide a sufficiently accurate picture of the standards reached by all pupils. An additional analysis of pupils' work confirmed that standards overall are well below those that pupils are expected to reach by the age of 16. Written work was well below this standard in mathematics, science, art and modern foreign languages. It was below the expected national standard in English, design and technology, humanities, information technology and music. Standards were satisfactory in religious education. There were insufficient numbers of pupils present in physical education lessons to evaluate standards generally at the age of 16.
38. Most pupils do not reach the standards expected nationally at the age of 16 because the weaknesses in the basic skills of numeracy and literacy have not been overcome by the age of 14 and continue to limit the quality and range of their work in most subjects. As well as enduring weaknesses in reading and writing skills, many pupils lack the confidence and listening skills to engage in discussion within lessons. Their uncertainty in speaking is an important reason why even the higher-attaining pupils struggle at times in modern foreign languages.
39. As many as a quarter of the pupils do not attend regularly and this means that they cannot link the subject matter of the lesson to what has been taught previously. It also means that some pupils fail to complete work and their exercise books provide a poor foundation for examination revision. These weaknesses have a particularly strong impact on standards in science and modern foreign languages but are a general feature of the quality of pupils' learning between the ages of 14 and 16 that is having an adverse effect on standards. The school has identified these areas for action in its planning.
40. There are other reasons why the quality and range of pupils' work is below the standards expected nationally. There has been less emphasis placed on addressing these issues that are linked to the quality of teaching and learning. In the teaching of English there is a strong and correct emphasis on preparing pupils for the GCSE examination but the range of reading and writing activities is too narrow. There is also a narrowness in the range of activities in art. In the ICT course followed by the majority of the pupils there is a good range of activities but pupils too frequently repeat the same thing and are not challenged enough with increasingly harder work. The scheme of work in science does not recognise sufficiently the need for regular revision in order to help pupils recall what they have learned previously.
41. Pupils' own attitudes sometimes help them to reach good or satisfactory standards. In physical education they show confidence, a readiness to get involved in the lesson, to work well with others and to attend more regularly. As a result, standards are good at the age of 16. Very good expectations and planning, that are the hallmarks of the good teaching of pupils between the ages of 14 and 16 in religious education, produce much hard work and develop good levels of perseverance in the pupils. This helps them to overcome the initial difficulties they have in reading and writing and to produce a considerable amount of written work that is of a satisfactory standard.
42. At other times, pupils' attitudes let them down, not only in irregular attendance but also in a lack of confidence in lessons. This is evident not only in their low levels of literacy, orally and numeracy but also in their reluctance to apply and develop the basic skills they do have. Sometimes they lack the confidence and the ingenuity to apply what they know in order to extend their learning. There are an unsatisfactory

number of opportunities for pupils to develop a spirit of enquiry and curiosity, particularly in art and science. They do not respond with confidence when challenged to apply their knowledge in mathematics. They are too ready to rely on the ideas of others rather than finding out information for themselves. This was a significant weakness in art and science.

43. Between the ages of 14 and 16 pupils make generally satisfactory progress. Their achievements are good in English and higher attaining pupils make good progress in mathematics. They make good progress and achieve well in modern foreign languages, religious education, design and technology and in the geographical aspects of the humanities course. Progress is satisfactory in all other subjects.
44. Standards in literacy are below those that pupils are expected to reach nationally at the ages of 14 and 16. Many pupils find it difficult to use technical language and very few naturally enter into discussion in class. Their lack of confidence in speaking has an adverse effect on standards in modern foreign languages as well as in English. In many subjects it limits the degree to which pupils move from a level of basic knowledge to fuller understanding. In some subjects, such as religious education and geography, the good teaching of basic skills is helping to raise standards of literacy but they remain weak and an obstacle to progress in information technology and history.
45. Standards in numeracy are also well below those that pupils are expected to reach by the age of 16. Higher-attaining pupils have good levels of skill in the use of number but the standards reached by middle- and lower-attaining pupils are unsatisfactory because they still have too few opportunities to practise and apply these skills in subjects other than mathematics.
46. Standards in ICT at the ages of 14 and 16 are well below those found in many schools nationally because they are not developed systematically across all subjects. There are some good examples of a satisfactory range of opportunity for pupils to demonstrate a satisfactory level of ICT skills in design and technology, humanities music and modern foreign languages.

47. Students with special educational needs make good progress overall, but particularly in reading, spelling and handwriting because their needs are well identified, they get a good level of help for their specific learning difficulties when taught in small groups. They get effective extra help to improve their literacy and numeracy when working alongside other pupils. They generally make satisfactory progress on these occasions.
48. In line with national recommendations, the school has identified ten per cent of its pupils as gifted and talented. The small number of higher attaining pupils make generally satisfactory progress because the organisation of teaching groups provides the opportunity for pupils who are doing well in a particular subject to be taught together. Their progress is good in religious education and design and technology because they are provided with a good level of challenge.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

49. Pupils' attitudes are satisfactory. The majority of them like coming to school. They attend regularly, appreciate what the school offers and do their best. A significant minority of pupils does not value the good range of opportunities and guidance provided. These pupils are regularly absent from school. A small minority sometimes thoughtlessly hinders the learning and progress in lessons of the majority.
50. The majority of pupils behave well both during and outside lessons. They are generally polite and courteous to one another, to their teachers and to other adults in the school, including visitors. Relationships are generally good. They are well founded on mutual respect, trust and friendship. Most pupils enjoy the opportunity to socialise at break times and during the lunchtime. They respect property, equipment and wall displays. Such attitudes express well the aims and expectations of the school.
51. Pupils with special educational needs, and those who speak English as an additional language, behave well in the school. They are fully integrated in their classes and take a good level of interest in their lessons. They have good relationships with their teachers and study support assistants, and with one another.
52. The behaviour of a significant minority of pupils, particularly of the boys between the ages of 11 and 14, is unruly and vociferous. This was seen in lessons and at other times during the school day. There were no recurring incidents of aggressive or racist behaviour during the week of the inspection but the school's monitoring records indicated that one pupil was removed from lessons for making racist jokes, another for making sexist remarks and a couple of pupils for fighting.
53. The school operates a 'call-out' system as part of its arrangements to manage behaviour in order to promote learning. During the week of the inspection approximately 5 per cent of the pupils misbehaved to a degree that required the assistance of a senior member of staff. Such misbehaviour included disobedience, disrespect, defiance and disturbing the progress of others in the lesson. On two occasions all the pupils in the lesson would not co-operate with their teacher.
54. The frequency of 'call outs' was greater in lessons for pupils between the ages of 11 and 14 than in those for pupils between the ages of 14 and 16. The highest proportion was in Year 9, involving 19 pupils, and the lowest in Year 11 where three pupils were involved. The frequency of 'call-outs' rose from 12 on Monday to 24 on Thursday during the inspection week.

55. The proportion of pupils whose positive attitudes and good behaviour are recognised within the school's merits and awards system, 'Getting It Right' confirms that many pupils behave well and attend regularly. By the end of the first term of the current school year half of the pupils in Year 7 had gained the necessary number of credits to receive a 'bronze' merit certificate and this had increased to three-quarters of the year group by Easter.
56. Overall, the attitudes and behaviour of the pupils were satisfactory or better in four-fifths of the lessons seen during the inspection. They were good or better in half of the lessons. Behaviour was generally better in Years 10 and 11. It was unsatisfactory in a quarter of the lessons in Year 8 and a third of lessons in Year 9.
57. In English lessons, the boys are more disruptive than the girls who work with more purpose and greater concentration. Concentration and behaviour are generally good in mathematics because the level of challenge and the pace of the work is good. In modern foreign languages the high expectations and good pace of the teaching give pupils no opportunity to be distracted. Behaviour is very good and sometimes excellent in physical education because pupils are encouraged to work together in teams. They also behave well in design and technology and in geography.
58. In many science lessons pupils express a lack of enthusiasm and commitment to work hard. Sometimes in art lessons a minority of girls misbehave and noise levels are too high because they chatter too much. When the teaching lacks pace in history many of the pupils lose interest.
59. The opportunities for pupils to show initiative are limited. Some pupils like to take responsibility and in so doing contribute to the life of the school. For example, a small group of in Year 11 edit and produce the 'Waltheof News' about once a term. It is circulated to all parents. Four Year 11 pupils have been trained as 'Peer Mentors'. They befriend pupils in Year 7 and, generally, help them. However, the contribution that those who attend well might make to supporting the good attendance of others is not well defined.
60. Some pupils show a good level of commitment. The school is involved in Princess Diana Award and one of the pupils received her award in December 2000. Many older pupils show a good level of commitment and make good use of the additional 'top-up lessons' to help them complete course work for GCSE examinations. This increasing level of commitment and interest is also evident in the readiness of some pupils to work after school in order to complete an on-line ICT course. However, only a minority have the confidence and organisational skills to do this without lots of support. They find it very difficult to undertake research on their own
61. There is a satisfactory degree of response to the arrangements to consult pupils and involve them in making decisions about school policies. School Council representatives bring suggestions and comments to council meetings. In the recent past, the council discussed racist behaviour of some pupils towards others. A survey on racism was conducted in the school by means of a questionnaire, and this has given rise to a whole school anti-racist draft policy for further consideration by the school.
62. There is a good level of participation by pupils in school sports. The encouragement of the teachers as well as the very good facilities promotes well their participation. This raises self-esteem and boosts the confidence of those who take part, including some basketball players who arrive very early at school in order to practise.

63. There is a satisfactory level of inclusion. The number of fixed term exclusions in the first half of the current academic year is broadly similar to the level during the same period in the previous one: 78 in the former and 79 in the latter. The rate of attendance at the school during the academic year 1999/2000 was very low. The level of permanent exclusions is low because good use is made of the behaviour support area [BSA].
64. A significant number of pupils are present for registration but do not then attend all their lessons during the day. Others arrive late for school, do not complete the necessary registration procedures but are present in lessons. During the week of the inspection there were approximately ten per cent fewer pupils in lessons than had registered at the start of the school day.
65. The rate of attendance is very low but has improved by four per cent since 1998. Many of the pupils have already established very poor levels of attendance whilst still at primary school. During the Year 1999-2000 the attendance rate was 80.4 per cent, an improvement on the previous year but very low in comparison with the average of in other schools nationally. The rate of unauthorised absence was 5.2 per cent. This was better than at the time of the previous full inspection but well above the national average of 0.4 per cent. In the year prior to the most recent HMI monitoring visit in February 2000, there had been a satisfactory degree of improvement of 2.3 per cent over the previous twelve months. The attendance rate in the autumn term immediately prior to this inspection was 82.7 per cent. It was highest in Year 7 and lowest in Year 11. In the week of the inspection the attendance rate was 82.4 per cent. The level of unauthorised absence, 10.9, was very high because nearly a quarter of Year 11 were absent without authorisation.
66. Attendance in Year 9 is very poor. Less than half of the year group attend regularly, although this is an improvement on the previous year when only a third did so. In Year 11 approximately one quarter of the pupils attend regularly but the lower-attaining pupils' attendance is poor with approximately one in five of the pupils attending for less than one-fifth of the time. The overall attendance rate for Year 11 in the autumn term 2000 was 75.5 per cent.
67. There are signs of improving attitudes towards attendance in Year 7. Before they started at the school these pupils were attending for 78 per cent of their time in the final year of primary school. Their attendance rate this year has been 89 per cent.
68. The overall rates of attendance have improved by approximately three per cent since the previous full inspection. There is an upward trend in the proportion of pupils attending for more than 90 per cent of the time. This is now just over 40 per cent. The proportion of pupils with levels of attendance below 80 per cent has reduced from just two-fifths to approximately one third. The proportion of pupils attending for less than half of the time has been cut from approximately 15 per cent to under 10 per cent. There were 7 court actions against parents on the issue of non-attendance.

69. Pupils, in general, are punctual in arriving at the school in the morning and in returning to their lessons after the break in the morning and at the end of the lunchtime. However, a small number of pupils adopt a casual approach to punctuality at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

70. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. There has been a satisfactory degree of progress in addressing the serious weaknesses identified by HMI during their monitoring visits in April 1999 and February 2000. At that time the quality of teaching was unsatisfactory in approximately a fifth of the lessons seen. There has been less improvement in the quality and range of pupils' learning. This remains on occasion too narrow and too dependent on being given information rather than discovering, exploring and analysing it. This is an important reason why, despite several good features within an overall pattern of improvement, the impact of the teaching remains satisfactory.

The main features of this generally improving picture are:

- The proportion of unsatisfactory teaching has reduced to less than ten per cent and the proportion of good or better teaching has increased steadily to 54 per cent.
 - The management of some pupils' often challenging behaviour remains a strength of the teaching.
 - The grouping of pupils according to their level of knowledge, skill and understanding in each subject is helping teachers to match the work better to the needs of the group.
 - There has been satisfactory progress in using questions, but only in the good and very good teaching does this provoke pupils to think and develop their understanding.
 - There has been a generally satisfactory improvement in the pace of lessons and continued improvement in the overall level of expectation and the planning of most lessons.
 - The teaching of basic skills is broadly satisfactory but some inconsistency remains.
 - There are still too few well-planned opportunities for pupils to engage in discussion and too little emphasis is placed on encouraging pupils to think for themselves and organise their own learning.
 - Marking remains unsatisfactory in some subjects,
71. The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in 92 per cent of lessons, of which just over half were good or better. It was very good in approximately 15 per cent of lessons. It was unsatisfactory in eight per cent of lessons. The proportion of good or better teaching was greater in lessons for pupils between the ages of 14 and 16 because the content and organisation of the lessons met the requirements of the examination syllabuses well and those present in the lessons were generally better motivated and more self-disciplined than the younger pupils. Too often in lessons for pupils between the ages of 11 and 14 the need to tackle unacceptable behaviour absorbed some of the intended time for actually teaching.
72. The quality of teaching was good in mathematics, design and technology, geography, modern foreign languages, physical education and religious education.

It was unsatisfactory in a third of the lessons in science for pupils between the ages of 11 and 14 but good for pupils between the ages of 14 and 16. In all other subjects it was satisfactory. There was no significant difference in the quality of teaching in different age groups except in religious education where it was better in lessons for pupils beyond the age of 14 and in science where it was unsatisfactory for pupils before the age of 14.

73. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of what needs to be taught is generally good. It is a good feature in the teaching of mathematics and English where more detailed understanding of the National Curriculum requirements is leading to sharper target setting and better preparation for the national tests that pupils take at the age of 14. Good knowledge and understanding of the GCSE examination syllabus is a strong feature in the teaching of religious education that is helping to raise standards. Information and terminology are usually well explained in mathematics lessons. Very good subject knowledge is one of the foundations of the very good teaching in food technology that engages well pupils' interest and concentration in the lessons. What needs to be taught is invariably well known and understood; how it might best be learned is only fully appreciated in the best teaching in geography, mathematics, physical education, food technology and modern foreign languages
74. The teaching of basic skills is generally satisfactory. There has been more improvement in the teaching of literacy skills across the different subjects than in the teaching of numeracy and ICT.
75. The school has gained the Basic Skills kite mark for its planned provision but practice in lessons remains inconsistent. It has yet to have a pervasive impact on raising standards because there is insufficient depth of understanding of how these skills are best learned. The good provision in English, particularly in Year 7, is having an impact on standards because the methods used are well linked to pupils' previous learning within the national literacy strategy. This aspect of teaching is also good in modern foreign languages, geography, history art and music. Technical language is frequently displayed in classrooms but is not always sufficiently explained in design and technology, science and mathematics. The current school action plan includes an objective that pupils will answer in full sentences but there is no broader plan to develop oracy skills, particularly discussion, across the different subjects nor has the development of an increasing range of progressively more challenging writing activities been defined.
76. The teaching of numeracy skills is good in mathematics. The greater emphasis on teaching basic skills and mental mathematics has contributed to improved test results. These skills are not taught consistently in other subjects and as a result pupils make unsatisfactory progress in applying their knowledge of number and its relevance in other subjects that they study. In the best geography teaching, pupils have the opportunity to draw conclusions from the analysis of data but the development of these skills within history is unsatisfactory.
77. The teaching of skills in information and communication technology is generally satisfactory in ICT lessons but the planned arrangements to consolidate and extend these skills in other subjects are unsatisfactory because there are insufficient opportunities for different subjects to use the computer equipment.
78. In response to the findings of HMI during their monitoring visit nearly two years ago the school's action plan for the current year also places a strong emphasis on improving the quality of planning, the level of challenge, the degree of pace and range of teaching methods. There has been further steady improvement during the

last twelve months in most of these aspects, but the range of methods used remains limited.

79. Planning is generally satisfactory and is a strong feature of lessons in physical education, design and technology and modern foreign languages. The practice of stating the learning objectives at the start of the lesson is now generally well established. It is aiding understanding in mathematics although not always in the lessons for higher-attaining pupils. The good presentation of objectives in history is helping to improve pupils' concentration. What they will learn is usually well explained in modern foreign languages. How they will learn and why is rarely shared in most subjects.
80. Sometimes, for example in science, objectives are still stated somewhat mechanically with no time taken to establish pupils' understanding. The policy of providing graded objectives for different bands of pupils within the class was seldom evident in practice. It was well done in modern foreign languages. In science considerable time had been taken to write out the three levels of objectives in every lesson plan but these were not then used in the lessons seen during the inspection.
81. Other aspects of lesson planning are generally satisfactory, although there is sometimes a confusion between the need to consolidate knowledge, skills and understanding, and unnecessary repetition, for example in covering all aspects of the design process in every design and technology project, and in the repetition of the same skills in each year in ICT.
82. There is a satisfactory level of expectation that pervades nearly all of the teaching. This is not only expressed in terms of encouragement to individual pupils but is now more closely linked to the standards expressed in the National Curriculum in some subjects. Target setting is now well established and is particularly well developed in mathematics. In the very good food technology lessons, high expectations are a feature of the inspirational teaching and they are also strongly evident in the good teaching in geography. They are a particularly strong feature in the GCSE religious education lessons. Expectations need to be higher in art and there is an unsatisfactory level of challenge in the historical aspects of the GCSE humanities course.
83. The teaching methods are broadly satisfactory and satisfactory progress overall has been made in improving the use of questions. On several occasions in the mathematics lessons seen during the inspection very good use of questions encouraged pupils to think mathematically but there is still insufficient attention given to developing mathematical reasoning. Questions are frequently well used in religious education to develop understanding, and they are sometimes well used in ICT, at the start of the lesson, to confirm pupils understanding of what they are going to do. The good questioning techniques in geography lessons help to give pupils confidence by consolidating their understanding. Occasionally in history the asking of questions was unsatisfactory because they were posed in a way that did not challenge or extend the depth and range of higher-attaining pupils' understanding.
84. More remains to be done to develop fully the range of teaching methods so that pupils' interest is engaged and maintained in all lessons. In the majority of lessons pupils had no planned opportunities to work together, to make decisions or to plan how they would undertake particular tasks, particularly in science. There was better provision for this in design and technology. There was an unsatisfactory range and number of opportunities for them to undertake investigation or enquiry, particularly in mathematics and science but also in art. On such occasions the

pupils were given information rather than having the opportunity to think or find out for themselves. In the best geography lessons there was a greater degree of challenge because were required to analyse data and make reasoned judgements for themselves.

85. The proportion of pupils who can present challenging behaviour is much higher than in most schools. Many teachers are skilled in managing them firmly, fairly and without confrontation. This was a strong feature of the teaching in music. Relationships between teachers and pupils are usually good, and particularly where the requirement to work hard and to do your best is well understood by the pupils. This was a significant feature in the teaching of geography and physical education. High expectations in mathematics, confidence in managing and not merely controlling pupils' behaviour in geography, as well as the good pace and careful sharing of objectives in design and technology and modern foreign languages, ensured that there was neither time nor opportunity for pupils to seek distraction. In these subjects, there was a well-understood and planned methodology to manage pupils' attitudes and behaviour by managing their learning.
86. Occasionally, for example in one ICT lesson, the distinction was not well drawn between encouraging pupils to plan their own learning and just letting them do what they wanted. Occasionally, in science, there was a reluctance to emphasise investigative work because it was assumed that the pupils would not co-operate. Despite the best efforts of the teachers and planned professional development about behaviour management, some of those who are just starting their teaching careers or working on a supply basis continue to experience difficulties in managing challenging behaviour. On such occasions the learning of other pupils is delayed.
87. Time and resources are generally well used. Lessons generally start promptly and the weaknesses identified in the 1999 HMI monitoring visit have been well addressed. However, a minority of pupils continues to arrive late for lessons and this can sometimes spoil their sharp start.
88. In the best English lessons for pupils between the ages of 14 and 16 time is well used and the pace of the lesson is well managed, varying the degree at times to ensure that pupils are still maintaining a good level of understanding. In a generally satisfactory modern foreign languages lesson, the concept of pace was confused with speed. As a result the lower-attaining pupils sometimes struggled to follow the lesson. Sometimes in science the slow pace leads pupils to be restless and the emphasis in the teaching then shifts to controlling behaviour rather than developing learning. Occasionally in religious education the balance in the use of time is uneven with too much time spent presenting information.
89. There is very good use of resources in physical education and the inter-active white board is frequently well used at the start of ICT lessons to capture the interest of the pupils and make a strong visual presentation of the learning objectives. There are some weaknesses in the use of resources in music. Support staff are generally well used in lessons. This was a strong feature in modern foreign languages.
90. The quality and use of marking and other forms of assessment are generally satisfactory. The high quality of marking in English, identified as a good feature by HMI, continues to support pupils' progress well by identifying clearly the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' work. It is a good and much improved feature in mathematics, because more reference is now made to the standards expected in the National Curriculum. This is helping pupils to be aware of their progress and what they need to do to improve further.

91. Constructive comments on how to improve the quality of work are also a good feature in the marking of work in design and technology. This supports pupils' good progress in completing projects. In the historical aspects of the GCSE humanities course the marking is unsatisfactory because it only offers encouraging comments and does not identify either the standards reached or the points for improvement. In art there need to be more opportunities for pupils to assess and evaluate the quality of their work.
92. The arrangements for homework are satisfactory overall. They are good in design technology and geography but unsatisfactory in art and ICT.
93. The teaching of pupils who speak English as an additional language [EAL] is satisfactory. Most of these pupils can speak, read and write with a satisfactory degree of fluency and accuracy. As a result, they make good progress in mathematics and modern foreign languages. There is good provision for the small number at an early stage of learning English. This combines a good balance of small-group work and support in lessons. There is insufficient additional support for those pupils who have grasped the basics but still need to develop their language skills further in order to cope confidently with their studies. None of the EAL staff is a qualified teacher.
94. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. They learn well and make good progress in design and technology and modern foreign languages and in history and geography between the ages of 11 and 14. Up to the age of 14, pupils with statements of special educational needs receive additional support in English on a withdrawal basis. This teaching is well structured and proceeds at pace. As a result, many make good progress in improving their basic literacy skills. Other students with special educational needs make satisfactory and often good progress within the school's planned curriculum because of the effective use of in-class support from learning support teachers and special support assistants. Pupils between the ages of 14 and 16 who work within the Behaviour Support Area make unsatisfactory progress because they follow a narrow timetable of English and mathematics. Gifted and talented students are well supported by learning mentors and make satisfactory and often good progress because some subject teachers plan suitably challenging work.

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

95. Overall, the school provides a good quality and range of opportunities. There are some strong features and some particular weaknesses.

96. The curriculum is generally well planned to ensure that all pupils have a broad and balanced education through to age 16. It is adapted to meet the needs of pupils at different levels of attainment and combines both GCSE and vocational courses for pupils between the ages of 14 and 16. The common curriculum ensures equal opportunity for all pupils, providing extra support throughout the school for pupils with learning difficulties and opportunities for higher-attaining pupils to achieve the academic qualifications they need for advanced studies.
97. For pupils between the ages of 11 and 14 the curriculum has been altered since the last inspection, so that drama is now taught within English and dance in physical education. Time for music has been increased but, in Year 9, the teaching of music and art in half-year blocks means that continuity of learning suffers. All pupils take one modern foreign language through to age 16 and the extra time allocated in Years 7 and 8 makes it possible to start GCSE courses during Year 9. Lunchtime classes in Urdu and Bengali prepare pupils for examinations in their community languages. Information and communications technology is taught in each year but it is not being used in many subjects, particularly in art where the curriculum is rather narrow in its concentration on drawing and painting. In design technology the range of computer applications is beginning to have a positive impact on standards, although provision for computer aided design is unsatisfactory.
98. For pupils between the ages of 14 and 16 the school has concentrated on providing a core curriculum for all but a minority of pupils, restricting choice in the interest of grouping pupils according to prior attainment so that teaching can be targeted to improve results. There is some flexibility on one afternoon a week, when pupils have the choice of vocational courses at Sheffield college, extra help with their core subjects, or 'topping up' examination courses in either ICT, physical education or religious education. The school makes good provision for teaching humanities as an integrated course for all pupils. This has sections about history, geography and religious education, the latter being in addition to the short or full GCSE courses in RE taken by most pupils. There is an alternative, vocational course called 'Making Connections' for some 40 pupils in Years 10 and 11, which also includes religious education, but not to the extent required by the locally Agreed Syllabus. Organisational difficulties and some pupils' rejection of what is on offer have led to a high drop-out rate from this course in Year 11, but it is working well in Year 10, where most of the pupils have improved their attendance since starting the course. In recent years, many pupils have gone on to college or found employment with training as a result of the connections made through school, with opportunities in further education and on work placements.
99. The school maintains satisfactory links with its partner primary schools and with the Sheffield College. Primary liaison is co-ordinated by the head of Year 7, who looks after each new intake and is able to form good working relationships with primary colleagues. There are projects that bridge the gap between primary and secondary school in each of the core subjects, such as the practice of pupils bringing their maths exercise books with them on induction day. Equally, the school helps its pupils' move to the next stage of their education or training by letting them sample college courses between the ages of 14 and 16 and offering good careers guidance. Links are also well established with the Manor Training and Education Centre, sharing facilities to the benefit of students from both institutions.

100. The school makes good provision for a range of extra-curricular activities. These extend well the range of learning opportunities. The physical education department has increased its programme of sports activities, seeking to increase participation by catering for pupils in all years, whatever their level of skill. Opportunities for many pupils to use their musical and dramatic skills were well demonstrated in the recent production of the musical, 'Ebenezer'. Instrumental tuition is available to all, but only a small number of pupils take this opportunity. Each year group has its own social area, where games and music are provided at lunchtimes. The school runs social events such as discos, and its Muslim pupils organised an Eid party this year. Trips to France are arranged to support the teaching of French but not to Spain. Pupils take part in fieldwork in geography and there is a history visit to the holocaust museum for pupils on the humanities course. Visits are also arranged, as part of an enrichment programme, for those pupils the school has identified as gifted and talented, including residential days on a university outreach programme. There are a number of activities that support learning, such as the breakfast and homework clubs, and the school's learning mentors have been running a course on self-esteem for Year 11 girls. The computer club is usually full and extra sessions are arranged after school for pupils taking an 'on-line' course in ICT.
101. The arrangements for careers education and guidance are now good, following recent improvements. Pupils are well supported when they make their career decisions and encouraged to show initiative and take responsibility within the careful management of work experience. This contributes well to their personal development. There is a satisfactory number of special events, including exhibitions and theatrical performances that help to raise pupils' levels of motivation and interest. The contributions to careers education and guidance made by subject departments within their schemes of work are not defined. The proportion of pupils entering further education or employment after the age of 16 has increased steadily since the last full inspection in 1998.
102. The provision for pupils' personal development is satisfactory, with some good features. The programme for personal, health and social education is given a high priority. Weekly lessons throughout the year are in tutor groups, with two tutors allocated to each class in years 7, 10 and 11. Work is organised by the heads of year with materials provided to ensure common learning experiences, but allowing some flexibility to each teacher. The programme is particularly sensitive to the social dangers of drug abuse, teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. The Year 7 programme helps to integrate pupils into the school while that for year eleven prepares them for work or further study.
103. Teaching in the tutor periods seen varied in quality between satisfactory and good. Where it is good, teachers are confident with the materials and sensitive to the differing backgrounds of pupils. Learning objectives are made clear and reviewed, for example, developing the skill of empathy. Boys and girls are able to discuss difficult issues seriously and take care with written work, which is stored and valued as in any other subject. Specialists are used; for example, the school nurse on testicular cancer and the Local Authority's staff for drugs education. The school is preparing to implement the inclusion of citizenship from Autumn 2001, recognising the need for staff development.
104. The school has mapped provision of spiritual awareness across subjects, in response to a need for improvement identified in the last full inspection. This has identified opportunities but has not included aims and objectives for spiritual development. There are some opportunities in art and music for quiet reflection about work that has been produced or performed.

105. Provision for pupils' moral development is good. The moral code within its behaviour policy is stated clearly and there is generally good provision within the personal, social and health education lessons. It is also well promoted in history and religious education. In design and technology, as well as in ICT, pupils are made aware of the moral dilemmas that face computer-based industries. Expectations and examples in other subjects, and particularly in music, help to place regular emphasis on the moral values within the school's behaviour policy. These messages are well emphasised in the many bold display posters throughout the building.
106. Provision for social development is satisfactory. Social values are emphasised well during tutor time and in assemblies. Except in physical education, there are generally too few opportunities for pupils to develop the skills and value the benefits of teamwork. In history and religious education pupils develop a satisfactory knowledge of social change, community life and the effects of religions on societies. A number of pupils are gradually taking more responsibility and contributing to the day to day running of the school. There is an active school council which contributes well to the school's consultation arrangements and which took an active part recently in the planning and organisation of an Eid party.
107. There is satisfactory provision for pupils' cultural development. There is a satisfactory range of opportunities for pupils to appreciate the cultural diversity of their school, their city and of the wider community. Well-planned assemblies celebrate the different religious festivals and raise awareness of both cultural similarities and differences. Particular care is taken, for example, in modifying the curriculum for Muslim pupils as they prepare for the holy month of Ramadan. Tolerance and understanding of other cultures are well promoted. There are regular opportunities for pupils to visit places of interest locally, sometimes beyond the region and occasionally abroad.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

108. The school takes good care of its pupils. It is an orderly community, providing a safe and secure setting for learning. There is a satisfactory quality and range of guidance and support for all the pupils. There are good, well-documented procedures to support this work. The school's commitment to 'put learning first' is well illustrated in the prompt response of senior staff through the 'call out' arrangements to any instances of misbehaviour likely to spoil the progress of other pupils. These arrangements link well the management of learning and behaviour. There is some unsatisfactory practice in health and safety in science.
109. There are good arrangements for child protection. The deputy head is the named person for implementing the school's policy. This follows the guidelines established by the local education authority [LEA]. A trained teacher handles the routine issues on a daily basis.
110. The school prospectus describes clearly and simply its aims and ethos. The school seeks to promote learning through good behaviour, a positive attitude to learning and regular, uninterrupted attendance. It also seeks to promote personal skills, confidence and self-esteem amongst its pupils by broadening their learning experiences. A good range of extra-curricular activities is available to pupils in the school and sports centre attached to the school building. This provides pupils with opportunities for their personal and social development and includes opportunities for doing additional work. There is a good range of opportunities to broaden the horizons and promote the wider interests of pupils whom the school has identified as gifted and talented.

111. Overall the monitoring of pupils' performance across the subjects of the curriculum is satisfactory. Good use is made of standardised tests to confirm pupils' standards, strengths and weaknesses when they join the school at the age of 11. At that time there are no other formalised arrangements to establish what pupils know, understand and can do in each of the subjects they will study. Most subjects have systems in place to assess pupils' attainment but their progress is not measured against rigorous benchmarks in each subject at the age of 11. There are good procedures to monitor and assess the progress of pupils with special educational needs and satisfactory procedures to monitor the progress of pupils who speak English as an additional language. There is little analysis currently by gender or ethnicity of pupils' performance. Assessment data are used for the grouping of pupils, setting targets, and to identify those who are gifted and talented. Information concerning the standards of pupils on entry to the school does not reach all subject departments but details of standardised tests are circulated. Their impact on planning is inconsistent because some subject leaders have insufficient understanding and expertise in their interpretation. There are weaknesses in the cross-curricular assessment and monitoring of ICT and in the assessment of physical education. Incomplete use is currently made of expensive commercial software to support the monitoring of progress and attendance because there is insufficient expertise. Training is proposed to ensure teaching staffs are made fully aware of its capabilities and in the interpretation and effective use of the data it can provide.
112. The school's code of conduct and discipline is generally effective in and around the school and in playgrounds. There are many displays and posters around the school that convey simple, clear messages about the school's expectations. Senior members of staff are frequently to be seen monitoring the behaviour, attitudes and orderly movement of pupils around the school and also eating with them at lunchtime. This presence of senior staff is a strength of the current provision but only a small minority of other adults choose to eat with the pupils at lunchtime.
113. There has been a good level of consultation in the development of the school's behaviour policy. In June 2000, the school organised a conference involving both the staff and pupils to discuss issues such as bullying, racism and sexism. As a result of this conference, the code of conduct in classrooms was revised.
114. The behaviour policy is an important document for behaviour management in the school. It makes positive statements on behaviour management and the enforcement of the guidelines. All departments have their own behaviour policy and all teachers received training in behaviour management in September 2000. Pupils who display disruptive behaviour are placed 'on report', an effective monitoring system, involving pupils, parents, form teachers, heads of year and the senior management team. There is regular, planned contact with external agencies such as the Educational Welfare Service or the educational psychologists.
115. Pupils with the most challenging behaviour are supported within the school's behaviour support area [BSA] by special support assistants. They are skilled in behaviour management techniques. Pupils who are on the special needs register or who have statements of special educational need in relation to behaviour have individual education plans. Pupils in Years 7,8 and 9 who overcome their behavioural difficulties are rewarded with merit certificates and prizes. Teachers are given support with their behaviour management through the system of senior team 'call outs'. These are closely monitored and, if the problem persists, then the parents of the pupil concerned are asked to visit the school for discussion.
116. There are good arrangements to promote positive attitudes in Year 7. The 'Getting It Right' system recognises positive attitudes and behaviour through a well-planned

system of merits and certificates that motivates nearly all pupils well. Certificates and prizes provide a good range of incentives. Similar arrangements for the older pupils are not yet fully implemented.

117. The management of attendance issues is broadly satisfactory. There is a good policy statement and a good level of overall co-ordination of effort between the project manager who is also an assistant headteacher, the five heads of year and the form tutors, the office staff, learning mentors and external agencies. There are regular meetings to monitor attendance and share information. Governors are kept informed regularly about the effectiveness of the current arrangements.
118. Additional Excellence in Cities [EiC] and Education Action Zone [EAZ] funding supports special initiatives including the Group Attendance Project [GAP]. This provides good opportunities for pupils to face up to and reflect upon the consequences of poor attendance. These arrangements seek to involve the parents of persistent non-attendeers. Another good feature of the current provision is the use of 'focus groups' that enable the tutor to concentrate on improving the attendance of a particular group of pupils and monitor closely their improvement.
119. There are agreed targets for individual years as well as for the school overall. Details about the weekly, monthly and termly levels of attendance are not as prominently displayed around the school as other aspects of its work.
120. The school has developed a good range of activities to emphasise the important of attending school regularly. These include the Walthoef Attendance Working Party meetings, which are attended by parents of the pupils with poor attendance records. Heads of Year, in consultation with the learning Mentors, identify those pupils who would benefit from a particular anti-truancy strategy, such as Group Attendance project.
121. Four education welfare officers work closely with the school and they have established a good working relationship with the school personnel.
122. The school participates in the local and national initiatives in order to make suitable provisions for its disaffected and disinterested pupils. The Group Attendance Project [GAP] enables the school to improve attendance and investigate the causes of absenteeism and truancy. The school has appointed three learning mentors in order to improve the pupils' confidence and self-esteem by participating in out of school activities. The school is also involved with the Southeast Sheffield Education Action Zone and Excellence in Cities project.
123. The Learning Mentors are involved with two initiatives, the group Attendance Project and the Armadillo Club, relating to the improvement in individual pupils' attendance. The Project Manager represents the school on matters relating to attendance at the Education Action Zone for Southeast Sheffield. The Education Action Zone began work at the start of the academic year. Since the disaffection and exclusion felt by some of the pupils from the school cannot easily be changed, the Action Zone has, recently, begun to seek collaboration with those who offer alternatives to mainstream education in the community.
124. There is an efficient, electronic system for the marking of registers. Statistics are produced each Friday afternoon to enable the senior management team to ascertain the trend in attendance and punctuality for each group during the week.
125. Arrangements to monitor internal truancy are unsatisfactory. During the week of the inspection approximately ten per cent fewer pupils were present in lessons than had registered at the start of morning or afternoon school. Enquires confirmed that

'internal truancy' checks are made from time to time. Heads of Year deal with pupils who are found to be absent on an individual basis but there is no record of outcomes maintained to enable senior managers to analyse patterns and plan remedial action. Full use is not made of the electronic systems available to monitor attendance in lessons, in the expensive software that the school has purchased.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

126. The effectiveness of the school's partnership with parents is broadly satisfactory. The school struggles, and has done so for many years, but continues to persevere in trying to maintain the active involvement of many of its parents in supporting the learning of their children.
127. A small number of parents attending the parents' meeting and those returning the questionnaire are very supportive of the school and its caring ethos. No significant concerns were expressed at the meeting. Parents are appreciative of the school's 'open door' policy. Some 94 per cent of parents agreed that they could approach the school with ease, if any problem arose.
128. Parents receive information in a number of ways, through the 'Student Planner', through their children's reports and through the 'Waltheof News'. Translation is provided for parents who experience difficulty in understanding English. Pupils' annual reports to parents include aspects of their personal qualities and teachers' evaluation of academic achievements and progress. However, there is a degree of inconsistency in the reporting of pupils' achievements in different subjects. This would make them difficult to understand by the parents.
129. Consultation evenings for parents are held in the autumn term, enabling them to meet staff and get an early indication of their children's progress. There has been some recent improvement in the number of parents attending. The number of parents with children in Year 7 attending such an evening rose by 16 per cent this academic year in comparison with last year's total. A rise of 10 per cent was recorded in the case of Year 8 and Year 11 meetings. For Year 10, the attendance figure was seven per cent. The smallest rise in parents' attendance at the consultation evening was four per cent for Year 9.
130. There are good communications and a good level of involvement by parents of pupils with special educational needs, including the arrangements to review statements. Only a small minority of parents of other pupils directly involve themselves, for example by monitoring and signing the Pupil Planner. Some parents condone the unauthorised absence of their children from school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

131. The headteacher provides satisfactory leadership. Its strongest features are the commitment, support, good humour and encouragement that he provides to his colleagues as together they seek to raise standards, improve attendance and build a more effective partnership with parents in often very challenging and difficult circumstances. He is managing the school well in establishing a shared commitment to raising standards. He knows his pupils well, has a very good knowledge of their circumstances and is keenly alert to their needs. Pupils and teachers are aware and respond well to his frequent presence around the school. There is a good balance between taking and supporting action to achieve improvements in the short term and an awareness that the resolution of the problems of attendance, behaviour and raising expectations require a long term strategy and commitment. There is, however, an unsatisfactory degree of clarity in defining the intermediate steps of the long-term plan beyond 2002, and weaknesses in financial planning to support both short and longer-term objectives.
132. The quality of the school action plan 2001-02 is satisfactory. It interprets well the aims of the school. These are expressed as strategic priorities to improve the attitudes of the pupils, increase their basic skills, promote their personal development and raise their expectations by setting clear goals. These priorities are well linked to the areas for improvement identified by HMI in 1999. The need and opportunity for professional development are identified and well linked to the planning objectives.
133. The annual action plan is generally well organised but some of the criteria by which success will be measured are imprecise, including those which refer directly to improving the quality of leadership and management. The sections that deal with the improvement of teaching and learning often have more precise targets by which the improvements in teaching can be measured but insufficient emphasis on the quality and range of learning that will result. The quality assurance plan that is linked to this section of the annual action plan concentrates on aspects of teaching rather than on its impact on learning.
134. The comprehensive and very well organised monitoring strategy to address the serious weaknesses in teaching and learning identified by HMI in 1999 has been the most successful aspect of the school's improvement over the last two years. Its impact has been good. The responsibilities are well defined and delegated, classroom observation occurs regularly, there is well recorded guidance given to individual teachers, opportunities to observe other teachers are offered and there is a well-planned programme of review involving heads of subject. These very good arrangements have made a very effective contribution to the school's good strategy for performance management.
135. The increasing emphasis on setting targets is a strength of the improving management of the school. The roles and responsibilities of the project leaders who form the senior management team are well defined and each project has explicit targets. The projects to improve teaching, learning and behaviour are very well managed. There is a good balance between direct involvement and the tasks of monitoring and review, and a good combination of direction and consultation in developing the projects. The evaluation of some aspects of these projects, for example the impact of teaching on learning and the cost-effectiveness of the behaviour support area, is not explicit enough to inform future management planning.
136. The management of attendance is generally satisfactory. Monitoring is carried out conscientiously but the evaluation of current procedures and practices is

unsatisfactory. For example, whilst the absence from lessons is periodically monitored by the heads of year there is no formal collation of statistics to provide a broader picture or to identify trends of improvement or deterioration. There has been considerable statistical analysis of the levels of attendance but this is not used sufficiently to evaluate the effectiveness of current strategies for improvement.

137. The project to raise standards is managed satisfactorily but some of the current analysis is incomplete and many subject leaders do not yet have the skills and understanding to interpret fully and use the data that they receive to evaluate the effectiveness of their departments. The use of this important management information system is currently weak because there is an insufficient level of expertise in its interpretation.
138. There is currently insufficient expertise in the use of ICT to support the management of information. As a result, full use is not yet made of expensive commercial software that supports systems to record, monitor and analyse attendance, and the progress that pupils are making in their studies.
139. The overall quality of subject leadership is good. It is very good in English, mathematics, modern foreign languages and religious education and good in geography, physical education and art. In all other subjects it is satisfactory. The hallmarks of the good and very good leadership and management are the very effective monitoring of teaching and learning and the strong commitment to setting high expectations in order to raise standards. There is a generally good level of awareness about what needs to be done to improve further. The links between the heads of subject and the BSA are unsatisfactory and result in too narrow a curriculum for the pupils for whom this special provision applies.
140. The management of the procedures to care for the pupils is generally good. The heads of year manage their responsibilities well, although tensions can arise in setting priorities when the roles of head of subject and head of year are joint responsibilities. In the last two years heads of year have shown a growing awareness of their role in managing the academic progress as well as the health, safety and general welfare of the pupils. As yet they do not have the technical skills to interpret statistical data nor do they have formal opportunities to link their work with that of the heads of subject.
141. The governing body makes a satisfactory contribution to the school's strategy for improvement. There are some strong features in the good level of support that it gives to promote the school's improvement. Its partnership with the headteacher and his colleagues with management responsibilities is good. Several changes have occurred in its composition since the monitoring visit of HMI in 1999. It now possesses a good range of skills and experience amongst its membership to support the school's management and the pupils' personal development. The increased frequency of meetings, a generally effective committee structure, helpful reports from the headteacher and regular contact with the project leaders enable many governors to be well informed about the school's rate and range of improvement. There has been a good level of involvement in developing the policy and procedures for performance management, including the setting of targets for the headteacher. There is a good level of individual understanding about the strategy to improve teaching and learning and about the management of provision for special educational needs.
142. The governing body is less fully involved in the initial development of the school's annual action plan, including the setting of priorities, but monitors its effectiveness satisfactorily during the school year. Governors are increasingly aware of the links

between the action plan, performance management and target setting. As a result they now make a satisfactory contribution to shaping the direction of the school's improvement and have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. The governing body fulfils nearly all of its statutory responsibilities but does not make sure that there is provision for a daily act of collective worship for all pupils. They were unaware of the gaps that until very recently existed in the school's financial procedures.

143. Overall there is a strong commitment to succeed that pervades the school. The capacity to do so is satisfactory and improving.
144. Expenditure decisions within the management of the school's annual basic budget are in line with planning priorities but the costing of projects within the annual action plan is not explicit enough. Prompt action within the current financial year has dealt with the small deficit that arose last year because of difficulties, beyond the control of the school, in insurance claims for staff absence.
145. The links between financial planning and action planning for school improvement are unsatisfactory. The school draws its income from a range of sources in addition to its basic budget. These include local initiatives such as Excellence in Cities [EiC], the South East Sheffield Education Action Zone [SESEAZ] and the Manor and Castle Development Trust. Approximately a third of the school's funding, more than three-quarters of a million pounds, is additional to its basic budget. The way that this funding will be directed to meet the objectives of the annual action plan is not indicated, making extremely difficult the rigorous evaluation of expenditure decisions linked to additional income for special initiatives. There is no detailed statement of planned expenditure for provision to meet pupils' special educational needs and no indication of how its effectiveness will be evaluated.
146. The school does not receive three-year financial forecasts to help its longer term planning. It does not itself make financial planning projections or undertake notional costings of its longer term improvement plan. The financial aspects of strategic planning are weak.
147. Financial controls are now good. Prompt action has been taken recently to remedy a number of significant weaknesses in the school's financial policies and practice that were identified by the auditors in January 2000. These identified a lack of rigour rather than serious irregularity. There is still a high proportion of expenditure administered through petty cash. This is necessary because standard ordering procedures are not appropriate for much of the expenditure involved in trips and other activities supported through special initiative funding, including SESEAZ and EiC. The controls on this are good. There are good procedures for the ordering of books, materials and equipment. The auditors found that the school did not apply the principles of best value consistently when awarding contracts for some aspects of grounds maintenance and security.

148. There is a satisfactory match of teachers to meet the needs of the curriculum. In addition, classroom support staff are well deployed to provide effectively for those pupils with special educational needs. Three learning mentors, funded through EiC, make a satisfactory contribution to further supporting the progress and personal development of individual pupils, including those who are gifted and talented. Approximately half of the teaching staff has additional, well-defined responsibilities that provide for a good degree of delegation and shared leadership in pursuing the objectives of the school's action plan. The arrangements for the induction and support of newly qualified staff and other more experienced newly-appointed staff are very good. The successful induction of more than 15 new teachers during the current school year confirms that the management of staffing is very good. The arrangements for staff development are very good and identified clearly within the annual action plan.
149. The overall quality, quantity and range of learning resources are satisfactory. Spending on resources has doubled since last year and is broadly similar to the level that is found nationally. Much of this increase is the result of funding from the Excellence in Cities initiative. This has led to a good degree of improvement in the quality of ICT equipment in three suited areas that is improving the motivation of the pupils. There is approximately one computer for every 11 pupils, a ratio that remains lower than the recommended level nationally. As a result there are insufficient opportunities for all subjects to make full use of ICT in their drive to raising standards by improving the quality of teaching and learning. In art, for example, there is no evidence of a capacity to teach computer generated or manipulated imagery in any of the lessons. The Learning Centre contains an insufficient number and range of books. This aspect of resources remains a weakness from the last inspection. There is good use of computer software to produce high quality worksheets in geography, although the department's other resources, while being of good quality, are narrow. In design technology, the pupils have access to good sets of up-to-date books, good quality worksheets and good equipment.
150. The quality and suitability of the accommodation is very good. There is a good range of specialist facilities. The facilities for physical education are excellent with a fine sports hall, good playing fields and plentiful outdoor hard play areas, as well as a range of equipment to support a large range of activities. The suiting arrangements for ICT equipment are very good. The facilities for design and technology are good. Those for art are very good but not all available equipment is fully used for its intended purpose. The good laboratory facilities in science are used insufficiently for their intended purpose in promoting investigative and experimental work. The classrooms provide sufficient space for a good range of teaching and learning methods but their potential is not fully realised. The BSA accommodation is unsatisfactory, because there are insufficient practical facilities to provide a satisfactory quality and range of curricular opportunities. The quality of display is generally satisfactory with some very good examples in religious education and humanities, that help to motivate pupils and raise their expectations.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

151. In order further to raise standards and improve the quality of education provided by the school, the governors, headteacher and staff of the school should:

(1) Raise standards in science at the age of 14 and 16 by:

- extending the opportunities for pupils to investigate, work individually and in teams;
- increasing the opportunities for pupils to exercise responsibility and initiative in their work;
- developing greater understanding by explaining learning objectives more more fully at the start of the lesson;
- developing pupils' readiness and ability to think scientifically by encouraging discussion and providing more probing questions;
- monitoring progress by gender to ensure that the decline in the standards reached by girls at the age of 14 is arrested and reversed;
- monitoring the completion of work by those who do not attend regularly;
- identifying other schools in similar circumstances nationally that have successfully raised standards in science and learning from their experience and expertise.

Paragraphs 7,10, 12, 15, 24, 28, 31, 34, 36, 39, 42, 72, 75, 80,202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209

(2) Increase the levels of attendance by:

- extending the range of opportunities for pupils to support and mentor the attendance of others;
- establishing parental support groups in each year;
- making full use of the electronic recording systems to monitor and support effective action to reduce internal truancy.
- Identifying other schools in similar circumstances nationally that have achieved sustained improvement in attendance and studying how they have done this.

Paragraphs: 39, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 124, 154, 163, 209

(3) Place greater emphasis on developing understanding and investigative skills in how pupils' learn by:

- defining learning objectives that emphasise these skills;
- providing opportunities for pupils to plan how they will tackle the tasks set;
- increasing the opportunities for pupils to work together in order to solve problems;
- providing more opportunities for pupils to choose and make decisions in their learning;
- offering more opportunities for pupils to discuss their work;
- extending the range and improving the sequencing of questions asked in lessons;
- provide more opportunities for pupils to reflect upon their work, to assess its quality and decide how it might be improved;
- identifying schools in similar circumstances nationally that have successfully addressed these issues and studying how they have done this.

Paragraphs: 18, 21, 25, 40, 84, 176, 191, 212, 224

(4) Improve the standards of behaviour in lessons by:

- developing a wider range of activities in lessons that engage pupils' interest and sustain their concentration;
- matching the level and type of work set more closely to the needs of the pupils.

Paragraphs: 16, 23, 52, 85, 163, 170, 176, 214, 223

(5) Improve the financial aspects of strategic planning by:

- developing financial forecasts based on projected pupil numbers;
- identifying how funding is allocated to meet the key objectives of the long term development plan, including funding received from special national initiatives;
- defining success criteria more precisely in order to support rigorous evaluation of expenditure decisions.

Paragraphs: 131, 142, 144, 145, 146

(6) Provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils by:

- identifying the most appropriate time and place within the current form time arrangements.
- identifying schools in similar circumstances nationally that successfully addressed this issue and studying how they have done this.

Paragraph: 142

In addition, the inspection recommends that the governors and staff also take action to:

- (a) Improve the management of lesson checks for internal truancy.
- (b) Increase the teaching of numeracy skills in all subjects.
- (c) Teach and assess ICT skills in all subjects.
- (d) Use the marking of pupils' work to identify more clearly its strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement.
- (e) Broaden the curriculum in art and make it increasingly more challenging in ICT
- (f) Improve the provision for pupils' spiritual development, including the provision for a daily act of collective worship.
- (g) Provide a broader curriculum and improve the ICT and practical facilities in the BSA
- (h) Seek further new ways to involve parents more directly in the education of their children.

THE BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT AREA

152. The Behaviour Support Area (BSA) is successful in maintaining students up to the age of fourteen in full-time education, in minimising the amount of disruption to the learning of others in the main school and in reducing the number of pupils permanently excluded.
153. The BSA provides support for students with significant behavioural difficulties. The Area aims to provide early support to enable students wherever possible to operate confidently in the main school provision. Although all students attending feature on the special needs register, this is a separate facility from that provided by the special educational needs department in the main school. Liaison between the two departments is made as appropriate. There are currently 37 students being supported by the BSA, 25 students up to the age of fourteen and 12 students fourteen to sixteen. The majority are boys. The older group are assigned permanently to the BSA and have no contact with the school whatsoever. Their learning opportunities are severely compromised by their allocated part-time attendance. They receive a diluted curriculum offer of English, mathematics and work experience and this affects their standards in other subjects and their opportunity for appropriate accreditation.
154. Students are referred to the BSA through the school referral system and following consultation with parents. Placement acts as an alternative to exclusion. Each student in the BSA has an individualised timetable identifying lessons to be spent in the Unit and those in the main school, with and without support. These timetables are regularly reviewed in the light of progress made. Individual education plans are drawn up for each student and identify behaviour targets, which are included in weekly report books. These are completed by teachers or special school assistants at the end of each lesson, provide a focus for the teacher and student and are a way of monitoring progress. Used properly, they are effective in improving behaviour and have a positive impact on students' progress. The system is undermined when some teachers do not complete these forms in a conscientious way.
155. Teaching in the BSA is satisfactory and as a result students make satisfactory progress within lessons. Two lessons were observed. In the one, the Head of BSA was helping a Year 10 student to complete his work in mathematics. High expectations that the student would concentrate and behave contributed to the satisfactory progress made. The teacher is not a mathematics specialist and found it difficult to offer informed advice or explanation. However, a trusting relationship meant that the student and teacher could work through the lesson together, which is what they did. In the other lesson observed a special support assistant was helping a Year 9 pupil temporarily excluded from a French lesson. The student had the text book and task for the lesson and completed her work with minimum fuss. Her behaviour was well managed and relationships were excellent.. Sustained progress over a period of time for most students in the BSA, is seriously affected by poor attendance similar to that within the main school.
156. The BSA is led effectively by an experienced teacher, who provides professional leadership to his colleagues and makes good use of data to inform organisational decisions and practice. It is well staffed by the Head of the BSA, one other teacher and four special school assistants. These assistants work with students both in the BSA and in support of them in the main school. They know the students well, have been trained in behaviour management, and are committed to helping pupils to improve their behaviour. They are deployed effectively and give both teachers and students confidence when reintegration opportunities occur. There is regular

contact with parents and carers so that problems and successes are shared. Good liaison with external agencies including the school psychologist, education welfare officer and behaviour support worker contribute to the students' successful reintegration.

157. The BSA is accommodated in a self-contained temporary classroom block away from the main school building. There is adequate classroom space but the building is in poor condition and there are no areas for practical work. This is a limiting factor for teachers in supporting students in practical subjects. Resources are at best adequate. For example there is only one computer and a limited number of books. Good resources, especially information and communication technology resources, motivate students to learn and attend. The BSA relies on schemes of work and resources being sent down from the main school to provide curriculum continuity, but this is not always the case. The absence of attractive display reflects the lack of a sense of ownership by the students who use it.
158. The BSA action plan is rightly concerned with improving communication and liaison with subject teachers in the main school. It should address as a priority, the provision of a full curriculum entitlement for its students aged fourteen to sixteen.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	168
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	58

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	13	39	39	7	1	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1008	N/a
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	495	N/a

Special educational needs	Y7– Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	44	N/a
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	361	N/a

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	142

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	37
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	55

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	14.3
National comparative data	7.7

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	5.2
National comparative data	0.4

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	98	109	207

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	40	40	24
	Girls	71	37	24
	Total	111	77	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	54(28)	37 (21)	23(9)
	National	63(63)	65(62)	59(55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	18(2)	13(6)	6(1)
	National	28(28)	42 (38)	30(23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	40	44	35
	Girls	68	46	34
	Total	108	90	69
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	54(26)	43(24)	33(20)
	National	64(64)	66(64)	62(60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	13 (3)	14(7)	12 (8)
	National	31(31)	39(37)	29(28)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	95	81	176

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	6	36	61
	Girls	22	50	66
	Total	28	86	127
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	16(9)	49 (54)	72(64)
	National	47.4(46.6)	90.6(90.9)	95.6(95.8)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	17
	National	38.4

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

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	6
Black – African heritage	4
Black – other	3
Indian	1
Pakistani	63
Bangladeshi	75
Chinese	0
White	767
Any other minority ethnic group	89

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	11	0
Black – African heritage	4	0
Black – other	2	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	5	0
Chinese	0	0
White	182	3
Other minority ethnic groups	9	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)	58
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	25
Total aggregate hours worked per week	715

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	74
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	19.5
Key Stage 4	20.5

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	2739372
Total expenditure	2805945
Expenditure per pupil	2826
Balance brought forward from previous year	51800
Balance carried forward to next year	-14773

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1008
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.	37	52	7	4	1
My child is making good progress in school.	44	45	6	1	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	30	44	12	6	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	24	59	9	5	2
The teaching is good.	32	62	3	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	28	49	17	3	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	51	44	2	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	40	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	25	55	14	2	5
The school is well led and managed.	33	46	8	1	13
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	38	51	6	1	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	27	51	11	2	9

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

ENGLISH

159. Standards are below those expected nationally at the age of 14 and at the age of 16.
160. When pupils enter the school in Year 7 standards are very low compared with all schools nationally and with similar schools. However, results at the age of 14 years in the National Curriculum tests in Year 2000 show that standards improve by the age of 14. They were below the national average for all schools but in the top five per cent of similar schools nationally.
161. Pupils did better in English than in mathematics and science. Just over half of the pupils entered obtained Level 5 or better compared with nearly two-thirds nationally. The girls did better than the boys. Nearly two thirds of the girls obtained Level 5 or better compared to nearly three quarters nationally. Just over two fifths of the boys obtained Level 5, while nationally more than half the boys did so.
162. National test results at the age of 14 are improving at a rate above the national trend. The improving performance of the boys is a significant feature. It is greater than the improvement shown by the girls. This trend is confirmed by the work of some boys in lessons seen during the inspection. For example, in a Year 8 lesson the boys, when well supported by the teacher, were able to select words used in a poem to describe a cat as a 'warm pin cushion of fur'.
163. Pupils make good progress by the age of 14 and also by the age of 16. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are well supported in lessons and a good level of additional, individual help. Some pupils in the top groups make good progress in reading and writing. As a result they achieve well in the national tests and GCSE examinations. Progress in speaking and listening skills is unsatisfactory because many pupils do not respond with confidence to opportunities to discuss their ideas. Some pupils behave badly in lessons, ignoring the teacher and refusing to tackle the tasks set. These pupils hinder their own learning and progress and that of others in the class. A significant number of pupils miss out large chunks of learning covered in English lessons because they are absent for long periods. For these reasons the current rate of progress in Year 9 is slower than that suggested in the most recent national test results.
164. Standards in speaking and listening are below those expected nationally at the age of 16. They were unsatisfactory in the lessons seen because pupils spoke only about matters of immediate interest to them and were reluctant to discuss the ideas and views of others. The skills of taking turns and co-operating in discussion are weak. As a result most pupils cannot contribute to or sustain an argument.
165. Standards in reading are below those expected nationally at the age of 16. Pupils enjoy hearing their teachers read stories, plays, poems and factual material but they do not read aloud fluently or with feeling. Most read accurately but the sense is lost because they read too quickly. They gather the meaning of what they read but do not convey the emotions or feelings suggested in the text. Most pupils read their examination texts very thoroughly. This helps them to achieve well. However, they do not read more widely across a range of fiction and non-fiction.
166. The standards in writing achieved by a significant proportion of pupils are well below those expected nationally at the age of 16. Standards of simple spelling are

satisfactory. Most pupils use full stops and capital letters correctly and cope with the basics of grammar. Some pupils write fluently and sometimes imaginatively. For example, some pupils in Year 9 wrote in exciting detail about an imaginary experience of 'leaving home'. These pupils communicate meaning clearly and show an awareness of their reader but many others do not. In the work seen during the inspection a significant proportion of pupils do not write in complete sentences. Sometimes written work is unfinished.

167. For these reasons, standards in English remain below those expected nationally despite significant improvements in examination results. Some pupils do communicate meaning through their writing, showing some awareness of the reader, and developing their ideas through some imaginative work. For example, pupils in Year 9 wrote in exciting detail about an imaginary experience based on a topic 'leaving home'.
168. Standards are rising at the age of 14 because pupils' progress is monitored closely and preparation for the national tests is now more rigorous. For example, in a Year 9 lesson pupils studying a Shakespeare play were encouraged to write about Macbeth's feelings immediately after he has murdered King Duncan. This prepared pupils well for answering questions that occur in their examination.
169. Standards at age 16 are below those expected nationally. Results in the Year 2000 GCSE examination were below the national average for all schools. Two-fifths of the pupils obtained grades A*-C compared with nearly three-fifths nationally. Just over nine-tenths of the pupils obtained grades A*-G, a proportion slightly lower than the national average. However, these results are well above the average for similar schools nationally. They are in the top five percent nationally when compared with the standards these pupils had reached two years earlier at the age of 14. Results were better in English than in mathematics and science. Pupils did less well in English literature. The girls did much better than the boys in English and in English literature. Since the previous inspection GCSE results have improved at a faster rate than in mathematics and science.
170. Standards in lessons for pupils between the ages of 14 and 16 were below those expected nationally. Many pupils still do not speak confidently, contribute to discussion or sustain an argument. Many do not use standard English in situations that demand more formal language and the range of their reading is narrow. Progress in lessons is broadly satisfactory. The girls work purposefully towards achieving the best possible grades. The boys are less well-motivated and more disruptive in lessons. Their poor concentration and a lack of perseverance results in much slower progress, sometimes unsatisfactory learning and overall lower standards. Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve well because they attend school regularly and work hard.
171. There has been a good degree of improvement since the previous inspection. Results in the national tests at the age of 14 have risen and are now well above the average for similar schools. The proportion of pupils obtaining grades A*-C at GCSE has more than doubled over the last three years. Schemes of work have been revised and pupils are now well prepared for national tests and GCSE examinations. Assessment procedures are more rigorous and now include opportunities for pupils review and evaluate their own work. Monitoring arrangements are very thorough and tests at the end of every term provide regular information on pupils' progress.
172. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. It was satisfactory or better in nearly nine-tenths of the lessons seen and good in just over half of them. There was more good teaching and less unsatisfactory teaching seen in lessons

for pupils between the ages of 14 and 16. Teaching was unsatisfactory in just over one-tenth of the lessons seen. Pupils with special educational need learn well because they are well supported in class. The quality of learning of pupils who speak English as an additional language is satisfactory.

173. Where the teaching was good in lessons for pupils between the ages of 11 and 14 pupils were being well prepared for the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 with an emphasis on the intensive reading and analysis of examination texts, including poetry, plays and stories. For example in a Year 8 lesson a delicious frisson of fear was shared as pupils described what it felt like to be left in the dark as a result of studying 'Haunting Tales'. Pupils are well taught to sift through non-fiction articles to select the most important facts. All this gives them useful experience of different styles of writing so that in the tests they are able to tackle questions on unseen texts as well as on the work they have prepared in detail.
174. In the best teaching seen in lessons for pupils between the ages of 14 and 16 there was a very good pace in the learning but pupils were also given time to think as they reflected on and were helped to analyse the cinematic techniques used in a film version of *Macbeth*. Pupils learn well when the lessons are planned carefully and the tasks set are sufficiently challenging. This was evident in lessons where the brisk pace sustained interest but also allowed pupils to think about what they were doing. For example, Year 11 pupils were intrigued to discover through the study of poetry linked to the theme of 'Hearts and Partners' how society's attitudes towards women changed over time.
175. Year 11 pupils have well planned revision schemes and examination techniques are well taught. This raises their levels of confidence in tackling examination questions. Regular target setting linked to very good marking helps to motivate pupils to achieve well. The impact of these good features was seen in a Year 11 lesson as pupils responded enthusiastically to the cracking pace set for writing a timed essay.
176. Where the quality of teaching and learning was unsatisfactory the pupils did not have sufficiently varied tasks to engage or sustain their interest. This led to inattention, restlessness and unsatisfactory learning. In some lessons seen teachers prepared their work meticulously but pupils' unwillingness to respond to the topics presented hinders their own learning and that of others in the class. More general areas of weakness include too little use of ICT and insufficient emphasis upon developing a wider range of reading beyond the examination texts in Years 10 and 11. Arrangements for homework are satisfactory. There is a good range of tasks set but some pupils regularly fail to complete it.
177. The provision for drama is fragmented, one term in each of Years 7 and 8, and this provides an unsatisfactory degree of continuity in the development of skills.
178. The leadership and management of the English department are very good. The subject leader has a clear plan to improve standards that is already producing results. The teaching staff is carefully deployed to achieve this and the quality of teaching and pupils' progress towards their targets are carefully monitored.

LITERACY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

179. The literacy project is a major priority of the school. Its aims are to develop skills through English lessons and also through other subjects of the curriculum. Good

use is made of the methods used in the national literacy strategy to develop pupils' knowledge, understanding and use of words, sentence and longer texts.

180. The leadership and management of these arrangements are good. The literacy co-ordinator provides a good level of guidance and advice. There is a liaison teacher in every subject department with responsibility for developing appropriate literacy skills. Test results that indicate pupils' levels of literacy are given to each subject area so that teachers can identify the problems that pupils will face in coping with the printed word and plan their work to match the needs of the pupils.
181. This is leading to an overall satisfactory degree of improvement. Provision is good in religious education, music, geography and modern foreign languages. In design technology, science and mathematics teachers use and display vocabulary relevant to their subjects but pupils are not developing their use of technical language sufficiently. In history and information technology the lack of well-developed literacy skills hinders the progress made by pupils. Computers are not used enough to develop literacy skills.
182. The 'Transition Project' is run jointly with partner primary schools. The literacy coordinator has designed a scheme of work for primary teachers to follow to support pupils as they move from primary to secondary school.
183. The school places a high priority on improving pupils' levels of literacy. The school is part of a pilot project set up by Sheffield Education Authority to improve the use of literacy skills across the curriculum. The school was awarded the Quality Mark issued by the Basic Skills Agency in July 2000. The new Draft English Framework for Learning has been incorporated into the course structure for English studies.

MATHEMATICS

184. Standards are improving. They are very low when pupils enter the school, in the lowest 5 per cent nationally. The results in the Year 2000 national tests in mathematics taken by all pupils at the age of 11 before they enter the school are very low compared with the national average. Standardised tests taken shortly after pupils enter the school support this picture of very low attainment on entry over the past few years.
185. Standards in the work seen at the age of 14 and at the age of 16 are well below those expected nationally. Pupils make good progress by the age of 14, however, through the teachers' strong emphasis on basic skills and the generally high expectations. Purposeful teaching is also having a positive impact on the quality of work at the age of 16, although this is less noticeable so far in improved standards.
186. At the age of 14, the proportion of pupils reaching level 5 or above in the Year 2000 national tests was well below the national average for all schools. The percentage gaining level 6 or above, and so exceeding the national expectation, was also well below the national average. Four per cent of pupils gained Level 7 compared with 19 per cent nationally. These results are better than those in science but not as good as those in English. Over the last four years, standards have risen faster than the national trend, with a marked improvement in 2000, coinciding with the appointment of a new head of department. Whereas four years ago pupils were on average eight terms behind in their work, by 2000 this had been reduced to five terms behind.
187. Over the past three years the standards reached by the boys has been significantly behind those of the girls, but for the summer 2000 tests they were higher. Pupils from ethnic minority groups are placed in all of the ability sets, and they attain

appropriately. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are given the help needed to acquire a sound understanding of their tasks. Pupils with special educational needs, who make up around half the number of pupils in several classes, are making appropriate progress.

188. In comparison with similar schools, attainment is broadly average overall. The proportion of pupils gaining the expected level 5 was above the average for similar schools, while the proportion exceeding the expectation was average.
189. At age 16, standards in GCSE mathematics have improved steadily over the past four years with a more marked improvement in 2000 when more pupils were entered for the level of examination that made it possible for them to obtain a grade C. Approaching one-quarter of the year group gained grades A*-C, while approximately four-fifths gained grades A*-G. These results are well below the national average for secondary schools but broadly in line with those schools that have a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. They are well above average when compared with the standards that the pupils had previously reached at the age of 14. The upward trend in grades A*-C reflects the higher expectations placed on pupils to obtain these higher grades.
190. At the age of 14, pupils in the higher-attaining groups have good numeracy skills. They have developed good mental facility with number and transfer this well to algebraic methods. This was shown clearly in a lesson on solving linear simultaneous equations, where very good questioning encouraged pupils to think and reason about the steps to take and there were opportunities for discussion in order to confirm understanding. The pupils maintained a good work ethic throughout the lesson and demonstrated some delight in mastering the process.
191. In the middle- and lower-attaining groups, the learning and progress of a significant minority of pupils is often adversely affected by their lack of interest and short concentration span. This was counteracted well in several lessons, though not in all, by the teachers' positive styles and engagement with the pupils. In a lesson on rotational symmetry, for example, the positive teaching encouraged a good learning atmosphere but the pupils' understanding, and their skill in forming mental images, were below average. In other lessons on the area of triangles and on lines of symmetry, there were clear presentations and instructions on what to do, but the pupils found any independent learning difficult because of a lack of confidence and basic skills. The questioning placed more emphasis on correct answers than on getting pupils to explain and give reasons, so that their ability to recognise lines of symmetry at a slanting angle was not promoted. Overall, pupils' numeracy skills and confidence with number in the lower-attaining groups are well below average, although the recent emphasis on mental arithmetic is promoting progress.

192. At the age of 16, in the higher-attaining sets, pupils' confidence and skills in numeracy have been consolidated well through effective teaching and skills practice. Standards are above average and pupils attain well in relation to what they have learnt previously. In a lesson on trigonometry within three-dimensional figures, the teacher's good subject knowledge and expectations had a direct impact on the pupils' learning and attainment. Sharp interventions, well-directed questions and clear explanations that dealt effectively with what the pupils did not understand helped them to concentrate well on the ratios needed. These pupils are working at a good GCSE standard. They show generally good understanding of the ideas and above average number skills, such as working with decimals and a calculator. Similarly, pupils' understanding of cumulative frequency was good in a lesson where clear teaching combined with good work attitudes by the pupils to establish the numeracy and graphical skills. They demonstrated very good work attitudes and behaviour, working hard throughout lessons, so that progress was good.
193. Within the average- and lower-attaining sets for this age group, standards range from broadly average to very low. Achievement is broadly satisfactory in building on what pupils have learnt previously. In a lesson on the areas of rectangles, for example, most pupils understood the basic idea and method. They lacked confidence, however, and were reliant on the teacher for reassurance and support; a restless atmosphere also slowed progress. In a lesson on corresponding and alternate angles, the pupils understood the basic ideas but several did not have the understanding to apply this to new situations. The good shape to the lesson and some collaboration between pupils led to average standards overall.
194. The quality of teaching is good overall. It was good or better in three-fifths and very good in one-fifth of lessons. The best teaching was seen in Years 10 and 11 where two-thirds of the lessons were good or better. No teaching seen was unsatisfactory.
195. Lesson planning is clear and based on a satisfactory scheme of work. Planning sets out the learning intentions for the lesson, although there is scope for greater clarity as to what the higher-attaining groups within lessons are expected to understand. Teachers' own subject knowledge is good, helping the presentation and explanations of the ideas, and they place a good emphasis on developing basic numeracy skills. In several lessons, teachers concentrated on factual answers and did not explore the pupils' reasoning enough in order to confirm their mathematical understanding.
196. Teaching methods are generally satisfactory and sometimes good. They promote a satisfactory level of understanding. The good use of resources, such as having positive and negative number cards for pupils to order, are a feature of the most effective methods. The main teaching method consists of exposition by the teacher followed by worked examples; there are not enough opportunities to discuss mathematical ideas or to take part in investigations in order to develop a fuller understanding.
197. The teachers' management of the pupils is mostly effective in maintaining behaviour and concentration. The lack of interest and short attention shown by a significant minority of pupils in a few lessons slows the overall pace and productivity by distracting other pupils and diverting the teacher's time. The head of department and some teachers set high expectations for behaviour and standards that promote good progress, but the example is not followed by all.
198. Several aspects of the department's work are promoting higher standards. There is very good liaison with the six primary schools from which most pupils transfer. Two members of the mathematics department have each taught in three of these

schools alongside the Year 6 class teachers, choosing an algebraic topic to illustrate the quality of work expected. This collaboration was highly successful and the task was extended into Year 7 on transfer. There is a much-improved emphasis on basic skills, including numeracy. Interesting booklets have been written by department members to support all pupils with mental and oral skills. The results of practice tests for the age 14 mental/ oral tests show significant improvements as a consequence.

199. The department has recognised the benefits of grouping pupils on the basis of attainment early in Year 7. All pupils are set targets based on their Key Stage 2 results or their end of year tests. This arrangement is helping pupils to become aware of, and motivated towards, what they might achieve. There is also frequent reference in lessons to the National Curriculum levels implicit in their tasks. Most marking is up-to-date and teachers are beginning the practice of stating the National Curriculum levels of the work to encourage pupils, and to show they can reach the expected standard. However, there is infrequent comment in pupils' books on how to improve.
200. Leadership and management are very good. They are characterised by a clear understanding of what needs to be done to bring about further improvement and the energy and determination to do it. Teaching staff are deployed to maximum effect in order to raise standards. High expectations are a strong feature of the new subject leadership. There are very good procedures and routines to support consistent teaching and establish a shared commitment to raising standards. All pupils have personal targets that are based on a realistic assessment of their progress. The curriculum is well organised and shared planning is a regular feature to support less-experienced colleagues and share high expectations. There is good practice in observing lessons, with constructive feedback to support improvements. The department is accommodated in a good suite of rooms, and the range of resources is satisfactory.

SCIENCE

201. Standards on entry to the school at the age of 11 are well below the national average. The proportion of pupils who reached the standard expected nationally at the age of 11 in 2000 was well below average for all schools and for similar schools nationally.
202. At the age of 14 and also at the age of 16 standards are well below those that pupils are expected to reach nationally.
203. In the Year 2000 national tests at the age of 14 the results in science were in the lowest five per cent for all schools nationally. They were broadly in line with the average for similar schools. A little less than one quarter of the pupils reached the national expectation, level 5, or did better than this. Almost three fifths of pupils did so nationally. The results of the boys and the girls were broadly similar and followed the national pattern. When pupils enter the school their national test results are higher in science than they are in mathematics and English. At the age of 14 they do less well in science than they do in English and mathematics by a much larger margin than is the case nationally.
204. Over the last 3 years, standards in science at the age of 14 show an improving trend but less so than in mathematics and English.
205. GCSE results at the age of 16 are well below average. Just over one tenth of the pupils obtained grades A*-C, compared with approximately half of all pupils

nationally. These results are an improvement on the previous year but lower than those in mathematics and English. The proportion of pupils obtaining grades A* - G is below the national average. Boys' attainment is slightly better than girls', in contrast to the national pattern.

206. These results are below the average for those schools that two years previously achieved a similar points score in the national tests at the age of 14
207. The overall standard of pupils' work at the age of 14 is well below that which pupils are expected to reach. Their understanding is sometimes incomplete and occasionally confused. For example, the symbol for a variable resistor was confused with that for a voltmeter. Some pupils know that atoms join to make molecules but could not explain the terms 'element' or 'soluble'.
208. Most pupils' work at the age of 16 is also well below the standards expected nationally. A small number of higher attaining pupils achieve satisfactory standards. For example, they have a satisfactory level of understanding of the principles of static electricity and can partially describe atomic structure, identifying electrons and the nucleus. They do not understand clearly the content of the nucleus and charges on particles. Most lower attaining pupils can identify the terms solid, liquid and gas but do not understand that these were states of matter. Some showed a satisfactory understanding of photosynthesis but others confused the process with respiration.
209. Progress is satisfactory at the age of 14 and at the age of 16. Some pupils make good progress in covering the topics required in the National Curriculum and their knowledge improves well. Some make unsatisfactory progress because they miss or fail to complete work. Sometimes questions are answered in incomplete sentences. Low attendance also limits the progress made by some pupils. Typically, only three-quarters of the class were present in lessons seen during the week of the inspection. The weak literacy and numeracy skills of lower attaining pupils, who form the majority, also contribute to unsatisfactory rate of progress made.
210. The quality of teaching is broadly satisfactory overall. It was good or better in two-thirds of the lessons seen in Years 10 and 11 and never less than satisfactory. It was unsatisfactory in a third of the lessons seen in Years 7-9.
211. In the best lessons subject knowledge was well used, explanations were clear and promoted a good level of understanding. Pupils were well managed and time and resources were well used. For example, in a lesson on pollution questions were well used at the start of the lesson to review what pupils already knew. There followed a series of short activities that retained the interest and concentration of the pupils well.
212. Where teaching was unsatisfactory planning was weak and the chosen methods did not develop understanding or fully involve the pupils' interest. For example, in a lesson on the blast furnace, the introduction was inadequate, the teaching unenthusiastic and untidy board work communicated a low level of expectation. Subsequent demonstrations were not clearly linked to the furnace and were ineffective in developing understanding or arousing interest. During the lesson pupils, when asked, did not know what the blast furnace was or what it made.
213. Schemes of work make provision for practical work but during the inspection there was an emphasis on the use of textbooks to provide information and questions to answer. These methods did not engage the interest or arouse the curiosity of the pupils. Where teaching was stimulating, pupils' interest was sustained, as when

the teacher used the Van de Graaf generator or demonstrated the amount of oxygen in the air.

214. Improvement since the last inspection has been broadly satisfactory. There has been some improvement in the national test results of both boys and girls at the age of 14 but GCSE results at the age of 16 have declined over the last three years. There have been some improvements in some aspects of teaching including the use of questions and the stating of objectives but these are not fully shared in order to engage the interest or confirm the understanding of the pupils. The review of learning remains too brief at the end of many lessons and there is sometimes more emphasis on controlling behaviour than on managing learning.
215. Leadership and management are broadly satisfactory. A start has been made in improving GCSE results and the average point score in 2000 was broadly similar to that achieved in mathematics. The department is now monitoring attainment and progress more rigorously and setting targets. This is starting to have an impact on expectations and standards. There have been several new appointments this year and induction arrangements have been well managed by the subject leader. However, standards remain low and the rate of improvement has been slower than in English and mathematics. Substantial effort and time have been spent in revising the schemes of work but the carefully defined range of objectives to meet the range of individual needs in the lesson are not always applied in practice. Some health and safety issues need to be addressed, including the testing of portable electrical equipment and the storage of chemicals and stock lists.

ART AND DESIGN

216. Standards in art are well below those that pupils are expected to reach by the age of 14, although they have improved since the last inspection. In the Year 2000 fewer than half of the pupils reached national expectations in the statutory National Curriculum teacher assessments at the age of 14. The girls did much better than the boys. These results are a significant improvement since the last inspection. Fewer than half of the pupils gained a grade A*-C in the 2000 GCSE examination. The girls again did better than the boys. Those pupils who followed the creative textiles course were more successful than those who specialised in drawing and painting. Their examination results were amongst the best in the school. Every pupil who sat the GCSE examination was awarded a grade A*-G which is above the national average.
217. Standards of work seen during the inspection continue to improve between the ages of 11 and 14 but remain well below the standard expected at the age of 14. The range of work clearly indicates that the teaching concentrates on a narrow curriculum of drawing and painting with insufficient opportunities for pupils to work regularly with textiles, clay or sculpture. The use of ICT to generate and modify imagery is unsatisfactory. The quality of experimentation and investigation in the work seen is poor. Some of the best work includes graphic images of face masks and compositions which make reference to Asian, Chinese and Japanese textile work, while the work of Henri Rousseau inspired a series of leaf drawings with a Jungle theme.
218. Standards at the age of 16, while improving, remain well below the national average. Still life occupies much of the pupils' time. Once again drawing skills remain weak with pupils unsure of the basic skills of selecting and recording from observation. Many pupils lack confidence or a spirit of adventure and are reluctant to embark upon personal investigation; they are uncomfortable using anything other than a pencil for drawing. The textile work displayed in and around the department demonstrates how the pupils soon use their creative skills when they are given a

range of materials and processes. The way they are allowed to use images taken directly from secondary source materials is further lowering standards and there is a lack of response to everyday situations.

219. Achievement is satisfactory. The pupils have had varied and often limited experiences of art education when they enter the school at the age of 11. Although there is a lack of information of their levels of prior attainment, their progress by the age of 14 is good. Progress slows in Year 9 and it is now that poor attendance begins to have an impact on their learning. Little more than three-quarters of the pupils attended classes during the inspection. The achievement of the pupils by the age of 16 is no more than satisfactory and reflects the little time and energy they devote to their schoolwork and homework. Those pupils who have special educational needs make good progress by the age of 14 and satisfactory progress by the age of 16. Pupils who are gifted and talented make satisfactory progress but are limited by the narrow curriculum. A wider and more demanding curriculum with opportunities to work with clay, print, textiles or computer generated images will allow these pupils to make better use their talents.
220. Teaching and learning in art are generally satisfactory, while much is good, and occasionally very good. Good relationships are a strength of the department. Teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 are satisfactory and sometimes good. Three-fifths of the teaching in Years 7-9 were good and one fifth was unsatisfactory. Teaching in Years 10 and 11 is never less than satisfactory. One of the three lessons seen was very good. These older pupils learn more slowly due to their devoting insufficient time or energy to their studies. Some Year 11 pupils are less committed to their studies than are their teachers and arrive in lessons without sketchbooks or sufficient prior research to carry them through the lesson. Good relationships are a strength of the department. Most pupils recognise their teacher's feel for their subject and respond accordingly. It is a credit to the pupils that during recent staff illnesses they have continued in their efforts to improve.
221. In the best lessons the pupils soon accept the creative challenge. In a very good lesson, Year 10 pupils responded positively to their teacher's enthusiastic invitation to investigate the potential of varied, more stimulating materials. The way the teacher moved between her pupils, assessing their work and encouraging them in their efforts was most effective. In another lesson, Year 7 pupils were delighted when working with *papier maché* and art straws to create a mask in the style of the painters L.S. Lowry or Beryl Cook. Their gains in knowledge of both practical technique and creativity were good. In both lessons the tasks allowed the pupils to become fully involved in the activity. The way the teachers presented the lessons and the manner and rate of working they devised caused the pupils to deepen their understanding of the work of other artists while improving their own practical skills. When pupils are given such opportunities for freedom of expression they accept eagerly.
222. The teachers have good subject knowledge. Their careful explanation and use of both general and specialist art keywords as they occur, make a good contribution to pupils' literacy.
223. The way teachers manage their classes, some of which have a number of potentially difficult pupils, is a good feature of many lessons. Unfortunately there are occasions when the poor behaviour of a small number of pupils, often girls, interrupts the learning of the majority or when noise from conversation rises until it too interferes with learning. In the only unsatisfactory lesson, the work set for Year 9 pupils was unchallenging and was neither clearly defined nor well matched to what the pupils were capable of doing. As a result, the pupils had little interest in the work.

224. There are other weaknesses in the teaching that are restricting the quality of the pupils' work. Occasionally planned activities lack sufficient challenge and pupils become involved in repetitious mechanical processes and techniques, requiring little creative thought or imagination. In other lessons there is insufficient planned attention to the teaching of basic drawing skills. Pupils need better instruction in the basic skills of observation, selection and recording of information, with opportunities to explore a wider range of processes and materials. Sketchbooks are under-used from the age of 11 and few pupils have developed skills of experimentation or personal research. There is also a need to raise the expectations of pupils and teachers alike in all year groups. The balance needs to shift away from "finished work" and more towards developmental and investigative work. The setting of homework is inconsistent and fails to challenge some of the more able pupils, or those pupils who, because of the popular culture, are perhaps reluctant to be seen to work hard and to do their best in front of others.
225. The curriculum is neither broad nor balanced. Each teacher has a copy of the department's very detailed schemes of work, which have details of the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, but there are few occasions when the schemes make full use teachers' specialist skills, which include textiles, three-dimensional design, and graphics. The Year 9 timetable limits art and design to either the first or the second half of the school year, interfering with continuity of study and having implications for choice at options time. The methods for assessing pupils' work are satisfactory and allow the pupils a realistic view of their performance relative to school and national standards but there are insufficient strategies for pupils to engage in meaningful self-assessment of their work.
226. Since the last inspection and the more recent HMI monitoring visits the department has made satisfactory progress. Progress is now good by the age of 14 but remains at best satisfactory up to the age of 16. In a minority of lessons the tasks are not yet sufficiently varied to meet the needs of the full ability range. Examination results, remain well below average but have improved. The teaching of literacy plays a central role in the pupils' work. The department has improved and is improving.
227. Leadership and management of the subject are good and provide a firm direction for staff and pupils alike, although the narrowness of the curriculum and the prescriptive nature of the schemes of work are significant weaknesses. The work of the teaching staff is monitored regularly and there are formal methods of recording teachers' performances. ICT is not used enough. The introduction and use of sophisticated computer software, common enough in art education today, should be a priority. Strategic planning for the short, medium and long term, lacks details of cost, staffing and resources. The accommodation is very good and makes a positive impact on the quality of education provided. The resources for learning are good and plentiful and include much new equipment for both two- and three-dimensional studies although some equipment, including the department's computer, is under-used.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

228. Standards in design and technology are unsatisfactory. They are better in making than in designing. However, there is a trend of improving standards since the 1998 inspection, because the quality of teaching has improved and is now good, particularly so in food technology.

229. Only one third of pupils at age 14 in the Year 2000 statutory teacher assessments reached the standards expected nationally. Approximately two-thirds of pupils do so nationally. However, work in lessons and completed earlier this year indicates that standards are improving. They were satisfactory in half of the lessons seen.
230. Standards in work seen at the age of 14 are below those expected nationally. By the end of Year 9 most pupils are unable to draw upon a wide range of sources of information other than those provided by their teachers. They do not make preliminary models to explore and test their design ideas. They are not making enough decisions regarding the choice of materials and construction methods. They do not describe them in a manufacturing specification.
231. GCSE results at the age of 16 in 2000 were well below the national average. The proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-C in resistant materials and in food technology was well below the national average, although all gained at least a grade G.
232. Standards are higher than this in the work of the current Year 11 pupils. Approximately half of the pupils will sit a GCSE examination in food technology, graphic products or resistant materials. Inspection evidence indicates that of those pupils entered for GCSE in 2001 about half are currently reaching a satisfactory standard. A small number in food technology are producing work of a good standard. Boys and girls achieve similar standards.
233. The use of a range of computer applications is beginning to raise standards. However, pupils' experience of computer aided design and manufacture requires further development in all years.
234. Some very good GCSE food technology coursework was seen in Year 11. For example, projects involving the design and manufacture of a range of food products for sale in the school canteen showed that pupils could investigate the needs of potential customers and work to a product specification.
235. Pupils working in resistant materials and graphic products are producing satisfactory coursework projects, including some who were designing interior lighting units and some who were remodelling mobile telephones. These pupils showed that they were able to work to a plan and make the finished article to an acceptable standard.
236. The quality of teaching is good. Two thirds of lessons were good or better for pupils aged 14 –16 and half were good or better for pupils aged 11 –14. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. Good lessons have clear learning objectives, are well managed and organised, are stimulating and have pace; for example, when year 9 pupils were involved in computer aided design and manufacture of puzzle games. In addition, the very good lessons show evidence of inspirational teaching, combined with high expectations and very good question and answer sessions, for example, when Year 10 pupils prepare a range of baked cake products ready for sensory analysis.
237. However, some teaching of design in resistant materials is over-reliant on all aspects of designing being taught in every project, particularly in years 7 and 8, when progress is only just satisfactory. This is because the different aspects of designing do not receive enough in-depth attention where appropriate. This limits pupils' rate of progress in developing these skills.
238. Specialist teachers have good subject knowledge and this has a positive impact on learning. On-going marking and assessment of GCSE projects are also having a

positive impact on standards because pupils receive constructive comments from their teachers that help them to improve their work.

239. Homework is used effectively to help pupils to consolidate class work, to prepare for lessons and to develop their technical vocabulary. It has a positive impact on standards. Much has been done to support the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills by way of high quality classroom displays containing technical vocabulary and the provision of well-structured worksheets to support pupils' designing. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress, particularly in the practical aspects of making.
240. Pupils who have a regular pattern of attendance make good progress in their design and technology lessons. For about one quarter of pupils, poor attendance has a significant negative effect on their progress over time and on their standards of attainment.
241. Pupils' attitudes are generally good. They enjoy design and technology and take pride in their work. They are willing to participate fully in lessons and readily offer answers to questions from their teachers. They share tools and equipment fairly and handle them safely. They are eager to do well and take responsibility to clear and tidy up working areas at the end of every lesson. Design folders and written work are kept neat, tidy and properly organised.
242. The shared leadership and management are satisfactory. The two heads of department are particularly enthusiastic and set good examples for their colleagues. There are systems in place that enable them to monitor teaching and learning. Regular departmental meetings focus on improving standards by evaluating the design and technology curriculum and assessment issues. Pupils' reports meet statutory requirements and focus on targets for improvement.
243. The department is learning to make better use of assessment data to enable all pupils to fulfil their potential. The scheme of work is well balanced. It provides pupils with a broad experience in all aspects of designing and making and in a range of materials. The departmental development plans set out clear directions for the way forward and improvements are being systematically phased in. However, there is still a need to develop a more co-ordinated approach to the management of design and technology as a whole so that curriculum planning is firmly linked to financial planning. This issue remains unresolved since the 1998 inspection.
244. The accommodation for design and technology is modern and spacious but secure storage facilities for hand tools in the three resistant materials workshops are unsatisfactory. The level and quality of technician support is good.

GEOGRAPHY

245. Standards on entry to the school are very low. Most pupils make generally good progress between the ages of 11 and 14. There was insufficient evidence to confirm the progress made in the geographical parts of the integrated humanities course that all pupils study between the ages of 14 and 16.
246. Standards in the statutory teacher assessments at the age of 14 in the Year 2000 were well below average. Slightly less than a third of the pupils reached the expected standard compared with nearly two-thirds nationally. GCSE results at the age of 16 in the Year 2000 integrated humanities examination were below average. Approximately a third of the pupils gained grades A*-C compared with the national average of approximately two-fifths. Nearly all of the pupils gained at least a grade

G. These results are better than at the time of the last inspection and similar to the previous year.

247. The standards of work at the age of 14 are well below those expected nationally. Levels of literacy are weak and this has been recognised by the department as a key factor affecting the rate at which pupils learn and make progress. In Year 7 the majority of pupils develop basic Ordnance Survey map work skills but have difficulty using scales and six figure references. They are also aware of the components of weather and climate. In Year 9 they study development issues and can describe global patterns of development and trade. They can distinguish between developed and developing countries and offer simple explanations for their differing characteristics. They use the correct terms to describe volcanoes and earthquakes and their impact on human activity. Standards remain well below the expected level because most pupils cannot explain why things happen or appear as they do.
248. There was insufficient evidence to confirm the standards in geography within the GCSE integrated humanities course but standards in Year 10 were generally below national expectations. Pupils in Year 10 can classify different types of employment but only the more able can relate this to specific locations in the UK. Standards remain below the expected level nationally because most pupils cannot annotate maps and diagrams clearly and accurately and have too few opportunities to analyse data in order to explain geographical patterns and physical and human features.
249. The department has made good progress since the previous full inspection in 1998 and subsequent HMI monitoring visits. There has been a greater emphasis on the teaching of basic skills, particularly in literacy. Learning objectives are made clear to pupils at the start of lessons, together with important geographical terms. The monitoring of progress and standards is more rigorous and the majority of pupils are now aware of the level that they are working at, and their target level by the end of the year. The move to a single subject approach within humanities in Years 7, 8 and 9 has increased staff confidence, thus allowing specialist subject skills to be taught more effectively. All year groups are now taught in groups based on prior attainment so that work can be more closely to the pupils' needs as part of the strategy to raise standards. Poor attendance remains a weakness that slows the progress of many pupils. In the lessons observed attendance averaged only 69 per cent and this clearly has a negative impact on the continuity of teaching and learning.
250. The quality of teaching is good. In two-thirds of lessons observed it was good or better. None of the teaching seen was unsatisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge, insist on high standards of behaviour and are confident in their presentation of the lesson. Questioning techniques are used effectively by teachers to engage the pupils and build their self-confidence. Lessons proceed at an appropriate pace, with the pupils responding well to the demands of their teachers because relationships are good. Where the teaching is very good there is a greater degree of challenge in the work set and the pupils are encouraged to analyse geographical data and make reasoned judgements. In a Year 9 lesson on development issues a topical 'Comic Relief' video was used to introduce the lesson and the pupils were encouraged to explore the issues relating to patterns of world trade. Extension activities were provided for the more able and writing frames were used to promote literacy
251. Leadership and management are good. The team of teachers works well together, recognising the importance of common objectives and the sharing of good practice. Displays of pupils' work and current geographical issues stimulate

interest in the subject. However, the department needs to make greater use of the available statistical data to analyse pupils' progress and performance by gender and ethnicity, and use the results to inform teaching and learning and identify for the pupils what they need to do to improve. Fully integrated schemes of work need to be completed for Years 7 and 9 and for two modules in the GCSE Integrated Humanities course. The development of the use of ICT needs to be continued and the department must ensure that the range of differentiated teaching materials enables pupils of all abilities to be suitably challenged.

HISTORY

252. Standards are very low in terms of both literacy and the level of historical skills, knowledge and understanding when pupils enter the school at the age of 11
253. Standards in the statutory teacher assessments at the age of 14 are well below average. Two-fifths of the pupils reached the expected standard compared with two thirds nationally. Pupils who speak English as an additional language attain standards broadly similar to those of the other pupils. Pupils with special educational needs, both in the withdrawal groups and in the three teaching sets, reach standards that are appropriate to their level of prior attainment and make a level of progress in lessons that is always at least satisfactory and is sometimes good or very good. Gifted and talented pupils make good or satisfactory progress in lessons but there are no instances of very good progress being made by these pupils. Considering the low levels of attainment on entry to the school, the achievement of pupils in general is satisfactory.
254. There were no candidates for GCSE history in the year 2000. In 1999, there were nine candidates: none achieved grades within the range of A* - C but all of them were awarded grades within the range of A* - G
255. Standards of work at the age of 14 are unsatisfactory: They are satisfactory in only two of the five key elements of the National Curriculum. The ability of pupils to organize and communicate their knowledge and understanding of the subject is satisfactory: some of those in the higher and in the middle-attaining groups present work pleasingly in their notebooks. Most pupils are also able to use sources of information, both primary and secondary, to advance their study of different themes and topics. Knowledge of chronology however, is weak and the appreciation of differing interpretations of history is unsatisfactory. These are important reasons why standards remain unsatisfactory despite the overall satisfactory progress. There is some good use of imagination and empathy, particularly in studies of the English Civil War in Year 8 and of the enclosure movement and urban living conditions of the nineteenth century in Year 9. Except for pupils in the higher-attaining groups, the standard of literacy, in respect both of writing and of reading aloud from books, is unsatisfactory. This is an important additional factor to explain why standards are unsatisfactory.
256. The analysis of work indicates that pupils at the age of 16 reach an unsatisfactory standard in the history component of the GCSE Humanities course. Some pupils in Year 10 however, following their recent visit to the Holocaust Museum, have produced some very good work on the treatment of Jews in Nazi Germany that demonstrates high levels of empathy.
257. The quality of teaching in lessons for pupils aged 11 to 14 is satisfactory overall but with some good, very good and unsatisfactory teaching also in evidence. Teaching was good or better in three-eighths and unsatisfactory in one-eighth of lessons. Teachers have a secure command of subject and their skilful presentation of lessons engages pupils' attention and interest. Clear and precise learning

objectives, communicated clearly at the start of the lesson, help pupils to concentrate on what they are going to learn. Teachers enjoy good relations with the great majority of pupils and they choose methods that best work to promote understanding: in a Year 7 lesson for example, the display of sketches representing the different social groups in medieval England in pyramid shape on the whiteboard made a strong visual image that helped pupils to grasp the essentials of the feudal system. Teachers also ensure, in the early part of lessons, that pupils know the meaning of vocabulary that is important for a full understanding of theme and content. Special arrangements are made for the teaching of groups of pupils with special educational needs in Years 7 and 8. The quality of teaching of these groups is very good: it creates a high level of interest in the subject and an active participation the lesson.

258. There was insufficient evidence to evaluate the quality of teaching within the historical component of the GCSE Humanities course. With reference to the most recent HMI monitoring report in February 2000, there is still a lack of challenge evident in some lessons, especially where those pupils who have been identified as gifted and talented are concerned. There is very little open questioning of these pupils to encourage deeper exploration of topics, a broader grasp of the subject and a wider appreciation of the differing interpretations of events, issues and personalities.
259. Whilst extension work is set on some occasions, it is not a consistent feature of the teaching of higher-attaining pupils. In one lesson where teaching was unsatisfactory, there was a slow start and the poor behaviour of some pupils, which restricted the level of progress made, was not effectively corrected. There are also weaknesses in the marking of work: whilst pupils are regularly given praise and encouragement for good work and effort, they are not always given clear indications as to where their work is inadequate or unsatisfactory. Pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills are not developed on a regular basis in the teaching of the subject.
260. Planning of the subject is thorough and fulfils all statutory requirements. There are sound schemes in use for the assessment of pupils' work and progress which are closely related both to the key elements and to the standards described in the National Curriculum. Some themes in the history component of the GCSE Humanities course are well designed to promote both the moral and the cultural development of pupils.
261. There has been a generally good degree of improvement since the previous inspection. Software packages are now in regular use in support of teaching the subject. Information and communication technology (ICT) skills are not developed regularly, due to the difficulties in gaining access to the appropriate facilities. There is now a better range of structured materials in regular use with the lower sets.
262. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There are several good features that are helping to raise standards for the majority of pupils. These include a well-considered development plan, in which the areas for development are prioritised and their costs estimated. There is a range of good quality resources comprising worksheets, topic books and videos, and including some that match the requirements of pupils with SEN. The head of subject has observed the lessons of other teachers, including those who work with pupils with special educational needs, and they have been given opportunity to observe the head of subject's teaching. The use and interpretation of data however, and especially that which relates to the assessment of pupils' work and progress, are not conspicuous features in the modification of curricular planning for different groups of pupils. The

appearance of the main teaching room is enhanced by displays of pupils' work and there are also lists of vocabulary germane to the subject in support of pupils' literacy. There has not been any staff development related to the teaching of the subject during the last two years.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

263. At the age of 11 when pupils enter the school no assessment is made to check standards in ICT.
264. Standards in the Year 2000 statutory teacher assessments at the age of 14 were well below the national average. Less than a quarter of the pupils reached the expected standard whereas three-fifths of pupils did so nationally. These results were an improvement on the previous year when only one-fifth of the pupils at this school reached the expected national standard
265. Standards of work seen between the ages of 11 to 14 were low because the range of the tasks undertaken was narrower and their complexity more limited than would be expected nationally for pupils of this age. Word processing and presentational techniques are well taught at the age of 11. By the age of 14 progress is generally satisfactory but the range of work is too narrow. Pupils are able to combine text and graphics to produce, for example, letters, posters and simple newspaper pages. Higher-attaining pupils are able to use the more advanced features of desktop publishing programmes, for example, designing custom borders to produce more sophisticated work, while lower attaining pupils are less confident in independently using ICT in their presentations. With the aid of a whole class demonstration and worksheet, Year 9 pupils were observed producing presentation slides with transitions and sound. Higher-attaining pupils were able to carry this out quickly and effectively, whilst lower-attaining pupils required more support. Other ICT skills are far less well developed. There is very little opportunity to use ICT for measurement through the use of data logging. Examples of simple spreadsheets based on a tuck shop project have been undertaken, but there is little development in using spreadsheets for testing predictions and modelling patterns. There is insufficient use of the Internet. For example, images are downloaded for insertion into documents but pupils do not use e-mail to share information.
266. Standards at the age of 16 remain below those that are expected nationally. Between the ages of 14 and 14 it ranges from high to well below the expected standard. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress and pupils in wheelchairs have access to all ICT rooms, using lifts. The higher attaining pupils are involved in the GNVQ course. Year 10 pupils who are studying the full and part1 courses attend a two-hour after-school session, and Year 11 students taking the GNVQ part 1 course attend a two-hour session on another evening. This level of commitment by pupils and staff produces high standards. The tasks are progressively more demanding, and higher-attaining pupils in Year 10 show good levels of achievement. Pupils were able to use spreadsheets and databases at a sophisticated level, the posters, party invitations and agendas for meetings produced in a desktop publishing programme, and letters for job applications were in the main well produced and work was well assessed. Pupils taking the part1 GNVQ course show achievements of variable breadth and depth and although this is well marked and assessed often folders contain little or no work.
267. Poor attendance is an important contributory factor to the lack of progress and low standards. Pupils who are not entered for the GNVQ courses undertake an ICT project, working from a student booklet. In a Year 11 group most pupils used word-

processing and desktop-publishing software to complete CV's, type up reports from other courses or work through exercises in the course booklet. Folders contained some work but standards were low and the range of applications used was severely limited. In a Year 10 group, no work was available in folders and no satisfactory outcomes were achieved during the lesson. Pupils were given little direction, nor were they asked to undertake challenging work. Poor teaching affected learning and the pupils did not remain on task. In its present form this is a very poorly organized course and is an area of weakness.

268. With the recent increase in staffing, improved facilities and improvements in teaching, standards have started to improve for pupils between the ages of 11 and 14. In 2001, for the first time, pupils will be entered for the Thomas Telford Project 40 ICT GNVQ part1 and the full GNVQ Intermediate courses. Other pupils undertake a project based ICT course. In the scrutiny of work and through lesson observation, no differences were observed in standards between boys and girls and overall achievement and progress are satisfactory at the ages of 14 and 16.
269. The co-ordination of ICT across the school is unsatisfactory. It has not been developed, with the result that the application of ICT skills in other subjects is not used in a planned way to raise standards and improve the quality of learning. The use of ICT by other subjects in the school is restricted by lack of access to the computer room. There are subject areas however, that include ICT as part of their planned schemes of work. In design and technology pupils are taught computer aided design and modelling. Other departments use ICT mainly for presentation and word processing. In music pupils use a sequencing programme for work on pop styles; modern foreign languages, integrated humanities and history make positive generally good use of ICT. Science uses data loggers and sensors for demonstrations on 13 local-networked Archimedes machines, but more sensors are required to develop effective work and access to dedicated software on the PC network.
270. Since the previous inspection there has been a good level of improvement in the quality of ICT resources with 3 well-equipped networked rooms capable of teaching full classes with one pupil to a machine and access to a full suite of modern software. However the ratio of 11:1 pupils to computers is less than the national average and is still insufficient to meet the demands of the curriculum. There is a good programme of planned staff development and a full revision of the schemes of work is in progress. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory and there are no targets set to raise standards
271. The quality of teaching is generally satisfactory. It was satisfactory or better in nine out of ten lessons seen and good in a third of them. It was unsatisfactory in one lesson.
272. In the best lessons activities are conducted at a good pace and the interactive white board is well used to gain attention and sustain concentration. This resource was particularly well used in a Year 8 lesson so that pupils could demonstrate what they had learned at the end of the lesson by using a digital pen to edit the text.
273. On other occasions learning was satisfactory but some time was lost because pupils in Years 7-9 showed a reluctance to follow simple instructions and their immaturity was not well managed. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 were more self-disciplined and received a good level of individual support as they worked.
274. When learning and teaching were unsatisfactory pupils were given little direction or guidance and the level of challenge in their work was low. In one lesson for pupils who were not following the GNVQ course pupils this led to pupils becoming

distracted and they make unsatisfactory progress. The scheme of work and assessment arrangements are unsatisfactory in Years 7-9, homework is not provided and targets are not set.

275. Leadership and management are satisfactory but the management of the whole school cross-curricular provision is poor. The subject leader is a recent full-time appointment supporting new ICT staff. The last two years have been a time of rapid development and the subject leader has put much in place. Displays in all ICT rooms are excellent and provide useful information for learning particularly, for pupils taking the GNVQ courses. However, there are few examples of key words on display and opportunities are missed for the development of literacy and the reinforcement of learning. The full-time network supervisor and technician are very well deployed and give excellent technical support.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

276. When pupils start at the school they have no previous experience of learning a modern foreign language. At the age of 14 and at the age of 16 standards are well below those that pupils are expected to reach nationally. The level of achievement and rate of progress are, however, satisfactory when compared with pupils' very low standards in English language skills on entry to the school in Year 7.
277. Standards in the Year 2000 statutory teacher assessments at the age of 14 were well below average. Approximately two fifths of the pupils reached the national expectation compared with two-thirds nationally.
278. In the Year 2000 approximately three-fifths of the year group took GCSE examinations at the age of 16 in modern foreign languages at the age of 11. This figure is relatively low in national terms. Less than one fifth of the candidates obtained grades A*- C in French, a very low proportion compared with the national average. The proportion gaining at least a grade G was slightly above the national average.
279. A group of higher-attaining pupils took GCSE Spanish and their results were well below the national average. Approximately one fifth of the candidates achieved a B or C grade. The results for middle-attaining pupils taking GCSE French and lower-attaining pupils taking GCSE German were also well below the national averages but the pupils' results were broadly in line with their performance in other subjects. The girls performed better than the boys, and by a greater margin than found nationally. Results were good in Bengali and satisfactory in Urdu. A small number of pupils followed a certificate of achievement course, but their performance was marred by a high absence rate and no final results were awarded. Over the past three years there has been a steady improvement in the number of pupils taking languages at GCSE and in the results.
280. Standards of work at the age of 14 are very low. Many pupils are hesitant in speaking the foreign language and lack confidence when attempting to use more than single words or brief phrases. The small number of higher-attaining pupils recall words they have heard or used much better, and they are more willing to take part in vigorous chorus work and pronunciation practice. For example, a Year 9 group of pupils learnt how to talk about the weather in Spanish quite rapidly because of the 'quick-fire' practice they had done with the whole-class and then in pair work. Most pupils can generally understand only a limited range of familiar vocabulary in reading and listening tasks. In writing, standards range from broadly in line with those expected nationally to very low. Most middle and lower-attaining pupils, who form the large majority of each year group, need a great deal of support

from the teacher and reminders about accuracy even when they just copy-write short sentences about themselves and their activities. The small number of higher-attaining pupils write with good accuracy in more extended accounts and letters about themselves from Year 7 onwards. In Year 8, they are introduced to the past tense and towards the end of Year 9, their descriptions are interesting. Their best work shows some flair.

281. Standards at the age of 16 remain very low. All pupils between the ages of 14 and 16 now continue with a language. The vast majority of pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and some of the pupils with English as an additional language achieve well and make good progress. There was no opportunity during the period of the inspection to observe lessons in Year 11 but evidence was gained from an analysis of exercise books, examples of coursework and a discussion with Year 11 pupils. Many pupils develop their written work well between 14 and 16. With good support from their teachers, they learn how to produce carefully written assignments for their examination coursework. The highest-attaining pupils use a good variety of tenses and expressions and are encouraged to produce their work at home in word-processed form. Many pupils are less confident in speaking and even the higher-attaining pupils have some difficulty in recognising and using the past tense easily.
282. The great majority of pupils achieve well because pupils respond well to the good teaching and high expectations. The majority of pupils behave well in class and they have good attitudes towards their language learning. This good behaviour enables them to listen carefully to the teacher, to take part well in chorus work and other activities and make progress. A few pupils are less well motivated, but their behaviour is generally well managed. Pupils are well motivated and have been keen to take up the opportunities offered for trips to France
283. Improvement in modern languages has been very good, particularly in the last two years. The whole department has considered very carefully how best to raise standards. There has been a consistent emphasis on improving attitudes towards the subject and behaviour in class. Schemes of work have been improved so that the graded objectives approach is accessible to all pupils. There has been a good degree of sharing teaching approaches and adopting the best practice in behaviour management. The emphasis on high expectations includes regular reminds to pupils about deadline dates for coursework assignments from Year 10 on and provide very good opportunities for revision classes. Constant monitoring, single-mindedness and support from senior management have been vital ingredients in this successful pattern of improvement.
284. The quality of teaching is good overall. It was good or better in two-thirds of the lessons seen. Only one lesson was unsatisfactory because the teacher was not firm enough in managing the pupils so that they could all learn properly. Teachers have a good knowledge of the languages they teach and understand very well how best to adapt their teaching methods and approaches and pace of delivery to meet the needs of pupils of differing abilities, so that all pupils can learn well. They use the foreign languages well, but a few teachers could increase the amount spoken by themselves and by pupils to match the best practice in the department.
285. All teachers set out the learning objectives well at the beginning of each lesson and teach literacy skills well, by insisting on good standards of copy-writing throughout Years 7 to 9. They explain spelling and grammatical concepts well and make sure that lower-attaining pupils understand the meaning in English of, for example, more complex adjectives. Teachers plan their lessons carefully and make sure pupils follow through their objectives, until pupils have learnt them. They are sufficiently flexible in their approach to understand when particular points may need more

practice or consolidation. Teachers have a very good understanding of how much individual pupils in each set can learn, and graded objectives are set accordingly.

286. Teachers' expectations of good behaviour are always high and a positive ethos of success is created, where 'failure to learn is not an option'. Teachers make good use of overhead projectors for presentations, 'fun' language games and competitive activities. The pace of lessons is energetic and pupils often take part in vigorous chorus work that they enjoy. Teachers re-focus regularly on the key words and phrases that the pupils are to learn in the lesson. There is little time for pupils to behave inappropriately and teachers give pupils ample praise for their efforts and concentration. Support staff give valuable help to individually identified pupils. The range of teaching activities is very good, but the department needs televisions, and some more up-to-date textbooks in French for 14 to 16 year-olds, to raise standards of learning further. The marking of pupils' work is generally done well, using National Curriculum levels and good comments for support and praise. All pupils have clear guidelines stuck in their exercise books, on how they are to achieve their targets.
287. Leadership and management are very good. The head of department has enabled a very committed team to achieve real improvement over the last few years in the quality of teaching and the raising of standards, particularly those of the higher-attaining pupils. All pupils now prepare a language for GCSE. All teachers are familiar with the implications on teaching and learning of the school data on pupils' attainment and potential. Good target setting is in place and pupils are clear about what they need to do to be successful. Financial planning is good. The department is aware of the need to develop information and communications technology.

MUSIC

288. Standards on entry to the school at the age of 11 are well below those expected nationally. In the Year 2000 statutory teacher assessments at the age of 14 less than one tenth of the pupils reached the standards expected nationally, a proportion well below the national average of more than two-thirds.
289. No pupils took the GCSE examination in music in the Year 2000. The proportion of pupils obtaining grades A*-C in the previous year was very low compared with the national average.
290. Standards in work seen at the age of 14 are now much better and broadly in line with those expected nationally. Most pupils make satisfactory progress.
291. In lessons observed, Year 7 pupils can keep a given beat, understand and use rhythmic notation to create patterns, which they perform confidently as duets, and both make and use graphic scores. Written work includes, for example, personal reaction to jingles and knowledge of mediaeval music, with care taken in presentation. No poor work was seen.
292. While progress is at varying rates, pupils in Year 8, including those with special educational needs, understand the process of composing, using xylophones to choose pitch notes and write these against syllables of a verse. Most show good aural recognition of major and minor chords. The best of written work is presented to a high standard, including personal appraisal of class listening. The small amount of work of some others reflects absence from lessons.
293. Lower-attaining pupils in Year 9 recall the concept of triads and can work out the notes that form them. In practical work to build melodies on these, many have insufficient self-control, and show unwillingness to co-operate, so that progress of

the whole group is slowed. Higher-attaining pupils, whose written work was seen, demonstrate understanding and care in a range of modules. These pupils show a standard of attainment much closer to national expectations for this age group.

294. There are no pupils studying music in the current Year 11. The standards reached by the small number of pupils taking music in Year 10 are below national expectations because several do not attend regularly and the performance skills of the majority of the pupils are well below national expectations. Some of those who do attend regularly are well motivated and are working at a standard broadly in line with national expectations. Two receive good instrumental tuition. Most pupils can use stave notation well enough to construct a bass line from given chords, including inversions. They are familiar with following a piano score when listening. Some pupils can construct their own notes from supplied fact sheets, for example on Mozart and the symphony orchestra. Computers are used during the year, for example when sequencing programs for composition.
295. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. There was no good or better teaching seen and no teaching seen was unsatisfactory. The generally good use of time and resources are the strongest feature and basic skills are well taught in lessons for pupils between the ages of 11 and 14. As a result pupils develop a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of key words and concepts such as chord and pulse.
296. In the best teaching the learning objectives are shared carefully with the pupils at the start of the lesson and reviewed at its close and there are well planned opportunities for pupils to develop their listening skills. In these lessons pupils' behaviour is well managed. In lessons for pupils in Year 10 a strong feature was the way that the pupils' own questions were used to extend understanding, for example when demonstrating impromptu the properties of organ pipes.
297. Teaching is less effective when the pace of lessons is too slow and too much time is allowed for the completion of tasks. In some lessons there is not enough variety in the hour long lessons and this can lead to restlessness. Occasionally in Year 10 lessons the learning of lower attaining pupils is unsatisfactory because the materials are not prepared carefully enough to match what they can cope with, for example when listening to music and following a score
298. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. There has been an improvement in standards in Year 10. The previously 'poor' provision is now broadly satisfactory. The time for music between the ages of 11 and 14 has been increased but there is still a lack of continuity in Year 9 because pupils study the subject for only half of the year within the arrangements for expressive arts. The use of ICT and the range of extra-curricular activities has increased. The gifted and talented pupils have been identified and provision made for them to attend professional performances in order to extend their experience and understanding.
299. Leadership and management are satisfactory, but development is hindered by the dual responsibilities of the subject leader who is also a head of year. Some elements of the development plan have yet to be tackled. The monitoring of teaching and good provision for professional development are having a positive effect on standards. There are some inefficiencies in the use of accommodation and resources.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

300. There is insufficient evidence to confirm the standards that pupils have reached when they enter the school at the age of 11. Standards at the age of 14 are good. There is insufficient evidence to evaluate the standards reached by all pupils at the age of 16 because attendance in lessons for pupils between the ages of 14 and 16 was poor. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls, who are normally taught in single gender groups.
301. GCSE Physical Education and GCSE. Dance are offered as options in Years 10 and 11. Results have fluctuated since the previous inspection. In the Year 2000 just over half of the candidates gained grades A*-C, a proportion broadly in line with the national average. Nearly all gained at least a grade G. Results in dance were much lower and well below the national average. All the grades were in the range D-G.
302. The standard of performance in lessons seen for pupils between the ages of 11 and 16 is usually good, sometimes very good or excellent. Most pupils make satisfactory progress in lessons because attitudes and behaviour are generally good. Occasionally unsatisfactory behaviour hinders progress. Most pupils are well motivated because they are well taught. Boys in Year 7 showed a very high level of skill in passing and receiving during a hockey lesson. Different groups of Year 11 GCSE pupils made rapid progress during volleyball and dance lessons and could analyse and improve their own performance
303. There has been a satisfactory degree of progress since the previous inspection and following the HMI monitoring visits. The development of schemes of work has been good and assessment and recording procedures revised to include the use of target setting. These arrangements are now satisfactory. The range of extra-curricular activities has increased.
304. The quality of teaching is good. It was good or better in four-fifths of the lessons seen and very good or better in half of the lessons for pupils between the ages of 11 and 14 and in a third of lessons for pupils between the ages of 14 and 16. On one occasion in Year 7 it was excellent. Teachers are well qualified and have good knowledge of the subject. They establish good relationships with the pupils and have high expectations of them. As a result most pupils respond very well and are well motivated to take an active part in the lessons.
305. In the best lessons the activity is well suited to the physique, aptitude and interests of the class. As a result learning proceeds at a brisk pace. Year 7 girls in a gymnastics lesson and Year 8 girls in a dance lesson responded with interest and energy when periods of activity were interspersed with concise, clear explanations and demonstrations.
306. Leadership and management are very good. Good teamwork and the effective deployment of staff has managed well the long term absence of a key member of staff so that pupils have continued to make satisfactory progress. There are satisfactory arrangements to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. Newly qualified teachers and newly appointed teachers are well supported and make valuable contributions to the department's work. Links with feeder primary schools are well established. One member of the department visits them regularly and children from these schools are invited to use the sports facilities at times before they change schools.
307. Resources and accommodation are very good, including a large sports hall, dance studio, large playing field and hard surface outdoor areas. The hall which is used for gymnastics is also used for assemblies and examinations. Frequently, the floor is not sufficiently clean to provide a healthy environment for exercise.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

308. In the GCSE examinations in 2000 the proportion of pupils achieving grades A*-C was very high for the full course and above average for the short course. The girls did better than the boys in the long course and the boys did better in the short course. These results represent a significant improvement over 1999 and are a considerable achievement.
309. There is insufficient evidence to evaluate the standards that pupils have reached when they enter the school at the age of 11 but their basic literacy skills are very low.
310. Standards at the age of 14 are below those expected in the locally agreed syllabus. Their progress is satisfactory between the ages of 11 and 14. Most pupils have a satisfactory level and range of knowledge. They have a sound factual knowledge of the main beliefs in Christianity, Islam and Judaism and their moral teachings. In their imaginative writing, higher-attaining pupils show good understanding of the importance of fasting and pilgrimage in the life of a Muslim. Standards remain below expectations because pupils have difficulty understanding religious concepts. For example, Year 8 pupils were able to identify familiar religious symbols but were not sure about their meaning. Many Year 9 pupils find it difficult to apply religious teachings to moral issues. For example, many pupils' letters on the subject of capital punishment made little mention of religious teachings on either side of the argument. Similarly, in a Year 9 lesson on Christian attitudes towards violence, pupils found it difficult to develop the idea of turning the other cheek, when asked what a Christian would do in certain situations. Poor literacy skills inhibit their ability to express and support their views clearly in writing, and many are not spending enough time on homework to complete written tasks. Many lower-attaining pupils are making good progress in the withdrawal groups in Years 7 and 8, where a more practical approach is used.
311. Standards at the age of 16 are broadly in line with national expectations. Higher attaining pupils reach a good standard but many lower attaining pupils continue to experience difficulties in expressing themselves because their literacy skills remain weak. Most pupils achieve well and make good progress because the good teaching in lessons for pupils between the ages of 14 and 16 places a strong emphasis on improving basic skills.
312. At the age of 16 most pupils have gained the expected knowledge and understanding of moral issues, informed by the teachings of Christianity and Islam. Their files show that most pupils are working hard, completing the tasks they are set and achieving a good standard in their coursework on religion in the media. Some pupils have the advantage of being able to draw on their faith background to support work. Higher-attaining pupils make good progress because examination techniques are well taught. This helps them to analyse questions well and select relevant religious texts and examples. Lower-attaining pupils are making satisfactory progress in their study of a local mosque on the certificate of achievement course, but on the GCSE short course they are falling behind with coursework, finding the assignments difficult. Poor attendance is a key factor holding back the progress of many pupils.
313. Since the last inspection, the appointment of a head of religious education and the policy of entering as many pupils as possible for examinations in the subject have had a big impact on standards. Very good planning by the two specialist teachers has produced learning materials and teaching methods designed to prepare pupils thoroughly for the examinations. Also, a lot of work has been done to produce new schemes of work for Years 7 to 9, with learning objectives for each lesson at three

levels, to sharpen the focus of lessons and raise standards. The introduction since September of an assessment system based on eight levels of attainment, as in all the National Curriculum subjects, is beginning to give teachers more accurate information for monitoring pupils' progress and setting them appropriate targets.

314. The quality of teaching was good or better in nearly two thirds of the lessons observed and satisfactory in all the rest. It was consistently good in Years 10 and 11 and good in nearly half the lessons in Years 7 to 9.
315. The teachers have high expectations of their pupils and set them challenging tasks to make them think. Well-designed materials are well matched to pupils' needs and presented in an interesting manner. Good use is made of questions to engage pupils in discussion.
316. Most lessons are well managed but occasionally in Years 8 and 9 continue to interrupt. There are good review and target setting arrangements in Year 9. The strong examination focus is evident in Year 11 lessons, where teachers are giving pupils plenty of practice with test questions.
317. Teaching is occasionally less effective when too much time is spent talking to the whole class and pupils' concentration starts to wane. There are not enough stimulating textbooks to further engage their interest. Some of the marking of pupils' work between the ages of 11 and 14 is unsatisfactory because it does not identify clearly what needs to be done in order to improve. There is insufficient use made of ICT because available opportunities to use the computers are limited. Learning materials are well produced at the right level for pupils, but pupils do not have sufficient access to stimulating textbooks. Teachers set homework regularly but it is not always done
318. Leadership and management are very good. Very effective teamwork and strong leadership have a very positive impact on standards, especially in Years 10 and 11, where examination work has been developed so successfully and the subject is highly valued. The commitment to raising standards is very high and the very good subject leadership demonstrates the drive to make planned improvements happen. The teaching staff is very well managed because very good support is given to the non-specialists who teach pupils between the ages of 11 and 14. This ensures a consistently high quality of lesson planning. The close liaison with the learning support staff ensures that the provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.

EXPRESSIVE ARTS

319. This course offers an integrated approach to the subjects of art, music, drama and dance. Teachers from each of these subject areas work together to provide pupils with learning opportunities in each of these specialist subjects.
320. In Year 9, each pupil has a ten week experience in expressive arts. The time is divided between six week studies for each subject, music, art, dance and drama. Pupils in Year 10 and Year 11 undertake the 2 year GCSE course in Expressive Arts. Pupils study two subjects in Year 10 then elect to continue with one of them in Year 11.
321. In Year 10, pupils work across the arts on a common theme. Pupils explore, investigate, and respond creatively to the theme chosen and areas they wish to develop. For example, students presented a journal of Theatre Drama created from the memories of old people. Pupils visited a local Old Peoples' Home and

developed their thoughts into scenes for a play using different individual skills to respond to their experience.

322. In Year 11, pupils develop their self-directed skills further using a variety of resources chosen from the art form selected for further study. The common theme is Popular Culture. Pupils are expected to use the working skills developed in Year 10 to explore ideas through a variety of media techniques. Pupils prepare a working notebook alongside their final piece of presentation work. For example in drama pupils were observed preparing scenes to investigate the controversies over 'Animal Rights' issues. Pupils studying art and design research into designing for advertising by looking at the influence of Andy Warhol. Pupils' designs demonstrate a developing awareness of all the elements of art such as shape, form, tone and texture.
323. Pupils electing to study music produce an original composition which is audio taped for assessed performance.
324. For dance studies pupils develop basic techniques and choreography to devise their own dance sequences working in pairs or small groups. The dance programmes are developed to a performance which is made into a video for assessment.