

INSPECTION REPORT

PINDAR SCHOOL

Scarborough

LEA area: North Yorkshire

Unique reference number: 121674

Headteacher: Mr P D Acaster

Reporting inspector: Dr A R Beaver
20224

Dates of inspection: 30 April – 3 May 2001

Inspection number: 187837

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 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Moor Lane
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North Yorkshire

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Appropriate authority: North Yorkshire

Name of chair of governors: Mr K Dale

Date of previous inspection: 29 April – 3 May 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20224	Anthony Beaver	Registered inspector	Equal opportunities	<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>The school's results and achievements</p> <p>How well are students taught?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
9974	Dalgit Singh	Lay inspector		<p>Students' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well does the school care for its students?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
23550	S. Marie Blewitt	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
19066	Jane Brooke	Team inspector	Religious education	
22780	David Custance	Team inspector	Science	
17077	Donald Elliott	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
5819	Peter Goring	Team inspector	Geography	
31693	Tim Hanafin	Team inspector	Art	
22906	Barry Hodgson	Team inspector	Physical education	
22878	George Nolan	Team inspector	Mathematics	
18846	Phillip Priest	Team inspector	Music	How well the school cultivates students' personal development

7399	Paul Roberts	Team inspector	History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to students?
Ofsted no. 10941	Renee Robinson	Team inspector	Design and technology Information and communication technology	
3731	William Robson	Team inspector	English Drama Special educational needs	Assessment of special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Pindar School provides education for 785 students who live on the estate of Eastfield, near to Scarborough, and in the surrounding villages of Seamer and Cayton. A few come from Scarborough. The school is comprehensive and smaller than most other secondary schools. Students are aged 11 to 16 years, with slightly more girls than boys on roll. No students with minority ethnic backgrounds attend the school. The percentage of students who claim entitlement to a free school meal has increased recently and is above average. Many students have deprived backgrounds. The proportion of students who joined or left the school, other than at the usual ages of 11 and 16, is above average. The proportion of students identified by the school to have special educational needs is above average. Many of these students have emotional and behavioural difficulties. The percentage with statements of special educational need is in line with the national average. Overall, students' attainment on entry to the school at age 11 is well below average. When they join the school their attainment spans the full range of ability, but there are many more students whose ability is well below average, than those of above average ability.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Teaching is good and enables students to learn successfully in most lessons. Although most students achieve what they should and make satisfactory progress, some should achieve more highly, but poor attendance holds them back. Standards of behaviour are usually satisfactory in lessons, despite the increasing numbers of students with acute behavioural problems. Some behaviour is unsatisfactory around the school. Although leadership is satisfactory and has ensured good improvement in the quality of teaching, some teamwork and consultation are lacking. Some parents have lost confidence in the school to resolve their concerns. Overall, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Most teaching is good.
- The quality of teaching and learning and the standards achieved in English and physical education.
- Induction and support for newly qualified teachers.
- The very good range and quality of extra-curricular activities.
- Provision for students with special educational learning needs.
- A good range of courses and learning opportunities well suited to students' interests and abilities, particularly in Years 10 and 11.

What could be improved

- Attainment of some students in Year 9 National Curriculum tests and at GCSE grades A* to C.
- Attainment and provision for information and communication technology.
- Teamwork between the headteacher and his most senior colleagues to provide a more effective system of support for teachers in managing behaviour in class, and leadership in managing behaviour throughout the school.
- The behaviour of some students, particularly when not in lessons.
- The attendance of some students.
- Links with parents and response to their concerns.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the last inspection in 1996, most students continue to enter the school with attainment well below that which is typical of most schools. Most achieve the standards that they should, with, for example, able students and low attainers doing well in public examinations. Teaching, a key issue for improvement in the last inspection, has much improved and is now good. Monitoring, developed by the school's leadership, has helped to improve its quality. Of the other key issues of the last inspection, much training of staff has taken place to help them to develop their skills to manage the increased number of students with acute behavioural problems who attend the school. Most teachers now manage students well in lessons, but

some students neither behave well enough in lessons nor around the school. Some students' poor behaviour prevents them from achieving as well as they should and is unhelpful to others' learning. More students with behavioural difficulties are in the school than in 1996. Assessment data have been used more to make achievement a higher priority in the school. More computers have been provided and more provision is planned. Some training of staff in their use has taken place, but students do not receive their entitlement to information and communication technology. Attendance remains below average. On balance, given the increasing learning and behavioural difficulties that students bring with them on entry, improvement has been satisfactory overall.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			Similar+ schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
GCSE examinations	D	E	E	D

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

+Reference to similar schools is to those schools which contain a similar proportion of students who claim eligibility for free school meals. This is considered to be a valid indicator by which to compare schools with students of similar backgrounds. Reference to all schools indicates all secondary schools across the country.

When students enter the school at age 11, their attainment spans the full range of ability, but, overall, it is well below average. They attained average standards in Year 9 National Curriculum tests, in comparison with similar+ schools, in 1998 and 1999, but results were slightly lower in 2000. Students made the best progress in English, in which they achieved higher standards at both Levels 5 and 6 in the tests, than those that they achieved in mathematics and science in 2000. In comparison with all schools, results are well below average, overall, but some students attained highly, at Level 7, in all three subjects tested in 2000.

At age 16, in 1999 and 1998, students attained average GCSE standards compared with those of similar schools. Compared with these schools in 2000, they attained average results in the attainment of five or more GCSE subjects at grades A* to C, five or more grades A* to G and one grade A* to G. The average GCSE point score, from which the grades in the table above are derived, was below average because some students who experienced great difficulty in following the usual school curriculum in Years 10 and 11 were provided with alternative worthwhile learning opportunities - apart from GCSE. When compared with all schools in 2000 and 1999, results were well below average. However, in 2000 and all recent years, some students have progressed well to achieve the highest grades at GCSE in most subjects. Students with special educational learning needs achieve well. Overall, most students make satisfactory progress during Years 10 and 11 to achieve standards in line with what might be reasonably expected from their earlier attainment. The school has set very challenging targets to be achieved at GCSE. In recent years, students have achieved well in GCSE English, drama, geography, history and physical education. Their standards have been lower in mathematics, art, German and French than in most of their other subjects.

In work seen during the inspection, students of wide-ranging abilities generally achieved what they should in all year groups. For example, in English, students achieve exceptionally well, expressing views clearly in speech. Skills in writing vary widely in quality and many students' written expression and accuracy are weak. Achievement in mathematics and science is less secure than in English. In mathematics, students' standards in algebra are a weakness, particularly in Years 10 and 11, but their statistical work is good throughout the school. In science, students' skills in coursework in Years 10 and 11 are good and their work involving prediction and evaluation of the outcomes of experiments is good. Their skills of recalling and using work covered earlier are weaker. Across the school, students are achieving below the standards that they should in information and communication technology. Overall, most students make satisfactory progress throughout the school, but poor attendance holds some back.

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory. Most students have positive attitudes to school, show interest and concentrate on their work. Some lack interest in learning despite the purposeful efforts of teachers.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. Students usually behave well in most lessons. Out of class, their behaviour is generally satisfactory, but some is boisterous, immature and unruly.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. Most students act responsibly and exercise responsibility well. Relationships among most students are satisfactory and in many cases, good. Some students do not respect others well enough.
Attendance	Attendance is below average and unauthorised absence is above average, preventing higher achievement. Absence of some Year 11 students during the inspection was unhelpful to their final preparation for GCSE examinations.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching was satisfactory or better in 95 per cent of lessons. It was good or better in 55 per cent, and very good or excellent in 18 per cent. It was unsatisfactory or poor in five per cent of lessons, either because teachers' control did not enable students to learn successfully enough, or, in a few cases in modern foreign languages, lessons were so poorly planned that students were unable to make progress. The quality of teaching of English was good. The teaching of mathematics and science was satisfactory. Key strengths of teaching are good choice of methods and effective choice and planning of learning in most lessons, ensuring that students extend their knowledge and understanding successfully. Teachers use support staff and resources well. They help students to extend their literacy, but methods are not consistently used well across all subjects. Numeracy is taught satisfactorily in mathematics, but the teaching of it in other subjects is unsatisfactory and no policy is in place to require consistency. The teaching of information and communication technology is satisfactory in lessons, especially for this subject, but inadequate across the curriculum.

The school meets the needs of able students well enough for them to achieve the standards that they should at GCSE. Low attainers, including many with special educational needs in learning, achieve well. Most other students achieve satisfactorily. Most students learn successfully, developing knowledge, understanding and subject skills well in lessons because teaching is good. Learning is sometimes unsatisfactory when students act unreasonably and do not control their behaviour well enough to make the progress that they should and, in a few lessons seen, this behaviour prevents others from learning as well as they should also.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good range of courses in Years 7 to 9 and Years 10 and 11. Very good opportunities in Year 11 for students who find the usual curriculum too difficult. Very good provision for extra-curricular activities. Statutory requirements are not met for religious education in Years 10 and 11 or for information and communication technology throughout the school.
Provision for students with special educational needs	There is good provision for the considerable numbers of students with special needs in learning; unsatisfactory provision for many with emotional and behavioural difficulties.
Provision for students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Provision for students' spiritual development is unsatisfactory. Provision for their moral and cultural development is satisfactory and social provision is good.
How well the school cares for its students	Satisfactory support and mentoring for students to achieve well in their work for examinations. Much oppressive behaviour is dealt with satisfactorily, but some persists and is, understandably, of considerable concern to some students and parents.

Links with some parents are unsatisfactory. Some have lost confidence in the school's capacity to provide an orderly situation for learning and think that the school should work more closely with them. Two parent-governor posts are unfilled.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Overall satisfactory. Standards of teaching have much improved. There is recognition that improvement in behaviour and attendance is necessary. Teamwork has not been effective enough between the headteacher and his most senior colleagues in providing a system for support for teachers in managing behaviour in class in which all have confidence, and in giving leadership in managing behaviour throughout the school - where the code of behaviour is not followed well enough.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors are strongly committed to the school and develop expertise through their committees. They intend that the school will regain the confidence of all parents. They do not meet statutory requirements for a daily act of worship for all students, religious education in Years 10 and 11, or for information and communication technology.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning are good and data are used more effectively than in 1996. The school evaluates progress towards its academic targets effectively. Little evaluation to judge progress in improving attendance and behaviour has taken place to guide action.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes satisfactory use of funding. It has provided much improved accommodation and facilities to support teaching and learning, especially for sport. Funding is lacking for additional support and facilities to assist students with acute or moderate behavioural difficulties.

The provision of staffing is satisfactory, but many changes of staff have been unhelpful to students' continuity in learning and to building up good relationships. Accommodation is good overall, with some very good features, although some accommodation for science requires improvement. Resources for learning are satisfactory, but the school lacks sufficient modern computers. Insufficient textbooks are available in mathematics, science and modern foreign languages. The school applies the principles of best value well enough, but more consultation with staff and parents is essential.

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 expectation that their children will work hard and achieve their best. • Their children make good progress at school. • The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities. • Their children like school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour. • The school working more closely with them. • More information on how their children are getting on. • Leadership and management. • Homework.

Inspectors agree with parents' positive views. However, the school's leadership has lost the confidence of some parents who feel strongly that behaviour in the school is unsatisfactory. The inspection team agrees that some behaviour is unsatisfactory. Some students are very challenging and teachers require high expertise to manage these well enough to ensure that learning can take place. This is usually the case, but, in some lessons, teachers require additional support, and this is not always provided quickly or consistently enough. Behaviour out of lessons is largely satisfactory, but some is boisterous, immature and unruly. The school provides reports to parents and consultative evenings that satisfactorily inform them of their children's progress. It gives parents the opportunity to attend consultative meetings on proposed changes, for example to the school day. During the inspection, homework was set as the school intends and was helpful to extend students' learning, but lack of textbooks restricts the range of work that can be set in some subjects. The inspection team agrees with parents that the school should work more closely with them and involve them more in all initiatives to improve the quality of education, much of which is good, that it is providing for their children.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and students' achievements

+Reference to similar schools is to those schools which contain a similar proportion of students who claim eligibility for free school meals. This is considered to be a valid indicator by which to compare schools with students of similar backgrounds. Reference to all schools indicates all secondary schools across the country.

1. When students enter the school at age 11, the overall attainment of all year groups is well below average. Students' attainment spans the full range of ability in all years, but the school's intake includes far fewer able students than those who are, at least, of below average attainment. Many more students are low-attaining on entry than is typical of most schools. Many more students than in most schools have learning difficulties and are on the school's register for special educational needs. These students require, and receive, extra help to enable them to make satisfactory progress. Many other students have emotional and behavioural difficulties on entry to the school, holding back their learning and progress and making these unsatisfactory in some cases. More students with acute behavioural needs, unhelpful to their progress, are in the school than at the time of the last inspection.
2. In Years 7 to 9 overall, most students achieve the standards that they should. Their progress is satisfactory, as most parents recognise. However, some students' below average rates of attendance and behaviour hold back their progress. This is most apparent in particular subjects where missing even a single lesson can significantly affect progress, as, for example in mathematics, science and modern foreign languages. Students attained average standards in the Year 9 National Curriculum tests, in 1999 and 1998 in comparison with similar* schools, and results were close to this standard in 2000. Students achieved well in English, where their results in the tests were above the average for similar schools. In mathematics, students attained below the average of similar schools and lower in science. In 2000, in comparison with all schools, results were well below average, overall, but able students attained highly, some gaining level 7, in all three subjects tested. The school has set challenging targets for improving standards in the tests and recognises that students' attainments in these could be higher, especially in mathematics and science.
3. In work seen during the inspection in Years 7, 8 and 9, most students - of wide-ranging abilities - generally achieve what they should by Year 9. They make satisfactory progress, overall, from well below average standards on entry to the school. In English, students achieve exceptionally well, expressing views clearly in speech. Skills in writing vary widely in quality and many students' written expression and accuracy are weak. Achievement in mathematics and science is less secure than in English. In mathematics, students' standards in algebra are below average, but their statistical work is good enough, given their standard of numerical skills on entry to the school. Their achievement is below average in the subject. In science, students manage practical work well enough, but have difficulty in recalling and using work covered earlier and their achievements are below average. In work seen in other subjects, students achieve average standards by the end of Year 9 in geography and physical education and above average in music and drama. Standards are below average in art, design and technology, history, modern foreign languages and religious education. However, students are achieving well enough in these subjects and make satisfactory progress by Year 9, particularly so in history and music, given their levels of attainment

on entry to the school at age 11. Students are achieving well below the standards that they should in information and communication technology, where they have insufficient opportunity to practise skills in using computers and other equipment. Overall, most students achieve standards in line with what might reasonably be expected for their very different levels of ability and they make satisfactory progress. The attendance and behaviour of some students hold back their progress.

4. At age 16, in 1999 and 1998, students attained average GCSE standards compared with those of similar schools. Compared with these schools in 2000, they attained average results in the attainment of five or more GCSE subjects at grades A* to C, five or more grades A* to G and one grade A* to G. However, the average GCSE point score was below average in 2000, because some students who experienced great difficulty in following the usual school curriculum in Years 10 and 11 were provided with alternative worthwhile learning opportunities - apart from GCSE. Some achieved Certificates of Achievement in all subjects for which they were entered. Others have followed vocational courses elsewhere. When compared with all schools in 2000 and 1999, results were well below average. However, in 2000 and all recent years, some students have progressed well to achieve the highest grades at GCSE in most subjects. The school has set very challenging targets to be achieved at GCSE, and recognises that attainment of five or more GCSE A* to C grades could be higher, if students were to attain the good standards that they now gain in some of their subjects. In recent years, students have attained well in GCSE examinations in English, drama, geography, history and physical education. Their standards have been lower in mathematics, art, German and French than in most of their other subjects. As in Years 7 to 9, the progress of some students is adversely affected by poor attendance and, in some cases, by poor behaviour that results in exclusion from school. Some students have been repeatedly excluded with the result that their chances of success in public examinations in Year 11 have been considerably reduced.
5. In work seen during the inspection in Years 10 and 11, standards are below average, overall. However, in the GCSE courses in music, religious education and physical education, students attain above average standards, and average ones in geography. In these subjects, students are achieving well and making good progress in Years 10 and 11. Although they are attaining below-average standards in English, art, drama, history, modern foreign languages and social science, they are achieving at least as well as they should, given their attainment at the end of Year 9, and above this in English and history, where their progress is good. However, students could achieve much more highly in mathematics and science, and higher in design and technology, where the skills and knowledge that they gained earlier are an insecure foundation for some GCSE work. As in Years 7 to 9, students' achievement in information technology is well below what it should be, because of insufficient timetabled time, absence of teachers and the lack of a scheme of work to guide teaching and progress. Until recently, the computers available have not been sufficiently up to date. More modern computers are needed and the school has plans to improve this situation.
6. Students achieve generally satisfactory standards in literacy, given their attainment on entry. They speak clearly and confidently, although not always in standard English. Their reading is good enough to enable them to manage what they need to read in different subjects. Their writing is often neat, and many write well at length although their work contains many errors of spelling and punctuation. Students achieve satisfactory standards in using numeracy in mathematics, but they do not use numerical skills enough in other subjects, and their progress, overall, is unsatisfactory in use of number.

7. The progress of most students with special educational learning needs is good. Those with difficulties with literacy and moderate learning difficulties make good progress. This is often very good when they receive small group or individual support from teachers and assistants in the learning support base. However, the progress of some pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties is unsatisfactory. Their difficulties persist over time and the school lacks the resources to provide sufficient support for them, until their needs become more severe.
8. Since the last inspection, the school has worked hard to make achievement a central concern of all, as required by the key issue of that inspection. Overall, most students in most subjects achieve the standards that could reasonably be expected of them from their standards on entry. Able students generally do well and achieve what they should in Year 9 National Curriculum tests and at GCSE. Overall attainment is not higher because attendance is below average, and some students are poor attenders, adversely affecting their progress. The behaviour of others, some of whom, but not all, have acute behavioural needs, results, in some cases, in extended periods of fixed-term exclusion, unhelpful to their progress and attainment.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Overall, students' attitudes to the school are satisfactory. Their behaviour and relationships with staff, contribute to good, effective learning in the classroom. This enables many teachers to trust their students with positions of responsibility, which are taken up with confidence by those who serve the school through the school council and through work in the community. However, some students do not like coming to school and rates of attendance are below average. This particularly prevents a significant number of students from achieving higher standards.
10. Most students act responsibly in lessons and work effectively together when engaged in work in small groups. They respond positively to questions and engage responsibly in discussion. They concentrate on their work. In most lessons, students are motivated, confident and have good levels of interest and enthusiasm. In some lessons, they lose concentration and display negative attitudes, as was seen, very occasionally, during the inspection. Most students usually take up the opportunities provided to use their initiative well, as, for example, in drama, when they are involved in role-play and preparing to present a performance to the rest of the class.
11. Inspection evidence indicates that most students approach their learning constructively and take a positive interest in their school life. They undertake a good range of curricular and extra-curricular activities. For example, during the inspection, students were observed enjoying football at lunchtime, but few students reported an active interest in the homework club, which runs after school. Through formal and informal interviews, students shared positive perceptions of the school and indicated that staff, particularly heads of year and form tutors, were caring, sensitive and supportive. They felt that most teachers offered good teaching and interesting lessons.
12. Most students display good behaviour in lessons. These students are polite, trustworthy and generally respect teachers and visitors. Some students do not behave well enough in lessons and, occasionally, some present challenging behaviour to their teachers who need support from senior colleagues to manage the situation in class. Most incidents of inappropriate behaviour are when students are not directly supervised. Behaviour out of lessons is often lively, boisterous and sometimes unruly. Some students drop considerable litter in corridors and some do not adhere closely enough to the school's rules for uniform. A small minority display bullying, racist, sexist

and aggressive behaviour, ignoring the school's anti-bullying policy. These incidents are of much concern to some students across the school and have been reported by some parents. Some students are adamant that bullying and racism are not tolerated; others think that bullying and racist incidents are not consistently challenged enough. The number of fixed-term exclusions is above the national average, but permanent exclusions fell between 1996-1999, and have slightly increased, to six, in 1999-2000. Some students who are excluded have already been excluded from other schools and given an opportunity to complete their education at Pindar, but they do not take advantage of their opportunity well enough. Fixed-term exclusions are sometimes of considerable length in days and, in some cases, repeated, adversely affecting the progress of these students.

13. Relationships are satisfactory overall. They are often good between teachers and students and purposeful among most students in the classroom. This helps to raise achievement and promotes the good personal development of students. Most students share humour and support each other in and out of the classroom. These students work with teachers in a constructive and purposeful manner in lessons. Where students have the opportunity to take responsibility to serve the school, as librarians or as representatives on the school council, they take their duties seriously, have positive attitudes and behave well.
14. Attendance is below average and adversely affects the learning, progress and personal development of some students. The school recognises that unauthorised absence and some which is authorised are cause for concern. Some students have poor records of attendance for many reasons, including truancy from school, occasional truancy from lessons, school phobia, bullying and some absence which is unjustifiably condoned. These absences hold back students' learning and progress. During the inspection, the attendance of students in Years 10 and 11 was poor and unhelpful to the chances of success of those about to take GCSE examinations.
15. Since the last inspection, there has been little improvement in meeting the key issue of improving attendance. Fixed-term exclusions remain above the national average. Some behaviour, particularly around the school, is not good enough. Most students continue to have positive attitudes and behave well in lessons.

HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?

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.

16. Teaching is of good quality, overall, across the school. It was satisfactory or better in 95 per cent of the 154 lessons seen. It was good or better in 55 per cent, and very good or, in one lesson, excellent in 18 per cent. It was unsatisfactory or poor in five per cent of lessons. Well over half the teaching of English and drama, geography, history, physical education and religious education was at least good, and many lessons were very good in most of these subjects. One lesson in physical education was excellent. A few lessons were unsatisfactory, and in one case, poor, either because teachers' control did not enable students to learn successfully enough, or, in modern foreign languages, two lessons were so poorly planned that students were unable to make progress.
17. There are some weaknesses in the teaching of the essential skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. Most teachers help students to improve their levels of literacy in lessons, but methods are not consistently

applied in all subjects. The teaching of numeracy is satisfactory in mathematics, but unsatisfactory in other subjects where students lack consistent practice with numerical skills. Computers and other information and communication technology are not used enough in lessons, apart from those especially for this subject, and, therefore, students do not achieve what they should in the subject.

18. In most lessons, students achieve satisfactory, and sometimes higher, standards in their work. Their progress in lessons is usually at least satisfactory. The school does not attain higher standards despite good teaching because the rate of attendance of some students is unsatisfactory. For example, many students in Years 10 and 11 were absent during the week of the inspection, a situation likely to be unhelpful to the chances of success of some students about to take GCSE examinations. Some students do not behave well enough in class and, occasionally, have to be withdrawn from lessons, restricting their learning and, in some cases, slowing progress for all in those lessons. When lengthy fixed-term exclusions from school are given and, for some students, repeated, the learning and progress of the students involved is held back. Good teaching helps most students of very wide-ranging abilities to achieve what they should from the well-below average standards of attainment of most on entry to the school.
19. Good teaching helps students to learn successfully and meets their needs effectively. Students extend their subject knowledge, skills and understanding successfully in most lessons. They usually work effectively with their teachers, have good attitudes to learning and behave well. In these lessons, relationships between students and teachers are good and helpful to learning and teachers meet students' needs well. In some lessons, students' attitudes are not positive and their behaviour deteriorates to become unsatisfactory and unhelpful to their learning.
20. In most lessons, teachers control and manage students well and help them to learn effectively. For example, in a Year 8 English lesson on poetry, the teacher's very good control of a low-attaining class enabled the students to listen in absolute silence to the sounds around them, helping them to appreciate the poem, *The Sound Collector*, very well. The teacher's control and rapport with students in a Year 7 history lesson on the Black Death helped very low-attaining students to appreciate the effect of the plague very well. While one student left the room briefly, the teacher directed the others to lie on the carpeted floor, as though dead, and all did so seriously, with great self-control. The returning student - and all - gained much understanding of the subject from the work that followed. Teachers manage older students equally well in most lessons. In a good art lesson for Year 11 students who had completed their final work for the GCSE examination, the teacher enabled all to extend their learning effectively, because they were well managed and had good relationships with the teacher. Many teachers have high expertise in managing the challenging behaviour which occurs at all ages, but some students' behaviour can be so difficult to manage in some lessons that the pace of learning slows for the class and teachers need to call for support from senior staff to withdraw a student from the lesson in the interest of the learning of others. When response from senior staff is immediate, learning continues.
21. Teachers use a good range of methods to enable their classes to learn effectively. Their explanations and presentations are usually clear and helpful to students' learning. They use questions well to help students to recall previous work and to guide them through problems that they encounter in learning. For example, in a Year 10 graphics lesson in which the teacher reviewed students' answers from their recent examination, probing questions to the class in this calm, well-organised lesson, helped students to extend their learning and depth of understanding well. Some teachers organise

students to work in small groups, enabling them to learn with others successfully. Teachers use this method effectively in drama, for example. In a Year 7 geography lesson, the teacher organised students into small groups that presented the results of their geographical investigations to the rest of the class well.

22. Teachers' competent level of subject knowledge helps them to plan their lessons well, so that students learn from a well-organised sequence of activities. They usually make clear to their classes what they are aiming to learn in that lesson. They use their own personal experience well to extend students' learning. For example, in a Year 8 music lesson in which students sang a South African song in different parts, the teacher was able to use personal experience of that country to extend students' understanding. Although much teaching of French, German and Spanish is good, and some lessons are very good in all languages, some lessons in French and German are unsatisfactory when teaching neglects the speaking of the foreign language, giving students no opportunity to hear or to speak the language. Teachers' subject knowledge shows in their explanations and understanding of how to extend students' learning in some lessons. For example, in an excellent Year 10 physical education lesson, extending students' skills of throwing and catching in rounders, the teacher's explanations were highly informative and contributed to the students' confidence in the subject, to very good relationships and to the very good progress that they made.
23. Work is usually pitched at the right level for the range of students' needs. All, including able students and low attainers, usually make at least satisfactory progress in lessons. For example, Year 7 students working on probability in mathematics made good progress because the teacher used very good judgement in deciding the level at which to pitch the work. Students were given the opportunity to manage their own learning for themselves in part of the lesson, with some effective examples to summarise what had been learned at the end. The teacher of a very good Year 9 history lesson on Scarborough in the Second World War pitched work at a challenging level for the students, helping them to judge the reliability of the evidence that they were considering effectively and to gain good understanding of how people felt at that time. However, some students do not have targets for improvement and not all are made fully aware of how they could improve their work.
24. Lessons usually run at a good pace and time is not wasted. A good Year 7 mathematics lesson, in which students converted percentages to fractions, had good pace. The teacher provided some mental exercises at the start of the lesson, and helped students through a series of activities, enabling all to make at least satisfactory progress. Physical education lessons invariably have good pace and time is used well; students of all ages have been trained successfully to warm-up at the start of lessons, and the activities that follow are well connected, keeping the attention of all on the objectives for learning.
25. Teachers usually set homework according to the timetable published by the school. Some work set is not very challenging because students do not usually take textbooks home. In mathematics, for example, students' exercise books are their only text, and any errors in these lead to continual misunderstandings. There are insufficient textbooks in this subject and in science and modern foreign languages from which more challenging homework might be set.
26. The quality of teaching of students with special educational needs in the learning support base is very good. Teachers plan a variety of suitable activities to help students to improve their skills of reading, writing and number, based on a careful assessment of their needs. They have a sound knowledge of methods of teaching to help students

with specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia, and these students make good progress over time. Support assistants also have a secure understanding of the needs of students to whom they are allocated. Relationships between staff and students with special educational learning needs are excellent. Staff also provide support for students who have refused to attend school. Good links between subject teachers and staff in the learning support base ensure that these students have appropriate work to do before they return to mainstream classes. Subject teachers usually adapt work well for students with learning difficulties in regular lessons and ensure that it is matched to their ability. Support assistants work effectively with teachers. Both teachers and assistants often provide good, individual attention for these students, especially when they are asked to write or record information. This usually ensures that they participate fully in lessons and make good progress.

27. Since the last inspection, teaching has improved considerably. In 1996, 18 per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory; now five per cent are below satisfactory. There is now much more very good teaching. Monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching have contributed to the improvement. The challenging behaviour of some students and the very wide-ranging abilities of those who attend the school make teaching particularly demanding. Most teachers manage students very well and the quality of teachers' work is, in many cases, impressive.

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

28. The quality and range of learning opportunities that the school offers are good. In Years 7 to 9, the National Curriculum is extended through the provision of a course of personal and social education and drama. In Years 10 and 11, social science, statistics and Spanish extend the range of optional subjects.
29. Students do not receive their statutory entitlement to information and communication technology throughout the school. There are no opportunities to gain a qualification in information and communication technology. Religious education is offered as a GCSE subject at Key Stage 4, but most students do not receive their statutory entitlement to this subject in Years 10 and 11. Insufficient time allocated to design and technology does not enable students to achieve the standards that they could in this subject at all ages; however, the school plans to increase time for the subject in Years 7 to 9 from September 2001.
30. The school meets nearly all the requirements of the many students who have statements of special educational need. However, speech therapy is not available for one student who needs it. The provision of smaller classes for low-attaining students is helpful and, in science for example, students on the special needs register make better progress than other students because of this arrangement. In Year 11, suitable alternative courses are available for students with special needs, such as Certificates of Achievement in several subjects and the Youth Award Scheme. The learning support department provides a good mix of in-class support and individual or small-group tuition. However, there is insufficient provision for students with emotional and behaviour difficulties. Those with more severe difficulties have the opportunity of alternative education, extended work experience and counselling from a behaviour-support tutor or educational social worker. There is insufficient support for students with less severe difficulties until their behaviour becomes too disruptive for teachers to manage in class. Current arrangements are therefore too re-active and do little to prevent more serious difficulties from developing.

31. Provision for literacy is adequate, but practice in teaching and learning of literacy is inconsistent across all subjects. All staff have received two days of training in teaching literacy. A summer scheme helps primary school pupils who are about to transfer to Pindar School to overcome difficulties with literacy. This scheme is extended to assist them further when they are in Year 7. However, the funds that are allocated to the library do not provide a very good selection of challenging reading for higher attainers. Provision for numeracy is unsatisfactory, except in mathematics. There is no school policy to direct work in numeracy in all subjects.
32. The school's provision for extra-curricular activities is very good. A very good range of sporting activities is provided. There are many competitive games and outdoor pursuits and orienteering. The Leisure Centre provides very good opportunities for extra-curricular activities until 6.00pm each day. Provision for musical activities is good. There is a band, an orchestra and an ensemble. Many students have instrumental tuition. There are theatre visits, foreign trips, including a residential trip to France for Year 7 students, field-study trips and a debating society. School productions are very successful, and well attended, including the recent *Faust and Furious*. A number of subjects run homework clubs.
33. All students, including those with special educational needs, have equal access to the curriculum except, for a few in Year 11 who are exempt from the requirement to study a foreign language in Years 10 and 11 so that their needs can be better met. There are some good initiatives in place for those pupils who find it difficult to follow the subjects of the regular curriculum in Years 10 and 11. For example, some students have the opportunity to study for Certificate of Achievement courses in several subjects. Boys and girls have equal access to the entire range of extra-curricular activities: girls play both football and cricket and there is a mixed hockey team.
34. Provision for personal and social education is satisfactory. The course is taught to every student throughout the school for one hour per week. Comprehensive schemes of work aim to improve students' skills and knowledge in personal relationships, health issues and awareness of major social problems such as drug and alcohol abuse, family breakdown, ageing and disability.

35. Provision for careers and vocational education is good. All pupils receive two weeks of work experience in Year 10. The Bridge Project, a partnership between the school, the Yorkshire Coast College and the North Yorkshire Business Education Partnership, allows students to spend one day per week in college in a vocational area. In addition, a small number of students in Year 11, who are exempt from the requirement to study a foreign language, benefit from planned, extended work experience. The Youth Award Scheme offers awards for students' achievements in vocational areas, as well as in academic and outdoor pursuits. There is an annual Careers Fayre held in the school which provides useful information to students and parents.
36. Links with the community contribute well to students' learning. There are good links with employers through work experience, and employers praise the efforts of the students that they receive. The Leisure Centre on the school campus is successfully managed jointly with the local borough council. The district manager of the Community Education Service works in the school and has close links there. A community classroom is available for the use of community groups. Individuals and groups from the community contribute to the course in personal and social education. These include representatives of sheltered-housing accommodation, Alcohol Awareness, Young Carers and a Christian Youth worker. Students visit the sheltered accommodation and local churches. The Community Education Service has supported two students with severe behavioural difficulties, organising an alternative education programme for them to improve their social skills. Mentors who are local managers and business representatives are supporting some students in Year 10, encouraging them to achieve. The Community Education Service organizes the literacy scheme for pupils in Year 7. The head teacher leads meetings of the Scarborough Learning Community Group, comprising representatives from schools, colleges and voluntary organizations locally. The school has satisfactory links with its partner institutions. Induction arrangements for Year 6 students are satisfactory and particular support is given to those transferring with special educational needs. Some curricular links through drama, music and information and communication technology have been established, but links are not well developed in English, mathematics and science. Staffs at the Yorkshire Coast College and the Scarborough Sixth Form College visit the school regularly and Year 11 students sample lectures in both of these colleges. Representatives of employers, training providers, universities and colleges attend careers events. Good links exist with higher education institutions in Leeds and Ripon. In the current academic year, 18 Initial Teacher Training students have worked in the school.
37. Since the previous inspection, the curriculum continues to provide a good range of courses and extra-curricular opportunities for students. Additional provision for students in Years 10 and 11 is good, and provides well for the needs of those for whom the regular curriculum does not provide well enough. Information and communication technology remains inadequate throughout the school.
38. Provision for students' personal development is satisfactory, overall. However, the weakest aspect is provision for students' spiritual development, which is unsatisfactory. The school recognises this as in need of development. There are few references to this in subject schemes of work. Weekly assemblies and religious education play their part, as do aspects of the personal, health and social education programme. Some contributions are made through topics in art, history and music, and in English and drama through emphasis on significant events in the lives of writers and those of students. However, teachers are insufficiently aware of where this area of experience might be developed in their subjects and do not make the most of opportunities that occur, for example when responding to questions in class. Spiritual awareness is not specified in the school's statement of its fundamental purposes.

39. Provision for students' moral development is satisfactory. It is clearly written into policies and codes of practice and forms an important part of the student development programme. Within subject schemes of work, moral awareness is explicit in science, through issues involved in genetic modification, and in history, through consideration of the moral implications of the slave trade. In art, it is good, for example through Year 9 students' design of a comic strip on the effects of alcohol. Other subjects make their contribution implicitly, through practice and recognition of the need to respect the views and work of others and, especially, through the management of behaviour in classrooms. The school's rules on behaviour are clear and necessary for the well-being of the school community, but they are not always applied well enough.
40. Students' social development is well provided for. It is common to find students working co-operatively in small groups in many subjects. Respect for each other and the exercise of responsibility, which generally applies in lessons and extra-curricular work, is in contrast to some anti-social behaviour out of lessons. Social responsibility is an important aspect of work with form tutors. The many beneficial contacts with the community enhance the social development of students.
41. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory overall. Extra-curricular work reflects aspects of local culture and valuable links are made with cultural activities of the area, for example in sport, the theatre and music. Visits to France and Germany, including one by a music group, and an after-school Japanese club raise awareness. In lessons, learning about the diversity of cultures is found in art, music, history, geography, drama and religious education, for example. However, insufficient is done throughout the school to develop in students an awareness and appreciation of the multi-cultural nature of their own country.
42. Since the last inspection, provision for students' personal development continues to be generally satisfactory, but students' spiritual development is insufficiently well provided for across most subjects.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?

43. Overall, provision for students' care, well-being and safety is satisfactory. Satisfactory arrangements are made for child protection, providing a safe and secure environment for learning. Inspection evidence indicates that health and safety are given priority and the existing policy, procedures and practice ensure appropriate levels of safety are observed.
44. Most students benefit from the support and guidance that they receive from the newly appointed heads of year and from many form tutors. These staff are generally well supported by senior staff. The provision of care is further enhanced by the work of the co-ordinator for disaffected students, the school nurse and mentors from the business community offering advice, information, support and guidance. This support enables students to raise their achievement, confidence and self-esteem.

45. The personal and social education programme includes guidance on health, the effects of drugs and aspects of sex education. The part-time school nurse contributes well to the course, which helps students to make informed choices, develop constructive relationships and enhance their self-esteem. It also contains important elements of anti-bullying practice and careers guidance. The careers programme is supported by employers, the careers service and a caring, committed tutor. With the assistance of form tutors, specialist speakers and the careers service, students are provided with good opportunities to meet with employers. These opportunities enable them to develop individual, social and personal skills, and to make informed choices about work, training and the next stage of education. The careers programme is valued by parents, many students and employers.
46. Procedures for monitoring attendance are sound, but policy and procedures for improving attendance are inadequate. The newly appointed attendance managers work closely with the educational welfare officer, but heads of school and form tutors do not play a sufficiently active part in ensuring that all absences are rigorously investigated and information shared in a sufficiently systematic way. Some form tutors do not consistently challenge or investigate absences and, consequently, many students, particularly those in Year 10 and 11, miss school and fail to observe the discipline of regular attendance and good time-keeping. Some tutors do not inform parents of their child's absence in accordance with the school's procedures. Consequently, the action to investigate absences is delayed, with some risk to the safety and well-being of individuals. This adversely affects relationships between parents and form tutors, as well as attendance managers. Furthermore, not all teachers check on students' attendance in lessons and inconsistent reporting of students who are missing delays the prompt action needed to discourage absence. This results in the unsatisfactory progress made by some students, undermines the hard work of staff, attendance managers and the educational welfare officer who work diligently to ensure high standards of attendance and punctuality are achieved.
47. Information from attendance managers and the education welfare officer helps the school to identify persistently poor attenders throughout the school so as to improve their attendance. Some students in Years 10 and 11 are provided with worthwhile alternative courses of study more suited to their needs. Rewards are given for good attendance. Younger students respond well to the system of rewards. Registration at the beginning of sessions is usually done efficiently, and the process complies with legal requirements. However, a small but significant number of parents condone absences unjustifiably.
48. Sound procedures are in place to encourage appropriate behaviour. Teachers work hard to maintain good standards of behaviour. The clear expectations in the school's code of behaviour are followed by most students, particularly in lessons. Rewards and sanctions are used fairly, recognised and valued by most students. Good management, organisation and control of students by teachers and form tutors help students to follow the published code of behaviour. However, the code is ignored by a number of persistent and disruptive students, who deliberately flaunt the rules. They ignore the severity of sanctions and are dismissive of rewards. Some staff do not enforce the requirements for behaviour and uniform as required by the school's code enough.

49. An anti-bullying policy is in place, but it is not applied enough to satisfy all students and parents. Some guidelines are not rigorously applied by staff at all levels, and procedures to discourage all types of anti-social behaviour and racism are not fully used. For example, there are no procedures for formally investigating, recording and monitoring incidents of racism. Some students and parents express concern about the aggressive and anti-social attitudes of some students in the school. Some name-calling and harassment lead to bullying which, in some cases, is not investigated to the satisfaction of some parents and students. Supervision, particularly at lunch-times, does not adequately support the personal efforts of the headteacher and senior staff.
50. Since the last inspection, the care and welfare provided for students are broadly the same. The school has changed from mixed age tutor groups to ones where all students are from the same year. This is helping to make the school more efficient, but co-ordination among all those with responsibilities for care of students is not yet fully in place. Concerns about attendance and the anti-social behaviour of a small minority continue to cause concern to the school community.
51. Assessment procedures for identifying students' standards of attainment are satisfactory. Data on students' attainment are systematically collected and analysed to predict individuals' and year groups' future attainment more accurately. The school and subject departments use the data to set targets for students in Years 8 and 11, and students' progress towards these targets is monitored. Students in these two years are made aware of the progress that they are making. The practice is most apparent in Year 11 and has not yet been extended to students in all year groups, but the school is planning to do so.
52. Although there is a large amount of statistical data available on students' prior attainment, the use of assessment information to guide departments in planning work to ensure that the curriculum is covered is not fully used by all departments.
53. Since the last inspection, the school has put in place a comprehensive policy on assessment, recording and reporting which enables the strengths and the weaknesses of students' work to be identified. Some good examples of good use of the policy in practice are developing in English and drama, but, in other areas of the curriculum, the implementation of the policy is still at an early stage of development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

54. Overall, the relationship between many parents and the school is unsatisfactory. A significant number of parents have lost confidence in the school and question standards of behaviour. Most parents are pleased with the school's expectations that their children will achieve well and in the progress that they are making.
55. Parents have expressed concerns about some aspects of students' behaviour, and the inspection team agrees that the behaviour of some students gives cause for concern. More students who have acute behavioural difficulties are in the school than at the last inspection. The co-ordinator of special needs and senior staff try to involve parents in improving the behaviour of their children. During the inspection, homework, a concern of some parents, was set as the school intends and, in most cases, extended students' learning well, but lack of text books restricted the range of work which could be set in some subjects. The inspection team agrees with the positive comments made by many parents who are confident that their children are making good progress and that the school expects their children to work hard and do well. A large majority of

parents are pleased with the very good range of extra-curricular activities provided and enjoyed by their children.

56. The information supplied to parents is good. They agree their part in the home-school agreement and have a copy of this. They receive a prospectus and an annual report from governors. These school documents are informative and comply with statutory requirements, except that the school prospectus does not distinguish information about the right of parents to withdraw their child from acts of collective worship from that of withdrawal from religious education. Reports are informative, providing satisfactory information about students' achievements and their personal and academic progress. Reports comply with legal requirements. There are regular consultative meetings provided for parents and for parents with children new to the school so as to discuss their concerns and to exchange information. During the inspection, a number of parents were seen attending a Year 8 parents' evening. Many expressed positive comments about the school and the improvement in arrangements to meet with parents. The school provides student planners, which enable parents to monitor their child's homework and progress, if they choose to do so. The school produces an informative, regular newsletter, which celebrates the achievements of students and the school and informs parents of forthcoming events. Not all students are reliable in passing this information to their parents.
57. The information provided for parents whose children have special educational needs is good. These parents are involved as much as possible in assessment and review of their children's progress, and in setting targets for improvement.
58. The overall impact of parental involvement on the life of the school is satisfactory. Many parents actively support sports and social events, especially those that involve their own children. Parents fund educational visits to France, Germany and local places of educational interest, as well as visits to the theatre. These arrangements support learning and the personal and social development of students. The parents' association has been discontinued, due to the lack of support from the majority of parents, but the school has plans to revive it. Some parents have expressed interest in reviving the association, which would support communication between school and parents more.
59. Since the last report, the school has lost the confidence of some parents. The headteacher and governors are determined to restore parents' confidence and to meet parents' needs for contact and consultation more.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

60. Overall, leadership is satisfactory. It ensures that the school provides teaching of good quality, enabling most students to learn successfully, despite the very wide range of abilities and needs of students in this school. The headteacher and all staff have recognised that the school needs to improve in some aspects of its work. A detailed improvement plan has been agreed in partnership with the local education authority and has the support of governors. Teaching has improved substantially since the last inspection. Most lessons are now good or better; many are of high quality. Little teaching is now unsatisfactory, in contrast to the previous inspection in 1996. The improvement is partly a result of teachers leaving and others being taken on. The headteacher and governors have appointed people of good calibre, many of whom are newly qualified teachers, who have been effective and successful in the classroom and well supported by the school. Leadership has worked in partnership with subject leaders in the school and with the local authority to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching closely. Although students attain below-average standards by national

comparison - unsurprising given the overall levels of attainment of most on entry to the school – most students of very wide-ranging abilities, including able students and those with special educational learning needs, make satisfactory, and sometimes good, progress to achieve well.

61. The headteacher and other key staff recognise that considerable weaknesses remain in attendance and behaviour. More students with acute behavioural needs are now in the school than five years ago and present a considerable challenge, beyond that encountered in most schools. Leadership has responded well by providing training for staff to enhance their skills in managing behaviour. Students with acute behavioural difficulties and others with less acute behavioural needs are sometimes very challenging towards teachers who require - and show - high expertise in managing them, but difficulties in some cases require students to be removed from lessons so that others' learning can continue. Latterly, teamwork has not been effective enough between the headteacher and his most senior colleagues to give all staff the confidence and sense of purpose to work together to improve standards. The system for senior staff to provide support for individual teachers when they encounter very challenging students in lessons is not always efficient enough. In some cases, difficulties in communication result in too much delay before support arrives. Consistency in how these situations are managed by the senior staff involved is sometimes lacking and some teachers have lost confidence in the support they receive. Basic rules in the detailed code of behaviour, for example for disposing of litter, chewing in class and for sticking to rules for uniform, are not always upheld well enough. Latterly, insufficient consultation and co-ordination have taken place with staff, students and parents to work to improve standards. Teachers, support staff and caretaking staff have a strong commitment to the school and many older students are equally responsible and committed. Parents say that they want to be more informed and involved. However, the energies and efforts of all parties have not, latterly, been co-ordinated well enough to ensure that improvement in standards of behaviour is achieved.
62. In many other respects, leadership by the headteacher and key staff is effective in enabling the school to improve in important areas in addition to that of teaching. There is no complacency with regard to the academic standards achieved, and very challenging targets have been set for improvement to enable students to achieve better standards of work. These are monitored and evaluated systematically. The school has made satisfactory improvement in managing the issues of the previous inspection. For example, assessment data have been collected systematically and used more effectively, as called for by the previous inspection, to help teachers to be more aware of students' potential to achieve.
63. Governors are strongly committed to the school. Some have long association with the school and the locality and give a great deal of time and effort in working to improve what is provided for students. Governors develop good expertise through their committees. They are not complacent with the standards that are achieved and they intend to regain the confidence of all parents. Some are regularly in the school to inform themselves of its work at first hand. They have purposeful links with subject staff and monitor the work of the school. They recognise the need to improve in the crucial areas of teaching, learning, behaviour and attendance and these are part of the school improvement plan. Governors have worked closely with the headteacher and in partnership with the local education authority in deciding priorities for improvement.
64. The leadership and management of subjects vary from very good to unsatisfactory. There is effective monitoring of teaching and evaluation of standards in some subjects,

for example in English and drama, geography, history and physical education. However, subject leadership is not effective enough where students are not achieving what they should, in particular in information and communication technology. In some cases, subject leaders have other important duties in the school and these prevent them from directing all energies to improving standards of teaching and learning in their subjects.

65. The recent change to establish tutor groups with students of the same age group has considerable advantages over the previous system. The three recently appointed heads of school work very hard to manage the students in their care. Two have responsibility for two-year groups each, and the numbers of students for whom these staff have responsibility are so many and their difficulties, in some cases, so considerable, that these staff are unable to manage their duties of care to their students well enough, given other managerial responsibilities and substantial teaching commitments. Form tutors have responsibility for monitoring attendance, which is checked by attendance managers, and students whose absence gives concern are followed up vigorously by the education social worker. However, co-ordination of those involved in monitoring and following up absence is lacking, and some heads of school are not closely enough involved in the process of identifying students whose records of attendance give cause for concern.
66. The use of funds available is satisfactory. Spending is linked to priorities in planning. The school's income per student is broadly average, and specific additional funding is used well to support students with special educational learning needs effectively. However, additional funds have not been available to employ staff skilled in managing students with special behavioural needs, in specialist accommodation within the school, to modify their unsatisfactory behaviour and enable them to achieve satisfactory standards of work. As a result, fixed term exclusions of students are above average and the same students, in some cases, are repeatedly excluded because their behaviour is not modified enough to be acceptable.
67. The principles of best value are applied satisfactorily. Achievement is almost in line with that of similar schools, despite the many students with behavioural difficulties, because teaching has improved. However, further improvement in standards in National Curriculum tests in Year 9 and in the higher GCSE grades is possible and recognised by the targets set by the school. The challenge that the school gives itself in the provision that it makes for its students through the curriculum and extra-curricular activities is good. It is developing consultation with students more through the school council, but overall, insufficient consultation with staff, students and parents takes place, to the extent that these groups want and need. The services that the school selects are chosen fairly and are cost-effective. Given the difficult circumstances in which the school operates, it gives satisfactory value for money.
68. There are sufficient and appropriately qualified teaching staff to meet the needs of the curriculum. There has been a high turnover of staff in the last two years, with many teachers gaining promotion. This is unhelpful to the continuity of students' learning and, in some cases, good relationships which have built up between students and teachers have been short lived because of the turnover of staff. Eleven newly qualified teachers are presently employed and the school has employed many such teachers in recent years. There is a good induction programme for these and other teachers new to the school, and this is effective in providing training and their integration with the school. The many newly qualified teachers who have been recruited in recent years and the effective induction and support that they receive have contributed very well to the improvement in the quality of teaching that has been achieved.

69. Students with special educational learning needs are well supported by suitably qualified classroom-assistants. Staffing to meet the needs of students with emotional and behaviour difficulties is inadequate under present arrangements for provision for special educational needs. There are sufficient qualified educational support staff.
70. Administrative staff are competent and efficient. There are two posts of caretaker, of which one is currently unfilled; the caretaker works tirelessly to maintain the building and its cleanliness to a good standard, despite the casual attitudes to litter of some students. Cleaning and grounds-maintenance provide good service. Support by technicians is satisfactory in science and in design and technology. There is no such support in art where some would be helpful to teachers in relieving them of managing materials and equipment and, therefore, giving them more time for preparation of lessons. Arrangements for technical support for maintenance of computers and other equipment for information and communication technology are by contract with the local authority and although the staff involved are competent, provision is unsatisfactory because there is an inevitable delay in restoring the computer-network when it breaks down, as happened during the week of the inspection.
71. There is good provision of professional training that relates to the school and departmental development plans, and the needs of teachers. A satisfactory system for judging the performance of teachers is in place, supportive of their professional development. The school has made a good response to the previous inspection with training of staff in managing behaviour. It is an effective provider for those training to be teachers. These student-teachers make a good contribution to the school, with new ideas and methods and sometimes they are recruited to the school staff.
72. Accommodation is good overall. Most subjects are taught in closely grouped rooms, which are large enough for the classes using them. However, an exception is one infrequently used art room which is too small for the usual numbers of students timetabled for its use, containing too much unsuitably bulky furniture so that space is not used effectively. Despite some refurbishment and reallocation of rooms since the previous inspection, science lacks sufficient space in one room for the numbers of students using it and some teaching of science takes place out of laboratories, restricting the range of activities for students. Provision for physical education is very good and includes a large sports hall and gymnasium, fitness room, generous playing fields and a floodlit all-weather pitch. Rooms and corridors are generally well decorated and often carpeted. Students' work is attractively displayed throughout the school. There is a well-planned programme of refurbishment in place, including the replacement of old furniture. During examinations, students may not make music in one music room due to its position close to the hall used for examinations. Storage is generally sufficient, but there is a shortage of storage for musical instruments. This restricts the range of work possible in this music room. During the week of the inspection, boys' toilets were clean and free from graffiti; a girls' toilet suffered some damage.
73. The allocation of funds to departments for the purchase of books, consumable materials and equipment is largely sufficient, but some existing resources for learning are inadequate. For example, there are not enough textbooks for the teaching of science, mathematics and modern foreign languages and books are not usually taken home, restricting the homework which can be set. In science, some apparatus is not satisfactory. The library contains a good collection of books and other resources, but lacks enough up-to-date resources on different cultures. Despite considerable spending on additional computers, more are required if students are to receive their

entitlement to information and communication technology. Most departments do not have easy access to computers and provision is inadequate in science, art, religious education and design and technology, for example.

74. The management of provision for special educational needs is at a transitional stage. The special educational needs co-ordinator and an assistant co-ordinator are working together effectively as responsibilities are re-assigned. Management of the learning support base is efficient and enables support staff to provide effective support for many students with special needs. However, responsibilities for the management of other areas of special needs provision are unclear. In particular, heads of school do not have a clear role in helping the school provide for students with emotional and behaviour difficulties. Subject-liaison teachers for special educational needs lack a central role under present arrangements. Policy for special educational needs meets most of the requirements of the Code of Practice. However, the explanation of management responsibilities is out of date and lacks co-ordination. The allocation of resources to support students on the special needs register is not explained and criteria for evaluating the progress of these students need further development.
75. Since the last inspection, improvement has been satisfactory on the key issue requiring closer monitoring of standards and of teaching. The quality of teaching has greatly improved. Of the other issues, leadership has provided suitable training to help staff in developing their expertise in managing behaviour in lessons. More computers have been purchased and there has been some improvement in use of these, but much more use of information and communication technology is required across the curriculum. The school's leadership recognises the need to improve behaviour, attendance and attainment. These are the right priorities. Teamwork among the headteacher and his most senior colleagues is not yet effecting enough improvement in some key areas.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

76. To raise standards achieved by students and the quality of educational provision, the school should:
- (a) Raise attainment of some students in National Curriculum tests and at GCSE grades A* to C: *(paragraphs: 2, 4, 92, 10). This is a target in the school's own improvement planning.*
- extend the good practice of setting individual targets for students in some year groups to achieve to all;
 - inform them and their parents of these;
 - provide individual support to help all students to achieve their targets;
 - monitor and evaluate the progress made;
 - inform and involve parents in this process.
- (b) Raise students' standards of work and provision for information and communication technology: *(paragraphs: 2, 5, 73, 140-146). This is a target in the school's improvement planning.*
- train staff further in its use;
 - provide more computers and other information and communication technology;
 - require each subject department to show where it plans to use information and communication technology in its scheme of work;

- monitor and evaluate the rate of improvement.
- (c) Improve teamwork between the headteacher and his most senior colleagues to provide a more effective system of support for teachers in managing behaviour in class. *(paragraph: 61)*
- ensure that the system of support provided for teachers when students' behaviour in lessons is unacceptable is always rapid and effective, enabling teachers to continue to help others with their learning.
- (d) Improve behaviour out of lessons, and provide more specific help for students with behavioural problems to enable them to learn more successfully. *(paragraphs: 3, 7, 12, 48, 78)*
- co-ordinate the support of all staff and students to work closely with the school's leadership to raise standards of behaviour.
 - ensure that the school's code of behaviour is respected by all students;
 - work to give students with behavioural problems improved opportunities for learning within the school, by employing additional specialist staff and providing suitable accommodation to help these students to modify their behaviour and achieve more highly;
 - monitor and evaluate improvement and report this to parents.
- (e) Improve students' rate of attendance. *(paragraphs: 3, 14, 15, 46, 94). This is a target in the school's improvement planning.*
- co-ordinate more closely the work of senior staff, heads of year, education social workers, attendance managers and form tutors to ensure that rates of students' attendance are closely monitored, so that students giving concern are known to all staff and where necessary followed up;
 - recognise and reward good attendance more;
 - monitor the rate of improvement.
- (f) Improve links with parents and response to their concerns. *(paragraphs: 54, 55)*
- consult more frequently with parents on plans for improvement;
 - involve them more in monitoring and supporting their children's progress.

In addition to the key issues listed above, the school should consider including in its action plan the following issues relating to other weaknesses:

- (g) provide greater consistency in the teaching and learning of literacy across all subjects. Produce a statement of policy for numeracy and ensure more consistency in the teaching and learning of numeracy in all subjects. Monitor and evaluate practice. *(paragraphs: 6, 17, 89, 99)*
- (h) provide more for students' spiritual development and by ensuring that all subjects identify their contribution to this in their schemes of work and monitor and evaluate improved provision. *(paragraph:38)*
- (i) meet statutory requirements for religious education in Years 10 and 11. *(paragraph: 29)*

- (j) provide more for students' experience and knowledge of different cultures, by ensuring that all subjects identify their contribution to these in their schemes of work and monitor and evaluate improved provision. (*paragraph:41*)
- (k) provide more textbooks for classwork and homework, particularly in mathematics, science and modern foreign languages. (*paragraph:73*)

ASSESSMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

- 77. The school has clear procedures for the initial identification of students with special educational needs. The co-ordinator for special educational needs and the head of Year 7 visit primary schools to collect information about pupils with special needs who are to attend Pindar School. The co-ordinator of special educational needs also attends the annual reviews of statements of Year 6 pupils and gains good understanding of the needs of students before they join the school. Further assessment takes place at the start of Year 7 so that all teachers are aware of students' special needs and ways in which they can support them.
- 78. Individual education plans are written by the co-ordinator and are informative, providing appropriate targets for students and subject teachers. Subject teachers review these regularly and many revise them to make them more appropriate to their own subjects. These procedures are effective and helpful for many students with learning difficulties. However, some students cannot remember their targets and the learning support department is rightly revising the way they are recorded. The same system of setting targets for students with emotional and behaviour difficulties is less effective. Targets such as "stay on task" and "concentrate" are not specific enough and there is little evidence of progress for many students.
- 79. Annual reviews of statements of special educational need are carried out efficiently, with useful contributions from students, parents, support staff, teachers and external agencies. Transitional plans for students after the age of 14 are also efficiently processed.
- 80. Overall, assessment is used effectively to monitor the progress of students with learning difficulties but closer monitoring is needed where students have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	154
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	46

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	17	38	39	4	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	
Number of pupils on the school's roll	785	
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	195	

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	20	
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	207	

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	36
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	51

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.2
National comparative data	7.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.7
National comparative data	1.1

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	69	78	147

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	30	33	24
	Girls	51	33	33
	Total	81	66	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	55 (51)	45 (57)	39 (45)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	19 (14)	22 (32)	10 (10)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	26	39	19
	Girls	54	51	30
	Total	80	90	49
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	54 (64)	61 (58)	33 (56)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	23 (30)	20 (30)	10 (22)
	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	71	76	147

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	21	63	69
	Girls	23	64	70
	Total	44	127	139
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	30 (30)	86 (84)	95 (93)
	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	29 (30)
	National	38.4 (38)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	785
Any other minority ethnic group	0

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	118	6
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	49
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	315

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	22.4
Key Stage 4	20.6

Financial information

Financial year	2000-1
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	£
Total income	1873465
Total expenditure	1828047
Expenditure per pupil	2375
Balance brought forward from previous year	-8281
Balance carried forward to next year	37137

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	785
Number of questionnaires returned	189

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	23	53	14	9	2
My child is making good progress in school.	27	55	8	6	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	12	32	31	18	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	14	52	22	10	2
The teaching is good.	9	63	16	5	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	10	43	33	13	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	21	53	16	9	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	27	64	7	3	0
The school works closely with parents.	11	38	35	15	2
The school is well led and managed.	8	43	24	14	10
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	13	52	23	6	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	34	48	10	3	5

Figures may not total 100% because of rounding.

Other issues raised by parents

Some parents at the evening for parents prior to the inspection and many others who have made written comments express particular concerns over students' behaviour, including bullying, and feel that they are not kept well enough informed on how their children are getting on. Some think that the school's leadership is not tackling these problems well enough and have lost confidence in the school.

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

ENGLISH

81. Students achieve well in English throughout the school. Teaching is good and students make good progress in lessons at all ages.
82. On entry to the school, students' standards are well below average. However, they achieve well. By the end of Year 9, attainment in National Curriculum tests in 2000 was below the national average but above the average for similar schools. Results were well below average in 1998 but improved in the following year and this improved performance was maintained in 2000. Students achieve higher standards in English in the tests than in mathematics and science. They continue to make good progress in Years 10 and 11. Results at GCSE have remained at similar levels since 1998. The proportion of students attaining grades A* to C in English in 2000 was below the national average but well above the average of similar schools, showing that they achieve well. Students did better than in mathematics, science and most other subjects, although attainment in English literature was well below the national average. Girls attain higher levels than boys, in line with the difference found nationally.
83. The standard of work seen during the inspection was in line with last year's National Curriculum tests and GCSE results and showed that students continue to achieve well. Although there is a full range of attainment among students who enter the school in Year 7, there are few high-attaining students. Even the more able spell longer words incorrectly and low-attaining students only write very short sentences about themselves with a lot of help from the teacher. By the end of Year 9, standards have improved. Most students speak confidently. They are usually keen to contribute to class discussion. They express their own views clearly and rarely interrupt each other when they are interested in a topic. However, many slip into non-standard English. For example, they frequently say "summat" rather than "something". Students who volunteer to read aloud in class do so fluently, accurately and with good expression. Few read widely for pleasure. Although students have regular lessons in the library, they rarely discuss what they read and do not develop a real interest in books. Most students understand the plot of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and the more able can analyse relationships between characters, making good reference to the text to back up their views. A few high-attaining students are able to analyse the way Shakespeare creates suspense in the play and discuss his use of dramatic irony. Students' standards of writing are lower than their speaking, listening and reading skills. Nearly all can express their ideas clearly in writing but often make mistakes of spelling and punctuation. Many in Year 9 consistently use commas instead of full stops. However, students make good progress with handwriting and take more pride in the presentation of their work than they do at the beginning of Year 7.
84. During Years 10 and 11 students continue to achieve well. At the end of Year 11 standards of speaking, listening and reading are in line with those found nationally but writing skills are below average. Most students speak clearly and confidently in class. In one lesson, higher-attaining students explained their views about set texts for GCSE to the rest of the class in confident, formal presentations, using an overhead projector. They showed a very good understanding of the plot and themes in a variety of short stories. Middle and lower-attaining students discussed Martyn Lowery's poem *Our Love Now* with insight, referring to their own experience to interpret its meaning and structure. Students annotate their texts well during class discussions. Many draft and

re-draft their writing carefully and respond well to the advice that teachers provide when they mark essays. Despite this, many students have difficulty in organising their essays well enough, especially when comparing short stories. The use of colloquialisms in formal essays and continuing difficulties with spelling and punctuation prevent several students from achieving higher GCSE grades.

85. Standards have improved since the last inspection. Results in National Curriculum tests in Year 9 have improved and, at GCSE, more students achieve the highest grades. Procedures for monitoring students' progress have also improved. The department was experiencing staffing problems during the last inspection and frequent changes of staff have continued. As a result, developments in some areas have been slow. The teaching of information and communication technology in English remains weak and students are still not sufficiently involved in evaluating their own progress.
86. The quality of teaching is good. In nearly all lessons it is at least satisfactory and, in one quarter of lessons, the teaching is very good. Teachers have high expectations of students. Their skilful questioning often helps students to build on their ideas and develop a personal response to literature. Teachers offer students a powerful role model by listening carefully to their views and giving them the confidence to express their thoughts in class. In most lessons, teachers pitch work at the right level, so that students at different levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. Support assistants provide these students with effective extra support in some lessons and work closely with subject teachers. Teachers mark students' work promptly and write useful comments and advice to help them to improve further. In the best lessons, teachers manage their classes well. They organise a variety of activities to interest students and to keep them working at a good pace. For example, a class of low-attaining students was asked to listen to sounds around them, read the poem *The Sound Collector* aloud, discuss it in pairs, and then, as a group write individual responses with help from the teacher. Some less experienced teachers do not vary their teaching methods sufficiently. Their emphasis on teaching the whole class and occasional lack of urgency and pace limits students' learning at times. Teachers seldom place sufficient emphasis on spelling and punctuation and students learn these skills too slowly as a result. They do not set enough homework for students.
87. The head of department provides very good leadership and support for an enthusiastic but, as yet, inexperienced team of teachers. Clear, appropriate priorities for development have been identified. Among these is the need to develop schemes of work further, especially for Years 7 to 9, so that sufficient time is given to improving students' skills of basic literacy and information and communication technology. Not all teachers follow the department's policy to set individual targets for each student and most students are uncertain about what they need to do to improve their level of attainment or gain a higher grade. The head of department has insufficient time to manage these important developments, as there is no second in department to whom other responsibilities can be delegated.

Literacy across the curriculum

88. Overall, standards of literacy are satisfactory. Most students speak clearly and confidently, although not always in standard English. Standards of reading are sufficient to allow most students to read textbooks and worksheets with understanding in all subjects. Most students write neatly and keep useful notes that help them when revising for examinations. The majority can write at length by the end of Year 9 but many still spell and punctuate incorrectly in all years.
89. The school's literacy policy lacks detail and the school has no literacy co-ordinator. As a result, many teachers help students to improve their literacy skills but there is no consistency in the methods they use. For example, some teachers encourage students to read during afternoon registration but others do not. Teachers often ask students to read aloud in religious education and history, but opportunities for this are missed in English and music. Most subjects identify key vocabulary in their schemes of work. Some teachers display these in their classrooms and refer to them in lessons, especially in art, mathematics, modern languages, history and science. History provides very good practice for students in the accurate use of specific and more general vocabulary and teachers mark spelling and punctuation errors assiduously. Teachers provide excellent advice and practice in planning and structuring continuous writing through GCSE coursework in history. In other subjects, the marking of spelling and punctuation varies too much in quality and helpfulness to students in guiding improvement. There is insufficient insistence on the correction of mistakes in writing. Not enough time is allocated to the development of basic literacy skills in English in Years 7 to 9.

MATHEMATICS

90. Students do not achieve as well as they should in Years 10 and 11 because absence prevents some of them from making better progress. Teaching is satisfactory throughout the school and teachers have good discipline.
91. By Year 9, students' achievement and progress over time are satisfactory because they enter the school at age 11 with well below average attainment in this subject. During Years 7 to 9, they improved to attain below average standards in the Year 9 National Curriculum tests in 2000 and 1999 in comparison with similar schools. In comparison with all schools, their attainment was well below average. Students attain lower standards in mathematics than they do in English, and similar ones to those that they gain in science. Students are able to solve problems using statistics, involving probability, simple and cumulative frequency, space and shape successfully. However, they have difficulties with numerical work. For example, they struggle in adding simple decimals. They have difficulty in dividing by two-digit numbers. Many, when doing compass-work, think that North is always 'straight ahead of you'. Students with special educational learning needs make progress in the subject in line with that of others at all ages. The grouping of students by their mathematical ability is very helpful to the successful learning of students with special educational needs.
92. By the end of Year 11, achievement and progress of students become unsatisfactory. The attainment of students at GCSE grades A* to C and A* to G in 2000 and in recent years was below the average of similar schools and of all schools. Students attained lower standards in the subject than in most of their others in 2000. All work seen in class by Year 11 was a revision for the forthcoming GCSE, and students entered for the higher papers showed understanding of powers, roots and reciprocals. However, other students were having difficulty with negative numbers, conversions of simple

imperial measures to metric and in explaining the ranges of groups of numbers in statistics.

93. At all ages, there is a lack of rigorous algebra to be found either in lessons or in the scrutiny of students' books. Where students have done work in algebra, exercises are repetitive and do not extend students' learning well enough.
94. Attendance at both the key stages is an obstacle to students' progress. In lessons seen during this inspection, there was a 1 in 10 absence rate in Years 7, 8 and 9, and a 1 in 4 absence rate at Years 10 and 11, impairing the progress of a significant number of students.
95. Since the last inspection, teaching staff no longer share classes and continuity of teaching is no longer a concern. Attainment in National Curriculum tests and at GCSE has not improved significantly. Some students continue to be entered for the Certificate of Achievement in Year 11, rather than GCSE, and achieve the necessary standard. There is still insufficient use of information and communication technology, and this situation has not improved from the last inspection
96. The quality of the teaching is satisfactory across all years. During the inspection, no lesson was graded unsatisfactory, but only one lesson was graded very good or excellent. In good lessons, teachers insisted on gaining the full attention of all students, and made them fully aware at the start of the lesson what was going to be achieved. In these lessons, the pace of the lesson involved all students well in learning. The work chosen was well adapted to the levels of ability of students and enabled them to make satisfactory progress. Less successful teaching lacked the same good pace of learning. In some cases, insufficient explanation was given to students to enable them to clarify issues from their work. In other situations, initial mathematical starting work went on for too long, restricting time for other key work and, therefore, students' progress. In some lessons, too many examples of the same type are used and, as a result, there is a lack of opportunity for students to do more demanding extension-work. All teachers have good subject knowledge. Teachers manage students well and have good control of their behaviour. The behaviour of the students in lessons is satisfactory and some teaching might have capitalised on the students' positive attitudes more and been more ambitious over what could be learned. Teachers set homework regularly. However, often it is only a repeat of those examples already practised by students in class, because insufficient textbooks are available to provide more challenging homework. Little extension work was seen during the scrutiny of the students' exercise books. The work is marked regularly, but the marking does not always help students well enough to understand how to raise the standards of their work. The guidance laid down in the department's handbook is not always followed closely enough. Too many students fail to hand in their homework.
97. The curriculum is supported by worksheets. Half sets of textbooks are available in rooms for the use of students, but textbooks are not taken home and do not, therefore, support homework. Therefore, students have to rely heavily on their exercise books when revising for tests. Scrutiny of exercise books shows that their content is insufficient in most cases for good revision to take place. A Year 11 lesson in which students taking GCSE at higher or intermediate levels demonstrated clearly that students, when given a text, made good use of it to help recall of earlier work.
98. There is no doubting the commitment of the head of department and other members of staff in this department to the progress and behaviour of the students in their care. Nevertheless, the monitoring and evaluation of the work of the department, particularly in relation to students' written work are not satisfactory. The head of department, in

particular, has considerable management responsibilities outside the department that impinges on his time. The fact that he is unable to call on other senior members of his department for assistance because they are also involved in managing other aspects of the school gives rise for concern for the efficient management of this department.

Numeracy across the curriculum

99. The use by students of skills in numeracy, in subjects other than mathematics, is unsatisfactory. Many students arrive at the school less than confident in tackling problems involving numeracy and need to approach others for help and assistance. The school has no policy in place for the development and use of numeracy. As a result, numeracy is under-represented in all subject areas of the school, other than in mathematics. All subjects outside mathematics are unable to be consistent without policy and direction concerning work, which not only includes knowing about numbers and number operations, but which also demands familiarity with the ways in which numerical information is gathered and presented. There were isolated examples of numeracy seen in science, physical education, modern foreign languages and geography. The school has not yet approached its partner primary schools to see how it might build on the national numeracy project.

SCIENCE

100. Students of all abilities who attend regularly achieve what they should in the subject. Absence holds back the progress of others. Teaching is generally satisfactory, and some is very good.
101. Attainment in National Curriculum tests for 14-year-olds in 2000 was well below the average of similar schools and all schools. There was no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls, and test results were in line with teacher assessments. Over the last three years, standards of attainment have declined and the gap between school and national performance has widened. Standards of attainment in science are below those that students attain in English and are broadly similar to their attainment in mathematics.
102. Analysis of the 2000 dual award science GCSE results shows the proportion of students achieving grades A* to C to be below the national average, but above the average of similar schools. Attainment within grades A* to G was in line with the national average. Over the last three years the proportion of A* to C grades has declined, but the overall pass rate has risen to just above the national level. Students' GCSE attainment in science is in line with what they attain in their other subjects. There was no significant difference in attainment between girls and boys.
103. In work seen during the inspection, overall attainment at the end of Year 9 was below national expectations. Year 7 students in a class of middle attainment, understood the principle of a fair test, but had difficulty in applying this to an investigation on the effectiveness of various substances to neutralise an acid. On the other hand, a class of more able Year 7 students demonstrated good investigative and evaluative skills in studying the relationship between the thickness of branches and their position in a tree. Year 9 students can describe the difference between sound and light waves and can explain amplitude and frequency, but their overall scientific knowledge and understanding is below average.
104. Scrutiny of written work and observation of classwork during the inspection show levels of attainment by Year 11 to be below national expectations. Students' notebooks show

limited development of numerical skills with few examples of extended writing or use of information and communication technology. Factual recall in class, the understanding of simple theory and the ability to link aspects of different topics are all below the national average. By Year 11, most students have developed satisfactory skills of prediction, analysis and evaluation as demonstrated in coursework, investigating factors affecting fermentation in yeast. However, many of the same students were challenged to explain the basic principles of the periodic table of elements. Lower-attaining Year 11 students following the Certificate of Achievement were able to relate the pitch and volume of guitar sound to the actions of the player successfully.

105. For the majority of students, achievement across Years 7 to 9 and Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory. Written work shows little evidence of satisfactory progress in independent understanding of basic scientific principles. The system of grouping students by ability in the subject ensures that higher-attaining students largely achieve their potential and in 2000, students progressed well enough to attain standards above the average of similar schools at GCSE grades A* to C. However, poor attendance, lack of textbooks to take home for homework and revision and limited access to their notebooks contribute to the majority of students failing to make sufficient progress. Students with special educational learning needs make good progress, in line with their prior attainment, through the school.
106. Since the last inspection, standards of attainment overall have continued to fall and many of the issues raised such as deficiencies in accommodation and the insufficient use of assessment data still await improvement.
107. The quality of teaching to students of all ages is satisfactory. Teachers are secure in their knowledge of the subject, make good use of limited resources, give good individual attention to students and demonstrate satisfactory class management. In the best practice, aims are clear, pace is well matched to students' levels of attainment and a variety of activities ensure that students are fully occupied and can make progress. The approach to homework lacks rigour, both in the quantity and quality expected. Textbooks are not regularly taken home to enable students to extend their learning out of lessons. Standards of marking and commentary in students' notebooks vary widely as does the quality of feed-back to students with little evidence of individual target-setting. While students' knowledge and understanding are regularly tested through end-of-module assessments, it is not evident that data from these assessments is being used to best advantage. Some helpful and specific comments were seen in Year 10 end-of-year reports, but this is not always the case in Years 7 to 9. Students with special educational needs respond well to the committed and flexible teaching provision. Teachers ensure that most students are compliant, settle down at the start of classes and are willing to learn. Students follow instructions, contribute to class discussions and, in most cases, the presentation of their written work is satisfactory or good. Students are generally individually polite, but a lack of awareness of acceptable standards of social behaviour in the classroom can sometimes significantly restrict the extent of what is achieved in some lessons.
108. Leadership of the department is satisfactory. Members of the department complement one another's strengths and share teaching strategies. However, recent high staff turnover has been unhelpful to standards of attainment. Schemes of work have recently been revised and take account of the wide range of student attainment. Constructive departmental meetings are held regularly and a departmental development plan is in place. There is, however, a lack of a central departmental record of assessment data against which student performance can be monitored and remedial action taken. Health and safety procedures are properly observed, but the condition of some of the

laboratories and the level of resources are unsatisfactory. A technician provides good technical support in difficult circumstances.

ART AND DESIGN

109. Attainment on entry is well below average in art. Though students achieve well enough by the end of Year 9 and Year 11, attainment in GCSE remains well below average, though strongly improving. Teaching and learning are satisfactory.
110. From standards that are well below average when joining the school, students make satisfactory progress and achieve well enough by the end of Year 9. Painting skills are well developed in students of all abilities and the standard is in line with national expectations. Drawing skills are less well developed. For example, Year 9 students draw the shape of shells well enough, but texture and form are poorly recorded. More able students can respond well to the work of other artists, making insightful evaluations and successfully relating these to their own work. Other students make simple written responses and are less able to make relevant links with their own work. Overall, standards are below national expectations.
111. Those students who study art in Years 10 and 11 continue to make satisfactory progress and are achieving well enough by the end of Year 11. Though the proportion of students gaining grades A* - C at GCSE has improved by 28% over three years, it remains well below the national average. The proportion of students gaining A* - G is close to the national average. Students' attainment in art has not been as high as students studying other subjects in the school but the quality of the work seen in Year 11 during inspection indicates that improvement has continued in the GCSE 2001 examination.
112. All students are able to develop their ideas using a sufficient range of techniques and media. More able students, with high levels of commitment, produce large quantities of good quality research and development work. A Year 11 student produced a comprehensive study of the Green Man, drawing on poetry, published images, catalogues, studies of nature and developing an accomplished relief mask in plaster. Other students have good painting skills and can relate their work to that of artists. Their extended studies use a good range of approaches including ambitious sculptures exploring Pop Art. Huge lipsticks, mobile phones and chocolate bars dominate one of the art rooms. Painting skills are well developed in less able students. They attempt challenging paintings in acrylic paint based on local landscape but are not able to sustain study in depth. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. The head of department has been appointed since the previous inspection and standards have risen strongly across all years. Because the departmental head has been on extended leave, plans to monitor student attainment and progress have not yet been implemented.
113. Teaching is always at least satisfactory and in just under half of lessons observed it was good. More lessons that were good were observed in Years 10 and 11 where teachers used demonstration, clear explanation and a good quality of examples to interest and motivate students. In all lessons, teachers support individual students well, including those with special educational needs. Students respond well, making good use of time, so that they make good progress during lessons. Bad behaviour is not tolerated and students can work unhindered. Where teaching is less than good, clear targets that would inject pace into lessons are not set. Sometimes work is over-directed and this does not challenge students well enough. More able students, in

particular, might otherwise make a more personal response. Students with special educational needs made satisfactory progress in line with that of others.

114. Although senior staff have arranged for some outside support for the department during the head of department's leave of absence, this has been insufficient to provide satisfactory day-to-day management of the subject. Available assessment information is not used well enough. The department would work more efficiently with technician help, for example, to load and fire the kiln. Students are not being taught to use information and communication technology in art as required by the National Curriculum.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

115. When students enter the school at age 11, they have limited experience of designing and making activities and their standards are initially low. They make satisfactory progress thereafter, but standards remain below national expectations at both the age of 14 and the age of 16.
116. In 2000, in the statutory teacher assessments at the age of 14, only 13 per cent of the students were judged to reach the national expectation, Level 5, compared with 66 per cent of students nationally. GCSE results in 2000 were well below average in design and technology at grades A* to C. The results for A*-G grades were at the national average. Results in 1999 and 1998 show a similar picture. Students perform less well in design and technology than in many of the other subjects that they study. While there are still stereotypical choices at the age of 14, many boys study food and a few study textiles. Some girls study resistant materials.
117. Standards in work seen at the age of 14 are below national expectations, although observation in lessons shows not as far below as indicated by the statutory teacher assessments for 2000. In design and technology, students understand that designing and making are linked and, with teacher help, they can produce a design-brief. They are able to design and make items using a range of materials including food, textiles, card, wood and metal. In textiles, they use a range of basic construction skills and surface decoration techniques to make their pencil cases and bags. When using food, they modify information suitably as a basis for their own dishes, as in the lesson on snacks. Able students' work in technical graphics is satisfactory, where design drawings show technical and functional detail. Making skills are used effectively to produce a satisfactory range of products, such as food snacks, juggling balls from textiles, candleholders constructed in metal, electronic badges and decorative tag pendants from hardwood. Students with special educational needs produce products of quality in line with that of others. Students can evaluate their practical work, although lower attainers' evaluations are very basic and lots of guidance from teachers is needed. However, lack of underpinning skills and knowledge affects attainment by the end of Year 9.
118. Standards of work seen between the ages of 14 and 16 are below the national expectation, mainly because of weaknesses in underpinning skills and knowledge. In their coursework, particularly for textiles and graphics, higher-attaining students can design and produce graphical work of a good standard to present their own individual ideas. They research well and information is used selectively in the design and making of products. Each section of coursework is well developed and presented, incorporating some good use of information and communication technology, such as use of a digital camera, word processing of questionnaires and pie and bar charts to illustrate results. The Internet is used for research. These students are able to evaluate

their work well. In food, special diets are analysed. Lower attainers' coursework shows the ability to follow the design criteria, but graphic skills are not of such a high order. Information and communication technology is used, but at a very basic level. Literacy affects standards, in that writing is not well formed and sometimes written work in pencil remains in final coursework. Students with special educational needs produce a standard of work similar to that of other students in the different areas of technology.

119. Students generally achieve satisfactorily and make sound progress in the lessons at both key stages. However, achievement and progress between the ages of 11 and 16 leading to GCSE are unsatisfactory overall for the reasons given above. Students learn a range of skills, including how to use various hand and machine tools safely for a purpose. They learn to weigh, measure and mark materials accurately. Students of all abilities progress in their understanding of health and safety in the workrooms. Progress is satisfactory in lessons because teachers encourage individual ideas from students and put a lot of effort into students realising them. This is a great motivating force for students. Students with special educational needs are fully involved in lessons. Their progress is similar to that of other students.
120. Since the last inspection, there have been improvements to the accommodation, although the area used for resistant materials is rundown and in need of improvement. The quality of teaching has improved. Standards of attainment are still below average overall and there is much work to be carried out to improve the students' attainment at the age of 14 and particularly at the age of 16. The reasons for low examination results include insufficient timetabled time at both key stages, and comparatively short lesson times, with large numbers of students in some classes. Some students have poor attendance over their courses. Some have had many different teachers working in design and technology throughout their time in the school. Other factors unhelpful to progress are students' weak literacy, that affects the quality of their writing, and inadequate use of computers and other information and communication technology, because of a lack of up-to-date resources in the department.
121. Teaching is good overall, as opposed to generally sound at the last inspection. Teachers are all subject specialists who know their students very well and plan to meet their broad range of needs, including those students with special educational needs. Lessons are well pitched to meet students' needs and challenge them to learn. Teaching styles generally motivate students successfully, so that they want to learn and most concentrate well on their work. The few disruptive students are managed well. Objectives in lessons are explained well and, as a result, students are clear what is expected of them. In lessons on food, no time is wasted and the range of activities ensures that students stay focussed on their work. In graphics and resistant materials, good question and answer sessions keep students thinking and help them to link what they know already with new work. Most students are eager to answer questions to show how much they know, as in Year 8 textiles where an end-of-module test was being completed along with practical work. Students have good listening skills. When teachers encourage students to make their own choices about what to make, they show some independence. There is good technical support in the department that plays a valuable part in ensuring that resources are available for the short time available to the subject. Learning is good in lessons, but students' retention of knowledge from earlier work is sometimes unsatisfactory. In Years 10 and 11, most students appreciate the teachers' hard work and respond by working hard themselves to achieve work of good quality. Teachers have a clear understanding of individual students' achievement in lessons and over time. The basic skills of literacy and information and communication technology are taught satisfactorily, but numeracy is not. Students'

work is well displayed to stimulate thought on the topics that are undertaken, particularly in graphics and textiles.

122. Leadership of the department is satisfactory and thoughtfully carried out. Staff share a commitment to raise standards, but some students' absence and restricted time for the subject hold back progress. An action plan for improvement in standards is a priority. While there is clear direction for work in the subject, the facilities for information and communication technology in the department are inadequate for the needs of examination students.

DRAMA

123. All students study drama in Years 7, 8 and 9. Students achieve well by Year 9. In Years 7 and 8 they are enthusiastic and imaginative but many lack the concentration needed to stay in role. By the end of Year 9, concentration has improved and students are able to sustain unfamiliar roles more effectively. For example, most Year 9 students used standard English appropriately in a formal interview between managing directors and job applicants and adopted suitable body language for their roles.
124. The subject is also a popular option at GCSE, although the number of students who choose it has fallen in recent years. Results in the 2000 GCSE examination were below the national average, but students attained higher standards in drama than most of their other subjects. In previous years GCSE results have been well above average. In the present Year 11, the achievement of many students is affected by poor attendance. In the Year 11 lesson observed during the inspection, less than half of the class was present and this caused difficulties for students who depend on others when practising scripted performances.
125. The quality of teaching is good and students make good progress in most lessons. Teachers plan lessons well. A good variety of activities and good pace in lessons keep students interested and working hard. Relationships between teachers and students are good and students clearly enjoy the subject. However, students would benefit from more opportunities to evaluate their performances at the end of lessons.
126. The head of drama provides good leadership for a number of teachers from other departments who teach drama as their second subject. Suitable priorities for development have been identified but effective planning to achieve these aims is difficult without a stable teaching team. Schemes of work for all years provide a range of suitable experiences for students. A weekly drama club, regular theatre visits and impressive school productions make a significant contribution to the range of extra-curricular activities available to students.

GEOGRAPHY

127. Attainment on entry to the school is well below average. Teaching and learning are good and students achieve well throughout the school. Progress in geography is good.
128. By the end of Year 9, students attain standards broadly in line with national averages. They acquire sound factual knowledge and good basic geographical skills in Ordnance Survey map-reading, data-interpretation and decision-making and have a good appreciation of the application of geography to environmental and social issues on local, national and world scales. Students with special educational needs make particularly good progress and respond well to well-planned lessons taught with enthusiasm. In 1998, GCSE results in geography were well above the national

average, but since then have fallen below it. GCSE results in 2000 show, however, that the average grade achieved by students in geography to be above the average obtained in their other subjects. This has been true for several years.

129. Considerable improvement has been made since the last inspection. Information and communication technology has been introduced and developed. A computer annex has been created next to the main geography rooms and the subject is well ahead of most others in use of computers. Departmental documentation is good. The handbook is a useful document which communicates information clearly. The range of fieldwork has been extended. Work has been better adapted to students' differing needs, and students of all abilities make good progress. However, further work is needed to ensure that able students in Years 7 to 9 have work pitched at the right level for their abilities and are more strongly motivated to do well.
130. The quality of teaching is good, with many examples of very good teaching at all ages. A strength of the teaching is the quality of the relationships between teachers and students, which encourages a supportive atmosphere. Lessons are well planned. Teachers know their students and use a wide range of activities to stimulate their learning and interest. Quickly moving question and answer sessions are used at the start of most lessons to test students' knowledge and understanding of work done previously. Students with special educational needs are identified and their individual education plans are used to support their learning effectively. Teachers use a good range of methods, enabling students to work individually, in pairs and in small groups. The most effective lessons pay careful attention to the sequence of activities followed, contributing to a good pace of learning. Assessment is used to guide future planning and regular homework supports learning effectively. Marking of classwork, homework and coursework is done regularly and is thorough, encouraging and supportive. Students and parents are thus able to monitor progress effectively. This helps students to develop self-esteem and confidence in their ability to achieve. When teaching is particularly strong, teachers hold high expectations of what students can achieve and their response is enthusiastic. The two qualified subject teachers have very good subject knowledge and the other teachers in the department are experienced and competent.

131. The department is well led by an experienced and exceptionally able teacher who is committed to improving performance at all levels. Formal and informal monitoring through observation of teaching and learning are leading to an improvement in levels of teaching. However, the use within the department of seven teachers who are not specialists is a cause for concern, because effective co-ordination of work in the subject is made very difficult to achieve. Comprehensive schemes of work are in place and the curriculum is broad and balanced, providing a wide range of learning opportunities. Work is well displayed and the classroom environment encourages learning and the students' social and cultural awareness. The scheme used for assessment of work and progress is very good and operates effectively enabling students and parents to monitor progress quickly and efficiently.

HISTORY

132. Students achieve well in history through the school and gain subject skills successfully. Teaching is good and the subject is very well led.
133. Standards of work seen are below the national average for students aged 11 to 14 and 14 to 16. In the GCSE results of 2000, the proportion of students who gained A* to C grades was below the national average. However, all students who sat the examination achieved grades within the range of A* to G, a result above the national average. Although results have fluctuated since the previous inspection in 1996, the overall trend in levels of performance has been an improving one. In respect of A* to C grades, boys performed better than girls in GCSE in 2000 and 1999. Results usually compare favourably with those that students gain in their other subjects.
134. Given their attainment on entry to the school, the achievement of students by Year 9 is good. Teacher assessments for 2000 indicate that more girls than boys attain the nationally expected level. Most students display a satisfactory range and depth of knowledge of the National Curriculum. They communicate their knowledge well both orally and in writing. The quality of work presented in the notebooks of able and average-attaining students is impressive. Students' understanding of chronology is not as well developed. They have difficulty placing historical periods within an accurate time-frame and are not always certain of the correct sequence of key developments. Their appreciation of interpretations of history is also not developed to a sufficient extent.
135. By age 16, students continue to achieve well. They possess a sound factual knowledge of the GCSE course and make good use of relevant sources of evidence. They are able to study independently to complete their coursework assignments, some of which are of a very good standard. They demonstrate some grasp of the relationship between cause and effect. The standard of literacy that most students attain is satisfactory, although a minority attain a good standard. However, students' skills in applying the knowledge that they have gained to judge issues and questions is weak and they do not always make the appropriate links between different topics. Their ability to evaluate evidence for its usefulness and reliability is not as well advanced as their understanding of it. Students with special educational needs achieve standards that are appropriate to their levels of prior attainment. In lessons, their rate of progress is at least satisfactory, and sometimes it is good.

136. There have been several notable improvements since the previous inspection. Key work required by the National Curriculum is now more apparent in both the teaching programme and the scheme of assessment for students aged 11 to 14. The quality of teaching has improved and now ranges between satisfactory and very good. Accommodation for the subject has been much improved. Attainment at the higher GCSE grades remains below average, but it is average at all grades. The opportunities to develop independent learning are still limited for students in Years 7 to 9.
137. The quality of teaching is good, with some very good lessons seen at all ages. There was no unsatisfactory teaching seen during the inspection and in only one lesson was teaching of a lower standard than good. All teachers have a secure command of the subject and their skilful presentation of lessons engages the interest and attention of students. Planning of lessons is good, with precise learning objectives providing a clear focus for students' work. Teachers enjoy good working relationships with students and methods help students to feel sympathy with people in the past and gain a higher level of understanding. In a Year 7 lesson for low attainers for example, a student was sent out of the room, returning a moment later to find all the other students lying motionless on the floor. This and the work which followed gave students a vivid impression of what it might have been like to come upon a plague stricken village at the time of the Black Death. In a Year 11 lesson, role-play enhanced students' appreciation of the political aims and outlook of communists in Germany at the beginning of the Weimar Republic. Teachers have high expectations of students' capacity to make comparisons between different periods of history.
138. Teachers help students to maintain very good attitudes and behaviour in lessons. Relationships between students and teachers are helpful to learning. Students, including those in lower-attaining classes, take an interest in the subject and are keen to extend their knowledge and understanding. Teachers help students to maintain good levels of concentration in class. However, teachers do not give students in Years 7 to 9 enough opportunity to work in small groups or in pairs so as to practise their skills of learning more independently - without close direction from the teacher. Marking of the work of students aged 11 to 14, whilst giving due praise and encouragement for work of a good standard, does not consistently indicate where there are errors and inadequacies in their work. This practice does not always comply with the written policy on marking. There is greater consistency to the marking of the work of students aged 14 to 16. Insufficient opportunities for independent learning are provided for pupils aged 11 to 14. Insufficient attention is given overall to teaching different interpretations of history, a key skill at GCSE.
139. Leadership and management of the subject are very good and play an important part in the raising of standards. The head of department is an enthusiastic and committed teacher and this has a beneficial effect on the work of other teachers in the department and also of the students. There is a very positive ethos and a shared commitment to improvement. A comprehensive departmental handbook has been compiled which provides excellent guidance on all aspects of teaching. Evaluation of the work of all teachers is achieved through regular observation of lessons. Resources are of good quality, but the department's use of information and communication technology is unsatisfactory. Although there are a number of software packages available, students are not given sufficient opportunities to practise skills in use of information and communication technology in history lessons. Schemes of work do not indicate where these opportunities exist. The head of department's personal collection of artefacts forms an interesting portion of the stock of learning resources. Although accommodation is generally good, structural faults to the roof of one of the classrooms causes flooding at times of heavy rainfall. The achievements of students in Years 10

and 11 are not systematically monitored on the basis of gender. The handbook does not sufficiently indicate opportunity to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

140. Standards of attainment are well below the standards expected nationally at all ages. Insufficient improvement has been made since the last inspection. Subject leadership is unsatisfactory.
141. When students enter the school at age 11, their experience of using computers and other information and communication technology varies greatly. In the 2000 National Curriculum teacher assessments at the end of Year 9, most students attained well below the expected level 5. Although some students are attaining satisfactorily in lessons, attainment by the end of Year 9 is well below what is expected nationally. Standards of attainment in Key Stage 4 are well below national expectations in comparison with all secondary schools
142. Standards in work achieved by the age of 14 are low. At the end of Year 9, the majority of students understand how to log on and access a variety of software programmes. With adult help, students with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in lessons meeting the targets set for them by teachers. Observation in Year 9 shows students able to set up a spreadsheet and enter formulae to calculate the weekly bills for a milk round. After initial adult help, higher-attaining students are able to progress more quickly through the work, pay attention to detail and use some of the technical language associated with the subject, such as *cell* or *formula*. Students' files show examples of satisfactory work from word processing, basic spreadsheets and bar charts, but these are not well enough labelled to indicate their purpose. Progress over Years 7 to 9 is poor.
143. In Years 10 and 11 students make poor progress, with attainment well below the standard expected nationally. In the information and communication technology course in key skills provided in Year 10, students with special educational needs are able to create a basic spreadsheet, enter data on the census and save their work. They need a lot of help from teachers to do this. As at the last inspection, a minority of students in Years 10 and 11 develops higher-level capabilities, particularly in the textile and graphics aspects of design and technology.
144. Since the last inspection there have been improvements in provision for information and communication technology with new hardware and software purchased. This has only been in use for a short time and students have been using equipment which has been out of date. Open access to facilities for using computers is limited, although better than at the previous inspection. A scheme of work for Year 7 has been produced, although this is lacking in detail to meet the students' needs. No qualifications are provided in the subject. Attainment remains low. As at the last inspection, students are not critical and autonomous users of information and communication technology, as required by the National Curriculum. The reasons for this include: insufficient timetabled time which is currently rotational in Years 8 and 9 - with gaps preventing more consistent development of skills - teachers' absences, lack of a scheme of work that shows continuity and progressive development of skills to be achieved in lessons, and insufficient specific lessons for the subject in Years 10 and 11. The school has plans to improve timetabled provision from September 2001.

145. The quality of teaching in timetabled lessons in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory, and occasionally good. Teachers have satisfactory subject knowledge that enables them to give clear explanations to students. Teachers' knowledge is good in the key skills course in Years 10 and 11. There are usually well-detailed plans for lessons, challenging work and objectives that are shared with students. A good pace is maintained throughout lessons, with a suitable balance of time to provide for instruction and for students to work on their own. The management of students is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. This ensures that effective learning takes place. Occasionally some disruptive students become restless. Because lessons are timetabled on a rotational system for students between the ages of 11 and 14, their retention of subject skills and knowledge is unsatisfactory, and most students need a significant amount of adult help during lessons. The needs of special educational students are well known to teachers and this enables these students to learn and to make progress as well as others. There is no evidence of teachers' use of continuous assessment of students' achievements and progress. There is no system established for conveying information about students' development of skills from one year to another. Students have poor understanding of what they can do well and what they cannot. The quality of students' learning in lessons is satisfactory but their progress over time is poor. Students' attitudes and behaviour are generally good. Students with special educational needs are well integrated and involved in activities in lessons.
146. The leadership of the specialist programme is unsatisfactory. The whole-school cross-curricular management of the subject is unsatisfactory. The legal requirements of the National Curriculum are not being met. This was a key issue at the last inspection. There are no opportunities for students to achieve an external qualification in information and communication technology. Although some staff are computer-literate, many need more expertise. The ratio of computers to students at 1:15 is below national average, but the school has plans to improve this situation. There is no full-time technician support for in the school, although support is provided by contract with the local authority.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

147. The use of information and communication technology in other subjects is poor. In some subjects, use of information and communication technology was not observed in lessons nor was it evident in students' work. The development and application of skills, knowledge and understanding are poorly co-ordinated across subject schemes of work. A few departments, for example, geography, music and special education needs have computers for their own use. These departments make satisfactory use of them in teaching their subject with computers. Generally, departments lack computer facilities and up-to-date software for use in their subjects. Not all departments have included use of information and communication technology in their schemes of work.
148. However, some useful work with computers takes place in some subjects. For example, in modern foreign languages, computers are used to make menus in French or German in Year 7, and the Internet is used to find a pen-friend and to search for information in Years 10 and 11. In science, word processing, tables and line graphs are used well to present investigations carried out on osmosis in GCSE coursework. In design and technology work, Year 7 students in special educational needs use computers satisfactorily to produce covers for their biscuit-cutter project. In the Year 8 moving-toy project, word processing with coloured fonts, well-placed clip art, and borders produces work of a generally high standard. In GSCE textiles and graphics coursework, students use more complex applications.

149. While much of this work has been carried out at home, it is imaginative and enterprising. Overall, use of computers and other information and communication technology is insufficient across the curriculum, and the school does not meet the requirements of the National Curriculum in this respect.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

150. A foreign language is new to students at age 11. Given their well-below average levels of literacy when they enter the school, they make satisfactory progress and enjoy their lessons. There are opportunities in Year 8 for more able students to study two languages. In Year 10, students have the further opportunity to study Spanish.
151. Students achieve well enough by the end of Year 9, although they attain standards below those typical of most schools in French and German. They make satisfactory progress from entry to the school to the end of Year 9 as a result of well-planned lessons, which are planned to allow everyone to achieve and progress according to their ability. For example, a Year 7 French class was keen to demonstrate their competent spoken skills and students understood what National Curriculum level they were working towards. The amount and quality of work in their books are good. Lower-attaining Year 8 students in French were enthused by a matching-up game involving memory. They were able to learn and use new words based on the family well. They successfully managed to use the words in sentences and in a more difficult listening task later in the lesson. More able Year 9 students in German performed well in role-play. They were able to ask questions and to answer appropriately, using the past tense, saying that they had lost an important item. Students listen well for key words from spoken French and German. Written work varies according to the wide range of students' abilities in both subjects. Able students can write at greater length and more accurately than others. Boys and girls alike contribute to lessons and make similar progress. Students with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Support is provided in some lessons and worksheets are compiled to enable these students to complete work effectively.
152. Progress continues to be satisfactory in Years 10 and 11 and students generally achieve what they should in French, German and Spanish. Students in each of the three foreign languages are able to answer in full sentences and attain reasonable fluency. In a Year 11 French class, students spoke confidently about their holidays, using the past tense, and were able to talk about future holiday plans. Shopping was the topic in a higher-attaining German class, where students mastered some difficult vocabulary well. Spanish has been recently introduced in Year 10 and is proving popular. Students enjoy using the language and are making good progress because they find it fun.
153. In the 2000 and 1999 GCSE examination in French, students attained standards which were below average at grades A* to C and very broadly in line with national results at grades A* to G. Students do not usually do as well in these subjects as in the others that they take. No students have yet taken the GCSE Spanish examination. Almost all students take a foreign language, unlike at the time of the last inspection, and direct comparisons are not possible. Some students have poor records of attendance. This greatly hinders continuity in learning foreign languages over time, although progress in individual lessons is satisfactory. The school has had difficulty in recruiting specialist teachers in some years, and this has been most unhelpful to students' progress, but the situation is now satisfactory. The restriction placed on taking textbooks home for further work is also unhelpful to extending students' learning.

154. The last inspection reported on the inconsistent use of French and German by teachers in lessons. Teachers are now using the foreign languages effectively in most lessons, but some students do not speak enough in some lessons in the foreign language. There is still no provision for the use of information and communication technology.
155. Teaching overall is satisfactory. However, in Years 7 to 9, over half the lessons seen were good or better. One unsatisfactory lesson was seen. Teaching in Years 10 and 11, apart from one poor lesson, was satisfactory. There was some good and very good teaching seen at this key stage. In good lessons, objectives are made clear to the students. There is good variety of activity and good use of resources. Students understand what they have to do and lessons flow well. There is a good rapport between teachers and students who respond well to enthusiastic teaching. The unsatisfactory and poor lessons were with lower-attaining classes, but they lacked variety and pace and there was no attempt to use spoken French or German by the teacher at any point in the lesson. The materials were very simple and lacked purpose and challenge.
156. Teachers are well qualified and give freely of their time for out of school clubs, revision lessons and foreign trips. A small group of students who were taught out of timetable gained top grades in GCSE French in 2000. Teachers work well together and meet regularly to plan and share ideas. Good use is made of the limited funding available. The rooms appear colourful, with good display of students' work.

MUSIC

157. Attainment in music is close to that typical in most schools. Students achieve particularly well at all ages. Teaching is good to students of all ages.
158. Standards at GCSE were well above the national average in 1998 and 1999. They were below this in 2000. This was because the number of candidates was greater and drawn from a wider range of ability, including some with special educational needs. The average of students gaining GCSE grades A* to C across the last three years was close to the national average. Girls tend to do better than boys, as they do in most schools. Attainment at GCSE is reduced by the poor attendance of some students. Teacher assessment at age 14 shows that standards are in line with those attained nationally. About two-thirds of students are assessed as reaching or exceeding the expected standard. At this stage too, girls do better than boys overall.
159. Students make good progress throughout the school, and achieve well at the end of Year 9 and Year 11. About half attain the standard expected, nationally, at the higher grades of GCSE. Most work steadily at each required aspect of the subject. In performance at all ages, most students are supported well by instrumental tuition and by the opportunities provided in extra-curricular musical activities. Students build knowledge of musical styles and techniques by keeping careful notes, which they draw on for the GCSE listening paper and for composition. Many lack confidence in their ability in aural dictation. In composition, some are frustrated by their lack of fluency in using musical notation. Completed compositions are computer-aided to combine parts, record and provide print-standard notation. The work of current students shows a reasonable range of mainly classical styles and textures.
160. Progress through Years 8 and 9 has been slowed in past years by reduced curriculum time, but this has now been restored. Year 7 students can already build triads and recognise and play them to form a sequence, some at a very fast pace, others with

some hesitation. Those in Year 8 sing in two parts in a South African language. They listen well to recorded extracts of a variety of music. Working co-operatively in small groups, they attempt to invent short pieces in distinctive styles such as Scottish, Caribbean or Indonesian, using keyboards and percussion instruments. Written work of Year 9 students indicates a satisfactory standard of literacy and of completion of work by most. However, the use of stave-notation is not as developed as it should be in Year 9; many students have forgotten what they learned in earlier years. About half understand and fulfil a brief to devise melodic variations in one lesson. Others take this time to learn to play the given tune, because of underdeveloped skill and understanding or difficulties with concentration. However all make at least satisfactory and usually good progress, including those with special educational needs, showing delight in their achievement.

161. Improvement since the previous inspection includes increasing the number of specialist staff, so that all students in Years 7, 8 and 9 now receive their entitlement of weekly music lessons. Standards at GCSE have improved and overall numbers of candidates, boys in particular, have increased significantly. GCSE is now a full timetabled option. The number of students receiving instrumental tuition has doubled, to ten per cent of the school population. Resources, including accommodation and computers, have increased to match the increased provision. Teaching has improved. It is monitored and there is no longer inconsistency in the quality of teaching. Aims of lessons are now clear. Good leadership remains a strong feature of the department. Extra funding for music, some through sponsorship, has been sought and found. This includes £20,000 for the founding of a brass band, based at Pindar, though drawing on players from a number of schools. The development plan includes the establishment of an alternative music technology course to GCSE for appropriate students.
162. Teaching overall in music is good. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen. Good teaching is found in lessons, in extra-curricular groups and in instrumental tuition. Teachers have good subject knowledge and skills and use these effectively to ensure that students learn successfully, for example in presenting appropriate examples of live or recorded music. Teachers are enthusiastic and encouraging, enabling all students to learn effectively. They make links with previous lessons, usually forecast the next step in the process and so help students to be aware of their learning over time. Sound planning allows them to give help to individuals or groups in most lessons. Marking of students' work is good. Where teaching does not reach this high standard, it is because the attention of students is not always maintained. Teachers do not always plan lessons enough for the different levels of work possible from students in some wide-ability groups. Literacy could be developed even more, for example by asking pupils to read aloud and there could be more use of musical notation in Years 8 and 9. At GCSE, teaching provides good guidance to students in preparing for the examination. Time is used well to cover the syllabus and teachers involve parents in tasks to be done at home. Teaching is skilled in helping students to develop and refine their compositions. In Years 10 and 11, teaching does not yet fully develop in students an awareness of music as sounds in the head, so that they can become more independent in their learning in both aural work and composition. Most students have not yet learned to use computers independently enough, including the use of sequencing programs. Teachers do not always avoid making their answers to test-questions unnecessarily prescriptive.
163. The specialist accommodation for music is not available during school exams, hindering the progress of students at this time. Available storage for musical instruments is not always used efficiently enough to ensure the safety of instruments.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

164. Students' attainment at the ends of Year 9 and Year 11 in core lessons and GCSE is similar to that in most schools nationally. Students achieve satisfactory standards overall, and good standards in GCSE examinations. Good teaching ensures that students learn new skills, increase their knowledge and understanding and make good progress in all years.
165. Students achieve satisfactory standards by the end of Year 9, as they build on work done in Years 7 and 8 and reach levels of attainment similar to those found nationally. The accurate teacher assessments of Year 9 students in 2000 show that students achieve the national standard. In Year 7, students understand the importance of the 'start' in sprinting and, in cricket, are able to field the ball well. In tennis in Year 8, students are able to play short rallies, and in athletics they have a good understanding of the importance of warming up and cooling down. Although students in Year 9 have satisfactory performance levels in triple jump, few have good technique. In rounders in this year, students are able to field and throw the ball with some control as well as bat with some consistency.
166. In core physical education in Years 10 and 11, students are achieving levels expected for their age group nationally. In Year 10 athletics, students have satisfactory performance levels in sprinting. However, in long jump, few pupils have good technique. In Year 11, there is a wide range of attainment in soccer, badminton, tennis and hockey, but most students achieve satisfactory performances in these games. In trampolining, some higher-attaining students can perform fairly complex routines which include good quality front and back drops.
167. GCSE results reduced from just above national levels in 1999 to just below in 2000, but students are achieving well in the GCSE physical education course. Their practical work in hockey in Year 11 shows that they not only have satisfactory understanding of the rules of the game, but they understand positional play and have sufficiently well-developed skills to play structured games. In rounders in Year 10, students are working at a high level, with good knowledge of positions and tactics, good fielding skills and good control when batting. In GCSE theoretical work, students in Years 10 and 11 have a satisfactory understanding of anatomy and physiology and aspects of training, and can relate these to sporting activities. Students in Year 11 have comprehensive studies, which are well presented, making good use of their skills in information and communication technology.
168. Since the last inspection standards of attainment have been maintained, students remain interested and enthusiastic. The quality of teaching has improved and is good. However, there are unnecessary differences between the boys' and girls' curriculum for dance in Years 7, 8 and 9. The recent introduction of the Certificate of Achievement and the Junior Sports Leaders' Award has increased curricular opportunities for students in Years 10 and 11.
169. There is good teaching in the department which impacts well on students' learning. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and their clear explanations and demonstrations help students to learn new skills and improve existing ones. Teachers plan lessons well with challenging tasks so that students of all levels of attainment make good progress in the subject. Where lessons are less successful and students make less progress, it is because the work set is not pitched at a high enough level, as in Year 10 athletics. Students' good behaviour has a significant impact on their learning, and teachers' usually high expectations of students lead to good progress. In one GCSE lesson, the open-ended tasks were unsuitable for students whose less than

mature response and poor behaviour led to them making unsatisfactory progress. Relationships between teachers and students are invariably very good and contribute well to good progress. In Year 10 GCSE rounders, the excellent relationships between teacher and students, and between students themselves, contributed to the significant progress made by students in the lesson.

170. The department is very well led and managed and there is a shared vision and commitment to improve opportunities for all students. There are many opportunities for students to develop their skills through extra-curricular provision of clubs and school teams, where there are high standards. Accommodation is very good. Some improvement in curricular documentation to show planned progression and the continuing development of assessment should help to raise students' standards further.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

171. Students' standards of attainment are below average by Year 9. Given their well-below average standards on entry to the school at age 11, they achieve well enough and are closely involved in their own learning. By the end of Year 11, the attainment of students who follow the GCSE course is at the national average and they achieve well. Teaching is good at GCSE with clear objectives to enable students to prepare well for the examination. The school does not require all students to study religious education in Years 10 and 11, as it should.
172. By the end of Year 9, students have opportunities to achieve all requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education. They can thoughtfully '*reflect on their own experiences*' of temptation in Year 8. They know well some of the '*central beliefs to Christianity*' in Year 7. In Year 9, they know '*the characteristic features*' of a mosque, and thoughtfully consider in detail '*response to ultimate questions*'. Worksheets and discussion enable them to enhance their knowledge and understanding successfully. They write some extended pieces successfully, but lack opportunities to extend their written skills further in the subject. Students with special educational needs achieve standards to be expected from their earlier attainment, and progress at a rate in line with that of others. By the end Year 11, students meet the requirements of the GCSE syllabus. Although too few studied the subject to GCSE in 2000 for accurate national comparisons to be made, the results of the students involved were above the national average. The present Year 11 group are achieving equally well.
173. Since the last inspection, GCSE religious studies has become a popular option with some students. It is now timetabled and taught during school hours, instead of after school. There is only one full-time specialist teacher of religious education and, at present, there is no course for all students in the school during Years 10 and 11, as is required by law. As stated in the last inspection, the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus cannot be met with the present amount of time given to the subject in Years 10 and 11.
174. The quality of teaching in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory. Pupils reflect maturely on their experiences and understanding of '*suffering*' and apply their knowledge well to the concept of '*impermanence*' in Buddhism. They learn effectively by co-operating when playing games about temptation, observing a video of a mosque, seeing artefacts such as a prayer mat and setting up a Hindu shrine. The quality of teaching in Years 10 and 11 is good. Students prepare well for GCSE by group discussion and practising examination questions. They know and understand that Muslims and Christians have different sources of authority when they make ethical decisions about '*family and*

marriage'. Pupils know the difference between drug-addiction and drug-abuse and can comment on Christian and Islamic perspectives on these issues. At all ages, teachers make effective use of the individual education plans of students with special educational needs and enable them to make satisfactory progress in Years 7 to 9. All students are well behaved and participate well in class discussions.

175. The department is well managed. Resources are made readily available. Initiatives have begun to be introduced to encourage literacy. New vocabulary is now highlighted at the start of each topic. Computers are not used in lessons and the scheme of work does not identify when they should be used. The partnership with the University College of Ripon and St. John allows new ideas to flow into the department and so enhances students' learning experiences well, although two student-teachers assigned to the school each year reduce teaching time for regular staff considerably. Stimulating display of work in classrooms, the effective use of video in lessons and the concern of teachers for each student to do well have helped to raise the status of the subject and increase the number of students opting for GCSE.