

**INSPECTION UNDER SECTION 9 OF THE
EDUCATION (SCHOOLS) ACT 1992**

BARNOLDSWICK, WEST CRAVEN HIGH SCHOOL

Lancashire LEA

Date of Inspection

20-24 March 1995

**BARNOLDSWICK, WEST CRAVEN HIGH
KELBROOK ROAD
BARNOLDSWICK
LANCASHIRE BB8 5TB**

School Number : 923/4040

Date of Inspection : 20-24 March 1995

Mr William Sydney Deller

Registered Inspector : T11310

Date : 28 April 1995

Under OFSTED contract number : 923/S4/0001474B

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1. INTRODUCTION

This inspection was carried out under Section 9 of the Education (Schools) Act 1992 to report on the quality of education provided by the school, the educational standards achieved in the school, whether the financial resources made available to the school are managed efficiently, and the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school. The findings of the inspection will contribute to the annual report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools to the Secretary of State for Education.

1.1 BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

1.	Name of School	West Craven High School
	Type of School	Comprehensive
	Type of control	County LEA
	Number of pupils on roll	715
	Age range of pupils	11 to 16
	Name of Headteacher	Mr W B Montgomery
	School Address, postcode and telephone number	Kelbrook Road Barnoldswick Lancashire BB8 5TB
	Name of appropriate authority	Governing Body
	Local authority area in which the school is located	Lancashire
	DFE school number	923/4040
	Name of Registered Inspector	Mr W S Deller
	Date of the inspection	20-24 March 1995

1.2 INTAKE OF PUPILS AND THE AREA SERVED BY THE SCHOOL

2. The school is situated on the edge of the small east Lancashire town of Barnoldswick and draws its pupils from the two industrial towns of Barnoldswick and Earby and from the surrounding mainly rural area. The vast majority of pupils come from less affluent homes in areas where unemployment is generally low and jobs are mainly in semi-skilled textile and engineering work. The school attracts pupils from the whole ability range but a significant proportion of the more able pupils cross the County boundary to enter selective schools in Skipton so that the intake is skewed towards the lower end of the ability range. 2.9% of the pupils have statements of special educational need which is slightly above national averages. Approximately 13.3% of pupils are eligible for free school meals compared with 17.6% nationally. In 1993/4 62% of pupils stayed in full-time education after the age of 16 which is in line with LEA norms.

1.3 SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

3. PUPILS

Number of Pupils in Each Year Group

	Boys	Girls	Total
Year 7	60	63	123
Year 8	77	82	159
Year 9	83	79	162
Year 10	71	76	147
Year 11	62	62	124
Total	353	362	715

Special Educational Needs

Number of pupils having statements of special educational needs 21

Free School Meals

Percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals 95

Teachers and Classes

Full-time equivalent teachers 44

Pupil:Teacher ratio 16.3 : 1

Percentage class contact 79.4%

Average teaching size 20.5

Teaching time per week

	Hours	Minutes
Key Stage 3	23	20
Key Stage 4	23	20

Pupil Attendance

Percentage attendance figures for each year group for the Governors' Annual Report to parents and for the third week of the term prior to the term of the inspection.

YEAR	ANNUAL REPORT TO PARENTS	THIRD WEEK IN THE TERM PRIOR TO THE TERM OF THE INSPECTION		
	Unauthorised absence	Actual attendance	Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence
Year 7	Not reported in this form	1155	85	0
Year 8		1416	127	0
Year 9		1463	150	15
Year 10		1311	140	8
Year 11		1090	140	21
Overall		6435	642	44

Number of Exclusions in the last 12 months

YEAR	FIXED PERIOD		PERMANENT		NUMBER FROM ETHNIC MINORITIES	
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Year 7		1			-	-
Year 8	2	1			-	-
Year 9	6	7	1		-	-
Year 10	9	4	1	1	-	-
Year 11	9		1		-	-
TOTAL (COLUMNS 1-4) 43	26	13	3	1	-	-

National Curriculum Assessments

Public Examination Results

GCSE EXAMINATION RESULTS	SCHOOL RESULTS 1993			SCHOOL RESULTS 1994		
	BOYS	GIRLS	ALL	BOYS	GIRLS	ALL
Number of pupils in Year ¹	62	62	124	68	64	132
Percentage of candidates						
Entered for 5+ GCSEs	72.5	80	76.7	91.3	81.3	86.4
Achieving 5+ grades A-C	13.7	26.2	20.7	30.9	32.8	32.0
Achieving 5+ grades A-G	66.7	80.0	74.1	88.2	81.3	84.8
Entered for 1+ GCSEs	92.2	90.8	91.4	10.0	98.4	99.2
Achieving 1+ grades A-G	92.2	89.2	90.5	98.5	80.1	93.0
Entered for all three subjects, EN, MA and SC	70.6	78.5	75	79.4	80	79.7
Achieving grades A-C	-	-	-	26.5	21.5	24.1
Achieving grades A-G in all of EN, MA and SC	-	-	-	76.5	73.9	75.2
	LEA AREA²			ENGLAND²		
	1994			1994		
GCSE EXAMINATION	BOYS	GIRLS	ALL	BOYS	GIRLS	ALL
Entered for 5+ GCSEs			-	88.0	90.8	89.4
Achieving 5+ grades A-C	-	-	20.7	32.0	40.8	36.3
Achieving 5+ grades A-G	-	-	74.1	83.0	87.1	85.0
Entered for 1+ GCSE	-	-		95.7	94.7	95.2
Achieving 1+ grades A-G	-	-	90.5	93.5	92.1	92.8

Note 1: Number of pupils in Year 11 in January in each of the examination years.

Note 2: These national statistics apply to all maintained schools in the LEA area and in England.

Type of Award	Awarding Body	Level	Vocational Area	Entries	Results
Basic Geography	AEB	Basic		6	5 + 1 merit
Basic English	AEB	Basic		14	13+ 1 merit
1993 English	AEB	Basic		10	5 + 3 merit

Pupils' routes on leaving the school (secondary stage only)

Percentage of year group:

	Further Education/ School	Employment	Training	Other
Year 11	62%	15%	17%	6%

Financial Information

INCOME (£)	Last full financial year 1993/4	Current year* 1994
	£	£
Balance brought forward	74,428	12,096
Transitional grant (for GM schools)		
Recurrent income (LMS or AMG, fees)		
Specific or special purpose grants for curriculum staff development	8,495	8,468
TVEI	23,698	16,258
Other income managed by the school; lettings, funds raised etc.	11,975	4,862
TOTAL	<u>1,505,790</u>	<u>1,581,501</u>
EXPENDITURE (£)	Last full financial year	Budget allocation for current year
Teaching staff	1,035,930	919,419
Other staff	88,275	81,590
Educational resources	66,006	60,399
Premises costs	173,153	161,759
Curriculum and staff development	8,495	
Other costs	<u>9,962</u>	<u>14,707</u>
TOTAL	<u>1,384,821</u>	<u>1,237,874</u>
	1,937	1,739
Total expenditure per pupil (£)		
Expenditure per pupil on educational resources (£)	93	85

1.4 RECORD OF THE EVIDENCE BASE OF THE INSPECTION

1.The inspection team consisted of 16 inspectors, including a lay inspector. During the week all or part of 183 lessons were inspected and a total of almost 110 hours were spent in lessons. An appropriate sample of lessons from all National Curriculum subjects and religious education was visited. A range of assemblies, registration periods and extra-curricular activities was also inspected. All teachers whom it was possible to observe were seen teaching, many several times. Planned discussions were held with over 20 members of staff, some on a number of occasions, and informal discussions took place with many more. Inspectors looked at the work of many pupils. All the available work of a representative sample of three pupils from each year group was inspected. Planned discussions were held with some of these pupils and with pupils holding positions of responsibility in the school. Informal discussions were held with many more. The behaviour of pupils was observed before, after and during school time, inside school and in the surrounding area.

2.A large amount of documentation provided by the school was analysed both before and during the inspection. A meeting took place with individual governors and the full governing body. Two primary schools which send pupils to the school were visited. The registered inspector held a meeting attended by 33 parents prior to the inspection and their views were noted. Parents' responses to a questionnaire about their opinions of the school were also considered. Local employers, members of the community and professionals associated with the school wrote to the Registered Inspector to offer their views.

2. MAIN FINDINGS AND KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

2.1 MAIN FINDINGS

Standards of achievement

3.Standards of achievement at West Craven show a generally upward trend and many plans have been formulated to raise expectations still further. The school is heavily involved in the life of the community and its reputation is growing.

4.Standards of achievement at GCSE have improved over recent years and, though they are still below national averages, they are broadly in line with what might be expected given the abilities of the pupils when they enter the school. At the end of Key Stage 3 most fourteen year old pupils achieve standards set by the national curriculum in line with their abilities, but a significant proportion of them underachieve. The school has plans to improve this.

1.Standards between subjects vary. In **English** standards are generally sound; there is some underachievement in all years, but most pupils are doing quite well for their ability. Pupils with special educational needs do especially well. GCSE results are below average but are improving. The work in drama is good.

2.In **mathematics** achievement is mostly in line with pupils' abilities. Standards are higher among older pupils than younger ones. GCSE results are significantly below the national average but were better in 1994 than in 1993.

3.Achievement in **science** is almost always sound and is very often good. GCSE results in the past two years have been below national averages but in 1994 there was a marked improvement especially in the results of boys which were close to the national average.

4.In **design and technology** pupils mostly achieve well for their age and abilities. Standards in information technology are particularly high. In 1994 GCSE results in business and information studies were at about the national average; in CDT: Design and Realisation they were above average but in CDT: Design Communication and in Home Economics (Food) they were below.

5.Most younger pupils underachieve in **French**, including many with special educational needs, but in **German** almost all pupils do fairly well throughout the school and achievement is sometimes quite high. In the upper part of the school standards between the languages are more even. Recent GCSE results in modern foreign languages are

significantly below national averages and results in French declined sharply last year.

6. Standards are sound in **history** and **geography**; the older pupils do better than the younger ones in history. In both subjects the 1994 GCSE results were much better than those in 1993 and were above the national average. The work in **sociology** is particularly good and the GCSE results are consistently above the national average.

7. Many pupils in the lower school do not do as well as they should in **art** but standards are better in the upper school. There is also underachievement in **religious education**. The art GCSE results in 1994 were significantly below the national average, though the 1993 results were better. Religious Education is not offered to pupils at GCSE level.

8. Excellent standards are achieved by the majority of pupils in **music**. Work in the upper school and in extra-curricular activities was particularly good. Pupils studying for GCSE music in 1995 are the first group to have been entered since the school offered the subject as an exam option in 1993. Pupils also do very well in **physical education** both in lessons and in extra-curricular activities. Standards are particularly good among older pupils and GCSE results in both 1993 and 1994 were significantly higher than the national average.

Quality of education provided

9. Pupils study a broad and balanced range of subjects except for religious education at Key Stage 4. Teaching is generally sound and often good in a number of respects: the teachers have thorough knowledge of their subjects; they are experienced at classroom management and they prepare the content of the lessons carefully. Pupils are generally willing to learn. Overall, however, teaching methods lack variety; the expectations of some teachers are not high enough and the pace of some lessons is too slow. Because of this some pupils are at times insufficiently challenged and their progress is therefore limited. The governors and staff have recognised this and policies are in place to remedy the problem: the school should now concentrate on ensuring that these policies are systematically monitored and that the results are acted upon.

Efficiency

10. The governing body is exceptionally committed and effective in all aspects of the work of the school. The headteacher, assisted by an able senior management team, provides clear thinking and purposeful leadership. Staff are hard working and give their time freely, but the teaching day is shorter than that recommended by the Department for Education. The budget is sensibly planned by the finance committee and well managed by the senior management team. The school provides good value for money. Day to day administration is efficient. A number of policies and plans have been formulated in recent years which provide a sound basis for future development but the translation of these policies into practical plans of action particularly at middle management level is uneven. At present, for example, the school development plan does not sufficiently guide departmental planning, particularly with regard to raising achievement. Responsibilities should be more clearly defined, progress more rigorously monitored and outcomes more thoroughly evaluated.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

11. Some assemblies provide occasions for spiritual and moral development but there was no evidence of worship in form periods despite a school policy requiring it. The subjects of the curriculum offer a range of opportunities for personal development, but these are generally unco-ordinated. The school is beginning to plan its provision and these plans should be further refined and put into action. Discipline is generally sound with only occasional misbehaviour in lessons and around the school. The school is an orderly community. Attendance levels are satisfactory: on an average day over 90% of the pupils attend. The staff's commitment to the care of pupils and to a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including sport, cultural activities and charity work offers pupils scope for moral and social growth. A strength of the school is its close and productive relationship with the community.

2.2 KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

In general terms the school should:

12. continue to refine, complete and agree its plans to raise achievement at both key stages, work systematically to

equip key staff to put them into practice, ensure consistency in operation and evaluate results rigorously.

In particular it should:

13.improve the implementation of existing plans and policies by better monitoring and evaluation (eg the policies on assessment, recording and reporting, the personal development of pupils, special educational needs, equal opportunity, staff development, homework, the library).

14.continue to enhance the school development plan by defining more appropriate success criteria and establishing a clearer connection with departmental and pastoral plans, particularly with regard to raising achievement.

15.equip key staff by stating their roles more clearly (eg those of team leader, head of subject and form tutor), providing professional development and giving feedback on performance.

16.extend the variety and effectiveness of teaching methods by more systematic sharing of good practice at department and whole school level and by curriculum planning that covers teaching methods.

17.fulfil legal requirements for a daily act of collective worship and in the arrangements for registration and reporting to parents.

18.attend to those health and safety matters raised during the inspection.

3. STANDARDS AND QUALITY

3.1 STANDARDS OF ACHIEVEMENT

19.In 1994 99% of pupils were entered for one or more General Certificate of Education (GCSE) examination. This is a higher proportion than the corresponding national and LEA figures. 86% were entered for 5 or more GCSE examinations which is in line with national and LEA figures. Of these pupils, the proportion obtaining 5 or more A*-C grades (32%) was below the national average of 43% for maintained secondary schools in England and the 41% average for the Lancashire LEA area. The proportion of pupils in 1994 obtaining 5 or more A*-G grades was just below the national average of 87% for maintained secondary schools in England. There was a significant improvement in the performance of pupils obtaining 5+ A*/A-C grades between 1993 and 1994, the proportion increasing from 21% to 32%. In 1994, 80% of both girls and boys were entered for all three of English, mathematics and science, and 24% of these pupils obtained A*-C passes in all three subjects. This figure is significantly lower than the 33% for all comprehensive schools. The 26% of boys passing all three subjects was higher than the 22% of girls who passed all three. In general GCSE performance of boys and girls was similar in 1994 but boys performed significantly worse than girls in 1993 when 26% of girls and 14% of boys obtained 5 or more A-C grades in GCSE.

20.Measures of ability on joining the school show an intake which is comprehensive but with more pupils of below average ability than above. 1994 GCSE results in 5 A*-C grades are broadly in line with what could be expected given the abilities of pupils when they enter the school, although performance was uneven across subjects. Performance in 5 A*-G grades is better than what could be expected.

21.The school was asked to provide the inspectors with the results of the National Curriculum Key Stage 3 assessments attained by Year 9 pupils in summer 1994, but elected not to do so. It is therefore not possible to evaluate these results or to use them to help draw conclusions about the standard of work in the school. At Key Stage 3 a substantial majority of pupils achieved the national expectation for their age in just under 6 out of 10 lessons observed. In a seventh of lessons many pupils achieved better than this. Standards were slightly higher at Key Stage 4 than at Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 4 a substantial majority of pupils achieved the national expectation in 6 out of 10 lessons seen. In over a seventh of lessons many pupils achieved better than this. In only a very small number of lessons observed in both key stages did the greater majority of pupils in the lessons achieve well above the national expectation.

22.When pupils abilities are taken into account, almost all pupils at Key Stage 3 achieved appropriate levels in over

7 out of 10 lessons observed. In over a quarter of lessons many pupils achieved standards that were high for their abilities. At Key Stage 4 almost all pupils achieved appropriate levels for their abilities in around 9 out of 10 lessons seen. In just over a fifth of lessons many pupils achieved standards that were high for their abilities. Lessons where the majority of pupils were achieving levels that were very high for their abilities were rare at both key stages. There was serious underachievement at Key Stage 3 where a significant minority of pupils were underachieving in over a quarter of lessons. Underachievement was less at Key Stage 4 where a significant minority of pupils were underachieving in less than a tenth of lessons. Pupils with special educational needs are generally making satisfactory progress in relation to their capabilities at both key stages.

23. Where pupils achieve the national expectation and beyond it, or pupils' achievements are high for their abilities, a range of factors contribute. High achievement is invariably linked to the quality of teaching and learning. Those good lessons seen had clearly set objectives shared with the pupils; teaching methods were carefully selected for the learning activities taking place. Tasks were suitably challenging and there were appropriately high expectations. Where pupils were underachieving and lessons less successful, pupils were not given the opportunity to respond to rigorous tasks and understanding was not checked.

24. In general, speaking and listening skills are well developed across the curriculum. Pupils listen to their teachers and to each other and, when given the opportunity, are able to discuss their work with confidence. Most pupils of all ages and abilities speak clearly and coherently. They answer teachers' questions fluently and readily and ask appropriate questions. In English, most pupils are able to make clear contributions to discussion and are able to work collaboratively in pairs and in small groups and to express ideas and opinions. Speaking and listening in history are average for the age and ability of the pupils. In modern languages few children have the confidence to take the lead in conversational exchanges but at Key Stage 4 some abler pupils cope appropriately in less structured conversation.

25. The majority of pupils read with understanding. They read aloud accurately, mostly fluently and sometimes with expression. In English pupils study an appropriate range of literary and non literary texts but only a relatively small proportion read widely for pleasure. In modern languages where reading was seen, this was usually as a support for other skills. In geography pupils were able to read and interpret information accurately. The library does not adequately support pupils' reading for learning or for pleasure.

26. Pupils write clearly in a variety of forms at both key stages. In English there is a wide range of writing for a range of audiences and purposes. There is some drafting and redrafting work, though few pupils make sufficient changes in their writing as a result of this process. Pupils are able to write for different audiences in geography. Little extended writing was seen in history at Key Stage 3 but it was well developed in Year 11 coursework and was of good quality. In modern languages pupils can operate at and occasionally above their expected levels of writing, particularly in German. Writing is limited in science because of a domination of work sheets.

27. Some pupils are not confident in the handling of number and measurement in a mental and oral form. Competence with written number and the associated operations is more secure. Pupils are using calculators reasonably well but not always appropriately. Capacity to interpret and use statistical data usually accords with their ability. Opportunities to use such knowledge and skills are provided within mathematics and examples of applications were seen in information technology, science, geography, history and design and technology.

28. Pupils develop sound core skills in information technology lessons but development of these skills are underdeveloped in other subjects of the curriculum because of problems of access to appropriate resources or lack of professional confidence. This was not the case in art, modern languages, design and technology and careers education.

29. The school participates in the LEA Value Added Project. The figures suggest that the school is generally performing as might be anticipated given the backgrounds and abilities of the pupils with regard to total GCSE results for 1994; the figures identify significant underachievement in 1993. In 1993 the school set up an action plan to raise achievement and the signs are that this has been successful.

3.2 QUALITY OF LEARNING

30. The quality of pupils' learning is broadly satisfactory though rather better at Key Stage 4 than at Key Stage 3.

In the lessons inspected, the quality of learning was most consistently good in science, music, German, and sociology. It was weaker in French and in religious education where the department has not yet begun teaching the new LEA Agreed Syllabus. Pupils have generally positive attitudes to learning. Most have sufficient skills to carry out tasks satisfactorily, though planning and drafting skills are not well developed except amongst more able pupils. Practical skills are generally good. Many pupils are able to use information technology to support their learning. Their motivation, rate of work and progress, both in lessons and over time, are closely linked to the quality of teaching. This is true of pupils of all abilities.

31. Pupils' learning was judged to be good in about four in ten lessons seen. In these lessons pupils worked hard, responded well to teachers' questions, asked questions themselves, and most were enthusiastic about the subject. Pupils made good progress in lessons and over time. They recalled information and ideas and could apply them to new examples. In German lessons for example, pupils responded well to teachers' questions. In sociology, they showed good understanding of concepts and could find examples to illustrate them. In most drama lessons pupils were able to identify what was successful in their own and each others' performance and to see how it might be improved. In many physical education lessons pupils improved their skills and applied them to the games they played. In most science lessons pupils could work out solutions to problems. In GCSE business and information studies pupils had good analytical skills.

32. In the lessons where pupils' learning was broadly satisfactory (about four in ten) pupils applied themselves and worked steadily. They responded thoughtfully to questions from the teacher. They worked well together informally. They made progress in the lessons and over time, but often at a rather slower rate than might have been expected, given their ability. They showed limited curiosity in seeking patterns and rules and in applying them. They rarely tried to improve on first attempts. Some writing tasks were routine and did not extend their understanding. Opportunities were missed to consolidate pupils' learning and move them on.

33. In the minority of lessons where pupils' learning was poor, about 2 out of 10, they made limited progress. They were often engaged in limited tasks, such as filling in words on worksheets, or in completing exercises affording little opportunity to vary the activity. They were often unclear about the purpose of the task. Some lost interest as the lesson went on. In a small minority of lessons, learning was hampered by the poor behaviour of a few pupils.

4. EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

34. The school provides value for money in that pupils generally achieve standards in line with their abilities at a unit cost per pupil which is in line with the average figure for Lancashire secondary schools. The governors' finance committee recognises the importance of careful managed planning and operates a clear cycle of budget setting related to overall budget objectives and priorities. The committee has terms of reference and has clearly defined the level of delegation to the headteacher. The most recent audit report identified a number of issues which needed addressing and this has now been done. The budget is managed very effectively by the governors, the bursar and senior management team.

35. The school has a development plan for the current year which has arisen from discussion with governors and staff. The present plan is informed by an evaluation of the 1993/94 plan and identifies specific targets in the areas of school management, curriculum, pastoral, reporting and assessment, and buildings. Responsibilities are identified together with a time scale but the plan does not identify clearly enough financial implications, though these are understood by the finance committee. Simple evaluation criteria are stated but these need further development to ensure good quality monitoring and evaluatory processes. An overall extended school plan, covering a number of years would also enhance the process, particularly in the area of policy development. Departments have development plans but these are of varying forms and quality and are often only tenuously linked to the school plan. The school should improve the processes of departmental planning to ensure good quality monitoring and evaluation by all subjects.

36. The school operates a well planned budget which is set against a historical spending pattern with reference to county guidelines and is informed by development plans but is not closely linked to them. There is an operating excess of about £70,000 in the current year but this is clearly earmarked as a sensible reserve of £50,000 and £20,000 for longer term repair and upgrading needs. Good budget management has enabled the school to look at a number of strategies to meet the pressures of a restricted budget for the coming financial year, including reduction by one teaching group in Year 8 and two redundancies.

37. Day to day management of the budget is good and internal management improvements suggested by the most recent audit report have been put in place. There are clear procedures for spending and the school can monitor and implement changes as appropriate. A statement on how the school stands financially at any time is readily available and such statements are issued regularly to the governors' finance committee.

38. The allocation of resources to departments is based partly on a maintenance sum requested by team leaders and partly through a sum allocated against needs identified for development. Amounts and priorities are determined by a deputy head and are informed by historical patterns and knowledge of departmental and school development plans. The school should identify more explicit criteria for the distribution of both forms of funding particularly in the light of the weaknesses identified in departmental plans. Evidence suggests that funding levels in most areas are adequate for departments' needs, though there is under resourcing in religious education.

39. The school employs sufficient staff to deliver its planned curriculum. The school timetable is generally effective in the use of staff and facilities and teaching occurs mainly in specialist accommodation. The staffing contact ratio of 79% is within the range for similar schools in the LEA.

40. At 23 hours 20 minutes for both key stages, the length of the teaching week is less than that recommended by DFE Circular 7/90. The governors should review the length and arrangement of the teaching day.

5. PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND BEHAVIOUR

5.1 PUPILS' SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

41. The school's aims make clear the importance attached to these aspects of pupils' development. A more recent paper, presented to governors this year, addresses directly the personal development of pupils and lists a range of opportunities where it may take place. This should be developed into a policy and guide for action. Pupils attend two assemblies a week and these are supplemented by 'Thoughts For The Day' to be used in form periods, starting with the lower school this term and the upper school from next September. In the assemblies observed, however, there was often little sense of occasion or sense of worship; form tutors did not make use of the thoughts for the day and made no attempt to provide an act of collective worship. Despite its plans, therefore, the school does not comply with the legal requirement for a daily act of collective worship.

42. Within the curriculum there are some opportunities for spiritual reflection: in history, Islam and its effects on society are studied; in religious education pupils receive information about Christianity and other religions; in English discussion of literature sometimes touches on spiritual matters. Overall, however, there is little planned provision which might support pupils in a personal search for spiritual meaning.

43. There are more opportunities for moral development: the cross curricular themes programme in Years 7, 8 and 9 discusses aspects of citizenship, personal relationships, sex education and health education; in Years 10 and 11 the social education programme, including careers, encourages reflection on moral and social issues; a number of subjects including, English, history, geography and technology, provide opportunities for moral growth, though these often occur incidentally rather than as explicit and planned learning.

44. Social and cultural understanding is provided widely across the curriculum: music is particularly successful in broadening pupils' cultural experience and awareness, with a strong multi-cultural element in its provisions; sociology, media studies and drama are also effective in widening and deepening pupils' social development.

45. The school has audited the contributions of subjects to pupils' personal development and is now in a position to plan more fully how it might fulfil its intentions for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development within the curriculum. It should certainly ensure that its existing policies for collective worship are carried out in practice.

46. Relationships within the school in general support values of fairness, a sense of right and wrong and concern for others. The involvement of many pupils in community and charity work is a strength of the school and makes a significant contribution to its moral climate. The loyalty and commitment of staff provide many good examples for pupils to follow.

47. A substantial programme of extra curricular activities gives many pupils opportunities to enrich their cultural and social experience: an arts week has been organised through the creative arts team; choirs and ensembles participate in local festivals; joint productions with primary schools take place; visits to France and Germany occur regularly; pupils produce their own newspaper; some pupils choose community projects in design and technology; the sports programme is particularly extensive and popular; visits to the theatre, museums, other places of interest and field trips all enrich the curriculum. The school does not monitor the take up by pupils of extra curricular activities, however.

48. The building does not readily lend itself to display but in some classrooms and in some curriculum areas the quality of pupils' work on view provides good visual stimulus. There are paintings on display along some corridors and the small foyer at the main entrance contains evidence of the school's achievements. A particularly good feature is a board with newspaper clippings, regularly updated, on pupils' and ex pupils' activities and achievements. Some areas and classrooms fall short of this standard and are drab and uncared for.

49. Pupils generally respect the fabric of the school and behave in a responsible manner. They are warm, direct and co-operative. However, some graffiti was observed, particularly in lavatories and some pupils are careless with litter.

50. Opportunities for responsibility exist. A prefect system with volunteers from Year 10 has been recently introduced and a pupils' group on equal opportunity is beginning, with the encouragement of staff, to discuss wider issues and taking on the role of a school council. Many more pupils assist and take part when given the chance. Advantage should be taken of these developments and of the willingness of many pupils to plan progressive opportunities for pupils to take greater responsibilities as they move through the school.

5.2 BEHAVIOUR AND DISCIPLINE

51. There are detailed school policies on behaviour and discipline. Procedures and lines of communication are clearly set out in disciplinary guidance, which state that all discipline should be approached from the perspective of rights, rules and responsibilities with positive attitudes being encouraged through assembly themes, by discussions in tutor groups and by the use of praise and encouragement generally. The school is mainly successful with this approach, although its application depends much on the individual teacher. The school should ensure greater consistency in the application of its policies for the recognition of good behaviour and in the management of pupils' behaviour.

52. Overall, standards of behaviour around the school are good. Observation of pupils' movement about the building revealed a generally ordered environment in spite of the congestion in particular parts of the building and the narrowness of certain corridors. Pupils waited to enter, went into and left classrooms relatively quietly. They were generally well behaved at breaks, lunchtimes and boarding the buses. Pupils were usually good-natured, polite and respectful. They generally treated the building and school property with regard; there was evidence of some litter outside the school, along the corridors and in the classrooms and of graffiti in the boys' toilets and on school furniture.

53. In general behaviour in classrooms is a positive feature of the life of the school and contributes to the standards of achievement and the quality of learning. However, in a small minority of lessons in some subjects, a few pupils are too easily distracted, do not concentrate and disrupt the work of others. In most cases this poor behaviour is related to inappropriate or undemanding teaching and learning.

54. The school has developed appropriate policies and procedures in response to problems of bullying. The issue is addressed through assemblies, aspects of the taught cross-curricular programme in the lower school and through a mentoring system with Year 11 pupils acting as mentors. Incidents of bullying are reported. The school should continue to ensure that it is doing all it can to address and alleviate the incidence of bullying.

55. During the past twelve months there were 39 fixed term and 4 permanent exclusions. The most common reason for exclusion was aggressive behaviour.

5.3 ATTENDANCE

56. Levels of attendance are satisfactory. The school makes an effort to encourage good attendance. In 1994, the school's figures for actual attendance, authorised absence and unauthorised absence closely mirrored the national figures and those of the LEA. The school was asked to provide figures for the third full week of the Autumn term. Overall attendance during this week was just below 90%. This week preceded the school's September holiday and was affected by related absence. Levels of unauthorised absence are low, although the school feels that there are instances of parentally condoned absence. As a whole, the school has a good monitoring system where year heads and form tutors contact parents in connection with non-attendance and other related matters; this encourages attendance.

57. Parents and pupils are given detailed guidance on procedures in case of absence. Form tutors and heads of year have the main responsibility for identifying problems with attendance. Awards for good attendance are made by the school, including the presentation of certificates; pupils track their own attendance through their logbooks. The school benefits from good relationships with the Education Welfare Service. Some teachers stress the need for attendance and punctuality by taking a class register for each of their lessons. This practice is not, however, universal. Punctuality for registration and for lessons was variable during the week of the inspection. Pupils were not always asked to explain reasons for arriving late. The size and layout of the building was sometimes a reason for lateness to lessons.

58. The school does not comply with guidance in Circular 11/91 as it does not complete registration at the beginning of the afternoon session and registers are not always completed in accordance with the guidance.

6. SUBJECTS OF THE CURRICULUM AND OTHER CURRICULAR PROVISION

English

59. Although the proportions of pupils achieving GCSE A*-C grades in English and English literature were slightly below national averages, results in 1994 were an improvement on those in 1993. Whereas just over four fifths of the pupils in Year 11 were entered for GCSE English in 1994 the school intends to enter the whole year group in 1995.

60. Most pupils achieve appropriately in relation to their abilities. Pupils with special needs consistently achieve levels that are high for their abilities. When all the evidence is taken into consideration there is some underachievement at both key stages, but pupils achieve better standards overall at Key Stage 4.

61. Most pupils speak clearly and coherently; they answer teachers' questions fluently and make clear contributions to class discussion. When given opportunities, they work collaboratively in groups and share ideas and opinions; some are able to justify choices and to support views with evidence. They have sound skills in role-play and improvisation.

62. The majority of pupils read with understanding. They read aloud accurately, mostly fluently and sometimes with expression. They study an appropriate range of literary and non-literary texts, including Shakespeare and pre-twentieth century literature. Response to shared texts includes drama activities and a range of writing. Only a relatively small proportion of pupils read widely for pleasure; the use of pupils' own reading logs is being encouraged but as yet these are underdeveloped as tools for learning. Pupils who have difficulty with reading are well supported and make progress over time.

63. There is a clear relationship between the quality of pupils' learning and the standards they achieve. The quality of learning was at least sound in three quarters of lessons observed at Key Stage 3 and in nine out of ten lessons at Key Stage 4. In half of these lessons seen there were good features of learning. The good lessons were characterised by pupils' positive attitudes, attentiveness and willingness to learn. They demonstrated skills such as the ability to make their own notes for learning, to co-operate effectively in groups, to interrogate texts for information and, in drama, to evaluate their own and each other's achievements thoughtfully. The rate of progress in lessons is clearly related to the quality of teaching. When pupils are motivated and are given the chance to develop skills, they make good progress whatever their abilities.

64. The quality of teaching was at least sound in seven out of ten lessons observed and in more than half of these lessons it had good features. Teaching is more consistently good in drama lessons and with special needs groups. In good lessons teachers offer focused support, communicate enthusiasm and give positive feedback. A good pace is sustained by the use of a range of activities and strategies. Where teaching is less good objectives are not always clear; teachers do not always intervene to move the learning along sufficiently; time limits for tasks are not set; planning is sometimes determined by content and not by learning objectives or lessons end without consolidation or review.

65. In order to raise standards further and to ensure consistency of provision the department should link its development planning more closely to success criteria; it should also carefully identify learning objectives in the schemes of work and to link them to the systems of assessment that it is currently developing.

Mathematics

66. The proportion of pupils entered for GCSE increased markedly in 1994 with the percentage achieving grades A-C also increasing. The results were still significantly below the national average. In 1993, the results for the girls in relation to the award of grades A-C were considerably better than those of the boys. This outcome was reversed in 1994.

67. Achievement in lessons is mostly in accordance with the abilities of the pupils. A high proportion of pupils at Key Stage 3 achieve at a level below the national expectation for their age but, at Key Stage 4, this proportion is smaller. A considerable number of pupils have difficulty in performing the skills and operations required to achieve

a specific result, but the more able pupils can appreciate the significance of what is being taught and are capable of appreciating its application elsewhere. Confidence in the handling of number and measurement, particularly mentally or orally, is not high.

68. Appropriate progress is made by many of the pupils and some of the more able show curiosity and seek explanations. Most of the pupils will persevere, work without close supervision and communicate their ideas to each other. They tackle routine tasks with some enthusiasm but are less competent in applying what has been learned to a new situation. They are often easily satisfied with the standard of the work produced and are rarely self-critical.

69. Some good teaching, particularly at Key Stage 3, was seen though the expectations of the teachers were not always high. Efforts are made to develop and consolidate the pupils' knowledge and skills and the questioning of the pupils by the teacher is sometimes effective. Strategies for promoting understanding are often absent and the range of teaching approaches observed was rather narrow. Involvement of the pupils is a feature of the lessons but their contributions are not always used effectively. Attention is being paid in the teaching to the use and application of mathematics, though this aspect of the teaching should be strengthened.

70. Regular checks are made on the pupils' progress and efforts are being made, somewhat inconsistently, to mark work diagnostically and to provide the necessary support to pupils.

71. Appropriate provision is being made for the pupils with special educational needs, with differentiation being a significant feature in some instances. The planning and delivery of some of the lessons seen with these pupils was good. The additional support provided in some lessons was effective. Opportunities to use the available information technology equipment have been taken.

Science

72. Standards of achievement overall are nearly always satisfactory or good when taking account of the abilities of the pupils, although there was underachievement in a minority of the lessons seen. GCSE results in the past two years have been below national averages but in 1994 there was a marked improvement especially in the results of boys which were close to the national average. Girls make good progress in lessons but do not achieve as well.

73. The quality of teaching and learning is almost always sound or better and some outstanding examples of each were seen. A few lessons were unsatisfactory. Good lessons are well planned and have a variety of activities which motivate pupils to work hard and to make good progress. Pupils behave well and have good listening skills. Given the opportunity, pupils are able to discuss their understanding and knowledge of science and can work out solutions to scientific problems. They have good practical and investigative skills.

74. Pupils are taught in mixed ability groups for the first three years and in most lessons inspected made good progress whatever their ability. Materials of varying difficulty are being developed to help pupils with special educational needs and teachers' support for these pupils is almost always effective. In their last two years pupils are placed into groups based on their abilities and efforts to raise standards are succeeding.

75. Pupils are assessed regularly. Work is marked habitually and at its best, the marking is very supportive and includes comments which help learning. Presentation is generally of a high standard and pupils have adequate numeracy and language skills to succeed in science. They should be given more opportunity to undertake tasks which require extended writing. All pupils have access to the National Curriculum and schemes of work are written to take account of their different abilities.

76. The department is well co-ordinated and teachers are well qualified to provide a good science course for all pupils. The technician provides excellent support for the teachers. A range of policies informs a coherent approach; issues are discussed and plans are produced for future implementation. The safety policy requires some upgrading but practice is good and pupils behave sensibly in lessons. There are good links with primary schools.

77. Equipment levels are good, having been improved via recent funding from the LEA. The basic allocation to the department from the school budget is low in the current year and needs to be monitored to ensure adequate provision in the future. Textbooks are available for class use but there are not enough to allow pupils to take them home.

78.The department has many strengths on which to build.

Technology

Design and Technology

79.At Key Stage 3 most pupils' standard of achievement match national expectations for their age and their individual capabilities. At Key Stage 4 most pupils' achievements correspond to national expectations; achievements of all pupils match their capabilities or are above them. In 1994 GCSE results in CDT: Design and Realisation were above the national average for grades A*-C but were below it in CDT: Design Communication and Home Economics (food).

80.The quality of teaching and learning at both key stages was satisfactory or better in most lessons observed. In the majority of classes, work was concentrated on the central National Curriculum Attainment Targets of designing and making. An emphasis on the progressive development of pupils' design fluency has been introduced in construction and control at Key Stage 3. Product design is in the process of being developed as a feature of food technology. The relatively recent introduction of a fabric and textiles course has provided a further avenue for pupils to develop confidence in designing and making and the quality of their work is high. Pupils receive a stimulating technological challenge from a new GCSE course which concentrates on systems and control with an appropriate use of computer hardware and software. Pupils with special educational needs receive individual support and make progress over time.

81.Relationships between teachers and pupils are good. Objectives are invariably clearly set and teaching methods are appropriately applied. All the teachers are well qualified and appropriately deployed, but most need in-service training to equip them for a National Curriculum requiring changes to teaching styles and in some cases aspects of subject knowledge. Work in the subject benefits considerably from good non-teaching support. The department is well managed and much has been achieved by concerted effort on the part of the majority of staff over the past three years. Departmental documentation is sound and a very thorough approach to assessment and recording has been established. The department is in a strong position to take advantage of the new National Curriculum Order when it is introduced. Development planning has been established, but is at a very rudimentary stage. Greater consideration should be given to the medium and long term to take into account likely changes in curricular emphases and resulting resource implications.

82.The department is generally adequately resourced, although the machines which are used extensively for computer control in systems technology are old and in need of replacement. Accommodation is generally appropriate and the recently refurbished facilities for food technology are outstanding. The fabric and textiles room is inconveniently situated in relation to the rest of the department.

Information Technology including Business Studies

83.Pupils' standards of achievement in information technology at Key Stage 3 either conform with national expectations for their age and ability or are above them. At Key Stage 4 in 1994 GCSE results in the higher grades of A*-C corresponded closely with the national average in business and information studies.

84.Pupils at Key Stage 3 make sound progress in learning new skills in basic computer applications. Most lessons are characterised by enthusiastic learning and by sustained concentration. Pupils are encouraged to take a measure of responsibility for their own learning from the earliest stages. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress according to their abilities.

85.In business and information studies at Key Stage 4, analytical skills are well developed and pupils work well independently. They make sound progress in the skills of information seeking and in communicating ideas. In business education, problem solving is an integral part of most course work and software packages are used appropriately for pupils' individually devised work. All lessons observed were well planned and resourced. Objectives were clearly set and understood. Assessment techniques in information technology and in business education are sound, although at present there are no arrangements in operation for pupils' information technology achievements and progress to be assessed across the subjects.

86. Although all departments give a commitment to information technology in development planning and schemes of work, few subjects are able to offer related work of any substance in lessons because of a lack of resources and/or of professional confidence. However, in art, modern foreign languages, design and technology and careers education, the use of information technology in an appropriate context, is already well established. The National Curriculum requirements in information technology are being delivered through an effective modular cross-curricular course at Key Stage 3.

87. There are no specialist teachers, but those who teach information technology at both key stages are enthusiastic, knowledgeable and well deployed. Information technology and business education are temporarily and effectively managed by a deputy head but the task of planning for information technology across the curriculum is seriously hampered by the lack of a co-ordinator. The ratio of computers to pupils at 1:10.2, is better than the national average, but many machines, especially in the subject departments, are out-dated and in need of replacement. Equipment difficulties are compounded by the lack of an information technology technician. The main teaching space, with a complement of 20 personal computer machines, is in the school library, but its location is inconvenient for the effective teaching of information technology and inhibits the use of the library. The essential development of information technology in the future will be largely dependent on the availability of staffing and resources.

History

88. Standards of achievement in history are generally sound, but are higher at Key Stage 4 than at Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 3 pupils' standards of achievement tend to fall below age-related expectations, which are met in only just under half of the lessons observed. A similar pattern was seen when judging standards against pupils' abilities. Levels of achievement matched pupils' abilities in under half of the lessons seen. In a small number of lessons, however, many pupils were reaching levels which were high for their abilities, and work in pupils' books reflected this. At Key Stage 4, however, standards of achievement are good in relation both to pupils' ages and abilities. At both key stages good achievement is characterised by effective comprehension, communication and source-work skills, competent use of knowledge and good standards of written work. At Key Stage 3 there is underachievement when pupils are not sufficiently challenged, when expectations are low and when pupils lack motivation and interest. Standards of achievement in GCSE in 1994 were considerably better than those for 1993: they were above national and LEA averages for A*-C grades, though entry numbers were small and no pupils gained A or B grades.

89. Pupils with special educational needs are well-supported, both by the department and by external support staff, whose contributions are much valued. These pupils make good progress and achieve well.

90. Pupils' quality of learning was sound or good in just over half of the lessons observed at Key Stage 3 and in all lessons observed at Key Stage 4. Good learning at both key stages is nearly always associated with appropriately challenging teaching and with high expectations which enable pupils to make good progress in knowledge and the understanding of history. Pupils make progress in learning skills when their attitudes are positive and their concentration is sustained by varied and suitable teaching approaches. Many pupils at Key Stage 4 are clearly eager to make progress and to achieve good standards.

91. The quality of teaching very clearly affects the quality of pupils' learning. The quality of teaching was sound or better in just over half of the lessons seen at Key Stage 3 and in all lessons observed at Key Stage 4. Good teaching is well-prepared, with clear learning objectives linked with teaching methods and activities which are matched to the pupils' ages and abilities. Expectations are generally higher at Key Stage 4 than at Key Stage 3. Teaching at Key Stage 3 should be more challenging with higher expectations. In order to achieve this, there should be a review of teaching and learning styles in which current good practice is shared. Ways in which tasks are matched to pupils' abilities should be further developed. Teachers' subject knowledge is good.

92. The curriculum at Key Stage 3 meets statutory requirements, including the provision of information technology experience. Pupils are assessed regularly as part of everyday teaching and learning. Records of pupils' achievements are sensibly used to help to identify where further progress can be made in teaching and learning.

93. The department is managed carefully and with great attention to the needs of the pupils. Documentation is detailed and thorough, but departmental development planning should be more coherent and linked with the school development plan and the departmental budget.

94.Resources are good, and enhance the quality of learning. Extensive, well-presented displays of pupils' work on classroom walls testify to the quality of work done by many pupils.

Geography

95.Standards of achievement in the GCSE in 1994 were significantly above national norms for pupils gaining A*-C grades. The results were a considerable improvement on those for 1993 which were below the national norms. In both years, girls performed significantly better than boys. At Key Stage 3, the standards of achievement of a majority of pupils meet or exceed age-related expectations. Most pupils achieve levels at or above their ability. In lessons observed, good standards of achievement involved pupils being given the opportunity to display their knowledge and understanding verbally, diagrammatically and in writing. They were able to read and interpret information accurately. There were good verbal responses showing a sound understanding of causal relationships, for example, the reasons for the underdevelopment of the Mezzogiorno region. At Key Stage 4 the standards of achievement of most pupils meet or exceed age-related expectations and most pupils achieve levels at or above their ability. Good standards of achievement in lessons observed involve pupils being able to explain, hypothesise and draw appropriate conclusions both verbally and in writing. Pupils at both key stages mainly present their written work well. When given the opportunity, pupils show a good understanding of patterns and process in geography and a clear understanding at Key Stage 4 of the process of geographical enquiry. The standards achieved by pupils with special educational needs are mainly satisfactory.

96.Pupils' quality of learning at Key Stage 3 was sound or better in all of the lessons seen. At Key Stage 4 most were sound or better with some lessons having good features and no major shortcomings; in a small minority of lessons there were some shortcomings in important areas. Pupils tackle work with interest and enthusiasm. They listen attentively and contribute to whole class discussions. When given the opportunity, they are able to work in pairs in or in small groups where they co-operate, listen and value the opinions of others. Overall the subject offers a broad range of ways of learning. Fieldwork helps pupils to develop skills of observation, measurement and recording and to engage in enquiry-based learning. This is a strength at Key Stage 4. However, opportunities are not always provided for extended writing and systematic note-taking.

97.At both key stages the quality of teaching observed was sound or better in almost all lessons. In a small minority of lessons there were some shortcomings in important areas. Where teaching is sound or better it is well-prepared and organised; lessons have clear objectives; there are appropriately high expectations and good relationships; tasks are suitably challenging, and well paced. Class discussions are sensitively handled; pupils are prompted and challenged to clarify their answers. Some lessons introduce a helpful variety of activities. Where teaching is less sound pupils are not given the opportunity to respond and knowledge and understanding is not checked out. There is sometimes an over-reliance on the textbook or on worksheets. In some cases special worksheets are provided for special educational needs pupils, but this is rare. Marking is usually frequent and is supportive of pupil attitude. Homework is set and marked on a regular basis.

98.The department is well organised and its documentation is generally helpful. There is a departmental development plan although this should be more clearly linked to the school development plan. Teachers keep their own records of pupil's progress; consideration should be given to the use and analysis of these records for the monitoring of pupil progress, so improving standards and the quality of education. To support this, individual target setting should also be more sharply focused to help pupils with their future learning. The department is revising schemes of work; it could usefully incorporate the cross curricular themes and dimensions that it has already identified into this review. Although the department as a whole is well-resourced, the geography section in the library is not. It is also under-utilised. The department should review its library stock and make greater use of the library as a centre for independent learning. Pupils' work is well displayed in classrooms and in the corridor outside the rooms.

Modern Foreign Languages

99.Recent GCSE results in modern foreign languages have been significantly below national averages at A*-C. Results in French declined sharply in 1994. Standards seen in various samples of pupils' work during the inspection were also largely at or below national expectation. There was underachievement by most pupils in French at Key Stage 3, including many with special educational needs. In German however almost all pupils performed at or above their potential at both key stages and achievement was sometimes quite high. At Key Stage 4 standards were more

even and generally in line with pupils' potential.

100. Many Year 7 pupils are soon able to understand and to respond quite effectively to the foreign language at an appropriate level. Subsequent progress in French is often fairly slow and many lower set pupils, including some with special educational needs, are only able to repeat words or phrases by the end of Key Stage 3. In German such pupils have often progressed to simple memorised conversations. Overall progress in German is broadly in line with national expectations and most pupils with special educational needs can enjoy simple exchanges relating to personal information. Few of the ablest pupils in either language can understand and relate orally simply past or future events, although many have shown that they can do so in writing by Year 9. Few children at either key stage have the confidence to take the lead in conversational exchanges but at Key Stage 4 in both languages some abler children can cope appropriately in less structured conversation. Exercise books, workbooks and displays show that most pupils can operate at and occasionally above their expected levels in writing, particularly in German at both key stages. Most pupils at Key Stage 3 can write a few comprehensible sentences relating to personal details and describe likes and dislikes; some older pupils have progressed to being able to write longer pieces although rarely with memorised language. Some pupils at both key stages have acquired useful word processing skills and have begun to redraft dialogues and letters. Reading was largely seen only as a support for other skills.

101. There were shortcomings in many Key Stage 3 lessons observed. In French progress was sometimes slow, with unchallenging copying, drawing and labelling work doing little to develop pupils' oral or written skills. In other lessons, mainly but not solely in German, pupils responded well to skilled questioning by the teacher. At Key Stage 4 lessons were mainly sound or good but too much pupil time was spent on practising GCSE comprehension tests. Some pupils responded well to group work in both languages at this Key Stage but not all activities ensured real progress. Access to computers is good, with most tasks developing linguistic as well as technological expertise. Many pupils are given the chance to attempt longer written tasks but not enough opportunities are provided to develop memory work or to attempt simple descriptions. Pupils' motivation and attitudes were generally much better in German than in French.

102. Most teachers use a very good range of aids and strategies to attain variety. These are most effective when combined with careful planning which ensures that pupils make real progress at a suitable pace. Most teachers use the target language skilfully but need to demand more in return from their pupils. Expectations need in some cases to be raised for oral work by special educational needs pupils in French and for grammar work by the more able. The quality of teaching was mostly better at Key Stage 4 than at Key Stage 3.

103. Good National Curriculum assessment records are kept but as yet not used effectively to plan progress via tasks set at a range of levels. There is also a more general need to improve aspects of departmental planning.

Art

104. At Key Stage 3 many pupils achieve below the national expectation for their age and, when account is taken of their ability, a significant minority is underachieving. At Key Stage 4 standards are in line with national expectations and are at more appropriate levels for pupils' abilities. In 1994 GCSE results for grades A*-C were significantly below national and LEA averages. In 1993 results were close to these averages.

105. At Key Stage 3 the general quality of work from direct observation is weak, though at Key Stage 4 pupils record with reasonable accuracy. Most pupils are technically competent in their handling of the materials and techniques with which they are familiar. They are beginning to acquire some understanding of aspects of our artistic heritage but as yet this understanding lacks depth and their use of the methods and approaches of other artists is at a fairly basic level. Most pupils with identified special educational needs make good progress in this subject.

106. In the majority of lessons seen at both key stages the quality of learning was sound or better, though pupils at Key Stage 4 make better progress than those at Key Stage 3. Pupils make considerable use of information technology in art and use the good quality facilities with confidence. Though their competence as learners is not always sufficiently challenged, most pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to their work. Pupils at Key Stage 4 adopt a mature approach and almost all work productively with minimum supervision.

107. In the majority of lessons seen the quality of teaching was sound or better. Only exceptionally were there

shortcomings. The scheme of work has been adapted to reflect the Revised Orders but does not yet address a number of areas - in particular: the exploration and use of three-dimensional media, printmaking, sculpture and textiles. More attention should be given in the planning stage to incorporating the structured development of basic skills into the existing scheme of work. In almost all lessons there is some direct instruction about the nature and history of art and the teaching is beginning to bring together the two attainment targets and, though this is yet to be consolidated, it is an area of strength within the department.

108.Documentation is thorough and particularly well presented. There are a number of policies in place but some are yet to be fully implemented. Departmental development planning is beginning to contribute to the work of this area and some of the current targets have already been met but more should be done to explore the means of achieving the more demanding targets.

Music

109.This is a good department in which pupils' achievements at both key stages and in a thriving extra-curricular programme are never less than satisfactory and are sometimes good or very good. In 1995, for the first time, pupils are entered for GCSE.

110.A carefully structured programme of practical music-making activities engages pupils in aspects of composing and performing, listening and appraising; schemes of work include assessment criteria so that pupils can understand the purpose of the tasks. The learning of musical notation is generally within a musical context and pupils' previous learning at Key Stage 2 is increasingly acknowledged. Curriculum content, assessment arrangements, accommodation and a good range of resources are adequate for the successful delivery of the National Curriculum.

111.The attitudes of pupils and their commitment to the subject are impressive. In most instances they are responsive, purposeful and enthusiastic, especially when engaged in small group or individual composing and performing tasks. At Key Stage 4 pupils with advanced performing skills are beginning to be able to criticise their own work and that of others, using the language of music.

112.Teaching is delivered with energy and enthusiasm. The department has recently expanded to include a part-time teacher whose contribution is consistent with the department's style and which includes voluntary support of the choir as accompanist.

113.Curriculum organisation ensures an adequate time allocation for all pupils at Key Stage 3. Efficient assessment procedures are in place to enable pupils' progress to be monitored. The quality of teaching is good.

114.Practical work, especially when organised on an individual or small group basis, enables pupils to work at their own pace and level. The needs of less able pupils are identified and tasks are either set at different levels or outcomes are open-ended. Individual pupils, including those with special educational needs, are supported sensitively.

115.In addition to the main curriculum, more than fifty pupils are taught to play instruments by visiting teachers and the orchestra rehearses after school and performs regularly. Singing is popular both in the classroom and in the choirs which, like the instrumental groups, give opportunities for pupils to experience advanced musical standards.

116.The music department is a strength in the life of the school and community. A firm foundation has been established in the last few years and pupils enjoy and respect their music-making. The potential for further development is considerable.

Physical Education

117.The substantial majority of pupils achieve the national expectation. Almost all pupils achieve appropriate levels for their abilities and some achieve levels that are high for their abilities. Standards of achievement are higher at Key Stage 4. GCSE results in 1993 and 1994 were significantly better than the national average for A*-C grades. Girls outperformed boys at GCSE in both years.

118.The quality of learning was sound or better in almost all of the lessons observed, and was good in nearly half

of the lessons. Learning was better at Key Stage 4. Pupils are highly motivated and make progress in their ability to perform a variety of physical skills and their understanding of how to apply these in games. They co-operate effectively with each other and, when given the opportunity, are able to evaluate their own and others' performance.

119. In almost all of the lessons observed, the quality of teaching was sound or better, and was good in more than one half. Teaching was slightly better at Key Stage 4. Teachers have in-depth knowledge of the subject and high expectation of pupils' performance. In the better lessons observed, the work was well-planned; a variety of teaching strategies were used and pupils were enabled to develop as independent learners. However, more use of differentiated teaching would enhance the learning of all pupils, including those with special educational needs.

120. The department offers a curriculum which fulfils the requirements of the National Curriculum and which is generally broad and balanced. Dance is taught only to Year 7 girls and there is an over-emphasis on the teaching of games.

121. A positive, caring ethos and sense of purpose combined with effective leadership of the department contribute to good standards. Documentation is of the highest order and includes detailed schemes of work and departmental policies. Further consideration should be given to implementing the department's policy on special educational needs to ensure that all pupils make appropriate progress in learning.

122. Extra-curricular provision, although affected by the short lunch break, affords pupils of all abilities opportunities to participate in a wide variety of activities.

Religious Education

123. At Key Stage 3 pupils' achievement is below expectation: when their achievement is set against their ability, many pupils are under-achieving, some significantly so. At Key Stage 4 achievement is at an appropriate level but is limited by the fact that the course offered is not in accordance with the requirements of the recently introduced LEA Agreed Syllabus for religious education. Pupils are not entered for GCSE. The acquisition of appropriate knowledge, skills and understanding is being constrained by teaching which is not founded on the subject's field of enquiry and which lacks progression of learning in the study of religion.

124. At Key Stage 3 the quality of learning had shortcomings in important areas. At Key Stage 4 learning was mostly sound. Where learning was satisfactory it was in respect of general learning skills rather than those that are specific to the subject. Much use is made of text books and there is limited access to reference books; no examples of more substantial reading were observed. Homework is regularly set and often used as a means of continuity between lessons. Presentation of written work is often good, given the ability of pupils. However, the teaching often lacks intellectual challenge and pupils are given few opportunities to bring their own experience to learning or to reflect on the development of their own beliefs and values. Teachers are sensitive to the needs of pupils with special educational needs, but a broader range of teaching styles would benefit these and other pupils.

125. At the time of the inspection the post of head of the subject was vacant. The new LEA agreed syllabus presents the school with a significant challenge and the department should implement the required courses as a matter of urgency. A departmental development plan should be constructed which would guide the adoption of statutory requirements for the teaching and reporting of the subject. An aspect of this process should be a review of resources needed to support such courses.

7. FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE FINDINGS

7.1 QUALITY OF TEACHING

126. In about 8 out of 10 lessons observed the quality of teaching was sound or better. In about 4 out of 10 it had good or outstanding features. There were shortcomings in about 2 in 10 of lessons seen. A particularly high proportion of good teaching was observed in science, information technology, music, sociology, drama and physical education and a particularly low proportion in religious education. In most departments the quality of teaching was variable with most being sound rather than exceptional.

127. The predominantly sound lessons were characteristically taught by teachers with good knowledge of their subjects. These lessons were well planned but with more attention paid to the content of what was taught than to teaching methods. In the best work knowledgeable teachers also conveyed enthusiasm for their subjects: in music, for example, pupils responded to lively and challenging lessons; drama lessons were well paced; some outstanding teaching in science had clear objectives, good variety and well planned practical work; information technology lessons were characterised by enthusiastic learning and by sustained concentration; in physical education teachers had in-depth knowledge of the subject and high expectations of pupils' performance.

128. However, much of the teaching, though sound, is unexciting and relies too much on a limited range of teaching methods. Lessons sometimes lack variety and the work is not always matched to the differing abilities of the pupils. In some English lessons observed, pupils were left to continue one activity for too long so that they consequently lost motivation; in mathematics the range of teaching approaches is limited with the greatest emphasis placed on exposition, consolidation and practice; in science some lessons relied too much on worksheets; in some aspects of technology, designing and making gave way to inconsequential 'theory' work; in modern languages differentiation is almost always sought by outcome rather than by task; in geography there was sometimes an over-reliance on textbooks or worksheets; in history for some groups at Key Stage 3 there was too much teacher input involving more new material than pupils were able to take in; in art greater use could be made of whole class demonstrations to help improve key skills and processes in which there are weaknesses; in music the pressure to complete tasks in the weekly lessons may inhibit imaginative work; in physical education little evidence was seen of differentiated work; in religious education opportunities were missed for pupils to reflect on their own beliefs and values.

129. Despite these reservations good teaching was seen in almost all subjects and some departments successfully share

good practice and plan for variety and differentiation in their teaching. The science and the technology departments are two good examples. The school should ensure that all departments do so systematically so as to bring the general level of teaching up to the level of the best. In this way the expectations of all teachers can be raised and standards further improved.

130. A detailed system for the setting, checking and marking of homework is in place. In practice however, form tutors vary in their checking of homework diaries and some teachers are less regular in setting and marking homework than others. The school should clarify and emphasise the roles of the pastoral and academic staff as well as that of the class teacher in the setting of homework. Marking is generally undertaken conscientiously by teachers with usually encouraging comments. Only at its best does it fulfil the school's policy that it should be diagnostic and set targets for future learning.

7.2 ASSESSMENT, RECORDING AND REPORTING

131. There is a written school policy for assessment, recording and reporting. However, the guidelines given to subject teams on implementation of have led to a wide interpretation of the policy. Practice varies between subjects. Each curriculum area is responsible for the development of its own policy. Subjects differ in the degree to which assessment, recording and reporting are related to National Curriculum levels. The retention of pupils' work to support assessments is at an early stage of development in most subjects. All subjects have at least two formal assessments during the year to help with pupil monitoring, but the use of assessments to inform the planning of future work is variable. Self-assessment sheets are used in some subjects but pupils are not always skilled at identifying strengths and weaknesses and in setting future targets. There are areas of good assessment practice on which the school is able to build, for example, in history and in technology. Self and peer assessment is used successfully in drama and in music. Records of pupil progress are held by individual subject teachers with some departments holding them centrally and so being able to use them to track pupils' progress across the subject.

132. Marking of written work is regular and generally encouraging. In a number of subjects, for example mathematics and French, the good practice provides detailed and encouraging comments on pupils' work as well as specific targets for improvement. Marking policies are inconsistent in their content. Departmental marking codes are often used and are generally understood by teachers and pupils alike, but practice is variable within as well as between subject areas. Criteria for marking are sometimes too general. The school should take advantage of the Dearing review to clarify these.

133. As part of reporting to parents, teachers and pupils review pupils' work together and set targets as a dimension of individual action planning. The quality of reports and individual action plans varies. The best reports are informative, give specific information about pupils' progress in the subject and include action plans which give guidance on achievable next steps in learning. A summative National Record of Achievement is issued to all Year 11 pupils in March of each year. The quality of the content of the "School Achievements" page of the National Record of Achievement reflects that of subject comments in the profiles to parents. A generally high priority is given to records of achievement and to action planning in the school. The school is not, however, following the guidance given in Circular 16/93: reports to the parents of pupils in Year 11 do not include a comment on the taught cross-curricular programme nor on religious education.

134. Inconsistent and often only superficial use is made of primary records for curriculum purposes. At present, there is little formal curriculum liaison with feeder primary schools, though there are plans to improve curriculum continuity. The school has established systems to enable it to refer, assess and review pupils in accordance with the requirements of the 1981 Education Act.

135. Profiling, reviewing and reporting developments are associated with twice yearly monitoring to identify underachieving pupils. The school and departments undertake a detailed analysis of external examination results. Team leaders discuss their analysis with the headteacher. The school is part of the LEA's Value Added Project. There is no whole school monitoring of the various stages of completion by each pupil of GCSE coursework across all subjects.

136. The school is in a strong position to build on its good practice in assessment, recording and reporting and should continue to improve its whole school approach by developing appropriate monitoring and evaluation procedures at

subject level.

7.3 THE CURRICULUM

(i) Quality and range

137. Overall the curriculum at both key stages reflects the aims and intentions of the school. At Key Stage 3, pupils study the full range of the subjects of the National Curriculum. They study either French or German. More able linguists take the second modern language in Year 8. In addition all pupils follow a cross-curricular skills course which covers information technology, citizenship and social education and health education, including sex education. These courses provide generally well-planned and appropriate coverage of several cross-curricular themes. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 all take a drama course. The proportion of time allocated to subjects is generally appropriate, though the length of teaching week at both key stages is less than that recommended by the DFE. Pupils are set by ability in mathematics and modern languages from Year 7 and for English, history and geography from Year 8. In other subjects they are taught in groups which contain the full range of ability in the school. In Year 9 pupils are set by ability in all subjects except PE, art, music, religious education and technology. Timetabling arrangements are generally satisfactory, though grouping arrangements for modern languages in Year 9 result in some large teaching groups in both modern languages, history and geography.

138. The curriculum at Key Stage 4 meets most of the current requirements of the National Curriculum with the exception of the provision for religious education. The current social education programme, covers moral and social education but does not provide an adequate coverage of religious education. All pupils take an extended core of subjects including English, mathematics, a double award course in science, a modern foreign language and a full course in technology. All pupils have physical education, careers and social education. They take a humanities subject and have one free option. Time allocations are appropriate. The planned provision for careers education, guidance and work experience is good.

139. All departments have schemes of work which indicate the content to be covered. The best ensure coherence and co-ordination in planning, for example, in science and history. Only a few, such as the scheme for drama, indicate the range of teaching strategies which might be used. Some subjects monitor and plan their contributions to cross-curricular themes and skills, such as information technology, and in geography, to environmental education.

140. Homework is set with reasonable regularity, though there is variation between subjects. In art, a good range of research tasks is set.

141. Extra-curricular provision in music, sports and drama provides significant enrichment for a minority of pupils. Pupils have opportunities to participate in a range of trips, for example, geography trips to the Lake District. IT is available for pupils to use after school.

142. The governing body is well-informed about the curriculum and together with the school management and teachers they have developed appropriate policies. Governors and senior management have yet to develop a range of strategies to monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum, for example, the detailed planning of subjects and the quality of pupils' experience.

(ii) Equality of opportunity

143. The school has clear and detailed policies on equal opportunities, covering sex, race and ability which meet legal requirements and are reflected, for example, in the governors' pay policy. There is a useful development plan for this aspect of the school's work. There are clear procedures for dealing with racial incidents. The school has a committee which monitors equal opportunity issues. Governors and pupils are represented on it. This is a useful forum for debate and planning.

144. Guidance is provided for departments to evaluate their own provision. Only a few departmental schemes of work have clear policies to underpin planning and monitoring. In geography, for example, there is a policy which identifies issues and strategies which relate specifically to the subject. In the week of the inspection, few teachers grouped boys and girls to work together.

145.All pupils have access to a broad curriculum. The structure of the timetable at Key Stage 4 ensures that all boys and girls take science, technology and a foreign language.

7.4 PROVISION FOR PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

146.The school has a clear and appropriate policy for special educational needs according to which roles and responsibilities are clearly laid down. A member of the governing body monitors special educational needs issues. The recently appointed special educational needs co-ordinator provides good leadership and guidance. As a result the school is making good progress towards implementing the Code of Practice recommended by the 1993 Education Act.

147.Twenty-one pupils have statements of special educational needs, which is slightly above the national average. Most have some degree of learning difficulty; two have visual impairment.

148.The school's assessment procedures for identifying pupils' needs have been widened to include all pupils in Year 7 who have difficulties in reading. This has yet to be extended to include pupils in other year groups. An appropriate range of strategies is used to identify pupils who need support, including liaison with primary schools, screening and diagnostic tests. Clear and detailed records are kept on pupils with statements. Thorough records are kept on pupils who have reading support. Statements are reviewed in line with legal requirements. The school has yet to develop individual education plans for all pupils who have special educational needs.

149.Subject departments are reviewing their planning and teaching strategies in order to provide more effectively for pupils with learning difficulties and for the most able pupils. Some departments, for example, science, history and modern languages, have begun to develop written materials at different levels.

150.All pupils, including those with special educational needs, have access to a broad curriculum at both key stages. They are taught in smaller groups in some subjects. Pupils with statements of special educational needs are well supported, both in lessons and when they are taught separately. Support is well planned. Support teachers are well informed about most courses the pupils study; they help pupils keep up with work in subjects and also target specific areas of weakness. There is however insufficient support for a pupil who speaks little English. Pupils in Year 7 whose reading is weak attend a reading club during the tutorial period two or three times a week. They make good progress, effectively supported by the special educational needs staff and by adult volunteers.

151.Pupils with statements of special educational needs generally achieve satisfactory standards and make progress. The four such pupils who left at the end of Year 11 in 1994 all had work experience and have either gone into employment or to suitable courses in further education. Increasing numbers of lower-attaining pupils have taken five or more subjects at GCSE level in the last two years. Almost all pupils are to be entered for five or more subjects this year.

7.5 MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

152.The school has clearly defined aims, drawn up in 1991, following discussion with staff, governors and a sample of parents. These aims emphasise the development of a 'quality learning community' and have curriculum guidelines, but are not developed into wider specific objectives to inform the school development plan. The school has a wide range of policies, though some of these are underdeveloped.

153.The school benefits from an active and committed governing body which fulfils its legal responsibilities. It generally meets twice a term. There is only one standing committee, for finance. There are mandatory small committees for Discipline, Appeals, Grievance and Complaints. The finance committee has terms of reference, but terms of reference should be put in place for the other committees. Short-term staff and governors' working groups are set up to deal with specific issues such as the review of the sex education policy. The lack of committees does not appear to hinder school development but, in the light of the need to increase the school's evaluatory capacity, the committee structure should be reviewed. There is an identified special needs governor.

154.The headteacher provides clear thinking and purposeful leadership and enjoys the support of the governing body, parents and staff. The senior management team is made up of headteacher, two deputies and, at the time of the

inspection, a senior teacher. The group meet regularly and have an internally published agenda and minutes. The decision has been made over the last year to decrease the senior management team by two senior teachers, one promoted to a deputy head vacancy and the other taking early retirement. It is intended that this movement to a flatter management structure will decrease the pastoral academic divide and, in particular, raise the profile of heads of year. There are two middle management groups which relate to the senior management team through the appropriate deputy head in the case of pastoral group and through the whole team in the case of the team leaders' group. Both groups meet regularly and effectively. Neither group has terms of reference; contribution to policy is assumed but is not explicit. Consideration should now be given to formalising the roles of senior management, the middle management groups and middle management generally with respect to policy generation, monitoring and evaluation.

155.The school's routine organisation and administration is efficient and benefits from a staff handbook which informs all staff of agreed procedures and policies. Communication systems within the school are effected through clearly understood processes. There is a weekly staff information bulletin with a daily briefing supported by daily notices. There is an annual calendar of school events with a separate list of internal meetings. Communication with parents through the prospectus, individual letters and meetings is good.

156.The school has a development plan and this is informed by an evaluation of the previous plan. Responsibilities are identified and simple evaluation criteria are stated but these need further development to ensure good quality monitoring and evaluation. Consideration should also be given to longer term planning particularly in relation to policy development. There are several working groups operating within the school with membership made up of interested people and representation of appropriate responsibilities; these groups make a useful contribution to the running of the school.

157.Agreed job descriptions, based upon generic models, are in place for all teaching staff. These are not signed and line management responsibilities have not always been clearly identified. There appears to be a lack of clarity of role of some responsibility holders within larger department areas. Non-teaching staff make a positive contribution to the school and to the consequent achievement of pupils.

158.This is a school where communication is good and moves are being made to raise achievement. To support this endeavour there is a need to enhance the role of middle management - particularly in the area of monitoring and evaluation.

7.6 STAFF, LEARNING RESOURCES AND ACCOMMODATION

(i) Teaching and non-teaching staff

159.With 44 full-time equivalent teaching staff, the school is adequately staffed for the curriculum it offers. Nearly 90% have a first degree plus teaching qualification and 10% a teachers' certificate only. The match between teaching commitment and qualification is generally good with very little non-specialist teaching except in religious education. 45% of staff have twenty or more years service in the school; 26% have less than five years. 63% of staff are over 40 years old. Less than 9% are under 30. The average teaching load is 79.3% which is within the normal range for the LEA. The pupil teacher ratio is 16.25 : 1 compared with a national average of 16.3:1. The staff are appropriately deployed.

160.A staff development policy was approved by governors in December 1994 and is linked to the school development plan. In addition there is an induction policy for new and newly promoted staff.

161.The management and impact of staff development varies between departments: most staff are encouraged to attend appropriate in-service training and some departments organise effective in-house professional development. Records are generally maintained of in-service undertaken. As yet, however, staff development is imperfectly linked to the needs of the school and to department development plans. Arrangements for the dissemination of in-service are also variable in their effectiveness.

162.The great majority of staff have been appraised according to a scheme which follows LEA guidance and is in line with national requirements. Appraisal is beginning to have an effect on staff development, though some

difficulties have been experienced in assisting staff to reach targets and in providing appropriate in-service. A staff development working party with a deputy head as co-ordinator has agreed an annual action plan for staff development and progress is being made.

163.The governors have agreed a pay and recruitment policy which is derived from the school's aims and follows guidance issued by the LEA.

164.Non-teaching staff are appropriately deployed. As well as clerical, reprographic, welfare and maintenance staff the technology and science areas receive technician support. The science technician is also responsible for audio-visual support. All these staff make a valued contribution to the work of the school. No non-teaching support is given to the library or to information technology.

(ii) Resources for learning

165.Resources are generally adequate to meet curriculum needs. Spending per pupil on books is close to the LEA average. Capitation is allocated to departments partly on a maintenance sum and partly through a sum allocated against needs identified for development. The school should identify explicit and agreed criteria for the distribution of both forms of funding.

166.The library is poorly resourced: the budget allocation in the current year is £600 which is less than £1 per pupil. The quality of books available for subject support is inadequate and limiting and the fiction section is dated. Borrowing levels are low in all sections. The library is used as an information technology room and is consequently under-used as a learning resource, though pupils do have access to the library on a daily rota during morning registration and assembly time and it is open at the end of the school day. A teacher has a responsibility allowance for general supervision of the library and for ordering books. At present the library is inadequate to meet the needs of pupils and has a negative effect on pupils' achievement. An action plan for the library has recently been produced. Practical improvement remains a matter of urgency. The overall ratio of computers to pupils is 1:10.2, which is better than the national average, but many of the machines, especially in the subject areas, are outdated and in need of replacement. Equipment difficulties are compounded by the lack of an information technology technician. The school is conscious of shortcomings and has published an Information Technology Plan which begins to address necessary changes.

167.Good use is made of additional funds received and the school has a clear charging policy which conforms to national requirements.

168.The school manages its overall budget well but it should improve its evaluation of the use of resources to ensure they are more closely targeted to identified need.

(iii) Accommodation

169.There are sufficient classrooms for the number of children and for the curriculum offered. A few rooms are too small to allow much flexibility of grouping but the majority are adequate for the number of pupils using them. The governors have agreed a rolling programme for maintenance and improvement of facilities which is well thought out and appropriate; its planned implementation has been disrupted recently by lack of resources. This is potentially damaging as the building, which has many flat roofs and metal window frames, is inherently expensive to maintain.. The governors make use of LEA advice in deciding priorities. Science and technology facilities have recently been upgraded.

170.Specialist accommodation is well used and is generally suited with the exception of English which is widely scattered, and mathematics, science and modern languages which are each split into two main areas. The wide separation of English rooms inhibits English teachers from working as a team.

171.Specialist facilities are generally adequate and often are good; the recently upgraded food technology and science laboratories are excellent.

172.The school is clean and litter is quickly cleared by conscientious site maintenance staff. Graffiti is also quickly

removed. The building provides an adequate and, in some areas, stimulating environment for learning.

173. Most staff have their own teaching rooms and some make considerable efforts to display pupils' work and other educational materials. Some rooms are, however, rather drab and uninviting.

174. Pupils are allowed into the building before school and at break times and most behave sensibly. More should be done to involve pupils in decisions about the use and appearance of their form rooms and of the corridors. Some pupils and parents complain of smoking and poor behaviour in the toilets. The depositing of large numbers of pupils' bags along corridors is sometimes hazardous.

7.7 PUPILS' WELFARE AND GUIDANCE

175. The school's arrangements for pupils' welfare and guidance are mainly effective and have the confidence of most parents and pupils. The pastoral care system is based upon heads of year and form tutors. There is a strong senior pastoral team who work hard, know the pupils in their care and in whom most pupils have confidence. Form tutors are significant figures in a support system which tries to encourage positive attitudes to the school. Form tutors in Year 7 effectively support the induction and transition of new pupils; in Year 9 they assist in the option process and in Year 11 form tutors co-ordinate the final record of achievement. The effectiveness of form tutors and their roles and responsibilities depends much upon the individual tutor. There are well-documented policies and procedures to be followed on pastoral issues, but the school should ensure that these are implemented on a consistent basis. The formal monitoring of academic progress is based on twice yearly assessments. The school is in a position to build on this practice to ensure that practical strategies and targets are established to help improve pupil academic progress. Parents are invited into the school to discuss problems at an early stage and they welcome this attitude and response.

176. Registration time is often used for administrative purposes, including the completion of the National Record of Achievement and individual action plans, but not for the support and guidance of pupils or of the coverage of the weekly assembly themes. The use of this time varies in effectiveness from tutor group to tutor group. The use of the total registration time should be reviewed to ensure that it is effective.

177. Pupils' welfare and guidance are enhanced by a generally sound programme of cross curricular themes for Years 7 to 9 which incorporates aspects of citizenship, health education, personal relationships and sex education. During the inspection the teaching of the cross curricular programme varied: most lessons were sound or had good features with no major shortcomings; a few had many shortcomings. The careers programme is well organised and effective; it is taught as part of the cross-curricular programme in Years 10 and 11. Excellent use is made of a wide range of visiting speakers and outside agencies, including the local college. An appropriate range of careers advice is available to all pupils, including ample links with the Careers Service. This is satisfactorily supplemented by meetings for pupils and parents as part of choosing options at GCSE. Pupils are helped to make informed choices and decisions. A valuable two week work experience placement is programmed for all pupils in Year 10.

178. The school's procedures for child protection comply with the guidance in Circular 4/88. A member of staff is identified as the child protection officer. The school follows the procedures set down by the LEA. There is a draft policy statement on sex education which is being discussed by governors, staff, parents and outside agencies. There are written procedures on the monitoring of racial incidents. There is a written Health and Safety policy with procedures for monitoring health and safety issues. Pupils mostly act responsibly and behave well when they are allowed inside the school buildings before the start of the school, at breaktimes and at lunchtimes; staff duty teams supervise the pupils during this time. The school has an effective primary/secondary induction programme. The induction process is an integral part of the Year 7 cross-curricular programme. There is an additional evening for parents of new pupils during the summer term with sample lessons for Year 5 and 6 pupils when they visit the school. Year 7 pupils settle easily into the school. However, curricular links are on an ad hoc basis and the school is aware that there is scope for a more systematic and broader approach to curricular links with the feeder primary schools. Procedures for inducting and guiding other pupils who are new to the school should also be formalised.

179. There is a Merit Award system used in the lower school, Letters of Praise, Certificates of Attendance and a Roll of Honour in Year 11 that recognise good work, progress, attendance and the involvement of pupils both inside and outside the pupils. The system is liked by the pupils, but its use and profile depends upon the approach of particular form tutors and subject teachers.

180.Support is provided by the following outside agencies: Careers Service, Education Welfare Service, Social Services, School's Psychological Services, the School Support Team, the District Health Authority and the local police force on occasions. They have all, at different times, played an important role in helping to ensure the welfare and well-being of the pupils of the school. The school nurse is a valued member of the pastoral team.

181.Pastoral provision makes an important contribution to the quality of education which pupils receive. There are effective procedures for the monitoring and reviewing of individual pupils' progress and for the referral of information about pupils causing concern. The school should ensure that these procedures are implemented on a consistent basis.

7.8 LINKS WITH PARENTS, AGENCIES AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS

182.The school has sound relationships with parents. Most, but not all, parents are satisfied with the values the school represents and the standards it achieves. Effective channels of communication are in place, including reports and meetings to discuss pupils' work, parents' evenings and governors' annual report. A school brochure is produced. The PTA has been reconstituted as the West Craven High School Association. It is very active and is a good support to the school. There is strong parental involvement in the school at governor level. A small group of parents directly assist in classroom activity, for example, through the paired reading scheme.

183.Good relationships with its contributory primary schools are indicative of the confidence they have in the school. Well organised and sensitive practices have been developed and pupils generally transfer smoothly. The school supports its local primary schools by loaning its facilities and equipment. There are several points of contact and joint ventures which benefit the schools and pupils involved.

184.Most pupils moving to further education attend the local tertiary college. There are sound professional and friendly relationships between the school and the college, resulting in a high degree of co-operation.

185.The school has developed close working relationships with the local business community. All year 10 pupils participate in a work experience scheme. Representatives from the local business community, public services and armed forces make regular contributions to the careers and other programmes. The school is a successful participant in the Compact and the Young Enterprise Schemes. The links with its business community are of a high order and are a strength of the school.

186.The school premises are well used by the local community on a regular or occasional basis. Pupils are involved in local environmental initiatives. Fund raising for charities is a strong feature of the school and is commendable.

187.Overall, the school's links with its local community are a positive feature of the school's provision and contribute to the quality of education which pupils receive.