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John E James

By

18-22 March 1996

Dates of inspection

School number: 359/4805

ST. EDMUND ARROWSMITH RC HIGH SCHOOL
Rookery Avenue
Ashton in Makerfield
Wigan, Lancashire
WN4 9PF

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

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INTRODUCTION

This inspection was carried out under Section 9 of the Education (Schools) Act 1992. Its purpose was to report on:

- the educational standards achieved in the school;
- the quality of education provided by the school;
- whether the financial resources available to the school are managed efficiently; and
- the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the 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.

Basic information about the school

1.	Name of school	St Edmund Arrowsmith Roman Catholic High School
	Type of school	Comprehensive All-through
	Type of control	Special agreement
	Number of pupils on roll	1132
	Age range of pupils	11 to 16
	Gender of pupils	Mixed
	Name of Headteacher	Mr P W Phillips
	School address, postcode and telephone number	Rookery Avenue Ashton in Makerfield, Wigan Lancashire WN4 9PF 01942 728651
	Name of appropriate authority	Governing Body
	Name of Chair of governors	Reverend Deacon J O'Brien
	Local authority area	Wigan
	LEA/DFE school number	359/4805
	Name of Registered Inspector	Mr J E James
	Dates of inspection	18-22 March 1996

Intake of pupils and the area served by the school

2. St Edmund Arrowsmith is a Roman Catholic comprehensive school for boys and girls aged 11 to 16 and serves the areas of Ashton, Hindley and Haydock. It is maintained by Wigan Local Education Authority but its catchment extends into the neighbouring St Helens Local Education Authority. All 1132 pupils on roll, boys and girls in almost equal numbers, are baptised Catholics, drawn almost entirely from the eight local parish communities, which extend to some eight miles from the school. This results in a large proportion of the pupils being dependent on school buses.

3. Originally opened in 1961, the school has been comprehensive since 1974. During this period extensive building developments have been carried out. The intake is fully comprehensive and pupils' abilities follow closely the normal pattern of distribution. The school is fully subscribed and parents are very supportive. The catchment area is mixed and ranges from comfortable middle class homes to distinct areas of urban deprivation. Eleven per cent of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, this is lower than the average for Wigan (17.5%) and nationally (17.6%). Statements of special educational need are maintained in respect of 45 pupils (4%) which is much higher than the average for maintained schools in metropolitan authorities.

4. Less than one per cent of pupils come from ethnic minority groups and none come from a home where English is not the main language. The proportion of pupils, at 67 per cent, who choose to remain in full-time education beyond the age of 16 is above the average for the local authority.

School data and indicators

5. **Number of pupils in each year group**

	Boys	Girls	All
Year 7	113	118	231
Year 8	120	104	224
Year 9	110	108	218
Year 10	107	127	234
Year 11	124	101	225
Year 12	-	-	-
Year 13	-	-	-
Totals	574	558	1132

Special educational needs

Number of pupils having statements of special educational needs

45

Free school meals

Percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals

10.8%

Teachers and classes

Full-time equivalent teachers

72.2

Pupil to teacher ratio

15.7:1

Percentage class contact ratio

75.2%

Average teaching group size

20.8

Teaching time per week

Hours

Minutes

Key Stage 3

25

-

Key Stage 4

25

-

Pupils' attendance

Percentage attendance figures for the third week of the term prior to the term of the inspection.

	Actual attendance	Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence
Year 7	96%	4%	-
Year 8	94%	6%	-
Year 9	93%	7%	-
Year 10	92.17	7.73%	0.1%
Year 11	95.58%	4.07%	0.35%
Totals	94.15%	5.76%	0.09%

Number of exclusions in the last 12 months

National Curriculum assessments and public examinations	Fixed period			Permanent			Ethnic minority groups		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Year 7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Year 8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Year 9	6	1	7	-	-	-	-	-	-
Year 10	14	1	15	-	-	-	-	-	-
Year 11	7	2	9	-	-	-	-	-	-
Totals	27	4	31	1	-	1	-	-	-

Key Stage 3

Standard Assessment Tasks:	English	Mathematics	Science	percentage of pupils achieving level 5 or above
Standard Assessment Tasks:	69%	68%	68%	68%
Teacher Assessments:	English	Mathematics	Science	68%
Teacher Assessments:	English	Mathematics	Science	68%
Standard Assessment Tasks:	29%	41%	38%	38%
Teacher Assessments:	English	Mathematics	Science	34%
Teacher Assessments:	English	Mathematics	Science	43%
Teacher Assessments:	English	Mathematics	Science	40%

**Key Stage 4
Public examination results: GCSE**

GCSE examination results	School results 1995		School results 1994	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Number of Pupils in Year 11 ¹ :	125	132	95	123
Percentage of pupils				
Entered for 5+ GCSEs	97.7	99.2	93.6	98.3
Achieving 5+ grades A-C	50.0	62.1	55.8	56.1
Achieving 5+ grades A-G	96.1	98.5	93.6	97.6
Entered for 1+ GCSEs	100	100	100	100
Achieving 1+ grades A-G	99.2	98.5	98.9	99.1
Entered for all three subjects	96.9	99.2	-	-
English, mathematics and science	39.1	47.0	-	-
Achieving Grades A-C	93.8	97.0	-	-
Achieving Grades A-G	93.8	97.0	-	-
GCSE examination results				
LEA area ² 1995	91.3	42.3	91.3	41.1
Entered for 5+ GCSEs	91.3	42.3	91.3	41.1
Achieving 5+ grades A-C	87.4	87.6	87.4	87.4
Achieving 5+ grades A-G	95.5	93	95.5	93.5
Entered for 1+ GCSEs	95.5	93	95.5	93.5
Achieving 1+ grades A-G	93.5	93	93.5	93.5
Pupils' routes on leaving school				
Percentage of the year group in:				
School/ Further Education	67%	16%	14.6%	2.3%
Employment	16%	16%	14.6%	2.3%
Training	67%	16%	14.6%	2.3%
Other	67%	16%	14.6%	2.3%
Year 11	67%	16%	14.6%	2.3%
Year 13	67%	16%	14.6%	2.3%

Financial Information

Income (£)		Expenditure (£)	
Current financial year 1995/6	Last full financial year 1994/5	Last full financial year 1994/5	Budget allocation* 1995/6
Balance brought forward	229,140	1,846,114	1,869,647
Recurrent income (LMS or AMG)	2,281,491	1,846,114	1,869,647
Transitional grant	-	129,226	145,124
Specific grants for curriculum/staff development	10,063	16,587	20,038
Other special purpose grants	-	183,694	216,500
TVEI funding	-	90,310	119,820
Other income managed by the school; lettings, funds raised etc	14,761	129,226	145,124
Total	2,535,455	2,346,130	2,445,513
Expenditure (£)	Last full financial year 1994/5	Last full financial year 1994/5	Budget allocation* 1995/6
Teaching staff	1,846,114	1,846,114	1,869,647
Other staff	129,226	129,226	145,124
Educational resources	90,310	90,310	119,820
Premises costs	183,694	183,694	216,500
Curriculum and staff development	16,587	16,587	20,038
Other expenditure	80,199	80,199	74,024
Total	2,346,130	2,346,130	2,445,513
Expenditure per pupil (£)	1,998	1,998	
Expenditure per pupil on educational resources (p)	76.93	76.93	

* Recorded as indicative allocations or estimates.

Record of the evidence base of the inspection

6. The school was inspected by a team of 13 specialist inspectors who spent 51 inspection days in school and inspected all subjects except religious education, which was inspected during the same week by Diocesan Inspectors under Section 13. Inspectors observed 205 lessons. All teachers present were seen teaching, the majority on a number of occasions. Planned discussions were held with members of the teaching and non-teaching staff, support workers and the Chairman and chairs of sub-committees of the governing body. In addition, there were informal discussions with both teaching and non-teaching staff and an informal lunchtime meeting to which governors and many professionals associated with the school were invited.

7. All the work of a representative sample of pupils from each year group was examined and planned discussions were subsequently held with these pupils. Inspectors spoke informally with many more pupils and examined their work during class inspections. The inspectors visited all assemblies and many tutorial and registration periods, together with a range of out of school activities and meetings.

8. Correspondence was received from a variety of local firms, agencies and organisations. The school helpfully provided an extensive range of documentation which was analysed before and during the inspection. The inspection team was able to consider the responses made by the parents of over 575 pupils to questionnaires and the comments of the 107 parents at the pre-inspection meeting conducted by the Registered Inspector.

MAIN FINDINGS

9. St Edmund Arrowsmith Roman Catholic High School is a very good school which serves its pupils and their communities well. It is a happy school which displays many examples of excellent practice.

10. The school enables pupils of all abilities to achieve highly as they progress through it. In over three quarters of lessons observed, achievements were at least in line with those nationally, with achievements above the national expectation in a third. Taking account of pupils' abilities, achievement was appropriate or better in over 95 per cent of lessons with two thirds in the latter category. There is virtually no underachievement.

11. Pupils enter the school with scores in Key Stage 2 tests about 10 per cent higher than the national average. This proportion increases by the end of Key Stage 3 and has increased further by the end of Key Stage 4 to over 15 per cent above the national average of those who gain five or more grades A*-C in the GCSE. These results contain a significant proportion of higher grades and overall indicate that the school is providing high added value to its pupils. Results in all subjects except in some areas of technology were consistently well above the national average in 1995 and hardly fluctuate from year to year. Girls generally perform better than boys and the school is seeking strategies to minimise this.

16. The promotion of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is a strength of the school and contributes greatly to its overall quality. The personal and social educational programme permeates the whole of the curriculum. All who enter the school are made to feel valued and respond accordingly. The consistent example of staff, their care and the pastoral system provide a constant environment in which pupils can develop and make progress in the curriculum. Opportunities for residential experience, environmental visits and field work further increase pupils' awareness and understanding.

15. The accommodation is in generally good condition. It is well used and managed although circulation in key areas is difficult at lesson changes. Strategies to manage the potential contribution of the library to pupils' learning skills should be a major consideration in the planned accommodation review. Most areas benefit from attractive displays of a high quality and from good decoration. Numerous valuable improvements which reinforce the civilised ethos of the school have been made by governors, although litter is a problem at the rear of the school.

14. Good, clear, committed leadership is given by the Headteacher, which is well underpinned at all levels in the school and is sustained by a knowledgeable and committed governing body who give generously of their time. A climate of loyalty, trust, shared understanding and common purpose prevails for the benefit of pupils. Departments and resources are well managed. The effective school development plan is being extended beyond 1997; this would benefit from a more integrated focus of the separate identified targets, to facilitate subject planning and formalised subsequent monitoring and review. The school is well organised and routinely runs well on a daily basis. The budget surplus accumulated in former years is being used systematically to carry out development priorities. The school gives very good value for money.

13. The pupils have positive attitudes to their learning and show perseverance. In almost all lessons, the quality of pupils' learning is sound or better with a significant majority in the latter category. These high proportions are replicated virtually exactly in the quality of teaching. Teachers generally have appropriately high expectations. The commitment of staff and their knowledge of their pupils as individuals is outstanding, helped by the full five years that pupils normally remain with their form teacher and head of year. Relationships are positive and purposeful. Staff are experienced and resourceful and the match between their qualifications and deployment is very good. There is challenge and an appropriate variety of teaching approaches for pupils of all abilities. The requirements of the National Curriculum are met and all pupils receive a curriculum which is broad and balanced. Almost all marking is consistently good but there is a small minority of incomplete assessment procedures and some reports do not always helpfully identify strengths and weaknesses. Homework supports learning well. Available information technology is used well and cross-curricular aspects are well taught.

12. The high standards of achievement in the core subjects, particularly in respect of the pupils' literacy skills, support their consistent progress in the subjects of the curriculum. Pupils who have special educational needs achieve highly, although in a minority of subjects appropriate extension work could be developed further for the most able pupils.

21. The intake of the school represents the full range of ability. Key Stage 2 tests, taken before the pupils leave the primary schools, indicate that the proportion of pupils achieving level 4 or above in English, mathematics and science is about 10 per cent greater than the national average. Cognitive ability tests administered to all pupils who have entered the

Standards of achievement

STANDARDS AND QUALITY

- Develop strategies to improve the potential of the library as a major resource to support literacy and the development of pupils' independent research and learning skills.
 - Within the planned accommodation review give priority to the improved grouping of dispersed subject areas and to an improved circulation system in key areas;
 - Formalise overall procedures for monitoring as well as for reviewing the discrete areas of the curriculum;
 - Continue the work begun on the extended school development plan, bring together the individual areas identified for development as a coherent focus;
 - Modify the existing separate organisational structures for assessment, recording and reporting into a unified system;
 - Maintain the school's positive features and the consistency of teaching and learning; to raise even further the standards of work and the quality of learning provision.
20. There are no major weaknesses. Against an overall picture of generally good development, the governors and senior management should consider the following in order to raise even further the standards of work and the quality of learning provision:

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

19. The bedrock of the school's success is the general consistency of the shared understandings, provision and teaching approaches throughout the school. This consistency contributes strongly to and is mirrored in the high standards achieved by the pupils.
18. There are many productive links and partnerships with the community and liaison with primary schools and post-sixteen providers is especially good. Charities are well supported. The pupils respond well to the frequent opportunities they are given to show leadership and exercise initiative and to the generous extra-curricular provision.
17. Parents support the school well and compliment it on its high values and expectations. The school community clearly demonstrates respect for all in a caring atmosphere. The behaviour and consideration shown by pupils are very good. They are happy, secure and confident and they work well together. Attendance at over 94 per cent is high; there is no unauthorised absence. Suspension and exclusion are used with care and appropriately.

26. Pupils' standards in numeracy are generally appropriate to their abilities. In particular pupils' ability to handle number mentally and verbally is generally satisfactory, though more routine practice for all pupils would help improve standards. Pupils can handle number in

25. The vast majority of pupils read competently for their age and ability and can use course books, printed materials and prepared sheets with understanding. More systematic planning by departments of the use of the library could help pupils to further develop their skills in the location, retrieval and comparison of information. The small proportion of pupils who have significant difficulties with reading and writing are given good support which, over time, enables them to develop their skills and gain increased access to the National Curriculum. The quality of writing is good overall, especially in Key Stage 4. In general, pupils show care and effort in presenting work. There is little evidence of copying and in many subjects pupils write in a range of forms and for a variety of purposes.

24. Pupils of all abilities make considerable progress with reading, writing, speaking and listening during their time in the school. This contributes significantly to their overall achievements and to their personal and social development. Pupils of all ages and abilities, but especially the average and more able, express themselves confidently and clearly when given the opportunity to take part in class discussions, pair and small group work and presentations to their peers. Talk is well integrated in a variety of groupings in a range of subjects including history, geography, English, drama and music; pupils discuss ideas to clarify meaning and consolidate learning. A significant proportion of pupils of all abilities speak French, German and Spanish confidently in modern foreign language lessons. Pupils listen attentively to their teachers and peers.

23. In three quarters of the classes inspected, the substantial majority of pupils met the national expectation for age at Key Stages 3 and 4; this indicates that good progress is being made throughout and between the key stages. When pupils' performances are judged against their abilities, they are appropriate or better in an extremely high proportion of lessons in both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. There is very little underachievement in the school.

22. All but a handful of pupils are entered for 5 or more GCSE subjects in Year 11. The proportion of pupils (56.2%) who gained 5 or more A* to C grades in the GCSE examination in 1995 is well above the national average (41.1%) and significantly above that for local schools (42.3%). At 43.1 per cent, the proportion of pupils who gained A* to C grades in each of the three subjects of English, mathematics and science is also significantly above the national average of 27.3 per cent. These achievements are consistent from year to year. They include 15 per cent of grades A* or A, also significantly above the national average. Ninety-seven per cent of pupils gained 5 or more grades A* to G. These results indicate that the school is providing very good added value over the 5 years. A higher proportion of girls than boys, significantly so in some cases, have gained 5 or more A* to C grades in two of the past three years and in all three of the core subjects. Overall, GCSE results were above or well above the national average in all subjects with the exception of some areas of technology.

school over the past five years indicate a slightly below average mean. By the end of Key Stage 3, the proportion of pupils gaining level 5 or above is more than 10 per cent above the national average in all three of the core subjects.

31. Pupils respond readily and are very competent learners. They are keen and their best learning occurs when they understand the criteria for success. They make sound progress, benefiting from the study skills content of the personal and social education programme in Year 7 and the advice provided as they approach their final assessments in Year 11. This is being strengthened by the mentoring scheme which is being piloted in Key Stage 4. The majority of GCSE pupils already display a mature approach to learning. Skills which enable pupils to take responsibility for their own learning are less consciously developed. These include looking for pattern and deeper understanding, raising questions, posing problems, exploring ideas and applying learning to new contexts. But when opportunities are provided, pupils demonstrate their capability in these areas, they work with enthusiasm and efficiently take responsibility for their own learning. More effective use of the library and the CD ROM facilities would enable more pupils to develop independent learning skills. Overall in the

30. There is a positive attitude to learning. Pupils are well motivated to learn, concentrate and persevere for extended periods of time and work productively. They work equally well individually or in groups. The level of self-esteem in learning is good. The pace and challenge of learning is appropriate.

29. The quality of learning is good or very good in most lessons and sound in all but a few of the rest. Pupils make good progress in knowledge and understanding and in the core skills of literacy, numeracy and information technology. They are confident in responding to adults and each other. Pupils with special needs and learning difficulties are enabled to learn particularly well. Policies are in place to support differentiation and there are good examples of successful learning as a result of the strategies adopted in a number of subjects, whilst others are still developing appropriate approaches. Learning support is available and effective use is made of this. The organisation of pupils enhances the success and quality of pupils' learning. The setting and marking of homework on a regular basis effectively reinforces pupils' learning.

Quality of learning

28. Pupils with special educational needs have access to and use IT equipment competently.

27. Across the curriculum there is good use of information technology and in English in both key stages content and accuracy are enhanced and redrafting skills supported by IT. Its use in modern foreign languages motivates the less able and there is some outstanding work in the use of desk top publishing. Data logging in science contributes to the quality of work and in mathematics, pattern display is excellent. Some outstanding work is being carried out in geography. Art makes use of IT for printmaking and art history and use is made in music to teach and consolidate musical literacy. In design and technology at Key Stage 3 some graphic work is enhanced by the use of IT.

writing and use calculators satisfactorily across the curriculum. Pupils measure and weigh graphics and in geography. They also handle and display data confidently and competently in several subjects including geography, history, modern foreign languages, science and design technology.

the well controlled costs, the school gives very good value for money. Given the high standards achieved by the pupils, the good quality of education provided and the school monitors and assesses its cost effectiveness and is developing further strategies. The school also benefits from funding by the Parents' Association.

38. The budget surplus carried over from earlier years is carefully and progressively being reduced each year to enable phased improvements identified in the school development plan to be carried out. The school also benefits from funding by the Parents' Association.

37. The present overall funding per pupil and the proportion of the budget spent on staffing are close to average. The proportion allocated to educational resources has been increased and now, at five per cent, is also about average.

36. The accommodation is well managed. There have been substantial improvements to the fabric and decoration of the school and there are further areas planned for improvement. At present the supervision of key areas of circulation is costly in senior staff time.

35. Time is used productively in classrooms, lessons proceed at a good pace and National Curriculum requirements are met. Teachers' qualifications and deployment match their teaching tasks well. The finance allocated to curricular areas is equitably distributed and resources are generally adequate and of good quality, although insufficient money is spent on library books.

34. The school has an effective development plan extending to 1997 which enables continuous review of financial priorities in relation to educational requirements. The extended cycle which identifies clearly, targets in sixteen areas and shows key personnel and success criteria is evolving, but would benefit from a coherent focus of these aspects to enable it to be underpinned effectively in subject plans.

33. Financial control by the bursar is thorough and systematic. The small number of recommendations in the most recent auditor's report in 1995 are being considered and implemented.

32. The governing body is well informed and clearly committed to the management of the school. The finance and buildings sub-committee has clear terms of reference, a comprehensive finance manual and meets regularly. The day to day running of the school's financial systems is sound. The routines for regular handling of expenditure are dealt with through the LBA computer system and information is readily available for the senior staff and governors, who oversee the allocation of budgets well.

EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

school learning is sound or good in almost all classes and pupils with special needs are particularly well catered for. There is a need, in some subjects, to modify teaching strategies to give greater opportunities for pupils, especially the most able, to take responsibility for their own learning.

PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND BEHAVIOUR

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

39. The school is successful in meeting its aims for the personal and academic growth of pupils contained in its mission statement. It is a very caring community which is firmly rooted in its Catholic ethos. Relationships between pupils and between staff and pupils are friendly and based on mutual care and respect. Parents are strongly supportive and appreciate the values and attitudes the school promotes. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is a particular strength of the school.

40. Pupils' spiritual development is fostered through opportunities for prayer and personal reflection before the start of the school day, at the end of the morning session and at the end of the day. It is also promoted through acts of daily collective worship and through liturgical activities at appropriate times. Spiritual development is effectively enhanced in subjects such as English, drama, music and religious education. In the recently held Mission Week all curriculum areas were involved. Pupils respond well to such opportunities and can reflect with meaning on life and death. However, the school does not have a quiet room or a full-time chaplain.

41. Good attention is paid to the moral and social development of pupils. In science, religious education and personal and social education, pupils are encouraged to respect human life and discuss relevant issues such as genetic engineering. In English and drama, pupils discuss issues of right and wrong, such as corporal punishment and abortion and in geography, opportunities are provided for learning about the environment. Moral development is also strongly reinforced in assemblies. Pupils care deeply for the less fortunate and raise relatively large amounts of money every year for many charities, including CAFOD and a local hospice. Pupils' social development is enhanced by the responsibilities they exercise across many aspects of school life, including taking part in the school council, acting as prefects and helping out at social functions. Pupils value such opportunities and undertake their responsibilities with pride and enthusiasm. Year 7 pupils are taken on a programme of 'Away Days' which is specifically designed to enable them to work more effectively with one another.

42. Pupils of all ages willingly undertake visits to theatres, museums and the places of interest like the Lake District; they are also encouraged to participate in poetry competitions. These activities further enhance their wider cultural development. They are taught about life in a culturally diverse society in some subjects such as English, history and religious education but this needs greater development across the curriculum.

48. Registers are properly marked at the beginning of each half day session and registration periods are conducted purposefully. The school has recently introduced a computerised system for recording attendance and good use has been made of this for improving the production of attendance statistics and communication with parents. Records of attendance meet legal requirements and attendance figures are properly published.

47. Both attendance and punctuality are good. Attendance is monitored through an effective pastoral system and pupils whose attendance pattern gives cause for concern are referred by form teachers to heads of year. In the sample week, the overall attendance was over 94 per cent. Tutors receive clear guidance on registration and realise that they have a key role in monitoring and fostering good attendance habits. Pupils are rewarded for good attendance. Parents appreciate the school's high expectations in respect of attendance which are set out in the prospectus.

Attendance

46. There is a clearly defined range of sanctions which may be invoked for misdemeanours. The ultimate sanction is exclusion and its use is in line with that found in schools of this type and size. Records kept by the school on disciplinary matters are well maintained and the parents are very supportive of the school in this area. Both parents and pupils report that bullying is not a major concern and feel that the school's policy in dealing with any incidents is effective. Useful work is undertaken on raising awareness about bullying through modules in English, PSE and drama.

45. The school has clear aims, intentions and expectations about pupils' behaviour which are communicated clearly to pupils, parents and staff through a variety of media including the school prospectus, staff handbook, and pupils' planners. Pupils are aware of what is expected of them and respond well to the recently introduced Code of Conduct and general school protocol. A range of appropriate procedures are in place which ensure effective monitoring of behaviour and discipline throughout the school and the system is well supported by the strong pastoral framework. Good behaviour is recognised and is consistently reinforced by a merit scheme linked to the flourishing house system which is highly regarded by pupils and staff. This process contributes to the maintenance and improvement of standards of both behaviour and achievement.

44. St Edmund Arrowsmith is a very well ordered community.

43. The standard of pupils' behaviour and discipline in classrooms and throughout the school is very good. Pupils are friendly, considerate and polite. They are courteous to one another and to visitors and do themselves much credit. Relationships are of good quality at all levels and make a valuable contribution to the positive ethos of the school.

Behaviour and discipline

SUBJECTS OF THE CURRICULUM AND OTHER CURRICULAR PROVISION

English

49. Standards in English are consistently good. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make considerable progress as they move through the school, attaining higher standards than could be expected on entry in Year 7. Virtually the whole year groups in both 1994 and 1995 achieved pass grades in both GCSE English and English literature; the proportions of pupils in these years who achieved A*-C grades in both subjects was above national averages.

50. Standards of speaking and listening, reading and writing are good overall at both key stages. The vast majority of pupils use talk effectively to plan, discuss and evaluate ideas. Average and above average pupils especially sustain independent discussion well and make effective presentations to their peers, showing ability to adapt and adjust speech to different audiences and situations. Groups of more able pupils in Year 9 perform excellent role plays as part of their study of Shakespeare. Pupils in both key stages enjoy, understand and respond critically to the study of a variety of literature and non-fiction. The small minority of pupils who have serious reading difficulties make good progress. At Key Stage 4, pupils of all abilities talk and write with good understanding in response to a range of demanding texts for GCSE, showing a grasp of themes, characterisation and an ability to comment perceptively on the use of language. Some pupils enjoy reading for pleasure although able, younger readers could tackle more challenging fiction.

51. Most pupils produce well-drafted assignments for GCSE, covering a range of genres and forms, including narrative, accounts, scripts, letters, literary essays and personal writing. The writing of the most able is mature, extended and perceptive. At Key Stage 3, only a small number of pupils cannot write accurately or continuously; most improve and develop their writing with support. The majority write in a range of forms and gain increasing control over structure, style and accuracy. Work is generally neat and well-presented.

52. Virtually all pupils have positive attitudes to their work and many are keen to learn; they cooperate well with their teachers and peers and concentrate well. Most make good use of the opportunities offered to them: they organise themselves sensibly in groups and pairs, show some initiative, respond enthusiastically to stimulating teaching and have satisfactory or good language skills. The consistently sound and often good teaching makes a marked contribution to pupils' learning and achievements. Individual teachers plan thoroughly and have high expectations; the best lessons are characterised by opportunities for pupils to work in a variety of groupings with clear objectives for the work. Pupils receive good feedback on their work; assessment is systematic and consistent.

53. English is taught by a well led, hardworking, cohesive team of teachers who strive hard to serve the best interests of their pupils and value their contributions. The department is efficiently administered; it would benefit from more detailed planning of the curriculum for Key Stage 3 pupils and from a rationalisation of its dispersed accommodation.

Mathematics

54. In the Key Stage 3 tests pupils achieved results significantly higher than national averages in GCSE in 1995 pupils achieved results for grades A* to C significantly higher than the national averages. Almost all pupils achieved levels appropriate to their abilities with a significant number achieving levels that are high. The 1995 results at GCSE were comparable with those in 1994. Pupils often show an ability to recall and utilise previously learned skills and knowledge. In some lessons however, pupils fail to recall basic tables or are unable to move the decimal point routinely. Pupils' standards of presentation are high. One graphical example of algebraic modelling applied to the growth of stalactites was particularly interesting. The patterns achieved by Year 7 pupils are also impressive. Pupils are happy and confident in using and applying mathematical skills in real situations. Mental arithmetic skills are exercised in some lessons but more routine work in this area is required. Although IT skills are not generally used at Key Stage 4, this area of the curriculum is addressed in Key Stage 3 and in due course all pupils should be able to use these skills confidently.

55. The quality of learning is sound or better in all lessons at both key stages and good in half. Pupils are well behaved and enthusiastic. Individually and in groups, they develop their skills, knowledge and understanding and know how to present data. They also use calculators effectively. Particularly successful learning was observed with a lower ability Year 11 class who handled basic trigonometry confidently and competently.

56. The quality of teaching is sound or better at both key stages with a significant majority of good lessons. Lessons are well prepared and teachers are confident of their subject matter. They structure lessons to maintain interest and enthusiasm throughout the session. Relationships in the classroom are positive, activities are usually varied to maintain interest, and tasks are appropriate for the ability of the pupils. The setting structure helps teachers to concentrate their expertise more effectively. Homework is set regularly and marked conscientiously. It is used often to complement and to reinforce classroom learning. The board and well structured worksheets are also used sensibly in lessons to reinforce textbook questions. Question and answer methods are used widely and effectively in individual and whole group teaching.

57. The requirements of the National Curriculum are met through coherent courses based on textbooks which are supplemented by worksheets. Pupils' attainment and progress are assessed, recorded and reported in accordance with clear guidelines. The department is very well managed and is staffed by a team of caring, experienced and dedicated teachers. The excellent relationship between teachers and pupils plays a major part and most pupils enjoy mathematics.

Science

58. A substantial number of pupils achieve the national expectation at both key stages and many achieve beyond it. The majority achieve appropriately for their abilities and some achieve even higher levels. At Key Stage 3, the results in national tests are higher than the national average. The 1995 GCSE results for A to C grades in double science are well above

63. GCSE results in 1995 for design and technology are below the national average. At Key Stage 4, a proportion of pupils are achieving the national expectation with some achieving higher. In other lessons some pupils are achieving the national expectation but a majority are underachieving. At Key Stage 3 in just over half the lessons the majority of pupils achieve the national expectation. In just under half, pupils are achieving higher. At Key Stage 3 all pupils are achieving appropriately or better for their abilities.

Design and technology

62. The department is well managed, but a stricter system of monitoring achievement, learning and teaching should be put into practice. Job descriptions need to be reviewed to achieve a more rational departmental structure and to identify specific responsibilities. Provision for teaching and technical staff development should be addressed. The teaching staff are well qualified and experienced. Accommodation and resources are generally good. Laboratories are cohesively grouped and provide a pleasant working environment, but some lack blackout and sufficient water and gas facilities. There are insufficient fume cupboards to ensure the safe delivery of some experiments. Staff have a good safety awareness. Some use is made of the school site for ecological studies.

61. The department's assessment and recording system is being developed to incorporate folios of annotated work at both key stages, and will require constant monitoring. The work meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Schemes of work are also being developed and require urgent completion to incorporate elements arising from recent National Curriculum changes. The department should ensure adequate provision of differentiated materials. Monitoring of homework should be implemented to aid its effectiveness in raising the levels of pupils' achievement.

60. At both key stages the quality of teaching is good in over half the lessons seen and is never less than sound. In the best lessons at both key stages, there is good planning and good management together with clear, lucid presentation. The teacher has high expectations and presents challenges which are achievable. There is skilful questioning, a range of strategies are used, and good relationships prevail. It is less satisfactory when objectives are unclear and too much teacher direction results in low levels of challenge and expectation.

59. At both key stages, the quality of learning is at least sound and very often better. At Key Stage 3 learning is best when it is based on well resourced practical work with pupils able to carry out observations and record results in a variety of ways. Learning is less effective in lessons which are over reliant on unsuitable worksheets and where the purpose and aims are not always clear. At Key Stage 4, learning is best in practical lessons when pupils are allowed to set up apparatus, observe, measure and record results without too much teacher direction. Too much copying of written work and a failure to consolidate basic knowledge before moving to more difficult concepts leads to less satisfactory learning.

G grades has remained well above the national average level. Similarly, the number of A* the national average and have remained consistent for the past two years. The number of A* grades is well above national average in 1995. Similarly, the number of pupils gaining A to

71. GCSE examination results in 1994 were better than the national average at grades A*-C. Girls outperformed boys at the higher grades. There were no information technology (IT) entries in 1995. IT is examined as part of the core skills in business education.

Information technology

70. The balance of curriculum content, whilst satisfactory at Key Stage 3, needs to include a stronger emphasis on graphics, electronics, textile technology in all years in conjunction with food technology and design and realisation. More widespread use of IT is required. Computer aided design and computer aided manufacture, CAD/CAM is lacking in the faculty. The requirements of the National Curriculum are being met.

69. A new head of faculty has recently been appointed and implementation of the development plans he has drawn up is a priority. Accommodation is adequate for present requirements but a multi-media room with a clean area is needed to meet the requirements of the Programmes of Study.

68. Teaching is never less than sound and more than half is good. At Key Stage 3 some teaching has many good features. Sound teaching is well organised and structured. A feature of good teaching is the reinforcement of the design and making process and the critical questioning needed by pupils to recognise quality products. Teachers are secure in their understanding of the Programmes of Study and examination criteria. Pupils are encouraged to discuss, analyse and evaluate their work. All teachers have high expectations of pupils.

67. The quality of learning in the substantial majority of lessons is at least sound. Some learning at Key Stage 3 is good and a small minority of learning at Key Stage 4 has some shortcomings. At Key Stage 4 where learning is sound pupils are able to apply previously acquired knowledge and skill to their practical work. Good learning at this key stage is shown by the ability to take responsibility for an increasing proportion of work. Pupils in both key stages are willing to talk about their work and are able to express themselves clearly. At Key Stage 3 pupils show enthusiasm. IT is used effectively as a tool for learning. Pupils pay due regard to safety.

66. At Key Stage 3 many pupils are able to use the skills of designing and making and can use tools and equipment confidently. Pupils use mathematical and scientific concepts in the application of design and technology across the material areas. Pupils in both key stages use technical language accurately.

65. At Key Stage 3 good standards are being achieved by pupils in both year groups who have very good technical skills, and can use source information to generate design ideas. These pupils show confidence in using a wide range of tools and processes to achieve well presented products across all material areas.

64. At Key Stage 4 a substantial majority of pupils are achieving levels appropriate to their abilities. A minority of pupils underachieve. For some pupils in Year 11 practical and graphical skills are poor and management of time to complete course work is a difficulty.

77. At both key stages, the majority of pupils achieve standards in line with the national expectation and some achieve beyond it. Less able pupils in Year 9 achieve standards which are below the national expectation. Pupils' standards of achievement at both key stages are generally appropriate or better in relation to their abilities. This is reflected in recent examination results in the GCSE. In 1994, the proportion of candidates gaining A*-C was 44 per cent and this rose to 63 per cent in 1995, significantly above the national average.

History

76. The co-ordinator provides an effective way of spreading the use of IT systematically across the curriculum. However, the priority must be the development of an action plan to deliver the implementation of the statutory requirements, taught and cross-curricular in time for September 1996. A clear statement of entitlement to IT in the school development plan lays the foundation for the department's way forward. The requirements of the National Curriculum are being met.

75. Teaching at Key Stage 3 is at least sound with the majority being good. At Key Stage 4, teaching is good and pupils' work is clearly assessed and assigned to specific levels of attainment. The use of individual, paired and group work supports learning. Pupils are encouraged to carry out critical analysis and evaluation and to record their achievements. Teachers' expectations are high and their preparation, organisation and recording systems sound. Booklets are designed to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities. The quality of technical support for IT is valued.

74. All learning is at least sound with a substantial majority at Key Stage 3 having good features. Pupils are able to transfer knowledge from mathematics and are willing to make mistakes from which they can learn. Use of the Romer in Year 7 provides an interesting and challenging aid to their understanding of measurement and control.

73. Pupils show skill in drafting and re-drafting work. They are competent with number and many organise, plan work and assess progress against set criteria. In examination classes pupils handle and communicate information appropriately, are able to combine a variety of forms of information for presentation and are aware of the intended audience. High standards at Key Stage 3 are reflected by Year 7 pupils using line and text tools for orthographic drawing. In Year 9, pupils edit documents for relevance and suitability. At Key Stage 3 where there is some underachievement, some lower ability pupils have difficulty in expressing themselves in writing, and in systematically following instructions. However, they succeed in expressing themselves orally and in writing when supported by appropriately devised materials. Precise use of technical language is in evidence across the key stages.

72. At Key Stage 4, the substantial majority of pupils are achieving the national expectation. In relation to capability, pupils are achieving appropriately. At Key Stage 3, the majority of pupils are achieving the national expectation with a considerable proportion achieving at a higher level. All pupils are achieving at least appropriately for their ability with some achieving above this.

83. All pupils achieve standards appropriate for their age and ability. In half the classes, particularly good standards are being achieved by lower ability pupils. GCSE results compare favourably with national figures and reflect the strength of the subject in the school. Good use is made of enquiry based approaches. Close attention is paid to the development of the basic skills, which are regularly reinforced. Pupils are encouraged to seek understanding as well as knowledge. They are able to develop a secure appreciation of the patterns and processes in human and physical geography. Fieldwork is well integrated into the teaching
82. Standards of achievement in geography are in the main sound or better.

Geography

81. National Curriculum requirements are met but there are significant weaknesses in assessment and recording procedures and in schemes of work. Pupils do not have adequate access to IT or visit sufficient places of historical interest. Staff work hard and are well qualified but need to undertake more in-service training. Much of the available accommodation is sufficient but its use needs to be rationalised.
80. The quality of teaching is mainly good at Key Stage 3, and it is sound or good at Key Stage 4. Lessons are, in the main, well planned and objectives generally clear, skilful questioning enhances pupils' knowledge and understanding. Relationships are friendly but firm and expectations of pupils are appropriately high. In the most effective lessons, pace and challenge for pupils are maintained and suitable work set for the more and less able. This is complemented by some good discussion work in pairs and also by the use of display material. The use of the video is effective, with teaching points being periodically emphasised by the teacher. Where the quality of teaching is weaker, lesson objectives and instructions are not always clear to pupils, the range of resources used is limited and the work set is not always appropriate for pupils of different abilities.
79. The quality of learning is mainly good at Key Stage 3, and it is sound to good at Key Stage 4. Pupils listen attentively and concentrate for sustained periods on the tasks set. Many are keen to participate in whole-class discussions and some are willing to hypothesise about events based on previous learning. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They cooperate well with each other and many, especially at Key Stage 4, discuss work with each other in a mature manner. Boys and girls work well in pairs and this approach should be more widely shared within the department. Pupils generally make good progress. Where the quality of learning is weaker, some pupils lose concentration, particularly in the second half of double lessons.
78. At all ages pupils have a good recall of work already covered and can relate this to the topic being studied. At Key Stage 3, pupils have good historical knowledge and understanding. They know the causes for political and religious change and a minority have good appreciation of chronology. At Key Stage 4, pupils have a thorough knowledge of the social structure in Edwardian England, economic depression and poverty in the 1930s, and some can grasp complex issues in Britain's attempt to join the EEC in the 1960s. At all ages pupils of all abilities work confidently with primary and secondary sources. Pupils with special educational needs generally make good progress and achieve standards appropriate to their abilities.

88. The quality of learning is at least sound and frequently good at both Key Stages. The great majority of pupils demonstrate interest and perseverance. They take advantage of learning opportunities, cultivate good study habits and respond well in the foreign language to the teacher and to each other. Grammatical awareness is not neglected, and skills in the use of information technology are applied to good effect.

87. When pupils are assessed according to their ability most achieve appropriately, especially at Key Stage 3, where the less able benefit from small class sizes from Year 8; many of these pupils have speaking and listening skills equal to those of the more able. At Key Stage 3, pupils in the lowest set follow one year of French and one year of Spanish, to a standard below that of GCSE.

86. Standards are generally sound and sometimes good, though at Key Stage 4 a small amount of work is below the national expectation. At Key Stage 3 most pupils achieve a level at least consistent with their ability. Listening and speaking are good, reading is sound, and writing develops progressively to a level where some pupils can produce extended written passages by the end of the key stage. Some reach Level 5 of the National Curriculum at this point. The most able pupils begin German in French in Year 8, and those not quite so able begin Spanish in Year 9. High standards are achieved in German, but for Spanish the time available is very limited. At Key Stage 4 the great majority of pupils, some 90 per cent, take GCSE, a few choosing German in preference to French, whilst a similar number take Spanish or German in addition to French. Standards in GCSE have been well above national averages, rising to 69 per cent achieving A*-C grades in French and 100 per cent in German in 1995. Girls achieve substantially better results than boys.

Modern foreign languages

85. The quality of teaching in all lessons is sound or better with more than half the lessons showing good or outstanding features; the quality at Key Stage 4 is particularly high. This reflects the professional expertise and experience of the staff. Teachers' command of the subject is very good, there is satisfactory pace and challenge in lessons, and a wide range of teaching strategies are adopted. Support provided for the least able pupils is of a high standard. Teachers regularly set and mark homework which is relevant to the pupils' work and helps to raise standards.

84. The quality of learning is good or outstanding in most lessons at both key stages, and in the remaining lessons it is sound. Pupils are well motivated at both key stages and work with commitment and enjoyment. They sustain their interest and are competent learners, developing their knowledge and understanding in a variety of contexts. However, in both key stages further opportunities for independent learning need to be created for the benefit of the more able pupils, allowing them to explore more complex issues. The documentation is comprehensive and sound and clear guidance is provided for differentiation, using a range of strategies. There is a positive learning environment which promotes progress and achievement.

of the subject. In all year groups appropriate use is made of data handling skills. Whilst there are examples of the use of information technology in geography, this needs to be upgraded and structured to meet the standards envisaged in the National Curriculum.

94. The subject meets statutory requirements but progression in art history is inconsistent. Curriculum development is evolutionary and standards are improving.

93. The quality of teaching has many good features, some of them outstanding. At Key Stage 3, projects are supported by visual stimulus. Teaching is of good quality when there is an emphasis on working for quality. At Key Stage 4, there are high expectations of lower and middle ability pupils and there is a developing trend of offering higher ability pupils more diversity and challenge in their projects. Teaching is good when expectations are clear and standards are high in respect of display and of skills and techniques. Pupils have access to opportunities to work with practising artists and craftspeople. Appropriate time is given to assessment, achievement in skills, techniques and processes is addressed but art history content is not fully recognised. Teachers offer a wide range of opportunities for extra curricular activities.

92. The quality of learning has many good features. At Key Stage 3 pupils abstract and develop images through drawing, painting, print making and pottery. They use appropriate techniques to review, modify and improve their work, and they develop a technical language to describe their intentions and to evaluate the outcomes of practical work. At Key Stage 4, pupils work on a bold scale, build complex three dimensional forms, and derive ideas from social and historical contexts. Pupils develop personal strengths and the capacity to work independently, and they make appropriate use of information technology.

91. The substantial majority of pupils achieve at least the national expectation and many achieve beyond it at both key stages. Pupils at Key Stage 3 explore expressive and formal drawing. Ideas for prints, paintings and pottery are stimulated by references to the work of artists from other times or cultures. At Key Stage 4, pupils make successful relationships between form and surface decoration. They work independently to explore images, using information technology and printmaking techniques. Pupils have some opportunities to interpret the work of artists and craftspeople. In the GCSE results in 1994, in art & design, 70 per cent gained grades A*-C, and in 1995, 68 per cent did, well above the national average.

Art

90. At present there is no contact with native speakers of the languages and only limited opportunity for travel to the countries concerned.

89. The quality of teaching is almost always sound and often good. Lessons are well prepared and exploit fully the fifty minute periods, moving briskly through a series of interesting learning activities. Good progress has been made in the introduction of teaching in the foreign language and in developing expertise in the use of information technology, which has very good technician support. Other resources are effectively used. Especially good work is done in the minority languages, though the school might like to consider how the benefits of these could be extended to a wider range of pupils.

95. At the start of Key Stage 3 the majority of pupils achieve standards which are below the national expectation, with a very small number of instrumentalists above average for their age. Allocation of time is generous and progress is good, so that by the end of Year 8 the majority are achieving average standards, with only a small number of less able pupils still below the national expectation, and more instrumentalists achieve above the national expectation. Pupils have developed sound skills in listening, with a good musical vocabulary to describe what they hear. Group work shows strong social and team skills, with the ability to solve problems, and compositions are interesting. With the exception of those who have instrumental lessons, performance skills, which are often linked to composition work, are under-developed. All pupils are able to transfer previous experience, knowledge and skills to new situations. More generous staffing in Year 9 enables skills in information technology to be taught to assist composition. The majority of pupils in Year 9 have their allocation of music lessons compressed into half the school year, causing a gap in work which disrupts the learning process particularly in listening and performance, where regular practice is needed to maintain standards. This causes loss of skills. It is also rare for those pupils who have no music lessons from July to March to choose to continue the subject into Key Stage 4. Those who do continue are often skilled instrumentalists with good ability in all aspects. The emphasis at this Key Stage is on individual work, progress is good, and achievement is above average. This is reflected in GCSE results, which compare favourably with those in similar schools.

96. Throughout all years the quality of learning is good. Pupils are willing, co-operative, and anxious to learn. They have responsible attitudes to their own work and to that of their peers. They hold good levels of concentration throughout their work. Relationships with peers and teachers are good. Pupils understand the criteria for success, and are reasonably accurate in their judgments when carrying out peer and self-assessment. There is a sense of urgency and quality of work is regarded as important. Most of the work set is appropriate to pupils' needs, although there are some occasions in Key Stage 3 when the most able pupils are insufficiently challenged.

97. The quality of teaching at both key stages is almost always sound, and has many good features. Schemes are detailed and lessons are well-prepared. Expectations are high, and generally suited to the pupils' abilities. Lessons are delivered clearly, with detailed descriptions of tasks and likely outcomes. Teachers work with an infectious enjoyment and enthusiasm. Many lessons are long, but the variety of linked activities maintains concentration and interest. There are good working relationships in a relaxed and calm environment. Good use is made of praise and reward for effort and achievement. Pupils are made aware of strengths and weaknesses, and appropriate targets are set. Information technology is used well as a teaching aid.

98. Forty pupils have instrumental lessons with visiting staff. There is appropriate provision of extra-curricular activities, which are well-organised and well-led and include a choir, a windband, and a recorder group. There is an annual musical production, and regular concerts enhance the cultural life of the school and the community.

99. Standards of achievement in physical education are always sound and often good for both boys and girls. A substantial majority of pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 are achieving the national expectation or higher, and are developing levels of skill, knowledge and capabilities the performance of a significant number of pupils exceeds expectations, and a considerable proportion of boys and girls make good progress. The planned programme of activities is available to all pupils for a consistent proportion of time. However, the length of time allocated to the subject presents difficulty in ensuring effective delivery of the National Curriculum in the required breadth and depth. The requirements of the National Curriculum in Key Stage 3 are covered through Programmes of Study in games, gymnastics, dance and athletics. Whilst generally well balanced there is a need to consider the over-representation of games in the boys' programme. Pupils who are following the popular GCSE option are making good progress, and results are consistently above the national average.

100. Pupils are cooperative and very well behaved. They show positive attitudes towards physical education and participation rates are good. Relationships are very good, and pupils listen well to advice from their teachers and use it to improve their performance. They show energy and enthusiasm in sustaining activities, particularly where the work involves a variety of teaching strategies set in a context of high expectation and positive feedback. Where this is the case, for example in netball, soccer, girls' gymnastics and generally in GCSE practical work, pupils concentrate well, persevere with tasks set and make good progress.

101. The quality of both learning and teaching is always sound and in Key Stage 3 frequently good. Opportunities for pupils to plan and evaluate are developing well in most areas, although problem solving approaches are limited in games activities. Work is generally well matched to developing the skills and capabilities of the majority of pupils. A more precise definition of the tasks and resources required for the more gifted and the least able pupils would help to improve their progress. In Key Stage 4, priority should be given to developing structured units of work to ensure effective learning takes place.

102. Curricular planning is being developed. Departmental approaches for the assessment and recording of pupils' progress in physical education require further refinement, and should be linked more closely with National Curriculum requirements. Day to day administration is very sound. Longer term progress would benefit from a greater precision in subject development planning.

103. Facilities for physical education are good, and are well used by both the school and a range of community groups. Resource provision is good and work is well supported by appropriate levels of cleaning and maintenance. There is a good range of inter-house and extra-curricular activities, popular with boys and girls in which standards of achievement are generally sound and, on occasion, well above average.

109. Most lessons have suitable content based on National Curriculum programmes of study and attainment targets in Key Stage 3 and on GCSE targets in Key Stage 4. Teachers demonstrate a good command of their subject. Work is generally well matched to pupils' abilities and needs. The use of suitably differentiated material with lower ability pupils is a notable feature of the teaching within most subject areas. Activities are carefully sequenced, well paced and ensure, in most cases, that pupils are challenged to make good progress.

108. The quality of teaching is a considerable strength of the school. In almost all lessons the quality of teaching is at least sound and in more than half of these it is good or very good. This high quality is evident across the curriculum. Teaching is characterised by very good relationships where the rapport between teacher and pupils encourages learning and promotes enjoyment. Lessons are consistently well prepared and planned, with clear objectives shared with the pupils who respond well to the generally high expectations made of them.

Quality of teaching

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THESE FINDINGS

107. The assessment scheme requires refinement. The curriculum is generally process based, but with a strong literary content, where the inclusion of Shakespeare and war poetry effectively underwrite National Curriculum English and more collaboration between the two departments should be considered. Resources are adequate but the accommodation is specialist in name only. Despite this limitation the department achieves high standards.

106. Learning is well developed, and attitudes are open and positive. Learning is sound or better, and often good or very good. Pupils are mutually supportive and fully committed to learning, in spite of the constraints of space. Skills of personal organisation are good, and pupils work well in groups. Teaching is always sound or better and, as with learning, often good or very good. Preparation is thorough, and clear targets are set in the framework of excellent relationships. At Key Stage 4 the teacher observes the drama as an onlooker, acting as consultant and mentor.

105. Pupils collaborate well in groups, using a range of dramatic devices appropriately. In a Year 9 lesson, all pupils recognised and used the ritual nature of some music as a source for dramatic movement. A strength of the department is the development of verbal skills. Extra curricular work in drama is strong and varied, and not only reflects the school ethos, but acts as an effective public relations activity. Strong links in drama exist with the primary schools and sixth form colleges. Pupils with special educational need are fully integrated, and achieve well.

104. Attainment in half the lessons at Key Stage 3 was equivalent to the national expectation, and appropriate or better throughout Key Stage 4. Against pupils' own ability 4 it was similar, but with some higher levels of attainment. The 1995 GCSE results were high with over 90 per cent of pupils achieving grades A*-C.

Drama

115. There is an appropriate policy for the marking of pupils' work, which is effective in most subjects, often of a high standard, generally effective and reliably applied. An effective policy is in place for guidance on records of achievement which are used throughout the school. When the validation of the records encountered problems, the school took the initiative with the Education Business Partnership to develop its own validated record of achievement. This successful venture is an example of the status and relationships of the school with the local business community.

114. The school complies with the statutory requirements of the curriculum for these aspects. Arrangements for pupils with special education needs are well met using individual educational programmes.

113. An overall policy sets out clearly and accurately the school's intentions in respect of assessment, recording and reporting and is followed in almost all subjects. The accuracy and consistency of assessment within subjects is sound, with good practice in many subjects. The arrangements are most effective where assessments are moderated and folios of work have been created, where assessment opportunities are identified in planning and assessments are used to promote higher standards for individual pupils; where pupils are given positive feedback and support and understand the criteria for assessment; and where elements of self-assessment by pupils have become integral to the process. Changes in procedures to ensure more stringent monitoring and review of assessment, recording and reporting will ensure that more consistently high standards are found in all subjects.

112. The school has a high reputation for the quality of its innovation in assessment, recording and reporting which reflects the strengths of the management of these aspects. However, there have been several staff groups responsible for its development with an overlap of membership. Their roles are now also overlapping and a unified restructuring is necessary to ensure continuing coherence.

Assessment, recording and reporting

111. In a number of lessons where teaching is sound but less stimulating, it is so dominated by the teacher that the pupils' participation is reduced. A similar format of teacher exposition is followed by pupils undertaking associated written work, often dictated or copied from the board. When used frequently, opportunities are reduced for pupils to develop skills of independent enquiry and the work does not extend them fully as learners, nor lay secure foundations for successful achievement beyond GCSE level. Nevertheless, in the vast majority of cases the quality of teaching is consistently high and contributes significantly to the very good standards which pupils attain.

110. Some of the teaching requires pupils to respond in detail to rigorous and skilful questioning and to explore their ideas in depth. It provides ample opportunity to discuss, develop and share ideas and involves them in reflection and evaluation. Careful observation of pupils working individually or in groups leads to appropriate judgements about when to intervene to guide or extend their activities. A feature of the more effective teaching is the use of several approaches within the lesson, for example skilled questioning of pupils to recall previous learning, a practical exercise or video extract to stimulate interest and clarify ideas and a written task to confirm and consolidate knowledge and understanding.

121. The curriculum is effectively planned and organised. The school is planning to introduce short courses in a number of subjects and an to enhance the contribution of technology next year. Homework is set regularly and is used well to consolidate and extend work undertaken in class. The homework has a positive effect on both standards of achievement and the quality of learning.

120. The provision for the development of cross-curricular skills and themes is variable. The personal and social education programme is an outstanding feature of this in delivering health education, careers education and elements of study skills to all pupils. In some subjects, effective provision is made whilst in others provision for cross curricular skills needs to be more carefully organised. An audit of this dimension of the curriculum should take place to produce a more coherent picture.

119. In September 1995 a review of the timetable led to the introduction of a six period day based on units of 50 minutes. Its progress and implementation are being kept under close review so that concerns can be addressed.

118. The school timetable operates on a five day cycle which permits a broad range of curriculum subjects to be offered at Key Stages 3 and 4. These include three foreign languages in both key stages, a significant development of business studies as an option and a mathematics extension group in Key Stage 4. There is a wide range of open option choices for Key Stage 4 although the rotating operation of the expressive arts provision in Key Stage 3 has a limiting effect on the choice of some pupils. The potential of this programme would benefit from a more collaborative approach and agreed philosophy. With this exception, the option and guidance system in Year 9 is effective and well-organised. The operation of the option programme improves motivation, provides an incentive for success, and supports the raising of standards of achievement.

117. The curriculum provided by the school is broad and balanced in both key stages and is consistent with the aims of the school. The objectives of the school as a faith community form a framework which underpins and enhances the delivery of the National Curriculum in all its aspects.

Quality and range of the curriculum

THE CURRICULUM

116. The reporting system is supported by the parents and the local business community. Reports are written in appropriate language for both parents and pupils. However they place a strong emphasis on the pupil's effort and attitude to learning and do not give sufficient rigour on reporting the strengths and weaknesses of the academic achievements. The school continues to develop innovative approaches to raise pupils' standards of achievement. They include a range of techniques to monitor the added value of the education provided by the school and the development of a mentoring scheme for pupils in Year 11.

130. The school meets the requirements of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and the Race Relations Act 1976.

129. The school is aware that departments must give pupils experience of other cultures, and most schemes have units aimed at achieving this. Currently consideration is being given to some form of 'twinning' with another school to give pupils the opportunity to establish personal relationships with a different community.

128. Access to the curriculum is open, except in modern foreign languages, where all pupils take French, but only more able pupils can start a second language. Except in a few subjects in Key Stage 3 where the most able pupils are insufficiently challenged, the perceived needs of pupils of all abilities are well catered for, and good progress is made.

127. The personal and social education programme contains units in each year to raise awareness in pupils and to give opportunities to explore the issues, and other departments, such as English and religious education, also undertake related work.

126. The awareness of staff is kept at a high level through a development plan where targets and the criteria for success are clearly set out. A review of standards in the school showed that younger boys in each age group are in danger of underachieving, and most departments have now adopted positive strategies to mitigate this. One example is the plans of the English department to experiment in teaching some single gender groups.

125. Since 1993, when a co-ordinator for equal opportunities was appointed and a committee set up, the school has reviewed its policy and practices annually. The school's mission statement speaks of 'mutual respect, tolerance and understanding of each member of the community'. The ethos of the school reflects this. It is most unusually caring, and people are made to feel valued as unique individuals who have things of importance to offer regardless of age, sex, ability, race or religion. This is true at peer level as well as between adults and pupils. All pupils in the school are baptised Roman Catholics.

Equality of opportunity

124. The governing body discharges its responsibilities for the curriculum effectively and conscientiously and takes a keen interest in the different elements of the curriculum and in the achievements of the pupils.

123. The curriculum is designed to provide progression and continuity for all the pupils to enable them to acquire the knowledge, understanding and skills required as preparation for adult life.

122. A wide range of well organised activities are offered to pupils as extra-curricular activities which support the rest of the curriculum. Music, drama and sports feature strongly as do visits locally and further afield. Unusually productive curriculum links have been developed in the core subjects between the school and its partner primary schools.

138. The school has a well-defined mission statement together with a statement of ethos, both of which it fulfils successfully. The school's aims are well supported by pupils and parents. Good, clear and committed leadership is provided by the Headteacher who is ably supported by three deputy headteachers, each of whom has specific responsibilities which

Management and administration

137. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is a strength of the school.

136. Praise and encouragement are given in class, with good levels of individual attention. Pupils with special needs are well catered for. The quality of support is good and pupils are able to work at a realistic level of challenge. They are also well supported throughout the school by their peers. The staff who are involved in support lessons gain insights which inform their mainstream teaching. At their best, activities are appropriately varied, stimulating and well paced. Pupils make progress which is carefully monitored. The accommodation is attractive, with good displays of pupils' work and a wide variety of resources and materials. The school library has a popular stock of speed read books.

135. The school has a sound system for identifying and supporting pupils and encourages pupils in their learning. It assists pupils in lessons through the use of support staff or partnership teachers or by running small, specially created sets. The flexibility of these arrangements is exploited well. In Key Stage 3 particularly, some pupils who experience literacy and numeracy difficulties are withdrawn from their mainstream classes. This practice should be kept under review. In the Key Stage 4 options, groups of pupils benefit from a wide range of units, which together form an accredited modular studies and life-skills course. However, individually they are of uneven quality.

134. Annual reviews are properly carried out, parents are involved and records are well kept. All pupils with learning difficulties have access to a broad and balanced curriculum. A register is kept of pupils who receive support and their requirements are appropriately reflected in their action plans, in the formulation of which subject departments are fully and productively involved.

133. Governors fulfil their obligations. A governor is helpfully attached to the department and the system whereby each subject department also has a link member of staff, works well. Effective staff development has taken place in respect of the Code of Practice and on teaching pupils with differing abilities and this remains a continuing school focus. Staff are very knowledgeable about the pupils in their groups who have special needs. Good use is made of external agencies, whose support is valued.

132. There are a clear and detailed policy statement, development plan, commentary on the Code of Practice for SEN, together with a comprehensive handbook for the benefit of all staff.

131. The school has 45 pupils with LEA statements of special need and has, in addition, identified a further range of pupils who need support or who are at various stages of referral. No pupils are disappplied from the National Curriculum.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs

- include oversight of a cluster of subject departments. Together with two senior teachers, who also have specific roles, they form the senior management team. All are aware, accessible and involved around the school.
139. The school is well organised through year and subject teams. A well-coordinated programme of minuted meetings and good consultation which involves staff in the informed development of policies, has brought about a strong sense of trust, shared understandings, common purpose, good relationships and consistency of practice.
140. The school benefits from governors who are keen and committed. They are well informed, take an active part in the life of the school and have helped to bring about valuable changes. They fulfil their objectives in respect of the school development plan and establish sound statutory and non-statutory policies. They maintain effective oversight and monitoring through their committees.
141. All departments are well managed and schemes of work are generally of a high quality. They reflect the school's aims and policies. As the requirements of the school development plan become focused and subsequently embedded in departmental plans, the links which have already been established should enable further monitoring and review to take place.
142. The tone of language and attractive presentation of external communications and publications are exemplary. Parents consider themselves well informed.
143. The curricular intentions of the school are effectively implemented by the timetable. The daily operation of the school is efficient, supported by technology and ensures an appropriate environment for learning. A good range of support is provided by the administrative staff. School routines are established, sensible and well understood and supervision by staff is conscientious.
144. Overall, the management and leadership promote a positive self-image of the school and high standards of achievement.

RESOURCES AND THEIR MANAGEMENT

Teaching and non-teaching staff

145. The staffing of the school is the responsibility of a committee of the governing body. Teachers are well qualified and experienced and they are well deployed. In only a few cases are subjects taught by non-specialists and there is no discernible adverse effect on the quality of work. There is a good balance of age, gender and experience among the staff.

146. The school is well served by its non-teaching staff. Current levels are appropriate except in the case of science. Deployment is generally well considered although technician support in technology should be reviewed together with the additional administrative tasks undertaken by the library technician. A review of non-teaching staff by the LEA is planned.

147. Good arrangements are in place to extend the knowledge and skills of the staff; in-service needs are identified and appropriate training opportunities are sought using both GSEST and school funding. Staff development is an established priority in the current school development plan. In-service training is well monitored and evaluated to ensure that full benefit is obtained. Strategies are in place to disseminate new knowledge gained to colleagues and in the longer term to further enhance the quality of teaching and learning.

148. Arrangements for appraisal are well established and are strongly linked to staff development. All staff have specific job descriptions; some require review to meet current needs, for example in technology. The school is involved with and committed to a scheme for the initial training of teachers run in conjunction with Liverpool John Moore University and Hope University College. Students are well integrated into the life of the school and are set challenging programmes. The scheme is of high quality, brings positive benefits to the school and enhances the quality of education provided.

Resources for learning

149. The overall spending on educational resources has increased significantly and is now, at £106 per pupil, five per cent of the school's total budget, which is in line with similar schools nationally. Effective financial management by departments ensures that the money is well spent.

150. Governors are moving from formula based funding to a system whereby each department calculates a budget for maintenance together with the submission of a bid for agreed priorities identified in the subject development plan. The benefits of this scheme are becoming apparent as the more precise targeting responds to departmental needs.

151. Books and materials are generally sufficient in quantity and of satisfactory quality but there are some inconsistencies. There are some gaps of provision in English and too few song books and tuned instruments in music. Art and mathematics are well resourced. There is adequate provision of audio-visual resources. The school has an average ratio of one computer to every 12.4 pupils and good use is made of the existing technology but this is sometimes constrained by the heavy overall demands for its use. Good use is made of the local environment and off-site resources in geography and science. Effective use is made,

156. The accommodation is well managed and efficiently used. The governing body has a very active finance and buildings committee which has established policies and priorities and is continuing to identify resources for further modification and improvements cited in the

155. The use of accommodation is sound. Specialist subject provision is good. Where it has been possible to group together teaching rooms, there has been positive effect on teaching and learning through the sharing of resources and equipment. Some subjects, for example mathematics, are partially grouped. In others this has not been possible, leading to difficulties in geography, history and especially in English. In some areas such as geography, music, drama and history the combination of large group sizes and a number of small rooms results in overcrowding and restricts the use of interactive learning opportunities.

154. The school occupies a shared, open campus with restricted hardplay areas and good playing field provision. Many improvements have taken place in recent years, including new provision for science, bringing benefits to the quality of learning. The school site is densely populated and accommodation is tight for the number of pupils in the school. The provision of four mobile units ensures sufficient classroom and specialist teaching spaces to meet current needs.

Accommodation

153. The library is well used at lunchtime. However, only a third of pupils currently have a book on loan and few pupils in Key Stage 4 make use of the facilities. The library's purposes, procedures and practices are well-documented and its use is systematically evaluated. Pupils in Year 7 follow a detailed, well devised 'Learning to Learn' programme as part of the English course; however, this introduction is not fully exploited by other departments and the use of the library is, generally, not integrated into schemes of work. The school plans to extend the current library area into a resource-based learning centre. However, better levels of funding, a review of some aspects of staffing and a reconsideration of the role of the library in curriculum planning are necessary in order that this promising range of resources are more fully used by pupils and departments.

152. The library is a good resource for the whole school, whose potential has yet to be fully exploited. It is an attractive area and the overall book stock, although numerically well below national recommendations, has been judiciously weeded to discard out of date material. The fiction and non-fiction sections are well displayed and relevant to the school's current curriculum. Provision is enhanced by two CD Roms, video and audio tapes and a large cuttings and leaflet collection. The library is well managed by a teacher-librarian, pupils who give generously of their time and a library assistant who also has other school responsibilities. The school's bookshop, sited in the library, is successful in selling books to younger pupils. Funding of the library, however, at less than £2 per head, is low and will not allow replacement of stock or its enrichment.

amongst others, of surveys, visits to museums, field trips, concerts and visits to the theatre. Funds which are made available through the Education Business Partnership are used effectively and money provided by the Parents' Association has a positive effect upon the quality of provision.

163. Procedures for dealing with child protection issues are sound, in line with LEA guidelines and are clearly understood by staff. A newly adopted mentoring system involves some pupils in Year 10 who support less secure Year 7 pupils.

162. The Health and Safety policy adopted by the governors is generally effective. The building is well signposted for visitors, whose presence on site is monitored. The school has involved parents in the formulation of a sex education policy and is similarly developing a policy for health education. Suitably qualified staff administer first aid.

161. Form tutors monitor the behaviour and effort of individual pupils and good use is made in the lower school of personal planners.

160. The pastoral care of pupils and their personal and social development are a strength of the school. The school achieves a high standard of care for all pupils, in line with its mission statement. Form tutors and heads of year are the basis of the support network and are central to the welfare and guidance of pupils. They normally remain with the pupils for the full five years. As a result teachers know their pupils well and pupils feel secure and approach staff readily for advice or to share concerns.

Pupils' welfare and guidance

159. Cleaning and maintenance levels are good. Internally, the building is treated with care and respect by pupils. Recent investment in security measures has been effective in reducing intrusion on the open site. Externally, the school is in good order, marred only by the creation of litter on hardplay areas and parts of the playing fields. Good use is made of school facilities for a variety of community lettings. Overall, the accommodation provided has a favourable effect on the standards of pupils' achievements and the quality of learning.

158. Cloakroom areas are properly used and dining arrangements are efficiently organised and assisted by good behaviour. Locker provision is good but it is not used consistently through the school. The storage of pupils' bags at break and at lunchtimes produces obstruction in a number of outdoor areas despite the sensible and considerate behaviour of pupils. Elsewhere in the school the learning environment has been considerably enhanced by effective displays of pupils' work and other materials in the classrooms, corridors and reception areas. Carpeting and good furniture in many areas add to this improvement together with other refurbishments undertaken as part of a rolling programme across the school.

157. Circulation around the buildings is potentially difficult because of some narrow corridors and staircases, and is a cause for concern. Staff supervision is intensive at key points and is well supported by conscientious prefects. Pupils are considerate and their sensible behaviour eases the difficulties presented by large numbers moving around the school. Further investigation of strategies to reduce the congestion in certain parts of the school, for example by the creation of a one-way system, is needed.

LEA in support of these longer term intentions. An accommodation audit is planned to school development plan. Strong links have been developed with the Archdiocese and the review arrangements for grouping subjects in the light of further development.

170. Staff, parents and pupils give effective support to CAFOD and other charities which are adopted by pupils. Further links are sustained in ways which reflect the Christian ethos of the school.

169. Educational experience beyond the classroom is achieved by numerous visits to places of interest and use of outside resources. Of note, among these is the quality of work of senior staff with the Education Business Partnership. This work has brought about additional resources and information from industry and commerce which make a positive contribution to the pupils' learning.

168. Work experience is successfully arranged and the pupils are carefully monitored during this period. Employers comment favourably on the calibre and attitude of pupils. Independent advice is offered to pupils about post-16 education, employment and training with staff from the sixth form colleges being fully involved in this process.

167. Liaison with the contributory parochial primary schools is good. Pupils enjoy greatly the effective links which enable them to settle quickly into routines. Great care is taken with transfer arrangement and unusually sound links with subject departments contribute to the overall standards.

166. Many parents communicate through the pupils' planner. Further information takes a variety of forms, including a regular newsletter from the Headteacher. The well presented school prospectus is outstanding. The school enjoys a good reputation in the community and visitors are made to feel welcome. The Parents' Association raises substantial funds for the benefit of pupils. Well organised and attended meetings with parents are held regularly to report on their child's progress and to provide information. Parents who need to visit school on other occasions are given a high priority.

165. Parents identify strongly with the values of the school which are set out in the mission statement and published in the prospectus and planners. The school has established good links with parents based on trust and respect. Questionnaire returns from parents show a high degree of support for the school's policies.

Links with parents, agencies and other institutions

164. Much of the specific guidance, including careers education, is effected through the worthwhile taught programme of personal and social education which is delivered effectively by form teachers. The LEA Careers Service gives valuable specialist support to the effective careers programme. Pupils are able to obtain careers information and guidance from a wide range of sources which include personal interview, open evenings and visiting speakers including representatives from sixth form colleges. They have access to a well resourced careers library. Strategies for personal and educational guidance are good. Parents and pupils appreciate this area of the school's provision. A high proportion of staff monitor and support pupils during their well-organised periods of work experience. Decisions made by the school council make a positive contribution to the welfare of pupils. In questionnaire comments many parents praised and congratulated the school for maintaining its high standard of care for pupils.

171. The school recognises that links with industry and commerce are most effective where they support learning in the classroom. Examples are seen in business studies, food technology and in GNVQ modules. Professionals who are associated with the school confirm it has a welcoming atmosphere and that it works well with outside agencies.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education (Schools) Act 1992, the school must provide copies of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made to others requesting a copy of the full report.

ST EDMUND ARROWSMITH RC HIGH SCHOOL

**Rookery Avenue
Ashton in Makefield
Wigan, WN4 9PF**

SUMMARY OF THE INSPECTION REPORT

The school was inspected in March 1996. This is a summary of the inspector's full report, which can be obtained from the school.

THE SCHOOL
St Edmund Arrowsmith Roman Catholic High School is a comprehensive school for boys and girls aged 11 to 16. There are 1132 pupils taught by the equivalent of 72.2 full-time teachers.

INSPECTION FINDINGS

St Edmund Arrowsmith Roman Catholic High School is a very good school which serves its pupils and their communities well. It is a happy school which displays many examples of excellent practice.

Standards of achievement

The school enables pupils of all abilities to achieve highly as they progress through it. In over three quarters of lessons observed, achievements were at least in line with those nationally, with achievements above the national expectation in a third. Taking account of pupils' abilities, achievement was appropriate or better in over 95 per cent of lessons with two thirds in the latter category. There is virtually no underachievement.

Pupils enter the school with scores in Key Stage 2 tests about 10 per cent higher than the national average. This proportion increases by the end of Key Stage 3 and has increased further by the end of Key Stage 4 to over 15 per cent above the national average of those who gain five or more grades A*-C in the GCSE. These results contain a significant proportion of higher grades and overall indicate that the school is providing high added value to its pupils. Results in all subjects except in some areas of technology were consistently well above the national average in 1995 and hardly fluctuate from year to year. Girls generally perform better than boys and the school is seeking strategies to minimise this.

The high standards of achievement in the core subjects, particularly in respect of the pupils' literacy skills, support their consistent progress in the subjects of the curriculum. Pupils who have special educational needs achieve highly, although in a minority of subjects appropriate extension work could be developed further for the most able pupils.

Quality of Education provided

The pupils have positive attitudes to their learning and show perseverance. In almost all lessons the quality of pupils' learning is sound or better with a significant majority in the latter category. These high proportions are replicated virtually exactly in the quality of teaching. Teachers generally have appropriately high expectations. The commitment of staff and their knowledge of their pupils as individuals is outstanding, helped by the full five years that pupils normally remain with their form teacher and head of year. Relationships are positive and purposeful. Staff are experienced and resourceful and the match between their qualifications and deployment is very good. There is challenge and an appropriate variety of teaching approaches for pupils of all abilities. The requirements of the National Curriculum are met and all pupils receive a curriculum which is broad and balanced. Almost all marking is consistently good but there is a small minority of incomplete assessment procedures and some reports do not always helpfully identify strengths and weaknesses. Homework supports learning well. Available information technology is used well and cross-curricular aspects are well taught.

Efficiency

Good, clear, committed leadership is given by the Headteacher, which is well underpinned at all levels in the school and is sustained by a knowledgeable and committed governing body who give generously of their time. A climate of loyalty, trust, shared understanding and common purpose prevails for the benefit of pupils. Departments and resources are well managed. The effective school development plan is being extended beyond 1997; it would benefit from a more integrated focus of the separate identified targets, to facilitate subject planning and formalised subsequent monitoring and review. The school is well organised and routinely runs well on a daily basis. The budget surplus accumulated in former years is being used systematically to carry out development priorities. The school gives very good value for money.

The accommodation is in generally good condition. It is well used and managed although circulation in key areas is difficult at lesson changes. Strategies to manage the potential contribution of the library to pupils' learning skills should be a major consideration in the planned accommodation review. Most areas benefit from attractive displays of a high quality and from good decoration. Numerous valuable improvements which reinforce the civilised ethos of the school have been made by governors, although litter is a problem at the rear of the school.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

The promotion of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is a strength of the school and contributes greatly to its overall quality. The personal and social educational programme permeates the whole of the curriculum. All who enter the school are made to feel valued and respond accordingly. The consistent example of staff, their care and

the pastoral system provide a constant environment in which pupils can develop and make progress in the curriculum. Opportunities for residential experience, environmental visits and field work further increase pupils' awareness and understanding.

Parents support the school well and compliment it on its high values and expectations. The school community clearly demonstrates respect for all in a caring atmosphere. The behaviour and consideration shown by pupils are very good. They are happy, secure and confident and they work well together. Attendance at over 94 per cent is high; there is no unauthorised absence. Suspension and exclusion are used with care and appropriately.

There are many productive links and partnerships with the community and liaison with primary schools and post-sixteen providers is especially good. Charities are well supported. The pupils respond well to the frequent opportunities they are given to show leadership and exercise initiative and to the generous extra-curricular provision.

The bedrock of the school's success is the general consistency of the shared understandings, provision and teaching approaches throughout the school. This consistency contributes strongly to and is mirrored in the high standards achieved by the pupils.

WHAT THE SCHOOL SHOULD DO NOW

There are no major weaknesses. Against an overall picture of generally good development, the governors and senior management should consider the following in order to raise even further the standards of work and the quality of learning provision

- Maintain the school's positive features and the consistency of teaching and learning.
- Modify the existing separate organisational structures for assessment, recording and reporting into a unified system.
- Continue the work begun on the extended school development plan, bring together the individual areas identified for development as a coherent focus.
- Formalise overall procedures for monitoring as well as for reviewing the discrete areas of the curriculum.
- Within the planned accommodation review give priority to the improved grouping of dispersed subject areas and to an improved circulation system in key areas.
- Develop strategies to improve the potential of the library as a major resource to support literacy and the development of pupils' independent research and learning skills.

THE INSPECTION

The St. Edmund Arowsmith RC High School was inspected as part of a national programme of inspection. The purpose is to identify strengths and weaknesses in schools, that may improve the quality of education offered and raise the standards achieved by their pupils. The inspection of all schools every four years is also designed to give parents more information about their children's schools. A copy of this summary is sent to every family with a child at the school.

The inspection of St. Edmund Arowsmith RC High School took place between 18 and 22 March 1996. It was undertaken by an independent team of thirteen inspectors, led by John E. James. The inspection was commissioned by the Office for Standards in Education, a department of central government.

The team was required to report on the standards achieved by pupils, the quality of education provided by the school, the efficiency with which financial resources were used and the contribution made by the school to its pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The Governing Body is responsible for drawing up an ACTION PLAN within forty days of receiving the report, showing what the school is going to do about issues. The action plan will be circulated to all parents of pupils at the school.