MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

REPORT BY H. M. INSPECTORS ON

Old Swinford Hospital School, Stourbridge, Worcestershire

INSPECTED ON 28th, 29th, 30th and 31st MAY, 1957

NOTES

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MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, CURZON ST., W.1.

S.T. 210/57

Nature and Scope

Old Swinford Hospital was founded in 1667 by Thomas Foley, ironmaster, of Witley Court, Worcestershire, to provide education for sixty boys from Worcestershire and certain parishes in Staffordshire and Shropshire, the sons of poor but honest parents, "who shall be fit to be apprentices". A scheme for the future management and government of the Charity was confirmed in 1849, when the number of boys had reached one hundred. The scheme laid down that there shall be provided "a good practical education suited for the male children of a poor population employed in mining, manufacturing, agriculture and commercial pursuits, and proper religious instruction according to the principles of the Church of England".

In 1932 the Feoffees invited the Board of Education to inspect the school and after consideration of H.M. Inspectors' report the age of admission was raised and the academic bias was abandoned in favour of a type of education practical in its aim. When the school was granted voluntary aided status, from January 1950, therefore, the Feoffees were continuing a very old tradition in deciding that, placed between the Black Country and rural Worcestershire, the school should become a secondary technical school with courses in engineering and agriculture. The school also began to admit day boys. At that time there were between seventy and eighty boys in the school, all boarders.

There are now 288 boys in the school, 180 of them boarders. Of the boarders 71 are sponsored by the Worcestershire Local Authority and 32 are sponsored by 13 other Authorities, most of them in the Midlands but they also include London, Berkshire, Kent and Chester. The remainder of the boarders are sponsored by the Feoffees; two hold places under the Chance Educational Trust. Parents of boarders sponsored by the Feoffees pay the boarding fee of £129, but if they live within the beneficial area and are in need of financial help bursaries, usually up to £50 a year in amount, may be granted; holders of these are known as Lord Foley's boys and 23 boarders are at present in receipt of bursaries. Over half the day boys live in Stourbridge.

Day boys are admitted on the results of the 11+ examinations for allocation to secondary schools and although a similar standard is normally required of the boarders it has not been possible to insist on this during the period of rapid expansion, with the consequence that many of the boarders have not the ability to cope readily with the demands of a five-year course to the examination for the General Certificate of Education.

There has, however, been a growing measure of success in the external examinations in the last three years: in the July examinations, 39, 76 and 95 passes were obtained at the ordinary level in succeeding years; of these passes last year 42 were obtained in woodwork, metalwork and technical drawing. Last year, also, two boys were successful in the advanced level examination in woodwork.

Six boys are at present working in the sixth form; not all of them are taking a full advanced level course, but papers will be taken this year by two or three boys in woodwork and technical drawing and by one boy in history and geography.

Occupations taken up by school leavers show a preference for industry and agriculture. Of 97 leavers between December 1953 and July 1956 no less than 20 entered industrial apprenticeships, 9 took up services apprenticeships, 8 took regular engagements in the services, 12 went to farming or to parks apprenticeships, and 8 took up clerical work. Three leavers went on to full time courses in technical colleges and one to a training college.

Governing Body

The Feoffees of Thomas Foley's Charity continue, under the Charity Trustees Act, to administer the Foundation's incomes and they also provide, as Foundation Governors, eight of the twelve members of the Governing Body; four Representative Governors are appointed by the Local Education Authority of whom one is appointed on the nomination of the Stourbridge Borough Council. One of the Hereditary Feoffees is Vice Chairman of the Governors, thus maintaining contact between the school and the family of the Founder. The Governors meet at the school at least once in every term and take a close practical interest in its affairs.

Premises and Equipment

Part of the original building, the Old Block, much altered inside but with the original dignified frontage, is still in use for dormitories and dining hall, and the Barn Block, also dating from the 17th century, provides four classrooms and a laboratory. The Main Block, built in 1882 to accommodate an increased number of boarders, contains dormitories and a recreation room; one of the smaller dormitories is in use as a classroom. Expansion in the last ten years has necessitated extensive improvements and additions to the premises. The Governors, mindful of the effects of inflation on investments, have followed a cautious financial policy which aims at providing adequately for the needs of the school without unduly impairing the still considerable resources of the Foundation. The programme of building has therefore been phased to coincide as far as possible with the accumulation of income from investments and the sale of land. Thus the Lyttelton Wing was built in 1950, and renovation and modernisation carried out between 1949 and 1954 in Old Block and Prospect House provide junior dormitories and a well equipped sanatorium. Two workshops for wood and metalwork with a small drawing office were put up in prefabricated construction in 1954, a laboratory was added to the Lyttelton Wing in 1955 and, last year, a room was built for music and craftwork. Future additions already planned include an eight classroom block and a gymnasium.

The larger number of boarders has placed a strain on dining accommodation and while the midday meal can be served to day boys and boarders in two sittings the space is not adequate for serving meals to all the boarders comfortably in one sitting. The kitchen has been greatly improved recently but a vegetable store is an urgent need.

Until the new classroom block is built some of the teaching accommodation will remain sub-standard; when the plans have come to fruition however the teaching side will be well provided for; the Barn Block will then be adapted to give a library and art room and,

it is hoped, some division rooms of particular value to senior boys especially boarders, who at present have no common room and no studies. The dormitories have been improved and if a pleasantly colourful scheme of decoration is followed where the shabby state of the premises shows that redecoration is due, the sleeping accommodation will be satisfactory. Furniture is being bought to give each boy space for storage of belongings; the general standard of care for health and welfare is good, but much more could be done to give a pleasanter and a fuller life during leisure hours. The care which the juniors give to their pets in the pet shed indicates the value of the encouragement of leisure interests. A possible room for hobbies and a small common room are also under consideration. These and a more enterprising use of the playing space near to the school would greatly help to give highly desirable amenities for the boarders. Washing and sanitary provision is not quite evenly distributed but in total is not far short of what is recommended as adequate; there is however a shortage of baths not entirely compensated for by a fairly generous supply of showers, and a few extra fittings - doors, hooks, towel racks - would add, at little cost, to the comfort of the boys.

Furniture and equipment have been supplied as the school has grown and no serious shortages were noticed: the development of the work at the top of the school will require further consideration of the equipment and apparatus, particularly in the metal workshop and laboratories; and additional stock in some departments, for example, of timber in the woodwork shop, would be a great advantage.

Library

The school library is a pleasant room, not large enough for all that is expected of a present-day library, but nonetheless a most useful amenity. It is furnished with good shelving, bookcases, tables and display racks. Some bookcases were made in the school workshops. The number of books has grown very considerably since 1953, and the problem of housing them is likely to grow rapidly too. At present, the school owns something like 1,300 library books and has, in addition, a termly loan from the County Library. A fairly comprehensive selection of periodicals and newspapers is regularly supplied. Acquisitions are made from lists of suggestions put forward by the masters and boys, and part of the cost of new stock is met by an annual grant of £50 from the Feoffees. The purchases of both fiction and non-fiction books have been, in the main, carefully considered. It is clear, however, that in order to fulfil its functions more adequately the continued building-up of subject sections of the library must go on as rapidly as is possible.

The room is open to the most senior boys at any time; others attend at stated times for quiet reading or for exchange of books. Occasionally, groups or individual boys use it for study. Some attempts have been made to advertise new books by the display of dust covers on notice boards in the school, but more might be done to direct the boys' attention to what is available and is of special interest or merit. The history master is in charge of the library. He is assisted by a panel of five senior boys. The whole organisation of the library, including the cataloguing of the books under author and subject and the regular issuing of books for private reading, is being carried out most efficiently.

Staff

The Headmaster, an Oxford graduate, was appointed in 1951. His first six years at the school have been years of constant change, and now that the broad lines of policy have been laid down and tolerable accommodation obtained he is wisely re-examining the aims of his school. With a clearer view of the way ahead he will find it easier to give the lead that is now needed for the greater development of the school's undoubted potentialities.

The staff consists of 14 full-time and 2 part-time masters; this cannot be regarded as generous for a school of this size with so many boarders. Eight of the staff are graduates; the rest are qualified teachers nearly all of whom have suitable qualifications in their specialist subjects. When future appointments are under consideration the possibility of strengthening the teaching of mathematics, a key subject in the school, should be borne in mind. There are four or five good teachers and most of the staff are interested in and are thinking about the many problems thrown up in the school at its present stage of development, but several do not appear to have the teaching skill required to meet fully the challenge of new ideas.

Organisation, Curriculum and Standard of Work

The school is organised in two streams, a and b, on the basis of a two-form entry each year. All boys follow a similar course for the first three years, which includes woodwork, metalwork, rural science and general science. Technical drawing is introduced in the third year. French, which has not yet reached the fourth and fifth years, receives a time allowance of four periods a week except in Form IIIb, where it is reduced to two. In the fourth and fifth forms either woodwork or metalwork can be taken with technical drawing as alternatives to rural science (agricultural science in Forms IV and V); staffing and accommodation have been mainly responsible for the limited choice available, but future changes in staff may make desirable changes in the course practicable. For example it would be helpful to a boy taking agricultural science if he could also take handicraft, and chemistry might be the science most useful to him, whereas physics would be the obvious choice for a boy proceeding on the engineering side.

When the two main courses, agriculture and engineering, are reconsidered, the fifth form course in metalwork might be made more exacting and the course in agricultural science might be linked with the actual work of a farm, at the moment it is too closely tied to books. It is disappointing to find that the examples chosen in mathematics have so little relation to agriculture and engineering, which were intended to give the curriculum its technical flavour. Similarly, though a welcome start has been made in geography, much more could be done to correlate the work in various departments to give reality and a sense of purpose to what at present are academic studies not yet calling forth the maximum effort of the boys. The wide range of ability of the boys has posed a major teaching problem; to meet the different needs of boys and encourage their greater effort some adjustment of syllabuses and treatment is essential such as could be provided by working in sets in mathematics, and by giving more demanding practical work in science to the abler boys. It is early yet to make a decision on French,

a subject that has made a promising start, but it is questionable whether all boys should attempt to take it to the level of the external examination. Highly conscientious teaching in English might be more effective if the disadvantages of sharing a form between two masters could be overcome. The work in history has pace, and technical drawing reaches a good standard. Religious instruction is lively in the upper forms but there are too many dictated and copied notes in the lower forms; this in fact is one of the weaknesses of the work as a whole throughout the school. There is a quite undue emphasis on note taking, possibly because of anxiety to put factual knowledge simply and accurately before the boys, many of whom have difficulty in selecting what is relevant for themselves. Improved standards at the top and certainly the growth of good sixth form work will require a more careful selection of examples by the staff and more thoughtful oral and written answers by the boys throughout the course. Standards of craftsmanship are developing in woodwork and light crafts; careful draughtsmanship is taught in art; well drawn maps are a feature of the geography books; yet, in the school as a whole, much of the written work is untidily presented and shows serious weakness in spelling.

Subjects of Teaching

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

One period a week is given to every form for this subject and three masters share the work. During the days of the inspection it was only possible to see two of the masters with their classes but it may be said that the teaching is lively and interesting and, considering the limited time available, the boys seem well informed about the Bible and its times.

The written work which the boys are called upon to do in the upper part of the school shows considerable promise and rightly throws responsibility on the pupils to read for themselves before committing their views to paper. It would therefore be expected that a more directed policy should be adopted in the lower and middle school to lead the pupils more gradually to this stage. At present some of the forms are spending too much time on copied or dictated notes and on illustrations which make little demand on the mental effort of the pupils.

The syllabus has been well devised and provides a comprehensive study of the Old and New Testaments with sufficient emphasis on the more important of the Books and Gospels.

ENGLISH

The English syllabus, a statement drawn up with considerable care and thought, contains very helpful general sections on method. Such comments, which in this case show an enlightened appreciation of the place of English in the curriculum, are especially useful when several masters - in this school there are four - share in the teaching of the subject. The graduate English master, who is mainly responsible for the syllabus, is concerned with most, but not all, aspects of the English teaching to each of the third, fourth and fifth year forms; the Headmaster is responsible for literature with eight forms; the history master takes English with

Form Ia; a part-time qualified master, who has returned from retirement, teaches the subject to Form Ib and both the second year forms. Though it cannot be said that all of them are interpreting the syllabus as freely as it deserves, there is no doubt of their conscientious, sound teaching. Language studies are being stressed. Points of grammar and of syntax are discussed and exercises worked; attention is paid to spelling and growth of vocabulary; written comprehension of selected passages, leading to précis writing, is undertaken. And such work undoubtedly has a rightful place in the English course. The success of such work, however, often depends on an imaginative and lively presentation and on the skilful choice and invention by the teacher of exercises which allow the pupils to test the strength, flexibility and subtlety of language. Such exercises, too, should eventually supply the pupil with gauges by which he can measure his own efforts. While in the oral and written work of this school, though more especially in the upper forms, care is being taken with the choice of exercises, it might be found interesting and valuable if closer attention were given to the construction of exercises by the masters. All boys are given opportunities to express themselves freely in compositions and essays. Much of this work is of fair quality, though the younger boys hardly write enough. The older boys are beginning to respond in an encouraging way to the well-selected, imaginative and, often, challenging essay titles suggested to them. Their essays are increasing both in length and in quality of content, and several indicate that the writers are gaining ability both in the ordering of their thoughts and in their capacity for developing their arguments with some precision. But few, as yet, are acquiring any style in writing - a point which gains emphasis when the efforts of the majority are compared with the essays of one or two boys who have some literary ability. These few write with a pleasing fluency and show a maturity both in their statements and in their selection of generalisations and detailed comments. Much steady work is being done by the masters to raise the general level of the written work. Perhaps there is a need for each of the older boys to be given at convenient periods detailed critical appreciations of pieces of work which they have presented for marking. It might be useful, too, to attempt to direct more closely the boys' private reading, and a well-struck balance between the time given to oral and written expression might lead to more opportunities for saying things well. If time-table arrangements would permit it, the placing of the whole of the English studies in the hands of the master concerned with the English of any one form, has much to commend it. The present separation of language and literature does tend to a loss of opportunity for making those telling references from literature which give added point to class language studies. This last statement is not a criticism of the separate literature lessons as they are now presented. They are enjoyed by the forms, and the detailed examination of a text is a valuable experience. It is a little disappointing, however, that only a few of the boys appear to display any marked critical powers, though, on the other hand, the interest shown by the oldest boys in Chaucer's Tales seems to indicate a sensitivity to the use and growth of the English language.

HISTORY

The success of the history teaching rests firmly on the enthusiasm of the well-qualified graduate master. His close acquaintance with his subject enables him to teach from a syllabus which is the barest

outline of the course to be followed; and it is a long course, extending from pre-historical to modern times. It has, of necessity, meant that a good selection of periods, aspects or topics from history has had to be made, and the work is mainly concerned with significant movements, people, ideas and achievements in British and European history, and with such topics as trade and transport and architecture taken in more detail by certain boys. The more able older boys prepare for the ordinary level examination for the General Certificate of Education. More unusually a few study for the advanced level papers.

The pace of the lessons is high. To some extent this speed is forced on the master because the amount of available time is not generous, but, on the other hand, the pace can be maintained because the material for the lessons is handled with sureness and skill. There is some loss to the boys, who are not given all the opportunities they might have for questioning and discussing. When such opportunities are given, for instance when the master poses an historical problem, the pupils' interest is further heightened. In the attempt to cover so much fewer opportunities than are desirable are given for the boys to write accounts independently. Most of the notes taken by the younger and middle school boys are copied and illustrated by drawings of no great merit. The essays written by boys preparing for the external examination vary in quality, but the best are promising. History is interesting the boys in this school.

GEOGRAPHY

With the exception of the first year, geography is taught by an Oxford graduate who has given careful thought to the teaching problems with which he is faced. He is aware of the value of relating his work to that of other departments, notably science, mathematics and history, and of the importance of giving reality to book work and an understanding of vocabulary through direct observation and the use of visual material. During the inspection a film strip was very effectively used to illustrate a lesson on glaciation and some visits to local industries have already taken place.

The syllabus is suitably planned to lead to ordinary level in the General Certificate of Education examination, and results indicate that this goal is being reached with growing success. Some re-consideration of the content of the first two years might well result in the transposition of some of the study of the locality to the first year and a more gradual introduction to a simple study of world geography.

Knowledge of facts is tested frequently by oral questions which require short written answers based on the thoughtful use or interpretation of sketch maps and diagrams on the blackboard. Although the oral teaching is good, the oral response of the boys leaves much to be desired. Written records show a similar limitation: maps are well drawn with, for the most part, satisfactory lettering, but notes are almost entirely copied from the board or from dictation. Thus the few boys in the sixth form beginning advanced work have much to learn in the selecting and marshalling of information and in writing it down in good style. This training should be begun much earlier: Form I is not too early.

In a small rather crowded room a good start has been made in the intelligent preparation of boys for external examinations; to reach the further objectives of giving geography a particularly important part in the curriculum of the secondary technical school and providing a link between other subjects, less attention may have to be given to the making of their own text-books by the boys and more attention given to their use of books and other sources of information and to the growth of their own powers of expression orally and in writing. For this desirable development a slightly larger time allowance would be an advantage.

FRENCH

French is a comparatively new subject in the school's curriculum, and at present only the forms of the first, second and third years take it. The third year forms are not at the third year stage of the course, which is aiming at external examinations, and Form IIIb receive only two periods a week - a time allocation only sufficiently long to allow an interest in France and things French to be maintained. The other forms are given four periods a week. This is probably the minimum time allowance to be expected for the subject and a more generous allocation might well be needed as the demands of the work grow. There is no doubt that the subject has made a promising start, and the boys' interest is apparent. The lively teaching of the young graduate master ensures that the boys hear a reasonable amount of French spoken. Their oral response to questions and their store of French phrases are indications of their willingness to learn. They might receive more close practice in pronunciation and intonation. Grammar is presenting some difficulties, but the master is wisely modifying the exercises in the course book to suit the attainments and abilities of the pupils. There is clearly a place for a second language in the curriculum, but whether all boys should take it needs to be further considered.

MATHEMATICS

The teaching in this subject is in the hands of four masters. The head of the department, who is also the Senior Master, is a non-graduate. He teaches mathematics full-time, as does another master who is of foreign extraction but a graduate of Cork University. The geography master is responsible for the work in Form IIa and the sixth form is taken by the master in charge of physics. There is much careful and precise teaching to be seen and, within their capabilities as mathematicians, the masters are performing conscientiously and efficiently.

In general the standard of work is disappointing and is certainly not as high as it should be if the school is to achieve its aims in the field of secondary technical education. This assessment is confirmed by the rather unsatisfactory results obtained in the external examinations, in spite of the fact that recently only about fifty per cent of the boys have been entered. The sixth form contains seven boys who are studying mathematics; all are in their first year and three of them are about to take papers in additional mathematics. But these pupils appear to be inadequately prepared to do advanced studies and the present work is at a mediocre level. Only one of the seven pupils concerned seems likely to stay on for a second year.

An admirable laboratory has been built in the Lyttelton Wing, but the old laboratory in the Barn Block is awkward in shape and not well equipped. In both laboratories a stock of apparatus and materials is being built up though it will require considerable additions if there is much demand for advanced work.

Rural and Agricultural Science

A master who is a competent gardener is in charge of the rural science. No classroom teaching was seen but it was evident from the boys' notebooks, which could have shown a higher standard of work, that written work consists almost entirely of answering questions set for homework. It is suggested that if some records of the lessons were kept the boys would gain a clearer grasp of the logical development of the subject.

Practical work is well organised; the boys show a good understanding of the operations they are set to perform and tackle each job in a self-reliant manner.

The master chiefly concerned with the agricultural science has good qualifications for teaching the subject. At present there are only 14 boys in the first and seven in the second year who wish to sit the examination, and it may be unwise to allow them the choice of taking either agriculture or horticulture; at this stage such a degree of specialisation is not essential. The boys' notebooks for this subject are neat and give an adequate account of the work done in class. At present however this is confined almost entirely to classroom work and gardening; the laboratory is rarely available to them. In order to teach this subject adequately a close link with a farm is essential so that the livestock and crops can be studied at first hand and farm processes can be seen. The introduction of some lessons on farm machinery should also be considered.

A hut near the garden is used as a classroom; the provision of services to enable some experimental work to be done would be an advantage in connection with all this work. A roomy tool store adjoins it.

The garden has undergone considerable re-organisation and contains a variety of crops, including farm crops and ornamental features. Some useful constructional work has been done by the boys, particularly in the greenhouse, where a collection of plants is being built up. The garden is reasonably well maintained and provides adequately for the subject.

A school Young Farmers' Club meets weekly after school.

The library contains a few standard textbooks but could be improved by the addition of Ministry of Agriculture bulletins and leaflets, as well as more books on general topics of the countryside.

HANDICRAFT AND TECHNICAL DRAWING

The school has good woodwork and metalwork shops recently built, the former with a small drawing office attached. The equipment of the metalwork shop, though adequate for the course of work now carried out, will need to be supplemented by additional machines as and when a more advanced technical course develops.

In their first two years in the school the boys are given an introduction to both woodwork and metalwork, in their third year they practise both, and in their fourth and fifth years they have the option of following courses in woodwork, or metalwork, or rural science. It is unfortunate that boys choosing rural science cannot have some time for handicraft also. There is no lack of accommodation, for neither workshop is fully used.

In all three subjects - woodwork, metalwork and technical drawing - the courses have been planned with the General Certificate of Education examination in view: most of the boys staying for the fifth year have taken the examination in two of these subjects, and very few have failed to pass at ordinary level. Two boys were successful in the advanced level examination in woodwork last year. These successes have been achieved on a short time allowance for each subject and constitute a very creditable achievement.

The success of the courses cannot be measured, however, entirely by this criterion. In some respects the effect of the external examination has been restrictive. The metalwork course is very elementary for a school of this kind and in the fifth year is confined to the kind of exercise likely to be met with in the external examination, with nothing but the most elementary work on machines. The woodwork course suffers from a similar restriction in the work of the older boys; a contributory factor here is that the subject is taught by three masters, and that progress in the lower forms is relatively slow. The course needs some revision, and it would be better if one master were responsible. The senior woodwork master, who is head of the handicraft department, is also responsible for the teaching of technical drawing, which he does with skill and competence; the work of many of the boys is of a high standard of draughtsmanship, and it is clear that they not only enjoy their work in this subject but appreciate the value of it. It should be possible to effect a closer link between the technical drawing and the work which the boys do in the workshops, and especially should there be a link at the higher levels between engineering drawing and the metalwork course biased towards engineering.

ART

A small but pleasant room in the recently built Lyttelton wing serves temporarily as an art room. For ten years the teaching has been the responsibility of a part-time master who has given long service to art education and was formerly principal of an art school. He will be succeeded by a full-time master next September. On a time allowance of two periods a week the course proceeds to ordinary level in the examination for the General Certificate of Education, which a few boys take successfully each year. The master is unusually skilled in a number of crafts, but the work is limited mainly to painting and lettering; he sets an example of skilful drawing and sound draughtsmanship which undoubtedly influences the boys, and the more gifted of them produce very satisfactory results. To some of the boys, the younger ones particularly, the introductory work is unnecessarily restricting and while efforts are made by the teacher to secure keen observation and a sufficient mastery of technique to record those observations the results fall short of the standards he seeks to achieve.

CRAFTWORK

A newly built classroom provides accommodation for music and craftwork; it is small for this dual purpose since generous storage is required and the necessary equipment occupies considerable floor space. The young master responsible for craft also takes woodwork with several groups. He has introduced a suitable variety including bookcraft, basketry, lino-cutting for printing on card and fabric, lamp-shade making, and printing, the last named having been started since the recent arrival of old but serviceable equipment and type.

The space available is adequate for half classes, group work is encouraged where appropriate and a beginning has been made in the development of sound techniques and good taste. As the work becomes established rising standards can be expected to bring these aims nearer achievement and books, periodicals, illustrative material and well chosen examples of the work of craftsmen may also play their part.

MUSIC

It has not been found possible to give all forms lessons in music and, since there is no school orchestra or music club, it cannot be said that music holds a strong place in the life of the school. But the younger boys who do take the subject appear to be interested and gain much from their lessons. These are taken by a master who is enthusiastic and energetic. He is building up a useful library of records; he has produced a varied and lively syllabus and the songs he has chosen for the boys to sing are robust and tuneful. On the whole, there is promise for the future in this subject.

The boys sing well and the choir performs on occasions at the Morning Assembly and in local competitions. A few boys are learning to play stringed instruments and a larger group are individually taking piano lessons.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The school possesses a small, partially equipped gymnasium with changing accommodation, but no shower baths, in the adjoining boarders' cloakroom. There are plans, however, for a new gymnastic block. There is also a small but useful heated swimming bath; more seats and pegs are needed, and at some future date a modern chlorination system might well be installed. In addition to the tennis court at present being resurfaced, additional space for tennis and basket-ball could be available in the large playground if only suitable equipment and protective netting and markings were provided. The grassed space used for athletics could with advantage be much improved for the purpose. The various playing fields, although giving reasonable accommodation for winter games, do not provide sufficient good cricket wickets when the whole school takes afternoon games. The useful changing room with shower baths, adjoining the school field, is under repair, but better changing accommodation is needed at Bigmore.

The responsible master, who is now in his fifth year of teaching, has attended a supplementary course in physical education. Another master is in charge of association football and cricket and others assist with matches. The main programme includes gymnastics, rugby

and association football, cricket, athletics, cross-country running and swimming. It would be advisable to prepare a scheme of work incorporating all these branches of the work.

All forms receive two weekly periods of gymnastics in the autumn and winter terms and, whenever possible, one period each of swimming and athletics in the summer term; in addition the first and second forms and boys in the third forms who are below cadet age have a double period of games. All have games (usually matches) on Wednesday afternoons and the day boys may join the boarders on Saturday afternoons. With the present limited number of pitches, particularly for cricket, some suitable rearrangement seems desirable so that fewer boys play games at any one time.

Gymnastics, swimming and athletics were seen during the inspection. In gymnastics the boys, who show a keen response to their formal work, appear to need more individual coaching throughout the lesson and also would benefit from progressive, graded group work in vaulting and agility. There is much enthusiasm for swimming. Understandably at this early stage in the season, little progress has been made in athletics.

The school follows a full programme of inter-house and inter-school sporting activities and takes part in district competitions. Swimming and gymnastic clubs are held.

Corporate Life

The school assembles for prayers taken by the Headmaster every morning; lessons are read by boys.

It was not possible to see all the club activities since most of them are held on the same evening, but there is no doubt that a growing interest is being taken in the development of enjoyable leisure-time activities including art, drama, model making and chess. The school scout troop has a lively programme and individual scouts impressed by their readiness to use initiative. The Cadet Force recruits boys at the age of 14 and has 149 on roll; they showed great keenness on parade.

The school is the fortunate possessor of a swimming bath and swimming is a popular activity; the usual games are played but the playing space is overtaxed by heavy use at certain times of the week.

Observation of the various activities and the bearing of the prefects suggests the emergence of sound leadership among the senior boys which should render some of the close supervision by members of staff less necessary; this is of particular importance on the boarding side, and in a school with a robust corporate life promises well for the future.

Conclusion

Progress has been made towards matching organisation and effort to the exciting possibilities of this school. The aims of the school, however, need further clarification. If a challenging alternative

to a grammar school education is to be provided, standards of attainment will have to be raised and the work so planned and presented as to stimulate and encourage boys who learn best in practical situations while making exacting demands on the ablest among them. To achieve this in a school of this size admitting a wide range of ability will require wise leadership and the close cooperation of the whole staff.

Appendix

NUMBERS AND AGES OF BOYS IN FORMS

Form	Total No. of Boys	Average Age Y. M.	Number of Boys in the School whose ages on 1st May, 1957, were: 11 and under 12	12 and under 13	13 and under 14	14 and under 15	15 and under 16	16 and under 17	17 and under 18	18 and over
Ib	29	12 5	5	23	1	-	-	-	-	-
Ia	29	12 3	8	21	-	-	-	-	-	-
IIb	27	13 -	-	12	15	-	-	-	-	-
IIa	29	13 2	-	6	23	-	-	-	-	-
IIIb	27	14 5	-	-	9	14	4	-	-	-
IIIa	29	14 1	-	-	11	17	1	-	-	-
IVb	25	15 1	-	-	-	10	13	2	-	-
IVa	26	15 1	-	-	-	10	16	-	-	-
Vb	18	16 2	-	-	-	1	4	9	4	-
Va	25	16 1	-	-	-	-	8	16	1	-
V Up.	18	16 8	-	-	-	-	1	12	5	-
VIb	6	17 -	-	-	-	-	1	2	2	1
Totals	288	-	13	62	59	52	48	41	12	1

Total number of Boarders.	180