

INSPECTION REPORT

HALL GREEN SECONDARY SCHOOL
Hall Green

LEA area : Birmingham

Unique Reference Number : 103556
Inspection Number : 184598

Headteacher : Mr P Whittaker

Reporting inspector : Hilda Roxborough
1931

Dates of inspection : 1-5 November 1999

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school :	Comprehensive all-through
Type of control :	Foundation
Age range of pupils :	11-16
Gender of pupils :	Mixed
School address :	Southam Road Hall Green Birmingham B28 0AA
Telephone number :	0121-628-8787
Fax number :	0121-702-2182
Appropriate authority :	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors :	Mr R Fox
Date of previous inspection :	16 January 1995

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Hilda Roxborough Rgl	Registered Inspector	Characteristics of the school Attainment and progress Teaching
Helen Gamble	Lay Inspector	Attendance Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and the community
Philip Dahl	Modern Foreign Languages	Leadership and management The efficiency of the school
Jane Lloyd-Davies	English Equal Opportunities	The curriculum and assessment Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
Val Taylor	Geography Business Studies	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural behaviour
John Bethel	Mathematics	
Shirley Hackett	Information technology	
Gareth Large	Design and Technology	
Beryl Thomas	History	
Geoff Thomas	Music	
Bill Goodall	Art	
Peter Whitlam	Physical Education	
John Gopsill	Science	
Dilwyn Hunt	Religious Education	
Annette Hope	Special Educational Needs	

The inspection contractor was:

Dudley Local Education Authority
Saltwells Education Development Centre
Bowling Green Road
Netherton
Dudley
West Midlands
DY2 9LY

Telephone: 01384 813722

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The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- High standards of attainment are achieved by pupils at 14 years and 16 years of age in comparison to those achieved by all schools nationally.
- High standards of attainment are achieved by pupils at 14 years and 16 years of age in comparison to those achieved in similar schools.
- There are very good relationships throughout the school.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good with very successful integration of pupils with physical disabilities.
- There is a very good ethos and the community is very orderly.
- The behaviour of pupils is very good.
- The provision of learning resources is very good.
- The school provides good value for money.

Where the school has weaknesses

- There is no common strategic approach to development planning across the school.
- Monitoring and evaluation of the school's policies have recently begun but are not sufficiently embedded to inform development of the curriculum and its delivery.
- The interpretation of assessment data is insufficiently used to inform lesson and curriculum planning and raise standards.
- In the planning, delivery and time allocation for personal, social, health and careers education.
- The school does not meet the statutory requirements regarding the school's prospectus and the Governors' Annual Report to Parents. The school does not comply with the requirements of the National Curriculum in several aspects of art in Years 7 to 9 and the requirement for an Act of Collective Worship.

The school has many significant strengths. There are few weaknesses. The Governors' action plan will set out how the weaknesses identified in the inspection are to be tackled. The plan will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils in the school.

How the school has improved since the previous inspection

The school has successfully addressed the key issue raised in the previous inspection with regard to the accommodation in the school. The school has had major building work carried out and has brought about an increase in the capacity of the school buildings to deliver the curriculum to the number of pupils on roll. Accommodation is no longer a key issue.

The school has successfully taken steps to improve the standards of the more able pupils in mathematics and in doing so has brought about significant improvement in the overall standards achieved by all pupils in this subject. This is no longer a key issue.

The use of the morning tutor time is better co-ordinated than at the time of the previous inspection. Each year group has a calendar of activities. This is no longer a key issue for the school. The use of this time to deliver some aspects of personal, social, health and careers education is not sufficiently well planned to provide for systematic teaching and learning throughout the school.

A policy for assessment, recording and reporting has been developed and some aspects of this policy are being implemented. The development of the policy is no longer a key issue but the use of assessment data to inform lesson and curriculum planning continues to be a key issue for the school.

The governors and senior management team have reviewed the arrangements for the Act of Collective Worship and believe "that an attempt at a daily act of worship would undermine the successful integration of the different cultures represented in the school". The situation remains as it was at the previous inspection with the Governors' approval.

The school has the systems and strategies in place to bring about improvement.

Standards in subjects

The following table shows standards achieved by 14 and 16 year olds in national tests and GCSE examinations in 1999:

Performance in:	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	
Key Stage 3 test	A	A	<i>well above average</i> A B C D E
GCSE examinations	B	A	
A/AS – levels	N/A	N/A	

Results in national tests for 14 year olds are well above average in English and mathematics. In science they are above the national average. Results in these subjects are well above those for schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. The performance in mathematics and English of 14 year olds is higher than in science.

At GCSE, standards have improved since the previous inspection. The proportions of pupils gaining 5 or more A* to C grades and 5 or more A* to G grades are well above the national average. The attainment of pupils' aged 16 years in mathematics and science is higher than English.

In 1999, the most successful subjects in the school at GCSE were English literature, design and technology, mathematics and science.

Standards in religious education at age 16 years are below locally agreed expectations, as a consequence of the lower than recommended time allocation by the school to this subject in Years 10 and 11. Standards in information technology at age 16 years are good and have improved since the previous inspection.

Quality of teaching

	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
Years 7-9	Good	English, design and technology, history and mathematics.	None
Years 10-11	Good	English, design and technology, history and mathematics.	None
English	Good		
Mathematics	Good		

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

The quality of teaching overall is good and there has been some improvement since the previous inspection.

In 94% of lessons, the quality of teaching is satisfactory or better. There is good teaching in most subjects. Unsatisfactory teaching is not specific to any one particular subject or year group, it occurs in isolated lessons. This is an improvement from the previous inspection when the quality of teaching in 88% of lessons was satisfactory.

In 54% of lessons the quality of teaching is good or better. The proportion of good or better teaching has remained the same since the previous inspection. In 20% of lessons the quality of teaching is very good or excellent.

Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Pupils' behaviour is very good. They treat each other and their teachers with great respect, courtesy and consideration.
Attendance	Attendance and punctuality are good throughout the school.
Ethos*	Very good. Pupils are keen to do their best. The headteacher, staff and governors are committed to maintaining standards of behaviour and attainment. Relationships are very good.
Leadership and management	The headteacher provides strong, educational direction for the school. Management at all levels is sound.
Curriculum	A broad and balanced curriculum meets statutory requirements except for aspects of art in Years 7, 8 and 9.
Pupils with special educational needs	Provision for these pupils is very good. It is well planned and implemented.
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for moral and social development is good. There is satisfactory provision for cultural development but the provision for spiritual development has some shortcomings.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	The number, qualifications and experience of staff meet the demands of the curriculum. Accommodation provides a good learning environment and there are very good learning resources throughout the school.
Value for money	The school gives good value for money.

* *Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The very good behaviour and attendance of the pupils. •The positive reinforcement for good work and behaviour provided by the reward system. •The good standards of work which the pupils achieve. •The good attitudes and values which the school promotes. •The improvements in the accommodation and learning environment since the previous inspection. 	g and;

The inspectors' judgements match the positive views of the parents.

Inspectors support the view that the reports which parents receive do not always give a complete picture of pupils' attainment and progress. The reports lack information explaining how pupils are progressing in each subject and aspect of the curriculum. There is insufficient explanation to parents about pupils' attainment in relation to national standards and pupils' achievement in relation to what they should be achieving.

Inspectors also found that there were many gaps in pupils' planners when no homework had been set. This has no adverse effect on maintaining current standards.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

In order to further raise standards, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- use a common strategic approach to long and short term development planning across the school. All planning should define what action will be taken, contain a timetable for implementation, contain costings, identify staff responsible for the work, contain targets or indicators which will help to measure progress made, and indicate the strategies which will be used to evaluate the outcomes; (paragraphs, 96,98, 99,100, 104,112, 127)
- fully implement the monitoring and evaluation policy in a planned programme at all levels of management including senior managers and governors, to ensure:
 - that the school's policies and procedures are being effectively implemented
 - that the outcomes of the evaluation inform the development planning of the curriculum and its delivery.
 - that all pupils are receiving their entitlement in relation to personal, social, health and careers education, and use the findings from the evaluation to plan and implement a coherent, progressive strategy and programme of learning for personal, social, health and careers education from years 7 to 11; (paragraphs 45, 62, 66, 72, 96, 97, 100, 104, 110, 112, 114)
- use assessment data about individual attainment and progress at all levels, to inform and improve lesson and curriculum planning by better matching work to pupils' abilities; (paragraphs 15, 53, 54, 67, 68)
- meet the statutory requirements in relation to the school's prospectus, the Governors' Annual Report to Parents, the delivery of National Curriculum art in Years 7 to 9 and the Act of Collective Worship. (paragraphs, 57, 59, 74, 79, 84, 102)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered in the action plan:

- improvements to the annual report received by parents on their child; (paragraphs, 78, 85)
- ensure that marking guides pupils to improve their standards; (paragraphs 51, 124, 135, 154, 219, 260)
- develop and implement a systematic approach to language and literacy across the curriculum. (paragraphs 17, 18)

INTRODUCTION

- Characteristics of the school

1.The school is in the Hall Green Ward of Birmingham which is 3 miles to the south of the city centre. The school's population is drawn from the immediate vicinity of the school. The school serves a mainly residential area of local council and privately owned homes. Unemployment is in line with the national averages.

2.There are 758 pupils on roll; 406 boys and 352 girls between the ages of 11-16 years. Approximately 19% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is in line with the national average. The attainment of pupils on entry to Hall Green Secondary School for the current years 8 to 11 has shown a fairly consistent pattern. The attainment of pupils on entry is above the national average for pupils aged 11 years. About 75% of pupils at age 11 years have achieved the national standard (Level 4) in English, mathematics and science.

3.Provision is made for pupils with physical disabilities and these pupils are from across the whole of the city. There are 39 pupils with a statement of special educational needs, 37 of whom have physical disabilities. Just under 52% of the school's population is of ethnic minority origin, mainly Pakistani and Indian, with 44% of all pupils coming from homes where English is not the first language.

4.The targets for the end of Key Stage 4, agreed with the Local Education Authority for the year 2000 are:

-51% 5+ A*-C GCSE grades

-98% 1+ A*-G GCSE grades

-An average total points score of 38

1.The school aims are to:

-provide a broadly based and balanced education relevant to the needs and capabilities of the pupils, mindful of the requirements and aspirations of society.

-identify and to develop to the full the talents of every pupil - so that all individuals recognise their unique worth and are able to realise their true potential.

-develop young people who are confident and competent, endowed with the qualities of self-respect and respect for others.

-encourage healthy, social and emotional development in pupils so that they may play a significant part in the adult world.

6. Key Indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 3¹

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	82	70	152

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	72	68	59
	Girls	60	51	35
	Total	132	119	94
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	87(78)	78(74)	62(66)
	National	64(65)	62(60)	54(56)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	44(36)	44(43)	30(36)
	National	28(35)	38(36)	23(27)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	71	69	64
	Girls	63	53	52
	Total	134	122	116
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	88 (72)	80(76)	76(71)
	National	65(61)	65(64)	60(61)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	39(38)	59(49)	34(36)
	National	32(31)	38(37)	29(31)

¹ Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

Attainment at Key Stage 4²

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest Reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	82	66	148

GCSE Results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A* to G	1 or more grades A* to G
Number of pupils Achieving Standard specified	Boys	47	82	82
	Girls	39	65	65
	Total	86	147	147
Percentage achieving Standard specified	School	58(42)	99(97)	99(97)
	National	47.8 (44.6)	88.4 (89.8)	93.9 (95.2)

Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) Missed through absence for the latest Complete reporting year :

		%
Authorised Absence	School	6.6
	National comparative data	7.9
Unauthorised Absence	School	0.2
	National comparative data	1.1

Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year :

	Number
Fixed period	13
Permanent	4

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

	%
Very good or better	20
Satisfactory or better	74
Less than satisfactory	6

² Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

- 1.The attainment of pupils on entry to Hall Green school for the pupils in the current Years 8 to 11 has shown a fairly consistent pattern. About 75% of pupils at age 11 years have achieved the national standard (Level 4) in English, mathematics and science. Standards of attainment on entry are above the national average. In 1999 pupils entering the school in Year 7 had, on entry, reached standards well above the improved national average for that year.
- 2.Standards at age 14 years (the end of Key Stage 3) have improved since the previous inspection. By the age of 14 years, the percentage of pupils attaining level 5 and above (the national standard) is well above the national average in English and mathematics and is above the national average in science. In comparison with schools with similar backgrounds, standards at age 14 years are well above average in English, mathematics and science. The average points score achieved at age 14 years in 1999 is well above the average for schools with similar backgrounds. Over the last few years there has been a decline in the standards achieved in science from 74% in 1997 to 62% in 1999 of pupils achieving level 5 and above. At age 14 years, pupils achieve higher standards in English and mathematics than they do in science.
- 3.Throughout the school there are no significant differences in the attainment of pupils from different ethnic origins. There is no significant difference overall in standards attained by boys and girls, although there are variations year on year.
- 4.Standards achieved by pupils by the age of 16 years are well above the national averages. There has been an increase from 50% in 1995 to 58% in 1999 of pupils gaining 5 or more GCSE grades A*-C. There has also been an increase in the percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more GCSE grades A*- G and 1 or more grades A*-G. Pupils perform better in GCSE mathematics and science than they do in English. The average total point score per pupil at 16 years taking GCSE is above the national average. From 1994 to 1998 the average total point score showed no trend whilst the national trend was rising. In 1999, the average total point school per pupil increased significantly. Value added analysis for this group of pupils taking GCSE showed that they had, however, only made progress in line with pupils in the middle 50% of schools nationally.
- 5.In comparison with schools of a similar type, the school's performance at GCSE is well above average for 5 or more grades A*-C, for 5 or more grades A*-G and for 1 or more grades A*-G. The average total GCSE point score per pupil is also well above the average in comparison to similar schools.
- 6.Since the previous inspection there has been an improvement in the standards attained by 16 year olds in mathematics, geography and history. At GCSE, standards in geography are now close to the national average. Standards in history are in line with the national average and in mathematics are well above the national average. The key issue in the previous inspection regarding low standards in mathematics has been fully addressed.
- 7.The majority of pupils, regardless of ability or ethnic origin make good progress overall up to age 14 years. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress.

8. During Years 10 and 11, the majority of pupils make satisfactory progress overall in line with their prior attainment. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress. Pupils with high prior attainment make good progress. Pupils of average ability make satisfactory progress.
9. The school has only recently begun to track pupils' progress and has yet to carry out any analyses of pupils' short or long term progress in terms of gender or ethnicity. The patterns of attainment and progress of boys and girls, which fluctuate from year to year, have not been investigated over the long term. This issue of differences of standards achieved by boys and girls was raised in the previous inspection report. Value added analysis of pupil performance indicates a significant difference in progress of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. Pupils of white European origin make less progress than other pupils between the ages of 14 years and 16 years.
10. The school has recognised that the targets which were set in consultation with the Local Education Authority for the year 2000, are insufficiently challenging for the school. The school has set more challenging internal targets for this academic year. The targets for the year 2001 are appropriate in view of the prior attainment of pupils in the current Year 10.
17. Standards of attainment in English are satisfactory overall and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress throughout the school. By age 14 years, pupils are attaining results well above the national average and well above the average for similar schools. At GCSE, English language results are in line with the national average. Pupils perform less well in English at Key Stage 4 than they do in mathematics and science. The school has identified this and is beginning to address the problem.
11. The development of literacy in subjects other than English is varied. Reading development is generally restricted to the textbooks and worksheets provided. In history, pupils are provided with a wealth of good opportunities for reading from a wide range of stimulating sources. In geography where extended writing is encouraged and in mathematics where pupils are required to describe and explain their investigations, there is successful practice in writing. In history pupils write in a wide range of styles and there is good descriptive, narrative and discursive writing, poetry, diaries and letters. In many areas of the curriculum, however, there is little variety in the tasks set and no planned programme to ensure that pupils experience writing in various formats. Good listening skills are evident across the curriculum but there are few opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking skills. In mathematics and physical education good opportunities are given for discussion. In history a range of oral activities, including debate and role play is used successfully. Some initial planning has taken place between history and English and good literacy links have been established between these subjects, but there is no systematic approach to the development of language and literacy across the curriculum.
12. Attainment in mathematics is very good throughout the school. The percentage of pupils gaining the national standard by age 14 years is well above the national average for all schools and well above when compared to that for similar schools. The percentage of pupils achieving grades A*-C at GCSE is also well above the national average and well above the average when compared to that for similar schools. All pupils, including those with special educational needs make good progress.

20. In lessons other than mathematics, pupils' numerical skills are used and developed in history, geography, design and technology, science and information technology. In history, pupils understand and use the chronological framework at every opportunity. They confidently handle population figures in millions and are able to express them using percentages. Pupils also use bar charts in a variety of ways, such as a comparison of wages paid between 1840 and 1847. Population graphs are also used in geography, and pupils draw graphs from their own collected data. In design and technology, pupils regularly measure and mark out work confidently and competently. In science, pupils draw line graphs confidently and substitute into equations. Lessons in information technology make a positive contribution to pupils' data handling skills and their understanding of graphs through the use of spreadsheets and databases. Business studies affords many good opportunities for the use and application of data. Pupils are able to construct graphs and use data from charts, although their skills of analysis are less well developed.
13. Attainment in science at GCSE has remained well above the national average since the previous inspection. Standards in GCSE science are also well above the average when compared to similar schools. By the age of 14 years, pupils are achieving standards above the national average and well above the average for similar schools. There has been a decline in the standards achieved in science by pupils aged 14 years since 1997. In 1997, 76% of pupils achieved Level 5 or above whilst in 1999 62% of pupils achieved this standard. Pupils perform less well in science than they do in English and mathematics at age 14 years. Pupils make satisfactory progress in science throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
14. In art at age 14 years, pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory within the narrow range the art curriculum offers. Attainment and progress at age 16 years are good. 96% of pupils entered for the subject achieve grades A*-C, but only 15% of the year cohort take the subject at GCSE. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in this subject.
15. In business studies at GCSE, standards are close to the national average. Pupils make satisfactory progress.
16. Pupils throughout the school make good progress in design and technology and their attainment in the subject is good. Combined GCSE results for all the design and technology subjects taken show that standards are well above national averages. By 14 years of age pupils are achieving standards well above national expectations. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
17. Standards in geography at age 16 years are close to the national average. At age 14 years, pupils' standards are in line with national expectations. Pupils throughout the school are making sound progress in the subject. Special educational needs pupils make good progress.
18. Standards of attainment in history are well above the national average by the end of Year 9 and in line with the national average by age 16 years. Pupils make very good progress in Years 7 to 9 and good progress in Years 10 and 11. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
19. In information technology standards are good and pupils make satisfactory progress. By the age of 14 years, the standards achieved are well above the national average. Only a small number of pupils follow the GCSE course and they achieve standards well above the national average. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is good.
20. Attainment in modern foreign languages is good. By the age of 14 years, pupils achieve the national average in higher proportions than other schools nationally. At GCSE pupils attain results close to or above the national average, depending on the language taken. Up to the

age of 14 years pupils make good progress and by the age of 16 years they make at least satisfactory progress and sometimes better. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

21. In music, attainment overall is satisfactory. In GCSE only very small numbers of pupils take the subject and their progress is good. Results in GCSE in 1999 were well above the national average but in the years prior to this standards have been below. By the age of 14 years, the majority of pupils have achieved the expected standard or above and are making satisfactory progress overall. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

22. Attainment at age 14 and 16 years in physical education lessons is in line with national expectations. Results at GCSE in 1999 for the first pupils who took the examination are below the national average, with girls' results being well below the national average. Progress in physical education lessons and over time is satisfactory at both key stages. Progress for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory.

23. In religious education all pupils up to the age of 14 years make satisfactory progress and achieve standards in line with locally agreed expectations. The limited time allocated by the school for religious education in Years 10 and 11 constrains pupils' progress towards understanding the diversity of views within a religious tradition. Consequently, all pupils at age 16 years are making unsatisfactory progress and are not meeting locally agreed expectations.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

24. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards school. In many lessons their response is good. When opportunities are provided, pupils support each other and work well together. Good examples of pupils collaborating well are seen in drama, geography, music, modern foreign languages and history, when pupils work effectively in pairs and in small groups. Pupils respond to each other's efforts positively. They are helpful and courteous. Respect is shown for others' feelings and values, and without exception, their response to pupils with disabilities is mature and thoughtful. There is an atmosphere of mutual respect and good racial harmony within the school. Routines for moving around the school buildings are well established and an orderly, calm atmosphere is maintained in corridors, on staircases and in the dining hall.

25. There is a clearly defined system of awards. Pupils in most lessons take a pride in the rewards they receive. Appropriate sanctions are in place. Exclusion is seen as a last resort, and the number of permanent exclusions is low.

26. Behaviour in and out of lessons is generally very good. Equipment is treated with respect, particularly in science and in information technology rooms. In design and technology, pupils are given considerable trust and respond well to this. Pupils are given few opportunities in lessons to take responsibility, and work independently, although when they are given the chance, they respond well. Examples of this were seen in mathematics when Year 11 pupils supported Year 8 in a Numeracy project, and in physical education when pupils are asked to lead 'warm up' sessions. Year 11 pupils carry out their prefect duties diligently, especially when assisting Year 7 pupils in tutorials. Pupils are encouraged to show initiative in finding their own work placements, and in Year 7, form groups organise a charity week.

34. Attendance

27. Attendance and punctuality are good throughout the school and this has a positive impact on pupils' standard of attainment and progress.

28. Attendance at the school in the 1997/1998 academic year was 92.4%. This was broadly in line with the national average. Unauthorised absence, in the same year, was well below the national average. Last year attendance at the school improved to 93.2%.

29. Most pupils have a good attendance record. They arrive at school in good time for the start of registration and lessons start punctually.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

30. The quality of teaching overall is good. There has been some improvement since the previous inspection. The overall good quality of teaching has a positive effect on pupils' progress and the standards they achieve.

31. Teaching is most effective throughout the school in English, mathematics, design and technology and history. There has been an improvement in the quality of teaching in mathematics, geography, history and physical education since the previous inspection. These subjects were identified as in need of improvement.

32. The majority of teachers have a good understanding of the subjects they teach. There are some teachers not teaching their specialist subject and in a few cases this adversely affects pupils' progress in the lesson. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and their management and discipline of the pupils throughout the school are good. Relationships between pupils and teachers in all lessons are very good. There are very good resources in the school and teachers use these well.

33. Where teaching is most effective, teachers share the learning objectives clearly with the pupils at the beginning of the lesson. For example, these are often written on the board prior to the lesson in science. In effective lessons, teachers then use the learning objectives as a framework to question pupils at the end of the lesson to find out what the pupils have or have not learned.

34. Effective teaching is characterised by the provision of a variety of stimulating activities, including whole class introductions, small group, paired and individual work. For example, in a Year 11 English lesson pupils built on their previous knowledge and understanding of 'Gulliver's Travels' to consider "other worlds". The teacher provided a range of activities for pupils including watching video clips of films such as '1984', working together in pairs to analyse what they have seen, sharing their findings with the rest of the class and making notes appropriate to their individual coursework.

35. In the best lessons the questions posed by the teacher are open-ended and probe the pupils' understanding. When this occurs, other pupils listen attentively and respectfully and this has a positive effect upon both their understanding and their literacy skills.

36. A brisk pace characterises good lessons. For example, in a Year 10 English lesson, pupils were asked to identify the persuasive language and imagery used in a television advertisement. They were given a set time limit for this and then asked to explain the intended effect upon the audience. This disciplined approach to the use of time resulted in the pupils being highly focused and attentive which had a positive effect upon the quality of the final analysis of the media text.

37. Because the monitoring and evaluation policy is in the very early stages of implementation, the

very good and excellent teaching seen in the school is not being effectively shared across all departments to inform and promote the improvement of the quality of teaching.

38. When planning is weak, teaching is less effective. Some teachers confuse, as shown in their planning sheets, the learning objectives and the activities which are to be undertaken. In these lessons teachers only explain the tasks which pupils are to undertake and not what they are expected to learn. Teachers consequently do not always use appropriate methods or bring about a successful plenary at the end of the lesson. In these lessons pupils make limited progress.
39. The range of activities in less effective lessons is narrow. Teachers talk for long periods of time, only occasionally asking pupils a question. Although pupils behave very well in these situations, they lose concentration, become restless and spend time doodling or day dreaming and this negatively affects their progress.
40. Less effective lessons are often characterised by excessive use of worksheets. For example, in a lesson in Year 11, the teacher used six worksheets, one after the other, and talked through these for sixty minutes, interspersing the talk with occasional questions. Pupils were not actively engaged in the learning and little progress was made.
41. Teaching effectively meets the needs of all pupils with special educational needs. Additional support in the classroom is used well and there is sound team teaching when support teachers are present. Teachers' relationships with special needs pupils are very good. They maintain a very caring attitude towards these pupils whilst maintaining high expectations. Confusion exists, however, for some support staff regarding their role. They do not always support a number of pupils with special educational needs in the same classroom. The needs of those pupils for whom English is an additional language are satisfactorily met.
42. The quality of teaching in business studies is mostly satisfactory. Teaching is effective when teachers have a sound subject knowledge and personal experience, which they use to illustrate and enhance parts of lessons. In these lessons, pupils make sound progress. Where teaching is less effective and least progress is made, the high level of teacher input and use of closed questions limit the level of pupil involvement in the lesson. Few examples were seen of work being set for pupils of differing abilities.
43. Marking practices vary across the school. The school marking policy and departmental practices are not consistently applied by all teachers. Pupils do not always understand the criteria against which the work is marked, nor is it always clear to them what learning has been achieved. There are also few examples of written comments which explain to pupils what they need to do to improve their work.
44. Boys and girls are rarely encouraged by teachers to work together. This was an issue raised in the previous inspection report which has only been addressed by a few teachers. Where pupils work in mixed gender groups, for example in some English lessons, this has a positive effect upon their progress and attitudes. Their concentration is more focused and they make greater gains in learning.
45. There is insufficient use of assessment information to inform lesson planning. Many departments are in the early stages of using assessment data to bring about improvements in teaching and learning. For example, information gained from the marking of tests and class work is not used regularly and consistently by all teachers to identify where there are weaknesses in learning and subsequently to identify the weaknesses in teaching.
46. Whilst there are some good examples of teachers using targeted individual support for pupils, the use of work matched to pupils' abilities is limited. In some subjects (science, design and

technology, physical education, modern foreign languages and geography) the higher attaining pupils are not always given learning tasks which would challenge them to achieve more.

47. The use of homework is satisfactory. It is generally regularly set by the majority of teachers. It consists frequently of finishing off class work. Pupils report that if the work is finished in class then they do not get homework. In Years 10 and 11 homework is frequently the development of coursework for GCSE. There is a lack of variety in the homework tasks set. They are mainly written tasks or learning for tests. Tasks which involve the application of prior knowledge and understanding to new situations, or research are rarely set. In Years 10 and 11, homework makes a positive contribution to pupils' progress.
48. Although there is a school homework policy, there is no homework timetable. A few parents reported that there are evenings when pupils do not have homework and other occasions when a considerable amount is set to be completed for the following day. Inspectors found from an examination of homework diaries that this was the case. This has no adverse effect on maintaining current standards.

The curriculum and assessment

49. The curriculum throughout the school is broad and balanced. All National Curriculum subjects are offered and statutory requirements are met in all subjects except aspects of art in Years 7 to 9. Time allocation for subjects in Years 7 to 9 is generally appropriate, although the amount of teaching time is low.
50. In Years 10 and 11, pupils follow an appropriate programme of GCSE courses which includes English, mathematics, science, design and technology, a modern foreign language, a humanities subject and one other option choice. The time allocated to religious education is below the recommended minimum, which adversely affects the depth of study possible. The Year 10 and 11 curriculum is balanced overall. Drama is offered as an extra-curricular GCSE subject.
51. The curriculum is planned effectively to achieve continuity and progression in most subject areas. Schemes of work are generally detailed and systematic. There are some shortcomings in art in Years 7 to 9 where aspects of the National Curriculum programmes of study are not delivered and where tasks are planned which lack learning objectives. In physical education there is an imbalance of experiences in Years 7 to 9. Progression within information technology is clear in Years 7 and 8 where it is taught as a discrete subject but it is less so in Year 9 where it is delivered through other subjects.
52. Since the previous inspection timetabling and grouping arrangements have been revised to allow for more effective blocking of subjects and greater flexibility in the management of setting. This has generally been successful although some constraints remain in design and technology, art and science and between English and modern foreign languages, which results in pupils occasionally not always being in the most appropriate class.
53. Pupils spend a total of twenty minutes each day in morning registration and form period. Some of this time is used for personal and social education, to attend assembly, for quiet reading and for staff to deal with administration. The co-ordination of morning tutor time was a key issue in the previous inspection, which has been addressed.
54. The school aims to deliver personal, social, health and careers education to all year groups through assemblies, form tutorials and curriculum subjects such as science and religious education. The provision for sex education is satisfactory. The strategies used to deliver other

aspects of personal, social, health and careers education are not, however, adequately monitored to ensure that there is appropriate coverage and progression throughout the school. The quality of delivery and the breadth and depth of content are variable from form to form within the same year group. A significant amount of tutorial time is not effectively employed to address personal, social, health and careers issues. There are no schemes of work, no aims or objectives and no planned progression for delivery. This, together with inadequate co-ordination and monitoring do not ensure that pupils receive equal access to all aspects.

55. In all other aspects of the curriculum there is equality of access for all pupils. The curriculum offers equal opportunities for pupils of different ability, gender, ethnic and social backgrounds.
56. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is a strength of the school. Pupils with physical disabilities are fully integrated into all aspects of school life and the individual needs of pupils with learning difficulties are well met. Very little withdrawal from lessons for special needs support takes place and where it does the sessions are effective and planned to ensure curriculum access is not affected. The use of support staff is effective. There is some joint planning of materials and strategies between class teachers and support teachers. Individual Education Plans (learning support programmes and pupil profiles) are not sufficiently specific in terms of learning targets to be of use to subject teachers. Statutory requirements, including those for assessment for pupils with statements of special educational needs, are fully met.
57. A good range of extra curricular activities is offered to pupils which enhance their learning experiences. The provision includes sporting, music and computer activities. The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme is successful and very popular. In addition, there is a good range of residential courses and trips abroad, which make a positive contribution to pupils' standards of attainment. Extra lessons and clubs are provided by some subjects and a homework club operates for year 7, 8 and 9. There are successful before and after school coursework clubs for pupils in Years 10 and 11. Pupils report that they value these activities and opportunities, which effectively promote their progress.
58. Careers education is mainly delivered through form periods in Years 9, 10 and 11 by form tutors who are provided with careers and study skills teaching packs. The quality of delivery is unsatisfactory overall. Careers reference material is available in various formats in the library and appropriate use is made of outside speakers in assemblies. Arrangements for careers guidance are sound. All pupils in Year 10 receive an appropriate work experience entitlement. Some departments have begun to effectively integrate education and business needs into the schemes of work.
59. Since the previous inspection the school has revised its policy for assessment, recording and reporting. The degree to which the policy is implemented varies from department to department. Recording practices have improved and a system for monitoring pupils' progress throughout the school (the Pupil Tracking System) has been devised. The collection of data is common practice but little analysis of the data has been done to inform curriculum planning. Good practice is developing in some departments. These departments use data to identify underachieving pupils in Years 10 and 11.
60. Overall, the procedures for assessment have improved since the previous inspection. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are satisfactory except for art at the end of Year 9. The use of assessment data to inform curriculum planning is unsatisfactory and remains an issue for the school.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

61. The school curriculum policy stresses the importance of the promotion of pupils' moral, spiritual

and cultural development and preparation for adult life.

62. The provision made for social and moral development is good. Success is evident in the orderly community, lack of vandalism or graffiti and the good relationships between pupils and between staff and pupils. Staff set good examples for pupils. Pupils show tolerance and respect for the views of others and know right from wrong. Pupils respect everyone's efforts, particularly those who are less fortunate and coping with disability. This is a strength of the school. In lessons where pupils are given the opportunities to collaborate and work in-groups, they respond well. This was evident in a geography lesson where pupils worked in groups to present views on inner city redevelopment.

63. In several areas of the curriculum, opportunities are planned for pupils to explore social and moral issues. In English, pupils examined the way in which the media can manipulate an audience through advertising. In history, pupils looked at human suffering as a consequence of slavery, the holocaust and Hiroshima. Considerable social development also occurs during the Year 7 visit to school camp.

64. Pupils' personal, social, health and careers education is insufficiently planned or co-ordinated across the school to allow for the systematic development of knowledge, skills and understanding. This issue was also mentioned in the previous inspection report.

65. Cultural development is fostered satisfactorily in lessons and in extra-curricular activities. In religious education there is satisfactory development of pupils' understanding of the diversity of religious traditions. In English, pupils examine beliefs in the context of the time that texts are written, and in history pupils have developed an awareness of the beliefs of North American Indians. Both history and geography enhance cultural development through field trips which involve visits to areas of cultural heritage. But for several subjects, including art, there is limited evidence that cultural development is addressed. Opportunities to do so are missed.

66. The provision made for pupils' spiritual development is weak. The previous inspection reported that there is no daily act of collective worship. This remains the case: current arrangements do not meet statutory requirements. Spiritual development is infrequently addressed in lessons. A few isolated examples of spiritual development were found, including poems written by Year 9 pupils reflecting on soldiers' experiences in World War I.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

67. The school provides good support and guidance for its pupils and appropriate attention is paid to pupils' welfare. This has a positive effect on the educational standards achieved.

68. The school's very good ethos creates an environment in which most pupils feel secure and happy. Parents and pupils confirm that the staff are approachable and deal with most concerns effectively. A good induction programme helps the youngest pupils settle into school quickly. All staff are conscientious in the help and guidance they give in lessons and pupils are well supported in their learning. The pastoral team work hard to support pupils' progress towards personal and educational achievements. Form tutors often stay with the same group of pupils as they move through the school, which ensures they build good relationships with their form.

69. Pupils with physical disabilities and pupils with learning difficulties are well integrated into the school. The school succeeds in providing for their physical and educational needs in the classroom and around school. Good use is made of a wide range of outside agencies to provide additional support for these pupils.

70.Procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress and personal development are satisfactory. Teachers know their pupils well and carry out appropriate assessments. The pastoral team meet with subject teachers at regular review meetings to discuss each pupil's progress. Parents receive two written reports each year which provide a good overview of pupils' personal qualities and attendance record. They do not, however, give parents sufficient information about pupils' levels of attainment, progress or targets for future improvement in each subject.

71.The school has good procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' attendance. These are successful in promoting pupils' progress. Staff follow registration procedures correctly. The pastoral team monitor pupils' attendance and absences carefully. Unexplained absences are followed up promptly. Although rarely called upon, the educational welfare service is available to assist with any difficult cases. Pupils' attendance record is reported to their parents in the end of year reports. The school's attendance and absence statistics are not published, as required by statutory regulations, in the prospectus and governors' annual report to parents. Certificates are used effectively to reward and encourage pupils to attend regularly and punctually.

72.The school has good procedures in place to promote good behaviour and eliminate bullying. The school's behaviour policy provides clear guidelines to help all staff adopt a consistent and fair approach. Teachers have effective strategies for maintaining discipline in lessons. Midday staff are experienced and supported by senior staff but have had no recent formal training. Pupils understand the school's code of conduct and respond well to the system of certificates and other rewards. Appropriate sanctions are used to deal firmly but fairly with misbehaviour. Parents are contacted promptly if there are any problems with their children's behaviour. Incidents of bullying are dealt with promptly and effectively. Pupils are given some opportunities in tutorial time to discuss and consider issues such as rules, friendship and bullying.

73.The school has an appropriate child protection policy and follows the Local Education Authority's guidelines. A senior member of staff is the designated teacher responsible for child protection. Staff have had no recent formal training to ensure that they all know how to identify and report any concerns. There is appropriate liaison with the social services and other agencies when necessary. Pupils have some opportunities to develop the skills and knowledge to help protect themselves but there is no fully developed teaching plan.

74.The school has satisfactory procedures to protect the health and safety of the pupils. Governors, the headteacher and the building supervisor are all actively involved in managing health and safety in school. There is an appropriate health and safety policy which follows the LEA guidelines but it lacks sufficient school-specific detail about procedures and personnel. The school's policy for educational trips is good and gives staff clear guidelines which are followed in practice. Two members of staff are first aid trained and suitable accident and first aid procedures are followed effectively. Due to accommodation constraints the medical room is still used as an office for the special educational needs unit. Staff are aware of health and safety issues during lessons, for example, appropriate attention is paid to personal and food hygiene in food technology lessons. A small number of minor health and safety concerns that were identified during the inspection have been reported to the school. The buildings, site and equipment are checked regularly but formal risk assessment records are not always kept. This was identified as a weakness in the health and safety procedures at the time of the previous inspection and is still an issue to be addressed.

82.

Partnership with parents and the community

75.The school has established a satisfactory partnership with parents which makes a positive

contribution to pupils' learning. However, some of the information that the school provides for parents is not of a high enough quality to ensure that parents are well-informed enough to work in partnership with the school. Parents support the work of the school but their active involvement is limited. As was reported at the time of the previous inspection there is no parent-teacher association and parents are not usually encouraged to be directly involved in helping in school. Little consultation with parents has taken place.

76. Both the school's prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents do not comply with statutory regulations in that a significant amount of important information is omitted. This remains an issue that has not been addressed since the previous inspection.
77. Reports to parents have been revised since the previous inspection and there have been some improvements but subject reports do not always give a complete view of the pupils' attainment levels in comparison with their peers in the same year group or nationally. There is no indication as to whether pupils are achieving as well as they should. This was a concern raised by a few parents. The subject teachers' written comments do not always give details of pupils' progress and only occasionally provide directions for future development. Reports of pupils in Years 9 to 11 do not always report on pupils' progress and attainment in information technology and personal, social, health and careers education. The pastoral information that the reports contain is good, giving a clear overview of a pupils' personal qualities and attendance record. An appropriate pupil comment section contains some self-evaluation on their achievements and progress. Parental comments are encouraged and the pastoral team follow up any issues raised.
78. Other written information, such as the welcome booklet that pupils receive as part of their induction programme and regular newsletters, are good. They provide parents and pupils with useful information about school activities, expectations and routines.
79. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed and attend regular review meetings. All parents are invited to discuss their children's progress at parents' evenings and these are well attended. The school encourages parents to ensure that pupils comply with the school's code of conduct and uniform requirements. Parents support the school's homework programme by checking and signing the homework diaries. The school contacts parents if they identify any problems with pupils' behaviour, attendance or academic progress. These activities make a sound contribution to pupils' progress. Parents confirm that the school's open door policy ensures that their complaints and concerns are usually dealt with effectively.
80. The school has a new home-school agreement which was formulated following consultation with staff, governors and parents. It contains appropriate sections outlining the school's and parents' responsibilities and many parents have signed the declaration. This school's agreement does not outline the pupils' responsibilities. Pupils were not formally consulted over its content and have not been asked to sign the agreement.
81. The school has some links with the community that have a positive impact on pupils' attainment and personal development. Such links are at an early stage of development in a few areas of the curriculum.
82. The school liaises effectively with its contributory junior schools and this helps to ensure that transfer information is received. The school has well established links with the three main post-16 providers to which their pupils transfer.
83. Careers guidance is supported by the school's involvement with the careers education business partnership. The careers service provides satisfactory guidance for older pupils and local companies support the school by providing work experience placements.

84. The school's sporting activities include inter-school basket-ball, football, netball and cricket competitions. Occasionally, pupils work with professional football and basketball coaches. This has a positive effect on their sporting skills. The school has links with Hall Green Council of Churches, St Peters Church and the Church of the Ascension but no formal links with Birmingham's Temples and Mosques.

85. Residential camps for Years 7 and 8 are used effectively to broaden pupils' social development and give pupils experience of living away from the home environment. Field trips provide a valuable stimulus for geography work. Pupils studying modern foreign languages have the opportunity to visit France and Germany. Skiing trips for staff and pupils are also arranged by the school. The design and technology department has run a successful "Ready, Steady, Cook" competition for the last two years with the support of a local college, hotel and two retail companies. The Duke of Edinburgh scheme is well established at the school. It involves pupils from this school and other schools as well as older people from the local area. Its activities are well supported by groups such as the Police and Fire Service. Community group meetings and adult education courses are held on school premises. The school supports charities and encourages pupils to participate in the local Lions Group's annual festival. All of these activities contribute positively to pupils' all round development.

93. THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management

86. The contribution made by governors, the headteacher and staff with management responsibilities to the quality of education and standards attained is sound overall. Particularly strong features are the emphatic leadership of the headteacher and the strong commitment amongst all staff, particularly those with management responsibilities, to maintaining standards of behaviour and attainment. With the informed support of the governors, the headteacher provides clear educational direction for the school, focused on high standards of pupil appearance, attitudes, behaviour and public examination results. Where this contribution is less strong is in making a significant improvement in the quality of teaching and in raising standards of attainment in line with pupils' standards on entry to the school.

87. The Governing Body and its committees are properly constituted with standing orders and articles, their meetings are appropriately clerked and minutes are kept as a summary of decisions taken. Governors act as supportive and critical friends of the school, several giving freely of their time over many years. Currently their agenda and minutes do not make sufficiently explicit reference to priorities and strategies regarding school improvement.

88. Arrangements for monitoring teaching and curriculum development are satisfactory overall. There is a whole school policy for monitoring and evaluation. The initiation and development of this policy was given particular impetus by the headteacher in response to GCSE results in 1998. This policy sets out a programme to monitor curriculum provision and examination results. As it currently stands, the programme focuses on analysing data from tests and examinations. There are now established procedures for tracking individual pupils' progress, which are well used in several, but not all departments. The implementation of other aspects of the programme, such as classroom observation of teaching or monitoring of pupils' books and work, varies between departments. Most departments, with the exception of art, have made a positive start in monitoring their work in teaching and curriculum provision. Staff are beginning to use information gathered during monitoring to provide information for decisions about future developments. Evaluation of teaching and curriculum development is less than satisfactory. Governors and staff do not as a matter of course articulate clear, measurable success criteria to which they can refer when evaluating the effectiveness of the school's

provision in meeting pupils' needs.

89. All departments have appropriately identified priorities for development. There is good access to in-service training opportunities. Staff with responsibilities for areas of the curriculum benefit from having access to external advice and support provided by contractors to the school. Very good levels and quality of resources are available to support developments in teaching and curriculum. However, monitoring of teaching has yet to identify particular aspects which need improvement. Feedback from training is variable in how it is used to impact on raising attainment. Support for teaching and curriculum development is satisfactory overall.
90. The links between monitoring, evaluation and development planning are, however less effective. Arrangements for strategic development planning are unsatisfactory. The overall school development plan lists 58 goals. This plan and departmental plans are not currently co-ordinated by a common approach to long and short term planning across the whole school. Development goals are addressed during staff discussions, planning meetings, in middle management interviews and appraisal and by the senior management team in its regular meetings. Despite all these efforts and commitments to improving provision and raising standards several aspects of school development and improvement are neglected. Current plans do not specify what is to be done. There is no reference to timescales, costings, named personnel responsible, success criteria, the ways in which the plan will be monitored and by whom. There is no reference to how the outcomes of development efforts will be evaluated against the success criteria.
91. In a few instances, departmental priorities are supported by some strategic planning. The mathematics development plan, for example, includes targets with costings and responsibilities, but lacks the success criteria against which it can be evaluated. Developments in monitoring teaching in mathematics link effectively with the use of in-service activities to develop and improve provision. Such links within plans are, however, not worked out in all departments' development plans. The relationships between plans for improving standards with plans for information technology developments and monitoring and evaluation plans are not made clear. The lack of a systematic approach in these related matters does not promote a direction and focus to school improvement.
92. The school's current approach to planning and managing curriculum development maintains the quality of provision. What is missing, however, are strategies to identify strengths and build on them, identify weaknesses and remedy them. At the time of the previous inspection, for example, the quality of teaching found was much the same as that found and reported in this inspection. The quality of teaching overall has been maintained rather than significantly improved. In one area, that of mathematics, for which teaching was identified as an issue in the previous inspection, the department has responded effectively and clear improvements are evident.
93. All staff and pupils, in their commitment to high standards, successfully reflect in their work the broad aims and values of the school. The ethos of the school is very good. In successfully integrating pupils from different social and cultural backgrounds and with a wide range of abilities and disabilities, a very positive effect is achieved day-to-day, throughout the school, in corridors and classrooms and in extra-curricular activities.
94. The National Curriculum statutory requirements are being met with the exception of art in Years 7 to 9. Other areas of non-compliance arise over the lack of provision of an Act of Collective Worship. The school does not meet the Department for Education and Employment requirements regarding all of the information that should appear in the school's prospectus and in the governors' annual report to parents. The governors and senior managers have reviewed the arrangements for the Act of Collective Worship but believe "that an attempt at a daily act of worship would undermine the successful integration of the different cultures in the

school". The situation remains as it was at the previous inspection with the Governors' approval. Some of these matters of non-compliance, particularly regarding published information, were also raised at the time of the previous inspection and have yet to be appropriately addressed.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

95. Staffing levels are adequate. The number, qualifications and experience of teachers meet most of the demands of the curriculum. Non-specialists are required to teach in some subject areas and although they are committed and well informed, the quality of their teaching is sometimes adversely affected.

96. Since the previous inspection, approximately one quarter of the staff membership has changed. Newly-appointed staff have been quickly integrated into the school and are well-supported by senior and subject colleagues. Induction procedures for newly qualified teachers are good. Staff have good access to opportunities for professional development and are kept well informed of training opportunities. The school has invested in external advice as well as courses. Although staff development broadly reflects whole school and departmental priorities, it is not systematically linked to development planning. There is a lack of overall planning with the result that some training needs are not addressed. There is no formal process for evaluating the impact of teacher training on standards of attainment achieved by pupils. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined for teachers, head of departments, tutors and heads of year. Appraisal procedures are in place, are well-established and are currently being revised.

97. All non-teaching staff very effectively support the work of the school. Technical support in science, design and technology and information technology is of a high standard. Secretarial support staff make a positive contribution to the day-to-day efficiency of the school. The provision of in-class support is good. The modern languages assistants, classroom assistants and learning support assistants are appropriately deployed and make a positive impact on standards.

98. Accommodation is adequate and has improved since the previous inspection. A building programme has provided a fitness suite, new accommodation for music and drama and increased facilities for design and technology and science. Specialist rooms are generally good although some rooms are small. Rooms are well-furnished and well-maintained. Many contain excellent displays and are stimulating learning environments. Whilst most of the issues related to accommodation have been addressed and use of available space is generally efficient, facilities for physical education continue to be inadequate.

99. The school premises are clean and well supervised by the site manager. Provision for pupils with physical disabilities is good and there is wheelchair access to every area of the school.

100. Resourcing in all areas of the curriculum is very good. The school has made considerable investment in information technology and the pupil/computer ratio is much better than that found nationally. The provision of good quality texts, materials and classroom equipment, such as video players and overhead projectors, has a positive impact on standards.

101. The library is managed by the English department and is a popular area of the school. The provision of fiction texts is satisfactory but reference materials to support the curriculum are inadequate and the available computers are outdated. The current use and future development of the library are restricted by its continued use as a teaching room.

109. The efficiency of the school

102. All financial decisions concerning the school's budget or making any significant changes during the year are under the scrutiny of the Governing Body and its finance committee. Governors' financial planning is short-term, maintains historical patterns of spending and is not linked to development plan priorities. The governors have oversight of changes in planned expenditure during the financial year, but lack the information to evaluate the effectiveness of some expenditure. Governors do not carry out systematic evaluation of spending linked to development plan priorities. There are no financial projections to support long term development goals of the school. A major priority of long-term school development has been to improve the amount and quality of accommodation. The school has been successful in this respect. It has secured additional grants to undertake improvements in accommodation and the addition of the Performing Arts and Dolphin blocks. The school is successful in attracting donations and private funds. Funding for these educational developments is good. Funds have been efficiently and effectively used in some subjects to bring about improvements in provision and pupils' standards of attainment. Financial planning overall is satisfactory to support educational developments.
103. Regular annual allocations of funding for the purchase of educational resources are made to departments. The amounts are in line with average allocations for schools of this size and type. Resources for learning are well deployed and managed in all departments. The use of teaching and support staff and accommodation are good.
104. Arrangements for staff development are well supported financially. These arrangements are insufficiently linked to development plan targets and no success criteria have been identified to evaluate their effectiveness. The school has yet to develop appropriate procedures to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the allocation of resources for professional development.
105. Additional special educational needs funding makes possible the very good provision for pupils with physical disabilities.
106. The governors arrange for a regular annual audit of school finances. Any recommendations subsequently made have been effectively addressed. The work of a bursar keeps the amount of management time required for financial control and administration to a minimum. Governors, both in the Governing Body as a whole and in their Finance Committee, receive adequate general information about the school's financial situation, but this information does not include the means of evaluating the cost-effectiveness of spending decisions. For example, the impact on learning and attainment in specific subjects of the additional accommodation is yet to be judged. Administration is unobtrusive and day-to-day organisation is efficient. The school's arrangements for day-to-day financial control and administration are good and enable teachers to focus their efforts on teaching pupils.
107. The socio-economic circumstances of the pupils are average. Their attainment on entry is above average. Pupils' attainment in relation to national averages or expectations is generally very good. Pupils make generally good progress overall. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are very good. The quality of education, provided by the school is good. Unit costs are very high in comparison with other schools nationally. The value for money provided by the school is good.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

115. English

108. Standards of attainment in English are sound overall. National Curriculum results at age 14 years are well above national averages and are well above those for schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. GCSE English results are broadly in line with national averages. The attainment of girls is slightly below that found nationally whilst the attainment of boys is above that found nationally. Results since the previous inspection have been close to national averages.
109. In Speaking and Listening all pupils listen attentively and most are confident when making contributions. By the age of 14 years, the higher attaining pupils use vocabulary appropriate to context and task. By the age of 16 years, the majority of pupils structure arguments well and take account of others' views. A small number of lower attaining pupils do not speak confidently and their contributions remain limited and undeveloped.
110. By the age of 14 years the most able pupils read clearly and expressively. They show understanding of the main themes and events using textual references. By the age of 16 years, the most successful pupils read demanding texts and have a good knowledge of the features of different genres. Less accomplished readers at both key stages do not develop critical responses and a very small number of pupils do not become fluent readers.
111. By the age of 14 years all pupils, except the very lowest attaining, are able to write in a range of forms for different purposes. By the age of 16 years, the highest attaining pupils use a range of literary devices to create effect and can structure extended writing well. Less successful pupils have a limited ability to vary vocabulary and register and do not develop grammatical and technical accuracy.
112. All pupils make sound progress overall. Progress in lessons is often good or very good for pupils of all ages and abilities. Progress is better in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 to 9. The vast majority of pupils gain confidence as writers and good progress is exemplified by pupils increasing ability to write for a range of purposes and audiences. Pupils make good use of their reading experiences as models for their own writing. For example, Year 9 pupils successfully adopt the style of Robert Swindells' "Room 13". Most pupils make good progress in their ability to reflect on their reading. For example, Year 11 pupils recognise a range of themes in "Gulliver's Travels" and are able to compare and contrast these with themes identified in a range of other texts. Pupils make good progress in using information technology in English lessons.
113. Pupils display positive attitudes in English throughout the school. Relationships are very good. Pupils' response is never less than satisfactory and is good or very good in the great majority of lessons. Pupils show interest in the subject, sustain concentration and behave very well; their good behaviour contributes to the progress they make and the standards attained. When given opportunities to work together pupils collaborate well as in a Year 8 drama lesson where pupils in small groups explored characters from the play "The Book of the Banshee" through 'sculpting' techniques. Pupils respond appreciatively to the efforts of others as shown when Year 8 pupils praised each other's attempts at writing similes after reading the poem "The Ballad of Red Fox". Since the previous inspection it has become departmental policy that boys and girls should sit together and be encouraged to share ideas. Good examples were seen of boys and girls working together co-operatively. This is not yet consistent practice, however, and boys frequently dominate lessons.
114. The quality of teaching is good or very good in around two thirds of lessons and is never less than satisfactory. Teaching in Years 10 and 11 is better than in Years 7 to 9 overall. The best lessons are characterised by clear introductions which set out the purpose of lessons and good use of questions to ascertain understanding from previous lessons. Pace is good and

maintained through a variety of well balanced activities which create a purposeful working atmosphere. For example, Year 10 pupils were asked to identify the persuasive language and imagery used in a television advertisement within a set time limit and they were required to explain the intended effect on the audience. The rigorous use of time resulted in the pupils being highly focused and attentive which had a positive impact on the final analysis of the media text. In many lessons close attention is paid to the teaching of reading skills such as note making, text marking and annotation. Classroom organisation is good and most lessons end with an appropriate review of what has been achieved.

115. Teaching is less effective when planning is weak. In these lessons the objectives are unclear and lessons become dominated by teachers' talk with only limited opportunities given for pupils to think for themselves. In some lessons, particularly for the lowest attaining groups there are few opportunities for pupils to participate orally, beyond giving short answers to teacher questions. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported in English lessons and teachers generally provide appropriate materials to help them to achieve success. For example, a low ability Year 7 group was given wordbanks and a choice of format for their 'Fireworks' poems which ensures that every pupil could complete the task. Teachers usually have high expectations of pupils and this is linked to their good knowledge of pupils' performance.
116. Marking is usually conscientiously done and supportive but pupils are not always given guidance on how to improve. A programme of moderation of work carried out at regular intervals by teaching staff provides a good basis for the monitoring of pupils' progress.
117. The schemes of work for Years 7 to 9 allow for sound coverage and progression in language development and achieve good continuity into Year 10. Elements of the curriculum for Years 10 and 11 are introduced at the end of Year 9 which are appropriately challenging and have a positive impact on pupils' motivation and correspondingly on their attainment.
118. Opportunities for addressing spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are evident throughout the English curriculum. For example, pupils consider moral issues when working on political speeches and identifying propaganda in Year 11. Good opportunities are given for pupils to consider the cultural and historical contexts of a range of texts from the English literary heritage such as "Beowulf", "Macbeth" and "Gulliver's Travels", and from different cultures - through poetry in particular.
119. The department is well led and there is a clear common approach to the teaching of English in the school. The department shows a strong commitment to pupil achievement. English teachers work closely with support staff to provide appropriate programmes for reading development. Since the previous inspection the department has maintained its strengths. Recent developments include the writing of new schemes of work for Years 7 to 9, guidance to staff on assessment procedures, increased use of assessment data and the inclusion of drama in the delivery of the English curriculum. These developments have begun to have a positive impact. The department's development plan identifies appropriate priorities but is not sufficiently detailed regarding costings, success criteria, specific actions, monitoring and evaluation to ensure maximum impact on standards.
120. Drama is developed as an optional extra-curricular GCSE in Years 10 and 11 and the small cohorts of pupils who take it are highly successful. Since the previous inspection the accommodation issue relating to Drama has been solved in the form of a well appointed Drama Studio. The Library continues to be used as an English teaching room. Whilst this does not adversely affect the quality of teaching it was identified as an issue at the time of the previous inspection.
121. The development of Literacy in subjects other than English is varied. Reading development is

generally restricted to textbooks provided. History, however, provides a wealth of good opportunities for reading from a wide range of stimulating sources. With regard to writing there is successful practice in geography where extended writing is encouraged and in maths where pupils are required to describe and explain their investigations. In history pupils write in a wide range of styles and there is accordingly good descriptive, narrative and discursive writing, poetry, diaries and letters. In many areas of the curriculum, however, there is little variety in the tasks set and no planned programme to ensure that pupils gain experience in various formats. Listening skills are good across the curriculum. In maths and physical education good opportunities are given for discussion. In history a range of oral activities are used successfully including debate and role play. Since the previous inspection no systematic approach to developing language and literacy across the curriculum has emerged although some initial planning has taken place and good literacy links have been established between history and English.

Mathematics

122. This is a good and improving department.

123. By the age of 14 years, pupils' attainment is well above the national average. In 1999 National Curriculum tests, the percentage of pupils attaining level 5 and above, was well above the national average as was the percentage attaining level 6 and above. Pupils' performance in mathematics tests at age 14 years was well above average in comparison with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. Attainment of pupils aged 16 is also well above the national average. In 1999, 64% of pupils gained grades A* to C at GCSE. This represents an improvement of 27% from 1998. Results in statutory tests at age 14 years have shown a steady improvement since 1995. Similarly, at GCSE, although results have fluctuated, there has been an improving trend in the percentage of pupils gaining grades A* to C since 1995. There are no significant variations in attainment of pupils from differing background, ethnic origin, ability or gender.

124. In mathematics lessons, pupils listen attentively to their teachers and to each other and are able to express themselves very effectively. They are able not only to give simple answers to questions, but also provide clear explanations if required. When called upon to give extended written explanation in investigational work, pupils' use a wide vocabulary and express themselves well. The standard of numeracy in the department is good. Lessons regularly feature oral and mental sessions which focus on speedy numerical calculation and recognition of number facts, which has a positive effect on pupils' facility with numbers. Outside mathematics lessons, pupils' numerical ability is further utilised and reinforced. Particularly in history, geography, design technology, science and information technology. Information technology is used extensively in mathematics and work produced by pupils, using a variety of software applications, is of a high standard. Since the previous inspection, attainment in the subject throughout the school has improved significantly.

125. Progress by all pupils, including those with special educational needs, throughout the school is good. In Years 7 to 9, pupils' progress is at least satisfactory in all lessons, and in the majority is good or very good. Similarly in Years 10 and 11, progress is satisfactory or better in all lessons and very good or excellent in just over half of the lessons. Pupils of all abilities consolidate their mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding at least as well as expected and often better. Good progress has been made by pupils throughout the school in the preparation and presentation of investigational work. This had been weak in previous years and is now a relative strength. Particularly good progress was demonstrated in a lesson with an upper set in Year 11. The pupils began by sketching graphs of functions such as $y=x^2$, and quickly moved on to sketching transformations of the functions, e.g. $y=(x+2)^2$ very successfully, checking their answers by using graphic calculators. Since the previous inspection, pupils'

progress in lessons and over the longer term in mathematics has improved significantly.

126. Attitudes and behaviour in lessons are excellent. Pupils show interest in their work and concentrate for extended periods of time. They regularly work alone and develop good self study techniques. In lessons, pupils are courteous and trustworthy and show great respect for each others' property. They form good relationships with their teachers and each other and are able to work collaboratively to great effect. Pupils respond to each others feelings and recognise other people's values or beliefs. They are also well able to take responsibility and show initiative when called upon to do so in mathematics lessons. The response of pupils to their mathematics lessons has a positive effect on standards achieved.

127. The quality of teaching in mathematics is good and this has a positive impact on standards and progress. In all lessons in Years 7 to 9, teaching is satisfactory or better and in two-thirds is good or better. In Years 10 and 11, teaching in all lessons is at least satisfactory and in over half of the lessons is very good or excellent. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. Planning for lessons is generally good. Methods and organisational strategies used help to ensure that lessons proceed at an appropriate pace. Expectations are high and the management of pupils is good. Resources are used effectively and teaching is well matched to the needs of pupils, regardless of their ability level or background. Pupils' work is assessed regularly, but the departmental marking policy is not applied consistently. Few comments are made by some teachers which help pupils to improve their work. There is little evidence of assessment data being used to inform lesson planning. Homework is regularly set and marked.

128. In the very best lessons, teachers' share the learning objectives with their class at the beginning of the lessons, give clear explanations and examples and use skilful questioning techniques to involve all pupils and build on their strengths. Planning and preparation is of a high standard. Teachers teach with a sense of urgency, which ensures that lessons proceed at a brisk pace. Work set provides appropriate challenge and teachers assist pupils as required, stopping the class to review methods when necessary. Lessons are then closed with a review of progress made toward meeting learning objectives. These methods were clearly demonstrated in a lesson with an upper ability set in Year 10. The lesson was carefully planned and prepared and a 'warm up' question was displayed prior to the pupils arrival so that they could begin work immediately. The teacher explained that during the lesson pupils would learn to choose either Pythagoras' theorem or trigonometry in order to solve a series of problems. She demonstrated her subject knowledge by giving clear explanations and provided a series of very challenging problems, with time targets to ensure a brisk pace. She intervened as appropriate, addressing both individual and groups to ensure pupils were able to be successful in their work. The lesson was completed with a concise review of the learning objectives to check that they had been met.

129. The mathematics curriculum meets statutory requirements and provides equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. Planning for continuity and progression is generally sound, but for Year 7, does not always fully take into account work covered in Year 6, leading to some unnecessary re-teaching rather than revisiting of topics, which hinders progress. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are in place and in use, but there is little evidence that the assessment results have an impact on curriculum planning. Mathematics makes a positive contribution to pupils' social and moral development. Pupils regularly work together in mixed groups and are trusted to work in mathematics rooms during lunch breaks and after school. Particularly good examples of social development have arisen from the Numeracy Project which involves 35 Year 7 pupils in two groups, which meet for a half-hour session during one lunch time each week, taught by the head of departments and second in department. Ten pupils from each of Year 10 and Year 11 who work on a one-to-one or one-to-two basis with the younger pupils, also support each group. The older pupils are aware of the targets for each of the pupils they support and are keen to ensure that they are reached. This is having a

positive impact on the standards of Year 7 pupils.

130. The department is well led by an enthusiastic and very able head of department, who has very effective support from the second in department. The new leadership has brought strong direction and a dynamic learning environment to the work of the department, which is improving standards. Monitoring of teaching is at an early stage of development, the first trial programme having been completed. The departmental development plan is well constructed and includes targets, responsibilities and costings. It does, however, lack clear success criteria against which progress can be evaluated. The department is aware of this and steps are being taken to rectify the matter. Accommodation for the department is barely adequate with one member of staff lacking a permanent base and one of the rooms being very small, which precludes some activities. In all of the dedicated mathematics rooms and in the corridors, excellent displays of pupils' work and other stimulating materials significantly enhance the learning environment. The positive response to issues raised in the previous inspection, together with the strong leadership and direction, have brought about the changes which have resulted in significant improvements in organisation, progress and standards.

139. In lessons other than mathematics, pupils' numerical skills are used and developed in history, geography, design and technology, science and information technology. In history, pupils understand and use the chronological framework at every opportunity. They confidently handle population figures in millions and are able to express them using percentages. Pupils also use bar charts in a variety of ways, such as a comparison of wages paid between 1840 and 1847. Population graphs are also used in geography, and pupils draw graphs from their own collected data. In design and technology, pupils regularly measure and mark out work confidently and competently. In science, pupils draw line graphs confidently and substitute into equations. Lessons in information technology make a positive contribution to pupils' data handling skills and their understanding of graphs through the use of spreadsheets and databases. Business studies affords many good opportunities for the use and application of data. Pupils are able to construct graphs and use data from charts, although their skills of analysis are less well developed.

Science

131. At age 16 years, all pupils take Double Award Science. GCSE results have remained well above national averages since the previous inspection. In 1999, 62% of pupils achieved A*-C compared to the national average of 50%.

132. The results of pupils aged 14 years, in statutory tests, have varied widely since the previous inspection from between 76% and 54% of pupils achieving level 5 and above. Since 1997 there has been a decline in standards achieved. In 1997, 76% of pupils achieved level 5 and above and in 1999 only 62% achieved this standard. In 1999, results at level 5 and above were above the national average and well above the average for similar schools.

133. Overall, attainment in science is in line with that observed at the previous inspection with pupils of low and middle abilities continuing to perform best. The performance of boys and girls, and pupils from different ethnic or social backgrounds, is in line with the overall pattern.

134. All pupils have good oracy skills, including the correct use of scientific terminology when discussing their work. They competently follow instructions. When given the opportunity, pupils can write descriptively and imaginatively; for example, Year 8 pupils wrote about 'a lizard's environment' from the point of view of the lizard. Pupils show good numeracy skills within science, as shown by year 11 pupils who were very competent in drawing a series of graphs related to the rate of a chemical reaction at different temperatures. When given the opportunity, pupils competently use their information technology skills in a variety of situations, as

demonstrated in the production of their science GCSE coursework.

135. Throughout the school most pupils make satisfactory progress in extending their knowledge and understanding during lessons and over the period of the unit of work. Pupils are making similar progress to that observed at the previous inspection. No differences are evident between the progress of boys, girls and pupils of different ethnic origin. All pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
136. All pupils make similar progress in the theoretical and practical aspects of science. They are adept at using new terminology and are able to apply newly acquired knowledge to new situations. For example, a Year 10 group was able to apply the concept of diffusion to explain gaseous exchange within the lungs.
137. Excellent relationships exist between teachers and pupils and between pupils. Pupils work well collaboratively in a variety of groupings. Behaviour is very good and all pupils show respect for the laboratories, apparatus and books.
138. Pupils show interest in their work and an awareness of safety in practical work. They remain on task throughout the majority of lessons. All pupils show initiative when given the opportunity and will seek help if they do not understand the work.
139. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory and makes a sound contribution to the standards achieved. Teaching is better in Years 10 and 11 where just over half is good or very good. Teachers have high expectations of pupils who respond positively.
140. Challenging work is always given to low and middle ability groups. For some middle ability groups the work is very challenging and they respond well to this. However, there is a lack of work which consistently challenges the most able.
141. Effective lessons are characteristically well planned to involve a range of pupil activities, which make good use of the time available and take place in a supportive learning environment in which the contributions of all are equally respected. However, most lessons are teacher led with few opportunities for pupils to work independently to discuss, develop and clarify their ideas; questions asked by the teacher often only require short or single word answers. Homework is set to support and extend classwork.
142. In the better lessons pupils are asked more open ended questions to discuss in groups and subsequently develop their own ideas. For example, in a Year 11 lesson on unbalanced forces, pupils in groups were discussing the forces on a shuttlecock during and after it had been hit, as it rose and fell in flight. When opportunities for practising predictive skills are given, pupils respond well as shown by a middle ability Year 11 class making and testing predictions on the effect of temperature on rate of reaction – the predictions being based on the particle collision theory. In unsatisfactory lessons, the work is undemanding and lacks pace.
143. The science curriculum meets statutory requirements and provides equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by support staff to achieve good standards in their lessons although there is a lack of specifically targeted work for these pupils.
144. Regular assessment of pupil performance takes place through homework marking and end of unit tests. Results are co-ordinated and pupils' progress fully monitored. Assessment data is used with individual pupils and groups to set targets for end of Year 9 and GCSE performance grades. Overall results are also used to allocate pupils to teaching groups but insufficient use is made of assessment data in the planning for learning activities matched to pupils' needs.

145. The implementation of an agreed marking policy, which sets out clear criteria for effective marking, is monitored by regular checks of pupils' books. However, marking does not always explain to pupils how they can improve the quality of their work.
146. There are excellent relationships between pupils during group practical work. This has a positive effect on the pupils' moral and social development. Little contribution is made to the pupils' spiritual development, but the cultural diversity of the pupils is appropriately recognised. For example, when carrying out food tests the range of foods used includes those often associated with minority ethnic groups.
147. Overall, the leadership within the department makes a sound contribution to the standards pupils achieve in the subject. Departmental resources are effectively and efficiently managed and deployed. Day-to-day administration and the monitoring and evaluation of pupil performance to assist improvement are very good. The leadership of the department ensures that the subject is taught in a supportive learning environment. All staff are committed to providing appropriate support for all pupils so that they may reach their highest potential. Priorities and responsibilities within the department are clearly defined but the procedures for detailed development planning are underdeveloped. Monitoring of curriculum delivery is also underdeveloped at present. The department has responded fully and effectively to the issues raised in the previous inspection.
148. The department is staffed by hardworking and committed teachers, well qualified to deliver the science curriculum. They are well supported by a team of capable and hard working laboratory technicians. The new laboratories and apparatus provided since the previous inspection, together with the existing accommodation and resources means the department is currently well resourced. All laboratories are well looked after, meet safety regulations and contain lively displays of pupils' work which enhance the learning environment.
149. The two main factors that have significant positive effects on standards are the relationships between pupils and between staff and pupils and to the teachers' desire and determination that, all pupils will achieve to their maximum potential. The infrequent opportunities for all pupils to work independently, to explore and develop their own ideas and improve their understanding of concepts, is the main constraint on pupils' even higher achievement in the subject.

OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

Art

150. Attainment in art is overall satisfactory, as it was at the time of the previous inspection. By the age of 14 pupils are achieving standards in art, craft and design which are broadly in line with national expectations within the narrow range of aspects of the art curriculum being delivered. Teachers' judgement show that 83% of the pupils are attaining or exceeding the appropriate standard in the National Curriculum for art. Work in progress, in folders and on display indicates that this is inaccurate.
151. When they make detailed models and pots in clay, pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 are attaining high standards. Although this is achieved in a very narrow area of the National Curriculum, and the finished models are very similar in style and scale, they are detailed and well observed. Pupils take pride in their achievement, and finish the work off carefully. Good standards are also evident when pupils create pictures and animations on the computers, developing their skills in design and the manipulation of images to create personal projects, printing them off and then developing them into paintings.
152. By the age of sixteen, pupils are attaining good standards overall. The GCSE results in art are high, with 96% achieving A*-C grades. This is well above the national average. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The numbers taking art are small, but good standards are evident in pupils' development of personal projects in clay, graphics and painting. They make well crafted pottery and clay models. The thrown and decorated ceramic pieces are particularly good and it is pleasing to see these processes being studied in depth. Some pupils use computers for research and to develop and create exciting and carefully finished projects in two-dimensional media. Some of the mixed media projects are very mature and sophisticated.
153. Attainment in art in Years 7, 8 and 9, although good, is almost entirely concentrated on the "making" aspect of the National Curriculum for art. Because there is no direct reference to the current National Curriculum orders in planning or assessment, areas of Attainment Target 1, Investigating and Making, are not identified. Investigation is often based on working from secondary sources such as photographs, although some good research using computers and scanners is developing. Sketchbooks are not used extensively as is required in the orders. There is also little achievement discernible with regard to Attainment Target 2, Knowledge and Understanding. On-going review and critical analysis is done conscientiously. Although it relates indirectly to the National Curriculum, it is not planned, assessed or recorded systematically. Assessment of pupils' performance in art at age 14 years does not meet National Curriculum requirements.
154. Girls attain higher standards than boys in the GCSE, but there is no analysis of this result, of the performance of different ethnic groups, or of the results of Year 9 pupils. This lack of awareness of variations in pupils' performance makes an analysis of their progress by the department difficult.
155. The progress of pupils in Years 10 and 11 is good. GCSE results have improved steadily. In Years 7, 8 and 9, progress is sound in the limited areas of the National Curriculum which are taught. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. No differentiated work is planned, but continual discussion, advice and support in lessons takes place on a one-to-one basis and is effective in allowing all pupils to achieve their potential.
156. Teaching is good in these areas to which each teacher gives most attention. Two teachers each have specialist interests and complement each others' skills. There is, however, little exchange of ideas or liaison to improve the coherence of the art curriculum. Expectations of pupils' concentration and behaviour are high. Pupils are set clear targets and time limits. The

planning is however confused, based as it is, not on the current National Curriculum, but on whatever practical activities are to be completed. A lot of what is being taught relates incidentally to the National Curriculum orders, but there is no reference to the art Programmes of Study, especially Attainment Target 2. What pupils need to learn is not identified, or planned for, so continuity and progression of learning experiences are uncertain. There is no evaluation of what National Curriculum topics are taught. There is no planned curriculum for the whole of Years 7 to 9. The department does not comply with the statutory requirements for art.

157. Teaching has many strengths, pupils are organised well and day-to-day management is good. Pupils are given sympathetic and effective direction and support. All aspects of the National Curriculum programmes of study are not, however, delivered in Years 7 to 9. Accurate assessment of pupils' attainment and progress in Years 7 to 9 related to the National Curriculum does not take place. Clear educational direction for the department with effective monitoring does not currently take place. At the moment the art department is successful in its emphasis on GCSE results and technical competence in limited areas. There is no subject development plan but there is a good information technology development plan with goals to move the department forward. Staff development and curriculum development are not planned, costed or set against clear goals. The management of the department is weak overall.

158. Take up for GCSE is below national averages and only two-thirds of the pupils who start the course are entered for the GCSE examination. All pupils show interest in their work and sustain concentration well. Most learning activities are closely controlled, with pre-determined outcomes, so that the pupils' capacity for personal study is limited, especially in Years 7, 8 and 9. Pupils behave very well, are friendly and out-going and show respect for property. They form very constructive relationships.

159. Pupils' cultural development is good, with visits to exhibitions and museums and an end-of-year exhibition in the school. There are, however, few non-western stimuli or references, although there are many opportunities for their use, for example, in the projects on symmetry or ceramic decoration. The spiritual, moral and social development of pupils are less evident. The accommodation is good and resources appropriate for the curriculum offered, although the kiln and several computers are quite old. The pottery room lacks space for storage and display is not used effectively to provide information and a stimulating learning environment. Displays in the painting studio and around the school are very good and raise the profile of the department in the school.

168. **Design and Technology**

160. Overall pupil attainment by the age of 14 years is well above national expectations, confirmed by teacher assessment. Three quarters of the pupils attained level 5 or above. There is negligible difference between the performance of boys and girls. At Key Stage 4 most recent aggregated GCSE results are also well above national averages at GCSE grades A* to C. All pupils gain a GCSE grade A* to G. Girls' and boys' attainment are also similar at age 16 years, the department having put successful strategies in place to improve boys' attainment. Analysis of examination performance is thorough and translated into action, GCSE grades have improved steadily over the last few years.

161. Most pupils read and write well in the subject. Information technology capability is well developed. Pupils have a good capacity for listening. Opportunities for extended responses to questioning are limited. The current level of graphicacy at both key stages is satisfactory for most pupils and there is evidence of ongoing improvement.

162. The progress made through Years 7 to 9 indicates that pupils are currently gaining a particularly good grounding in practical skills within all material areas, with products of a high

quality being produced throughout. All aspects of designing are well developed from an early stage although a mastery of the design process is not yet evident in all pupils' work. A particularly good example of work in year 9 was observed in a food technology lesson where pupils had produced project work for the St Ivel gold award which would not have been out of place as GCSE coursework. Although they can talk with clarity about their work, pupils needed prompting to give an account of the flow of ideas which led to the end product.

163. All groups are banded using school criteria to make the allocations. Timetabling constraints preclude more precise setting with reference to specific design and technology criteria. Clearly planned strategies to match work to pupils of different abilities are limited although good teacher support, comprehensive vocabulary lists and extension lessons at lunchtimes and after school are commonplace. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, aided by positive teacher and effective classroom assistant support. The majority of pupils within the middle ability band make sound progress but the most able pupils are not being fully challenged.
164. Strategies are in place to monitor pupil progress, to moderate standards achieved in all material areas and to track individual pupil progress through biannual mentoring. These measures are having a positive impact on standards. There is a clear focus on practical skill development. Pupils are confident users of tools and machines with good regard to health and safety and quality of outcome. Pupils generally show good recall of practical procedures and can transfer knowledge effectively from earlier years to current work.
165. Progress through Years 10 and 11 is generally good. Most pupils produce coursework of a high standard in Year 11 and Year 10 work shows a growing capacity of pupils for project work. Practical skills are of a high standard and reflect the sound grounding from earlier years. Pupil progress is tracked through years 10 and 11 to ensure that grade predictions are at least met and where possible, exceeded.
166. Progress in lessons is directly related to the teaching approach and is good in the majority of lessons observed. Pupils have the capacity to progress in knowledge and understanding both within the lesson and often over the longer term. Pupils, however, often engage with tasks without clearly understanding the overall purpose of the work.
167. A particular strength of the department is the enthusiasm engendered in pupils, who are willing workers, capable of sustained activity, well motivated by praise and eager to achieve and share success. Pupils are polite and courteous and form a socially harmonious community, collaborating and co-operating well. They are capable of considerable application, concentration and independent learning, all of which impact strongly upon the maintenance of high standards.
168. In all years, the quality of teaching is at least satisfactory and mostly good or very good and has a strong positive impact on standards. Staff have good knowledge of their specialist subject areas, discipline is always of a high standard and there is good use of technical language and vocabulary. Marking is generally supportive although this is better developed in Years 10 and 11 where marking is with reference to GCSE criteria. There is some reliance upon worksheets that provide sound guidance for the less able but which restrict the most able. Effective classroom support is given to pupils with physical disability. This is exemplified by a Year 11 pupil carrying out food coursework, who despite limited physical communication capability was using a recipe modified by himself and giving clear instructions to an assistant who acted as an amanuensis. The class listened respectfully as he told them of his changes during peer evaluation.
169. In the most effective teaching there is a prompt and clear start to lessons. Prior work is reviewed and clear goals set for the lesson. Pupils are taught through effective questioning

techniques and are rapidly introduced to purposeful practical activity, using good procedural routines already mastered. Pupils' work is used as a focus to develop and reinforce knowledge and understanding. Individual support is offered to pupils who need help. Interest and lesson pace are maintained through a balance of teaching styles and range of activities. Good use is made of praise and encouragement and pupils are challenged to develop independence and responsibility for their work and equipment. Lessons conclude in good time with a clear summary and teachers review what has been learned. Homework is given and marked regularly forming an integral part of the learning experience.

170. The scheme of work for pupils in Years 7 to 9 is under constant review. Both staff and pupils contribute to this process. Pupils complete end of module evaluation sheets giving their honest views on the module. Comments received are used to further refine units of work to ensure that they are effective and suitably motivating for all pupils. Pupils are given a course checklist at the start of each year, which identifies the main features of each module. They are encouraged to review these and to tick off the skills they have developed. By 14 years of age, pupils have a clear record of their learning. These strategies give pupils a sense of ownership of their learning and the practice has a positive impact on standards achieved. Currently, electronics is underdeveloped; there is a systems module but no practical circuit construction. Food technology has modules for pupils in Years 7 to 9 to achieve St Ivel awards up to gold standard. By the end of Year 9 pupils achieve the Institute of Environmental Health Officers basic food hygiene certificate. Both of these awards have a positive impact on pupils' interest and motivation.
171. Opportunities for spiritual development are limited. Pupils take a pride in their own and others' work. This is fundamental to the aims of the department. Social and moral development are fostered well within the department, through respect for self, others and the working environment. Good quality work is encouraged and celebrated by both staff and pupils. The successful annual exhibition, held in conjunction with the art department, provides a public celebration of work and offers good examples for younger pupils. Cultural issues are not fully capitalised upon.
172. There is effective management by the head of department who has clear educational goals. A collegial approach has been developed so that staff have delegated responsibilities. There are clear procedures for monitoring the work of the department and to share assessment criteria with pupils. This is not yet fully developed as an integral part of day-to-day formative assessment.
173. There is a clear department handbook that accurately describes the work of the department. The departmental development plan is uncoded and it is unclear how it relates to the department's performance document, the school development plan or the departmental information technology development plan. This current lack of coherence is unsatisfactory.
174. Links with outside agencies at present are limited to "Ready Steady Cook" and "Mini Chef Club", both of which are lively initiatives, well supported. The need to extend such links and embed them into the design and technology curriculum is recognised by the Head of Department.
175. Staff are well qualified to deliver the curriculum. They form a close knit team with shared values, shared enthusiasm and respect for their subject and the pupils. There is good quality technician support, which is well integrated into the work of the department. Accommodation is of a high standard; it is a welcoming and lively environment with particularly good display and has a strong positive impact on standards. When questioned about his work, a pupil pointed to a display of high quality work and indicated that it showed the standard he was aiming for. There is a sound range of hand and machine tools and equipment available. Textbooks for new courses for Years 10 and 11 have been purchased although texts and other library

resources are limited. Information technology is well integrated into the department. All rooms have computers with a suitable range of input and output devices including computer aided machinery. There is a shared computer suite equipped for computer based control activities.

176.The department has made positive progress since the previous sound inspection report.

Geography

177.Standards of attainment in geography at GCSE level have steadily improved since the previous inspection. In 1999, 52% of pupils gained passes at grades A*-C which is close to the National average. Passes at grades A*–G have consistently been above 90%. By the age of 14 years, the majority of pupils are at levels of attainment in line with those found nationally. The improved levels of attainment reflect the number of changes made in the department and the positive response to the previous inspection.

178.By the end of Year 9, most pupils are able to describe geographic features, explain processes and can use geographic terminology correctly and appropriately. They can extract information from photographs, diagrams and pictures with accuracy. In Years 10 and 11, pupils can identify the consequences of change, and use reasoned, plausible arguments when discussing issues. Written work and coursework contain good examples of pupils having a good grasp of the causes of physical features. The majority of pupils are confident in their knowledge when explaining forms and processes. An example of this was seen in a Year 11 lesson on tectonic plate movements when pupils could explain the causes of earthquakes and volcanoes. The attainment levels of boys and girls reflect the national pattern. There are no significant differences in the attainment of pupils from different ethnic origins.

179.Pupils listen well, and speaking and reading skills are at appropriate levels to meet the needs of the subject. Pupils generally write well although most of their written work consists of short paragraphs or single sentences. There are, however, some notable exceptions. For example, poems written about pesticides by Year 8 pupils, and the descriptive work on Broadway and Ludlow. Pupils are able to construct graphs with a high level of accuracy although many lack the higher level skills of analysis and interpretation. In fieldwork pupils take measurements, and can collect and represent data. The use of information technology is encouraged and is given specific reference in the department's schemes of work. Pupils' skills are developed in a systematic and progressive way and enhance learning in the subject.

180.Sound progress is made in all years, in lessons and over the longer term. Low ability pupils and pupils with special educational needs make good progress. There are no marked differences in the progress of pupils from different ethnic groups or boys and girls. Pupils are generally able to recall previous work. They make clear gains in their knowledge of the human and physical aspects of the subject. Good progress is made in the quality of their presentation of written work and diagrams. In a Year 7 lesson on comparing rural and urban landscapes, pupils made progress in identifying differences and correctly naming features. In Year 9 lessons progress was made in understanding the causes of population growth. In Year 10, good progress was seen in lessons on London Docklands in understanding that advantages for some groups of people are disadvantages for others. Least progress is made by higher attaining pupils when the tasks set are to simply copy information or complete sentences requiring little reasoning. This lack of progress is further compounded when pupils finish their work and additional higher level work is not readily available for them.

181.Behaviour in lessons is good, and in many lessons there are good levels of concentration. Pupils are polite and keen to discuss their work. Relationships with staff and with each other are good. Pupils are generally supportive of each other and when given the opportunity, work well together. Evidence of this was seen in Year 10 lessons when pupils worked in groups to

present different points of view to the rest of the class. Many examples of collaborative work are also seen in written accounts of surveys carried out on fieldtrips to Ludlow and Stratford. Pupils show respect for their exercise books, textbooks and wall displays, all of which are in good condition. Pupils' good attitudes to learning have a positive impact on standards.

182.The quality of teaching throughout the school is sound and often good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. When teaching is good, standards of discipline are high and lessons are well planned and well paced. In these lessons pupils are effectively engaged in learning, with a variety of tasks which suit varying learning styles and levels of understanding. Good examples were seen in lessons in Year 11 where several different activities were set concerning plate tectonics and two levels of sample questions were provided. In a Year 10 lesson pupils were set a challenging activity to identify features on an aerial photograph with reference to a matching map. In this lesson all of the pupils were fully occupied in learning and their explanations were valued and shared. This encouraged pupils to think more deeply and develop their observational skills. Teaching is least effective, when lessons lack pace and tasks set insufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils.

183.The department contributes well to pupils' social, moral, and cultural development. Typical examples were seen in the moral and economic considerations given to battery farming, the social and moral dilemmas of population growth and inner city redevelopment. Good opportunities for social development occur during the department's fieldwork. Arrangements are made for all pupils up to age 14 years to take part in this. The department makes little contribution towards pupils' spiritual development.

184.The department has two specialist teaching rooms in which the learning environment is improved with displays which celebrate pupils' work. The quality and variety of resources have improved since the previous inspection. These improved resources have improved the quality of learning.

185.The department is well managed and effectively led. Schemes of work are good. Teachers are making some effective use of data gathered from assessment but it is not yet used to inform planning. Monitoring and evaluation procedures have begun, but are not yet sufficiently embedded in practice to have had an impact on raising standards. The department has identified its goals but there is a lack of clarity in plans as to how to reach these goals and how they will be implemented or evaluated for their effectiveness.

186.The department has responded well to the issues raised in the previous inspection and standards of attainment have improved.

History

187.Pupil attainment by age 14 years is well above the national average and by 16 years is in line with the national average. GCSE results show an improvement since the previous inspection. Results in 1999 show 24% of pupils gaining A* and A grades. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls or pupils of different ethnic origins. Attainment of some pupils with physical disabilities is very high. The standards achieved in lessons are good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.

188.History makes a good contribution to pupils' developing literacy skills. Opportunity is given for pupils to read quietly, or to read aloud from a wide variety of good source materials and textbooks. All pupils listen well and are encouraged to develop their oral skills through debate, open-ended questions, and through whole class or paired discussion. Particularly good in Year 10 was the debate for and against the factory system. Pupils deliver their speeches, with clarity and understanding, giving their points of view with a clear sequence. The questions

posed by pupils in Year 8 are well constructed and probe the motives for the actions of Tudor characters. Pupils' writing is especially good. Of particular note is the collection of poems written as a tribute to World War 1 soldiers by Year 9 pupils and the poems written by pupils from the view of a young child the morning after an air raid. Pupils have opportunities to write letters, reports, articles, narratives and speeches and to prepare for interviews. The diaries pupils wrote as if holocaust victim captured the horrific conditions and hopelessness the victims experienced. In Years 10 and 11 pupils learn the skills of how to build a structured narrative in answer to a GCSE question and there is evidence of good extended writing in Year 11.

189. History makes a sound contribution to pupils' numeracy development through the setting of interpretative work on statistics and graphs. For example, the number of weavers and spinners in the cotton industry between 1820 and 1890 and the charts showing wages that were paid to these workers between 1800 and 1847 provide opportunity for the study of comparative data. Pupils look at population figures during the 18th and 19th centuries and recognise how figures are affected by mass production throughout the Industrial Revolution. At every opportunity, pupils are encouraged to refer to and use a chronological framework.
190. History contributes well to the development of information technology skills. Pupils use a good variety of desktop publishing packages to improve the quality and presentation of their work. This is particularly evident in GCSE coursework. Good historical enquiry is aided by the use of CD-ROM and Internet sources, the use of which refines research skills. The use of laptops allows individual pupils to improve the presentation and accuracy of their work. This is particularly important for pupils with special educational needs. It allows them to view their work positively, which increases their confidence.
191. Progress is very good in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. There is no significant difference in progress between boys and girls. There is less progress with pupils of low prior attainment. Concepts that are too difficult and too many facts confuse them and impede their progress. Most pupils have acquired a good sense of chronology and are using good historical vocabulary well, orally and in their written work. Year 7 pupils are beginning to understand the difference between secondary and primary sources. Year 8 pupils show understanding of the impact which Henry VIII's death had on religion and the role of the monarchy since 1547. Year 9 pupils understand the complexities involved in planning the opening battle of the Somme, and why it went wrong. Year 10 pupils make excellent progress in understanding what social and economic history is about, and the meaning behind the concept of "people against profit". Year 11 pupils use sources of information critically to carry out enquiries about the different motives as well as the opinions of the mill owners. Pupils are beginning to reach substantiated conclusions independently, aware that some evidence maybe useless.
192. Pupils' response to history is very good. Pupils enjoy history lessons. Standards of presentation are extremely high. Pupils are well behaved, listen well, sustain concentration and enjoy humour in class. All of this has a positive impact on progress and standards of attainment. The challenge to prepare for a debate and a role-play is undertaken well and ensures success in the subsequent lessons. Good relationships exist with each other, especially with special educational needs pupils and pupils with physical disabilities.
193. The quality of teaching overall is good, and in over half of the lessons it is very good or excellent, which is a marked improvement since the previous inspection. This contributes positively to the high standards achieved. The lack of appropriate guidance highlighted in the last report has been effectively addressed. In the best lessons teachers set very clear objectives. They provide historical content which is accurate, challenging and reflects current knowledge and understanding of the events and personalities being studied. Plenary sessions are used to reinforce learning. Teachers ensure all pupils have a clear understanding of

chronology. All teachers have high expectations of behaviour and a great desire for pupils to know what it is to be an historian. Very good relationships exist within the classroom and there is an effective use of praise. Homework is used effectively to reinforce and extend learning.

194. Organisation and management of the pupils is particularly good. A wide variety of techniques is used. Particularly effective are the occasions when pupils work on shared tasks in groups or pairs and when pupils are encouraged to use study skills to understand difficult historical ideas. The quality of lesson plans varies. They are less effective when the learning objectives and the tasks to be completed in the lessons are not explained to the pupils. Teaching is less effective when the conceptual difficulty of the content is not suited to the ability of the pupils so they are unable to ask historical questions and their progress is slow.
195. Procedures for assessment are in place, but the use of data gathered through day-to-day assessment, to inform curriculum and lesson planning is in the early stages of development.
196. The department contributes positively to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Opportunities for spiritual development are good. Pupils are given quiet time in class to reflect upon the topics being studied, and time is provided for pupils to recognise and explain things that happen. Relationships are very good. This is in part achieved by the effective use of praise and the positive role models offered by the staff. It is also achieved through the provision of studies of social life of different people and changing patterns of family life. Visits to Chepstow Castle and Tintern Abbey, The Commandary, Ypres and Brindley Place, provide good opportunities for the social and moral development of pupils. Moral issues are raised within lessons and through the use of visitors. For example, a visitor's presentation of life in Bergen, Belsen and Auschwitz during the holocaust was particularly successful. Sympathetic understanding of other cultures, their life styles and points of view are developed effectively.
197. The department is well led by an experienced and dedicated head of department. It is an effective open and happy department. Staff are well qualified and have a secure knowledge and understanding of their subject. Since the previous inspection there have been improvements. Policies, guidelines and schemes of work are in place, however, progression with regard to level descriptions is not included. The head of department ensures there is equal opportunity for all pupils. Monitoring and evaluation procedures are being developed but monitoring is currently done on a largely informal basis. Monitoring of pupils' work takes place regularly.
198. There are two specialist history rooms, which are well organised and effectively used. The rooms provide a stimulating learning environment. There is very good use of display both as a learning resource as well as a celebration of all pupils' work.
199. Resources are sufficient for delivering the National Curriculum. Text books meet the needs of all pupils and the "need for more artefacts" identified in the previous report has been addressed.
200. This is a very good department, which successfully motivates and engages pupils in their learning. Overall the department has made good progress since the previous inspection having addressed the issues raised in that report.

Information technology

201. Attainment throughout the school is good and has improved steadily since the previous report. By the age of 14 years, 73% of pupils achieve level 5 or above, which is well above the national

average of 56%. By 16 years of age, of the small number of pupils who have followed the GCSE course, 95% achieve A* to C which is well above national average.

202. By the age of 14 years, most pupils are competent and confident users of information technology for written presentation and research. Many pupils have access to computers at home and bring their work in to support their presentations in a wide range of subjects. Most pupils can describe the software they use, why they are using a particular software application and where to look for information – for example the Internet or a CD ROM.

203. Pupils are given little opportunity to develop the key skills of reading or speaking. They listen carefully to instructions and information given and are able to act upon it. Most pupils are confident using word processing to produce written information. The canteen survey work carried out helps pupils' understanding of graphical representation.

204. The previous inspection identified good use of the application of information technology to support learning and this is still the case. Discrete information technology lessons in Years 7 and 8 improve pupils' skills in the communicating, handling and modelling strands of the National Curriculum. The control strand is effectively delivered largely by the design and technology area, but supported by LOGO work in mathematics. The measuring strand is delivered through the science area but this is under-developed.

205. Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school, but the more able are not being given challenging work so that they can reach their potential. Pupils involved in information technology GCSE courses make good progress, but the progress of other pupils in Years 10 and 11 is limited. Pupils with learning difficulties and those with physical disabilities make good progress in information technology; the school has a wide range of specialist resources including small and large keyboards and appropriate switches to support individual needs. There is a monitoring procedure in place to record when pupils use information technology within the curriculum, but this information has not been evaluated to find out if there has been continuity and progression in all pupils' learning experiences.

206. There is evidence of pupils making progress in lessons. The work in pupils' folders, in notebooks, in displays and in lessons shows progress over time. Pupils are able to apply their knowledge and understanding to other subject areas including design and technology, mathematics and music. The information technology scheme of work shows continuity and progression for Years 7 and 8, but this is less clear in the cross-curricular use of information technology in Years 9 to 11.

207. Most pupils enjoy using information technology. They are keen to produce work of a high standard and many will give up their own time to improve the presentation of their work, either at home or by making use of the open access to systems in school. Pupils in information technology lessons are interested and well behaved. They usually work one to a computer but they are willing to help each other if needed. There were no group activities seen during the inspection. Pupils respect others' views and beliefs. A number of pupils use access to the Internet and CD ROMs to investigate their own cultural or religious backgrounds. The computers and computer rooms are well cared for and pupils are trusted to work on their own before school, at lunchtimes and after school.

208. The quality of teaching throughout the school is never less than satisfactory and some good teaching occurs in Years 7 and 8. Teacher expectations and standards of discipline are high. Elements of good teaching include the teachers' good subject knowledge, use of questions to test pupils' understanding and the giving of appropriate individual pupil support. The GCSE theory work is well planned. Pupils know what is expected and the teacher makes effective use of the interactive whiteboard to provide notes and support material for pupils with physical disabilities who find note writing difficult. Relationships with pupils are good. The computer

technician gives individual support to some pupils with physical disabilities to help them to make progress.

209. Lessons are less effective when the lesson objectives are not shared with pupils at the beginning of the lesson and there is no review at the end of the lesson. The pace of lessons is slow and there is a lack of work matched to pupils' abilities. The pace of lessons is better in Years 10 and 11 where pupils are given more challenging learning tasks, are set realistic deadlines and work to them. In Years 7 and 8 most lessons are teacher led, the emphasis is on skill acquisition and development of competence and confidence. There is insufficient challenge for these pupils and the pace is often slow. The canteen survey and report in Year 8 is taught across the year group and this enables pupils to practice a range of information technology skills. Most pupils are able to apply these skills later in other curriculum areas, especially English, history and geography.

210. There is a marking policy in place. Some pupils have an understanding of levels of attainment but they are not always clear about how they could improve their level. Currently, data gathered through assessment are not used to inform the planning of lessons.

211. Special educational need pupils are well supported by information technology staff. Information technology used to support teaching and learning provides some pupils with access to the curriculum they would not otherwise have.

212. Pupils' levels of attainment are reported to parents at the end of Year 9 and there are satisfactory information technology reports for Years 7 and 8. From Year 9 onwards, it is the responsibility of the individual subjects to report information technology capability and progress and this is not yet carried out for all pupils.

213. The department is well led. There are some formal meetings but information is usually shared effectively through regular informal contact. The department collects a lot of assessment data and is beginning to analyse it, however, this does not yet inform curriculum planning. Accommodation is good and has a positive effect on standards. There are several large clusters of computers. Many curriculum areas have access to smaller clusters or individual computers, supported by a range of printers, scanners and digital cameras. This good level of provision has a positive impact on the standards achieved.

214. The previous inspection identified the good use of the application of information technology to support learning. The school has maintained this strength and information technology continues to make a positive impact on the standards achieved.

Modern Foreign Languages

215. Attainment in modern foreign languages is good. By the age of 14 years, pupils attain the national average of Level 4 or above in higher proportions than other schools nationally. Similarly, at GCSE, the percentage of pupils attaining grades A* to C and grades A* to G is close to or above the national average, depending on the language taken. All pupils taking GCSE in either French or German in 1999, gained Grade F or higher. There is no significant trend in the pattern of performance in French and German or for boys and girls. Pupils' grasp and understanding of language content and patterns are good in listening and reading. Pupils' competence in speaking is also relatively good across the ability range. More able pupils have well-established knowledge of the language and show good levels of accuracy and reliability in a variety of skills. Their ability to use and apply language independently with confidence diminishes in more open-ended contexts. Pupils' ability to use information technology to present their work in a range of word-processed or desk-top published forms is good. There is also a small amount of number work done using simple databases. Standards of attainment have

improved since the previous inspection, particularly in French.

216. Progress in lessons and over time is good in Years 7, 8 and 9 in both French and German. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 show good progress in the way they acquire key words, phrases, sentence patterns and structures within varied contexts. They make good progress in developing the skills to recognise details in listening and reading, as well as producing increasingly informative and varied forms of writing. Progress in speaking a foreign language is at least sound. Pupils can often work without prompts and show good recall of pronunciation and sentence patterns. They work well with guided and supported speaking activities to participate in activities, prepare personal tapes and respond in class. In the best examples, as in a Year 8 French lesson revising school subjects, more able pupils reached the point where they were knowledgeable and confident enough with topic content, to vary and adapt familiar patterns to make their own meanings. Middle ability pupils, similarly, derive confidence from the quality of resources and guidance offered to recall a good range of past tense sentence patterns with reliability. For example, in a Year 9 French lesson pupils built up a narrative of how they spent their free time during a previous weekend.
217. Progress in Years 10 and 11 is almost always satisfactory and sometimes good. Pupils make particularly good progress in informed preparation for the requirements both of the language and of GCSE. They are increasingly able to recognise and understand foreign language texts in listening and reading. They develop the reliability, recall and accuracy to substitute and adapt texts in speaking and writing. This progress is reinforced both in lessons and over time. For the more able, there is unsatisfactory progress in respect of reaching the highest levels of attainment in both understanding more complex texts and adapting more freely the models of text provided for different purposes. In a Year 10 German lesson, for example, an able group of pupils working on a description of Birmingham were able to reproduce the model reasonably well, but lacked the confidence from seeing and working with a range of structured alternatives to adapt the original extensively.
218. Pupils of differing abilities and backgrounds make at least satisfactory progress. The least able pupils and pupils with special educational needs make good progress. There are no significant patterns in the progress made by boys and girls or pupils from different ethnic groups. Progress has become more consistent and secure since the previous inspection.
219. Pupils' attitudes and response to learning languages are positive, overwhelmingly good and in some cases very good or excellent. They show evident interest in their work and are ready to sustain their concentration. Homework helps them to develop their capacity for personal study. In all lessons, behaviour is at least good and often very good. Pupils form constructive relationships with each other, especially when given clear, structured opportunities to practise or adapt the language working in pairs or groups. These opportunities are, however, somewhat limited. Pupils respectfully accept each others' efforts and attempts. When given opportunities to work in groups, with the Foreign Language Assistant or in preparing their own tapes, pupils show positive readiness to take appropriate initiative in and responsibility for their learning. In several lessons in both languages, the pupils' enthusiasm led to very good involvement. For example in a less able French group pupils rose well to the challenge of learning 8 parts of the body within a tight timescale. These good attitudes contribute positively to the standards achieved over time.
220. Teaching is satisfactory in most lessons and often good. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and pupils show a growing confidence in the teachers' grasp of the content and skills progression required. Teachers have good personal knowledge of their pupils. Expectations of pupils are high in both language classes. However, not enough is done to push higher ability pupils towards the higher standards. Planning is sound in that it is efficient, consistent and secure, but learning objectives are not clear in lessons. Activities do not always help all pupils to make the best progress. Pupils are not consistently given a practical example of the outcomes

expected against which to judge their progress and success. Teachers vary in their use of target language for a full range of purposes. The best practice in some lessons seen is the use of the target language for routine, activity management and focus text work, but this is not consistent across the department. Homework is used positively and supports pupils' progress well. Marking is sound and regular, often backed up by verbal feedback in class, but comments made in books lack explicit guidance for pupils' improvement.

221. In the best lessons seen, pupils gain a very clear idea of what they are to learn, building on prior knowledge which gives them confidence. Goals are put within the reach of pupils of different abilities. The amount and range of the language pupils learn are clearly supported by good quality and accessible materials. In less successful lessons, the objectives lack specific goals which cannot then be checked and reviewed at the end of lessons. The learning activities lack overall coherence and clarity and pupils lose their way during the lesson and become confused.

222. The curriculum offered for modern foreign languages meets statutory requirements in full. Planning for progression and continuity in schemes of work and in lessons is at least sound. Information technology is increasingly integrated into schemes. Portfolios of assessed work are bringing together examples of varying performance in tasks. Marking criteria, topic assessment tasks and samples of different levels of work are not as yet as arranged to illustrate and exemplify the progression to higher levels of attainment.

223. Pupils' moral, social and cultural development are well supported in this subject. Reflection on the value and importance of language and communication in human life as part of the spiritual development of pupils is under-represented. Extra-curricular activities contribute positively to the work of the department and to pupils' good attitudes, progress and standards attained.

224. The department is well led and management is good. Monitoring is beginning to positively contribute towards improved planning for greater progress and attainment. The department plans for further improvement. Broad goals are drawn up, but lack detail about strategic, costed and accountable action. Evaluation of the work of the department is not yet undertaken. Staffing is sufficient and foreign language assistants contribute well to the work of the department. Professional development is used to good effect, but is not sufficiently clearly planned with reference to the department's goals. Accommodation overall is sound. Learning resources in the department are good and information technology equipment available provides good opportunities to vary and enhance pupils' learning. All resources, including staffing and time are efficiently and effectively managed to support the progress and attainment of the pupils in both languages.

Music

225. GCSE results, have been below or well below national averages since the previous inspection. The results in 1999 were, however, well above the national average. Only very small numbers of pupils take GCSE. Teacher assessment at end of Year 9 shows 78% of pupils reaching the expected standard or above. About a fifth of pupils achieved above or well above the expected standard at the end of Year 9 but there is no Year 10 GCSE music group. Attainment in lessons throughout the school is satisfactory in just over half the lessons, but never better than that. The lowest ability group attains at the appropriate level for that ability, with some attaining beyond that. In other lessons where attainment is less than satisfactory, the work set contains insufficient musical challenge for pupils' abilities. Pupils' performances are generally well prepared. These consist often of their own multi-part compositions that are composed at the keyboard and recorded by means of integral disk drive. In Years 7 to 9, practical work occurs

regularly and written work is appropriately kept to a minimum. Singing in Years 7 to 9, although sometimes enthusiastic, is often inaccurate and timeless. Year 8 pupils are able to perform in two part rhythms based on crotchet and crotchet rests in simple duple time. In Years 7 to 9, there are examples of very good composition work done using computer software.

226. Progress in Year 11 over time remains good. In Years 7 to 9, pupils make satisfactory gains in performing and in the use of information technology skills. The continued use of letter names on keys and worksheets and the lack of appropriate fingering on keyboards are a hindrance to progress over time. Less able pupils display improvement in control of instruments, in ensemble work and make good progress. The majority of pupils make satisfactory progress, particularly in their ability to reflect on the performances of their peers. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

227. Pupils take pride in their performances and compositions, displaying a readiness to improve. They sustain concentration well, behave very well and show respect for each other and for the musical instruments they play. Although they work well when collaborating in pairs or small groups, they are given few opportunities to show initiative or take responsibility. Pupils response has improved since the previous inspection.

228. Teaching in Years 7 to 9 is variable in quality and ranges from very good to unsatisfactory. At the previous inspection, teaching was sound or better. Where teaching is satisfactory or better, lessons are well prepared, instructions are clear and teachers use their practical skills to good effect. Pupils are given suitable paired tasks whilst sharing keyboards. Pace of these lessons is good. Examples are well chosen and teachers display confident subject knowledge. Pupils appreciate the use of warm-up exercises for rhythm work and the teachers' instrumental skills. Some teacher worksheets and ensemble arrangements are of a very high standard. The peripatetic staff who support the department are good practitioners and work very well with their pupils. They teach well and have a clear understanding of pupils' needs. Teaching in Years 10 and 11 is good, as it was at the time of the previous inspection.

229. Where teaching is less than satisfactory, there is too much teacher-led activity, often prefaced by overlong instructions. The activities are sometimes non-musical in content and fail to engage the pupils. For example, pupils were asked to make up lists of words from the musical letters A to G. Teachers do not share learning objectives with the pupils and lesson plans indicate that some teachers themselves are not sure what these are. Work matched to pupils' abilities is rare. The words of songs selected are not always appropriate for pupils for whom English is not their first language.

230. Assessment is carried out and meets statutory requirements at age 14 years. However, the results of assessment are not used to inform teaching, planning or curriculum review. There are four class teachers of music, two of whom have appropriate qualifications. The deployment of suitably qualified music teachers is inefficient. The Head of Department teaches only half a timetable of music. The department lacks a consistent ethos and timetable arrangements permit little sharing of good practice or observation of lessons.

231. Accommodation has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Good use is made of the present facilities. The school continues to provide instrumental and vocal tuition free of charge. Opportunities for extra-curricular performance exist but relatively few pupils take advantage of these. Peripatetic teachers direct some of these ensembles, which are paid for by the school. Those pupils who do perform in the ensembles make good progress. The school does not, however, evaluate the cost effectiveness of its subsidy of music tuition and ensembles. The department supports the moral and social development of pupils but its impact on pupils' spiritual and cultural development is very limited.

240. Physical Education

232. Attainment throughout the school is in line with national expectations. The end of Year 9 statutory teacher assessments over the previous three years show that pupils achieve well above the national average. In Years 7 to 9, pupils are generally confident in wheeling, rolling and balancing in gymnastics. The quality of movement in travelling is often sound. The variety in balances is reasonably good. Recall of technical terminology and movement principles is sometimes good. Understanding of the need for warm up and of safe exercise principles is good. Pupil-led warm ups are effective and well-structured. Planning and evaluative skills are sound. This, for boys, is an improvement since the previous inspection.
233. In Years 10 and 11, awareness of warm-up principles is good and safety awareness is sound. Some pupils demonstrate a good level of fitness. Games techniques and skills are variable but often reasonably sound. Basic technical faults are evident such as poor footwork and swinging the arms to play the dig in volleyball. Badminton skills are similarly limited by inadequate footwork to move into positions which would allow good technique. Skill levels in basketball and table-tennis are often good but, for a minority of pupils are adversely affected by a casual attitude. Whilst skills are often performed adequately, tactical awareness is more limited. Problem-solving skills are reasonable, the ability to work in groups is good and listening skills are generally good.
234. For the first group of pupils who took GCSE physical education attainment was below the national average in 1999. Girls' attainment in this course was very low. No detailed analysis has been carried out to show what improvements are needed. The records and work of the current cohort indicate the potential for results more in line with national averages. Attainment is sometimes limited by insufficient time allocated to activities for large groups. The lack of time limits teaching and learning activities which leads to limited progress and negative attitudes by some Year 11 pupils. Deployment of non-specialist teachers to GCSE groups to teach activities beyond their areas of expertise also limits pupils' progress and attainment. Attainment by pupils with special educational needs is in line with their abilities. There is no difference in attainment of pupils from different ethnic origins. Attainment by girls in gymnastics is often better than that of boys.
235. Progress in Years 7 to 9 is sound in nearly half of the lessons and is good to excellent in a similar proportion. Safety awareness and the application of safe exercise principles improves. Over time there is evidence of sequence development and improved fluency in movement. Recollection of previous work is sound and confidence develops sufficiently to enable pupils to attempt new skills. Progress is, on occasion, limited by very open-ended tasks giving pupils insufficient focus on what skills to improve.
236. In Years 10 and 11, progress is sound in half of the lessons and good or very good in a further quarter. For example, rallies in badminton improve and some basic technical faults are overcome. Understanding of health related exercise clearly improves. In netball, footwork and pass selection improve. Where progress is unsatisfactory it is affected either by adverse pupil attitudes, by the deployment of non-specialist teaching beyond recognised areas of expertise or by insufficient attention to developing pupils' tactical awareness. Pupils of all abilities throughout the school generally make appropriate progress over time.
237. In most lessons pupils are interested, enthusiastic and attentive. They willingly respond to questions, try to develop practical skills and, when challenged, seek to respond and meet the expectation. Behaviour is generally good. Pupils value each other and are valued by the teachers. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated and supported. Relationships are good. Pupils work well together, are able to plan gymnastic work in groups and are often sensitive to peers' abilities. They respond to opportunities to accept responsibility,

which are more frequent than at the time of the previous inspection. They organise themselves well in groups and lead aspects of warm up. There is little evidence of older pupils officiating or helping each other to improve, despite the Junior Sports Leaders Award being one of the accredited courses available in Years 10 and 11.

238.The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. Process skills development is more evident, teacher direction is less frequent, feedback is more extensive and there is some improvement in the range of teaching styles used. In almost all lessons the quality of teaching is at least sound. In half of the lessons teaching is good, very good or excellent. Planning is evident in the delivery of lessons. Learning objectives are often shared, organisation is good and lesson activities are explained clearly. Pupil-led warm ups are monitored effectively. Teachers circulate and provide suggestions or ask questions which lead to improvement. Safety awareness is good. Class management and control is good and where high expectations are set they are met by the pupils. Essential principles are clearly presented. Where a good pace is set, it is maintained through challenging task, good motivation, high expectations and effective questioning. Individual learning needs are met in a few lessons through the varying levels of individual teacher support, task adjustment and pupil grouping. More able pupils are frequently insufficiently challenged.

239.The breadth of the curriculum at both key stages is good and the curriculum as a whole is based on sound principles. However, time allocation to the various areas of activity lacks balance and prevents adequate practice. Outline schemes of work now exist which aid consistency through clearly stated lesson objectives. Schemes of work, however, lack detail. Agreed assessment criteria at the end of Year 9 are clear and consistently applied.

240.Extra-curricular provision is reasonably broad and well supported by a number of non-specialist teachers. Girls' activities are broadening. Pupils representing the school and county are having increasing success and the quality of both teaching and performance during the extra-curricular activities is good. Curriculum delivery contributes significantly to the moral and social development of pupils.

241.Prior to the current academic year, management was unsatisfactory with regard to a lack of documentation, incomplete assessment records, extreme imbalance in curriculum activities and an obvious recreational approach to the work of pupils in Years 10 and 11. The acting head of department has made some progress in these areas in the short time he has been responsible for the subject. There are now some improvements in documentation. Monitoring work in the department overall continues to be unsatisfactory. Development planning continues to be weak with priorities different to those listed in the school development plan, the department's activity plan and those in the new staff handbook. The priorities identified by the acting head of department are appropriate but there is no indication of how they are to be achieved, by whom, at what cost and how the progress will be monitored or evaluated.

242.Resource provision is very good. Accommodation continues to have an adverse impact on the curriculum provision though the facilities are clean and displays reflect a good image. Specialist staffing is effective and non-specialists contribute conscientiously. However, nine non-specialist teachers contribute hours equivalent to 1.3 full-time teachers (42 periods) per week. Deployment of these teachers goes beyond their areas of expertise and adversely impacts on standards of attainment, particularly at GCSE.

Religious Education

243.The attainment of pupils by the age of 14 years is broadly in line with locally agreed expectations. All pupils in Years 7 to 9 make satisfactory progress in lessons and in the longer term. Due mainly to limited length of time of each lesson in Years 10 and 11 pupils - a single

thirty-five minute lesson each week - the attainment of most pupils by the end of Year 11 is below locally agreed expectations. Progress in lessons in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory and progress in the longer term is also unsatisfactory. There is no short or full GCSE course in religious education.

244. Most pupils by the age of 14 years, show a sound awareness of different religious traditions such as Islam, Sikhism, Christianity and Hinduism. They tend not to confuse information about one religion with another. Pupils demonstrate a limited but secure factual knowledge of religions. For example, they can correctly identify leaders of religion, places of worship, holy books and some rituals and ceremonies. There are however, weaknesses. This is particularly evident in their understanding of religious belief generally and key aspects of Christian belief such as the Holy Trinity, atonement, the incarnation and the significance of Jesus' death and resurrection. For example, one pupil in Year 8 suggested that Jesus was called the Saviour "because he gave out bread to all those people".

245. Older pupils in Years 10 and 11 are able to express a personal opinion on issues such as the existence of God, the creation of the world, abortion, euthanasia, family life and drug dependency. Some of the more able pupils can produce a short but well structured argument which demonstrates a sensitive understanding of the complexity of the issue. For example, one pupil in Year 10 while writing about her opposition to euthanasia acknowledged, "I think it is difficult to watch a person die in pain, and it is also difficult to live in pain and suffering". However, when discussing such issues most pupils do not have a sound grasp of diversity of views within a religious tradition or how scripture and other sources of religious authority may be interpreted in different ways.

246. Pupils' reading, writing and speaking skills are good. Their listening and information technology skills are very good. There are no significant differences between boys and girls, or between pupils of a different background or ethnic origin. There is no evidence of any overall improvement in attainment since the previous inspection.

247. Pupils are well behaved and given the smallness of the room in which most religious education is taught, some classes are very well behaved. Pupils show a high level of respect for their teachers. They stay on task and respond well to questions. However, pupils rarely initiate questions of their own. Although pupils show interest they do not demonstrate any enthusiasm for the subject. Pupils are invariably, quiet, subdued and compliant. There are no examples of sustained dialogue or debate between pupils or between pupils and staff. There are however some excellent examples of pupils involved in personal study researching and completing extended assignments. For example, one girl in Year 8 wrote two largely factual biographical accounts of the life of Muhammad and the life of Guru Nanak. Pupils show a substantial amount of respect for other people's feelings, values and beliefs.

248. Throughout the school, the teaching of religious education is satisfactory. Most teaching is undertaken by members of staff who have a very good knowledge and understanding of the topics taught. Good use is made of pupils' own experience of religious commitment with opportunities being provided to share their knowledge of their own faith with other members of the class. Good use is also made of modern technology with pupils using CD ROMS and the Internet for research purposes as well as using word processing skills in order to improve the presentation of their work.

249. However, there is a lack of variety in the range of teaching strategies adopted. Lessons in the main consist of long periods of teacher talk interspersed with questions. Lessons sometimes lack pace because of too much teacher talk. Insufficient use is made of artefacts, audio and visual material in order to give the lessons variety and support the pupil's learning. Generally, insufficient use is made of paired and group work in order for pupils to share ideas, carry out investigations or feed back their findings at length. Frequently, questions and activities lack

challenge and require of pupils only recall of information rather than analysis, understanding or evaluation. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to express their own opinions or learn from the religious material they are exploring. For example, before watching a video of Bible stories pupils in Year 7 were invited to “think about what these stories tell us about ourselves and about God”. The follow up question asked by the teacher after the video “The Bible is divided into two parts, what are they called?” did not attempt to draw out the pupils own response to the stories but instead tested their factual knowledge of the structure of the Bible.

250. Where teaching is better, probing questions are used which require of pupils thought and imagination. For example, pupils in Year 8 while learning about Islam were not asked to simply describe the Five Pillars but were asked, “Why do you think they are called the Five Pillars?” and were given a brief timed target to gather their thoughts. Pupils in Year 7 while considering Jesus’ family were invited, in groups, to record what their family meant to them and were allowed to share their thoughts with other members of the class.

251. The department is generally well organised with very clear documentation. The department makes a good contribution to pupils’ moral and cultural development and a satisfactory contribution to pupils’ spiritual and social development. There is, however, a general lack of drive to develop the department and raise standards. Development planning is unsatisfactory. There are no plans to develop a GCSE course. Concerns expressed in the previous inspection regarding the minimal time available in Years 10 and 11 and the limited time for reflection and discussion have not been effectively addressed. The lack of any formal form of teaching about Christianity in Year 8 and Year 9 limits pupils’ understanding of that faith. Assessment and marking procedures are also not well understood by the pupils. Pupils receive praise like “an excellent unit”, or are advised to “complete all the work” but they receive very little subject specific advice which would help them to make further progress or develop their ideas further.

260.

260. PART C: INSPECTION DATA

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

252. The inspection was carried out by a team of 15 inspectors. During the week, 190 lessons or part lessons were observed. All full-time and part-time teachers present during the week were observed teaching at least once and many were observed in several lessons. In addition, inspectors attended assemblies, tutorial and registration sessions and a representative sample of extra-curricular activities. (There were no management meetings being held during the planned days of the inspection).
253. Planned meetings were held with members of staff with management responsibilities, the chair of governors and the chair of the finance committee. Inspectors looked at the work of many pupils and all of the work of a representative group of pupils from each year group. Planned discussions were held with groups of pupils from each year and informal discussions were held with many more during lessons, lunchtime and other activities. For one day, a pupil from Year 7, Year 9 and Year 11 were accompanied by inspectors who observed all their lessons and work.
254. Prior to and during the week of the inspection, a large sample of documentation provided by the school was analysed. The Registered Inspector held a meeting attended by 22 parents and considered 134 responses from the parents' questionnaire. Meetings also took place with staff, the senior management team and governors prior to the inspection.

264. DATA AND INDICATORS

Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
Y7 – Y11	758	57	104	144

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (Y7 – Y11)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	48
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16

Education support staff (Y7 – Y11)

Total number of education support staff	19
Total aggregate hours worked each week	450

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes:	73
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Average teaching group size:	KS3	23
	KS4	20

Financial data

Financial year:

1998-99

	£
Total Income	2,437,015.00
Total Expenditure	2,424,725.00
Expenditure per pupil *	3,215.82
Balance brought forward from previous year	126,111.00
Balance carried forward to next year	138,401.00

* This includes significant additional funds for pupils with statements of special educational needs.

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

758

Number of questionnaires returned:

134

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	29.5	55.3	9.1	5.3	0.8
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	36.4	56.8	5.3	1.5	
The school handles complaints from parents well	23.6	55.1	16.5	4.7	
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	28.8	54.5	10.6	6.1	
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	35.6	49.2	9.8	5.3	
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	43.2	49.2	6.1	1.5	
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	30.1	51.9	11.3	6.8	
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	28.4	56.7	9.7	5.2	
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	36.6	54.2	5.3	3.8	
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	34.4	52.7	8.4	4.6	
My child(ren) like(s) school	34.3	53.7	6.0	3.0	3.0

Other issues raised by parents

No significant concerns were raised by parents.

A very small number of parents expressed concerns regarding insufficient information in the reports they received about how their children are attaining and progressing. They want to know if their children are achieving as much as they could. There are also some concerns about the imbalance of homework. There is no homework on some evenings and a lot on others.