

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Paget High School**  
Burton Upon Trent

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique Reference Number: 124392

Inspection Number: 185867

Headteacher: Mr. D. Ayling

Reporting inspector: Mr. D. Driscoll  
11933

Dates of inspection: 8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 708249

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
Type of control:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 to 18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Burton Road Branston Burton Upon Trent Staffordshire DE14 3DR
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. T. Pickering
Date of previous inspection:	October 1995

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

<b>Team members</b>	<b>Subject responsibilities</b>	<b>Aspect responsibilities</b>
Mr. D. Driscoll, Rgl	Other curriculum provision at Key Stage 4	Attainment and progress
		Teaching
		Leadership and management
Mrs. R. Watkins, Lay Inspector		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development
		Attendance
		Support, guidance and pupils' welfare
		Partnership with parents and the community
Mr. M. Ash	Modern foreign languages	
	Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	
Mrs. M. A. Axon	Mathematics	Accommodation
Mrs. M. Christian	Design and technology	
	Information technology	
Mrs. C. Harrison	Science	Assessment
Mrs. S. Jeffray	Physical education	
Mr. R. Jones	Geography	The efficiency of the school
	Special educational needs	
	Special educational needs assessment	
Mr. I. Kirby	Music	Curriculum
	Sixth Form provision	
Mr. M. Pettitt	Art	Resources
Mr. A. Skelton	Religious education	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
Mr. B. Treacy	English	Staffing
	Equality of opportunity	
Mr. J. Vanstone	History	
	Business education	

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London WC2B 6SE

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## MAIN FINDINGS

### What the school does well

- Most pupils make good progress as a result of the good teaching they receive
- The school's good pastoral care results in good behaviour, attitudes and personal development
- The values that the school promotes lead to a high degree of racial harmony and good relationships
- The school is improving under the good leadership of the senior management team
- There is very good provision for social development
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs
- Pupils make very good progress in art
- The school provides good value for money

### • Where the school has weaknesses

- I. Pupils make unsatisfactory progress in science and economics owing to unsatisfactory teaching
- II. There is insufficient support for pupils whose first language is not English and do not have an adequate grasp of the language
- III. The curriculum is unsatisfactory at Key Stage 3
- IV. There is not enough teaching of information technology to ensure that pupils can make satisfactory progress
- V. There are not enough computers in the school

**The school has more strengths than weaknesses. The governors' action plan will set out how the weaknesses identified during the inspection are to be tackled. This plan will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.**

### • How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has made good progress since the previous inspection. Examination results at GCSE level have risen at a rate that is faster than the national average and the introduction of GNVQ courses has led to students achieving above the national averages in those subjects. The number on roll has risen significantly. A focus on improvement combined with changes in staffing have led to improved standards in many subjects and, most importantly, the quality of teaching has risen dramatically. Given the good teaching that is now firmly in place and the senior management team's ability to identify and address the school's weaknesses, the school is well placed to continue its improvement

### • Standards in subjects

The following table shows standards achieved by 14 year olds in national tests in 1999 and by 16 and 18 year olds in GCSE and A/AS-level examinations in 1998:

Performance in:	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	Key
			<i>well above average</i> A
			<i>above average</i> B
			<i>average</i> C
			<i>below average</i> D
			<i>well below average</i> E



Key Stage 3 test	E	E
GCSE examinations	D	B
A/AS - levels	E	

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Results at the end of Key Stage 3 were below average in 1998 but fell in 1999, reflecting the well below average levels of attainment of the pupils when they joined the school. Whilst the proportion of pupils gaining 5 or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C is below average, the proportion gaining one or more GCSEs is well below average. The latter position reflects the attainment in examinations of those pupils whose first language is not English and do not have sufficient expertise in the language. A level results are well below average but GNVQ results are above average. The best results at GCSE were in art religious education and Urdu, whilst the worst results were in accounts, economics and design and technology: systems and control.

· **Quality of teaching**

	<b>Overall quality</b>	<b>Most effective in:</b>	<b>Least effective in:</b>
Years 7-9	Satisfactory	Art	Science
Years 10-11	Good	Art	Economics, science
Sixth form	Satisfactory	GNVQ subjects	Economics
English	Good		
Mathematics	Good		

Teaching is at least satisfactory in 94 per cent of lessons, good in 45 per cent and very good in 15 per cent. Teaching is less than satisfactory in 6 per cent of lessons. Teaching is unsatisfactory in science because some teachers do not expect enough of pupils and do not control pupils' behaviour. The teaching in economics is insufficiently planned and the assessment of pupils' work is unsatisfactory.

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

## Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Good in lessons and around school, but a high number of exclusions
Attendance	Satisfactory and improving
Ethos*	Good. Clear emphasis on raising standards and a positive learning environment
Leadership and management	Good. Very good leadership from the headteacher, supported well by governors most other staff in posts of responsibility
Curriculum	Satisfactory at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form but unsatisfactory at Key Stage 3 where many do not receive their entitlement to the National Curriculum
Pupils with special educational needs	A good provision brings about good progress
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Good overall, with very good provision for social development
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Inadequate support for pupils who do not speak English and insufficient computers
Value for money	Good. Most pupils make good progress, despite the school receiving well below average funding

\* *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
VI. The clear understanding they have of what is taught VII. The standards achieved VIII. The homework	

Parents are rightfully pleased with the progress that their children make. The curriculum booklets are particularly effective in informing parents about the different subjects. The amount of homework is about right.

· **KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION**

In order to improve the standards achieved and the quality of education provided, the Headteacher, staff and governors should:

- ◆ Improve the progress made by pupils in science by:
  - ensuring that teachers have appropriate expectations of their pupils; (paragraph 48)
  - ensuring that teachers control the behaviour of their pupils; (paragraph 51)
  - ensuring that pupils are following appropriate courses at Key Stage 4; (paragraph 58)
  - making the raising of attainment the main focus of development planning in the department and drawing up strategies to address this issue; (paragraph 147)
  - making greater use of National Curriculum levels in Years 7 and 8. (paragraph 147)
- ◆ Improve the progress made by pupils in information technology by:
  - increasing the amount of teaching throughout Years 8 to 11; (paragraphs 57 and 58)
  - providing sufficient resources to ensure that all subjects can make use of computers in their day-to-day teaching. (paragraph 106)
- ◆ Improve the progress made by pupils who do not have a sufficient grasp of the English language by providing more support for them in their lessons. (paragraph 31)
- ◆ Improve the progress made by pupils in economics by:
  - ensuring that lessons are planned in appropriate detail; (paragraph 49)
  - ensuring that assessment is carried out in such a way as to provide appropriate feedback to pupils and students and that adequate records of assessments are kept; (paragraph 53)
  - ensuring that the head of department sets a good example for other teachers in the department. (paragraph 93)
- ◆ Improve the curriculum at Key Stage 3 by ensuring that all pupils receive their entitlement to music and physical education; (paragraph 57)

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

- ◆ ensuring equality of access to all areas of the curriculum (paragraph 57), improving the provision for pupils' and teachers' health and safety (paragraph 85) and meeting all statutory requirements (paragraph 98).

- “ **INTRODUCTION**
- “ **Characteristics of the school**

1. Paget High School is a smaller than average mixed comprehensive school, educating pupils between the ages of 11 and 18. There are 879 pupils at the school (440 boys and 439 girls), considerably more than when last inspected. The school is situated in Branston within Staffordshire Local Education Authority. Most pupils come from Broadway and Uxbridge in Burton upon Trent, rather than Branston itself.

2. The school has an above average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. The pupils come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds, which, overall, are below average. The characteristics of the pupils entering the school are similar to those at the time of the previous inspection. The school has a very healthy multi-cultural ethos and one third of pupils are from ethnic minorities, which is a very high proportion. Almost a third of pupils come from homes where English is not the first language but only a small number speak little or no English at all.

3. There are 128 pupils on the special needs register and 34 have statements of special educational needs, which is above average; there were only 14 pupils with statements at the time of the last inspection. Most pupils with statements have moderate learning difficulties. Pupils' levels of attainment on entry to the school is usually below average in most subjects but brought down to well below average by the language difficulties experienced by a significant proportion of pupils. The pupils currently in Year 10, who took their National Tests last year, joined the school with levels of attainment that were well below average. The school is part of a Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) project to support pupils with low levels of literacy and numeracy on joining the school.

4. The school has several priorities for its work in the current year. These are to: maintain and improve standards; focus clear attention upon teaching and learning in Key Stage 3; continue to develop strategies to support the achievement of boys; undertake a whole-school review over the next 3 years; re-manage the delivery programme of the post-16 curriculum; continue to develop the behaviour support system in the school and to extend community and out-of-school hours opportunities.

5. The school set the following targets for 1999: 37 per cent of pupils achieving five or more passes at General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) grades A\* to C; 85 percent of pupils achieving five GCSE passes and an average GCSE points score of 35. Unauthorised absence to fall to less than 1 per cent and authorised absence to fall to less than 6 per cent. No permanent exclusions should occur and the number of temporary ones should fall to 30.

6. The school has aims to provide: an open atmosphere and a sense of community, where people trust each other and there is respect for the individual; a relaxed and purposeful environment where people feel safe and secure with the freedom to discuss issues; a stimulating school, which is an enjoyable and satisfying place to work in.

## 7.Key Indicators

### Attainment at Key Stage 3<sup>1</sup>

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	70	81	151

<b>National Curriculum Test Results</b>		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	29	36	19
	Girls	36	31	16
	Total	65	67	35
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	43 (51)	44 (53)	23 (49)
	National	63 (65)	62 (60)	55 (56)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	13 (13)	20 (23)	5 (11)
	National	28 (35)	38 (36)	23 (27)

<b>Teacher Assessments</b>		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	39	28	36
	Girls	44	40	36
	Total	83	68	72
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	55 (50)	45 (61)	48 (60)
	National	64 (62)	64 (64)	60 (62)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	28 (16)	7 (30)	12 (22)
	National	31 (31)	37 (37)	28 (31)

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<sup>1</sup> Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

### Attainment at Key Stage 4<sup>2</sup>

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	67	64	131

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	16	52	58
	Girls	27	54	59
	Total	43	106	117
Percentage achieving standard specified	School	33 (28)	81 (80)	89 (98)
	National	44.6 (43.3)	89.8 (88.5)	95.2 (94.0)

### Attainment in the Sixth Form<sup>3</sup>

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 who were entered for GCE A/AS examinations in the latest reporting year:

Year	Male	Female	Total
1998	20	18	38

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	11.3	14.0	12.3 (11.6)	0	4.1	3.2 (3.0)
National	N/A	N/A	17.6 (17.1)	N/A	N/A	2.8 (2.7)

Number entered for the IB Diploma, and percentage of *such students* who achieved this qualification:

	Number	% Success rate
School	22	82.0
National		72.5

Number in final year of approved vocational qualifications and percentage of *such students* who achieved these qualifications:

	Number	% Success Rate
School	7	12.0

<sup>2</sup> Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

<sup>3</sup> Figures in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year



National		10.9
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## Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year:

		%
Authorised Absence	School	6.9
	National comparative data	7.9
Unauthorised Absence	School	2.6
	National comparative data	1.1

## Exclusions

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

	Number
Fixed period	70
Permanent	3

## Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

	%
Very good or better	15
Satisfactory or better	94
Less than satisfactory	6

## **7. PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **7. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL**

#### **7. Attainment and progress**

8. The proportions of pupils reaching levels five or above and six and above in Key Stage 3 National Curriculum tests in 1999 were well below average in English, mathematics and science. The average level achieved by pupils was also well below the national average. Results in English and mathematics were better than those in science. Boys performed significantly better in the tests than the girls did in mathematics and science, but girls did as well as boys in English.

9. Between 1996 and 1998, the trends in results in English, mathematics and science were broadly similar to the national trends, although results were getting closer to the national averages. The differences between the performances of boys and girls were similar to those seen nationally. The results fell in 1999 owing to the well below average attainment of the pupils on entry to the school, rather than any reduction in their progress. Results in the tests overall in 1998 matched those in schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, but the 1999 results were well below those of similar schools.

10. In the 1998 GCSE examinations, the proportion of pupils gaining five or more passes at grades A\* to C was below the national average. The proportions gaining five or more passes at grades A\* to G and one or more passes at grades A\* to G were well below the national averages. Overall, the average GCSE points score per pupil was below average. Results fell in 1999, again reflecting the well below average attainment of the pupils when they joined the school.

11. Results at GCSE have risen at a faster rate than the national average since 1994 and so are getting closer to the national average. Girls perform significantly better at GCSE than boys do. Since 1996, the girls' results have shown strong improvement and in 1998 matched the national average for girls. Over the same period, however, the performance of the boys has declined to well below average.

12. Results overall in 1998 were above average compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. Results were average for the proportions gaining five or more passes at grades A\* to C; below average for the proportions gaining five or more passes at grades A\* to G and well below average for the proportions gaining one or passes at grades A\* to G.

13. In both the tests at the end of Key Stage 3 and in the GCSE examinations there are significant differences between the performance of those pupils who speak English as a second language and all other pupils. A significant minority of pupils do not have sufficient reading or writing skills in English to be able to perform in examinations. This explains the differences in the performance of pupils at different benchmarks. For example, at GCSE the proportion of pupils gaining five or more passes at grades A\* to C is not affected by the low attaining pupils with language difficulties. However, the pupils who cannot speak English are unable to understand the examination questions

and so reduce the proportion of pupils gaining one or more passes at grades A\* to G to a level that is well below the national average. Other pupils from ethnic minorities, whose mother tongue is English perform as well as the other pupils in the school.

14. Results in GCSE examinations in 1998 at grades A\* to C were well above average in art and French. Results were average in history, religious education and Urdu and well below average in all other subjects except biology, design and technology, economics and physical education where results were far below average. Results at grades A\* to G were far below average in design and technology and mathematics and well below average in economics, English and geography. In all other subjects there was either a 100 per cent pass rate or only one pupil failed to pass.

15. The best results in 1998, compared to other subjects in the school, were in art and Urdu, whilst the worst were in geography and economics. The best results in 1999 were in art, religious education and Urdu, whilst the worst were in accounts, economics and the systems and control examination for design and technology.

16. Results at GCE A and AS level in 1998 were well below the national average. Results at A level were above average in Urdu; average in computer studies, physics and sports studies; below average in art, economics, English, mathematics and sociology and well below average in all other subjects. The results are, however, dependent on the levels of attainment of the individual students on joining the courses and, because the number of students on most courses is very small, the results in each subject vary widely from year to year. For example, the best results in 1999 were in art whereas these had been below average the previous year.

17. Almost half of the number of students in the sixth form study for General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQ) and results in these courses at both intermediate and advanced level are above the national averages.

18. In the work seen during the inspection, pupils' attainment at the age of 14 is generally below the level expected for their age. Attainment is above the expected level in art and at the expected level in history, music, modern foreign languages, physical education and religious education. In all other subjects attainment is below the level expected, except for science where attainment is well below the level expected. The attainment observed in English and mathematics differs from the levels indicated by the pupils' national test results in 1999 as the pupils who took the tests in that year were of lower attainment on entry to the school.

19. In the work seen during the inspection, pupils' attainment at the age of 16 is below the level expected for their age. In art and religious education, attainment is above the level expected nationally. Attainment is at the level expected in history, modern foreign languages, music and physical education. In all other subjects attainment is below the level expected except for science where attainment is well below the level expected. Most of these judgements are reflected in the GCSE examination results of either 1998 or 1999, although there are some notable exceptions. In physical education, the judgement is on the attainment of all pupils and not just those who study the subject to GCSE level. In design and technology, too few pupils are entered for the examination as others do not complete coursework and this depresses examination results. In some

subjects, such as geography, pupils can express themselves much better in spoken English than they can in writing.

20. Attainment, by the time pupils leave the sixth form, is below the level expected for students on A level courses and above the level expected for students on GNVQ courses. The numbers taking A level in each of the subjects are very small. The overall levels of attainment observed during the inspection were better than those suggested by the A level results last year, but this is a reflection of the levels of attainment of the individual students when they entered the sixth form. For example, examination results were below average in art in 1998 but the candidates currently studying for A level are performing above the level expected on an A level course. The introduction of GNVQ courses has been most successful and has resulted in some students being provided with a more appropriate curriculum. The current students in the sixth form are generally performing at an appropriate level in all subjects at A level except biology, economics, information technology and physics, where attainment is below average and in Urdu where attainment is above the standard expected. Attainment is above the level expected on all GNVQ courses.

21. The standard of literacy at both key stages is below the level expected nationally. Even so, oracy is a relative strength for many pupils in the school and good opportunities are provided in lessons for them to develop these skills further. In physical education, for example, pupils discuss poems that provide a starting point for dance. Whilst there are limited opportunities to improve their skills in reading aloud outside English lessons, some other subjects encourage investigative reading. In history, for example, pupils are encouraged to read a wide range of texts, surf the Internet, use e-mail to contact university departments when investigating such topics as resistance to the Nazis or the effect a communist regime had on the music of Shostakovich. For many pupils, however, their main weakness is the quality of their writing. Across the curriculum, there are too few opportunities for pupils to produce extended pieces of writing. Besides this, the work of middle and low attaining pupils is marred by inaccurate spelling, punctuation and grammar. A small, but significant, number of pupils in each year group speak little English and their standard of literacy is, consequently, very low.

22. Higher attainers have a good level of numerical skills. They use them effectively in science when handling calculations on speed, pressure and power. The numeracy skills of middle and lower attaining pupils are below average. In science they tend to make careless mistakes in calculations and do not label axes of graphs. They lack structure in setting out their work and do not show their methods of working. Graphical skills in Year 11 are weak. In geography, pupils produce graphs of climatic and population change but this is the exception rather than the rule. Pupils produce charts of geographical data and demonstrate sound understanding of co-ordinates and scale in map reading. In art, pupils consider spatial concepts and relate pattern work to the transformation skills of symmetry and rotation that they learn in mathematics.

23. Most pupils generally make good progress at the school, but there are significant differences between certain groups of pupils, the subjects and the different key stages.

24. Pupils join the school with levels of attainment that, taking into account difficulties

with the English language, are well below average. Most pupils make good progress during Key Stage 3 but those pupils who speak little English receive insufficient support in lessons and make poor progress in most subjects. Consequently, the levels of attainment of these pupils are very low and depress the school's test results at the end of Key Stage 3. Taking these factors into account, progress in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory in information technology, science and physical education and satisfactory in design and technology, English and geography. Progress is good in all other subjects except in art, where the language difficulties have less of an impact and pupils make very good progress. When the results of tests at the end of Key Stage 3 are compared with the results for the same pupils at the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have made poor progress in science, satisfactory progress in English and good progress in mathematics. The progress in mathematics for those pupils supported by the SRB programme is particularly impressive.

25. The unsatisfactory progress made in science is directly attributable to unsatisfactory teaching. In information technology, the teaching is good but there are too few lessons whilst in physical education a minority of pupils are withdrawn to study Urdu and do not receive sufficient lessons to fulfil the National Curriculum requirements. A similar situation exists in Year 8 for a much smaller group who are withdrawn from music for language support.

26. Progress at Key Stage 4 is good and pupils achieve levels of examination success that are consistently above those that would be expected from their levels of attainment upon entry to the school. Progress is good in all subjects except design and technology, geography and physical education, where it is satisfactory and in economics, information technology and science, where pupils make unsatisfactory progress. In art, progress is very good. The unsatisfactory progress in economics and science is a result of unsatisfactory teaching, whilst the unsatisfactory progress in information technology is a result of too few lessons. The impact of the lack of English for some pupils is less marked at Key Stage 4, although there are still a few pupils whose command of the language is not sufficient for them to access the curriculum.

27. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is similar to that of their peers. Pupils with statements of special educational needs make good progress towards the targets on their individual education plans.

28. Progress in the sixth form is satisfactory. The well below average A level results achieved in 1998 were a result of students being placed on inappropriate courses rather than the progress that they made in lessons. For example, many of the students studying science subjects had achieved a D grade or lower at GCSE in science whilst many in computer studies had not taken GCSE at all. Progress is satisfactory in all subjects except art, computer studies, English and Urdu where students make good progress whilst in economics students make unsatisfactory progress. Students on vocational courses make good progress and achieve results above the national averages.

29. The school has recognised the underachievement of boys in the past and has introduced strategies to address the issue. Of particular note is the single sex teaching groups in English, which are proving most successful in improving the progress of boys,

but the school has also found that the progress of the girls has been improved. In the tests at the end of Key Stage 3, boys tended to outperform girls, but this was because they had done so at the end of Key Stage 2 rather than any differences in the relative progress that they had made at Key Stage 3.

30. Pupils from Asian backgrounds fall into one of three groups. The first group are competent users of English, who attain as well as or better than their peers. The second group have sufficient English to get by, but cannot express themselves well enough to achieve their potential, especially in subjects which require sustained writing. The third group have insufficient command of English to access the National Curriculum without substantial support. Group one pupils make good progress in line with their peers. Group two pupils make less progress than their potential. Group three pupils make poor progress unless given enough support.

31. The school provides one full-time teacher and one full-time bilingual assistant to support pupils whose first language is not English. Unfortunately the teacher has been on sick leave for long periods of time, so effective support has been reduced. Although the bilingual assistant provides valuable support to pupils in many subjects the total time is not sufficient. There are lessons where pupils are not supported, so they do not make appropriate progress. This also has an effect on other pupils, as teachers have to spend too much time helping pupils with language difficulties and therefore less time with others. When the teacher is present, she is used to support pupils withdrawn from lessons and this is not appropriate as the pupils need the support in their lessons to understand what the teacher is saying. The situation is not entirely within the control of the school's management as the service is provided by an outside agency and the teacher is unable to work within a class owing to medical reasons. However, the outcome is that pupils are not receiving sufficient support and make poor progress as a consequence.

32. Attainment and progress, where they can be compared with the previous inspection, have improved in all subjects except design and technology, history, information technology, music and physical education, where standards have been maintained. Standards have fallen in science.

### 32. **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

33. Good attitudes to learning and good relationships are evident throughout the school, as at the previous inspection, and these contribute to the progress pupils make with their learning. A friendly atmosphere continues to be evident, and parents rightly appreciate the way different ethnic groups relate well to each other. Behaviour and other aspects of pupils' personal development are also good.

34. The good attitudes to learning of the large majority of pupils, and their good behaviour, are frequently evident, especially in well-taught lessons. Pupils of all ages and from all ethnic groups come to the classroom ready to learn. They listen to the teacher, and try to answer questions. They settle down to work quickly, work successfully together when this is part of the lesson, and on occasion show real determination. They show pride in their work, for instance in folders of work for the youth awards programme. Where teaching is at its best, the response may be outstanding, as in an art lesson where very high concentration levels were apparent and pupils organised themselves purposefully, contributing to their very good progress. Students in the sixth form generally act with maturity, persevering with their work, though occasionally a few lapse into immature behaviour. In a minority of lessons pupils are less enthusiastic. They remain willing to co-operate with the teacher but small distractions or off-task chatter tend to creep in. A few pupils find it particularly difficult to behave well and at times distract others, slowing progress with learning as happened in one physical education lesson. When teaching is ineffective, pupils fail to settle down to work and their behaviour deteriorates, as observed in science. A few pupils, mainly in Key Stage 4, show a poor attitude to learning by their frequent absence from school.

35. Around the buildings and site, pupils are friendly and well-intentioned and their behaviour continues for the most part to be good, though occasionally boisterous. In lessons, pupils respect their environment and look after equipment, although there is some carelessness with litter around the school. Where large groups are moving around the school between lessons, consideration for others tends to be forgotten where groups meet in doorways and corridors.

36. Occasional incidents of poor behaviour occur, for instance where boys in particular behave badly towards others and over-boisterousness deteriorates into fighting. The school frequently finds it necessary to use fixed term exclusion as a sanction for poor behaviour. Recently it has recognised that, while some incidents can only be responded to by exclusion, for instance when there is risk to the safety of pupils or staff, others might be better addressed by alternative means. Nevertheless the rate of such exclusions remains high. It has risen since the previous inspection, and the upward trend is continuing. In the first two months of the autumn term leading up to the inspection there were 17 exclusions involving 15 pupils, compared with 16 exclusions in the whole of the 1998 autumn term. Pupils previously excluded from other schools are more frequently involved in exclusions than are other pupils. Teachers do persevere with support measures where a pupil has continuing difficulties with behaviour, so that permanent exclusions are average in number. In the year preceding the inspection around an eighth of the Afro-Caribbean pupils in the school were involved in exclusions. This relates to poor behaviour of the individuals concerned.



37.Despite the occasional incidents of poor behaviour, relationships are, overall, good and add to the quality of work in lessons. In all age groups pupils are ready to help each other and work productively together in pairs or groups. The school is a harmonious community, where individuals in the same and in different racial groups for the most part relate well to each other and to staff.

38. Other aspects of personal development are also good. When pupils are given responsibility and opportunity to show initiative they cope well, and this helps their learning in lessons and also their contribution to the school and wider community. Sixth formers who join the Young Enterprise scheme show responsibility in organising their ventures, while others regularly engage in community service. A number of older pupils have given considerable commitment to training as counsellors and now act as mentors to support younger ones. Members of the year and school councils contribute to the functioning of the school community, for instance through the audit of 'Ideas for Learning'. Others, on occasion, also take responsibility when they recognise a need, for instance a group of Year 10 pupils recently organised themselves effectively to raise funds for cystic fibrosis. Pupils generally respect each others' work and ideas. When pupils are given the opportunity, as on Remembrance Day, those of all ages, backgrounds and ability show a notable capacity to reflect seriously on concepts such as the sacrifice, suffering and outcomes of war.

### **38. Attendance**

39. Attendance is satisfactory. In the most recent year it was just under 92 per cent. This is an improvement from the previous year when it was 90.5 per cent, close to the national average for secondary schools. Unauthorised absence was 1.4% in the most recent year, having decreased from the previous year when it was well above the average for secondary schools.

40. Most pupils attend school regularly, only staying away when there is a good reason. A small minority of pupils, especially in Years 10 and 11, tend to miss school frequently, often without any proper excuse. In the reporting year immediately before the inspection Year 10 attendance was over 90 per cent but Year 11 was lower. This represents a slight improvement from the overall unsatisfactory Key Stage 4 attendance found by Her Majesty's Inspectors two years ago. However, concerns remain about the way absence interrupts the progress of a few pupils and limits their attainment. Students in the sixth form for the most part show satisfactory patterns of attendance.

41. Efforts made by pastoral staff and improved liaison with the Education Welfare Service helped to bring about the upturn in attendance and decrease in unauthorised absence. In some instances, though, the school considers reasons given by parents for an absence are unacceptable and rightly refuses to accept their excuses.

42. From time to time pupils miss periods of school because of long family visits to Pakistan, but the extent of this is limited. Parents often pay attention to teachers' requests for them to avoid such holidays in term time.

43. While most pupils arrive in good time each day for the start of school, a few arrive during the registration period or, occasionally, even later. The movement time allowed between lessons is effective so pupils generally arrive on time for lessons during the day. Occasionally a pupil registers at the start of a session but fails to attend a following lesson. Checks by the school limit the extent to which this happens.

### 43. QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

#### 43. Teaching

44. The school has a good teaching provision that brings about good progress in lessons for most pupils, but poor progress for those whose first language is not English and have an insufficient grasp of the English language. The quality of teaching in the school is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and in the sixth form. Teaching is good in Years 10 and 11. Teaching is at least satisfactory in 94 per cent of lessons, good in 45 per cent and very good in 15 per cent. Teaching is less than satisfactory in 6 per cent of lessons.

45. The quality of teaching in Years 7 to 9 is very good in art and good in history, information technology, mathematics, modern foreign languages, music and religious education. Teaching is satisfactory in all other subjects except science where it is unsatisfactory. Teaching in Years 10 and 11 is very good in art and good in all other subjects except design and technology, geography and physical education where it is satisfactory. Teaching is unsatisfactory in economics and science. Teaching in the sixth form is satisfactory in mathematics, the sciences and religious education and good in all other subjects except economics, where it is unsatisfactory.

46. Teaching is unsatisfactory in science because the teachers do not expect enough of pupils and do not adequately control pupils' behaviour. The teaching in economics is insufficiently planned and the assessment of pupils' work is unsatisfactory.

47. In most subjects teachers have a good knowledge of their subject. This is particularly true of art, where the teachers use their experience of the professional art world to enhance their demonstrations and produce high quality resources that pupils find most stimulating. Similarly, in design and technology, the teachers are able to use their good subject knowledge to pass on craft skills of high quality.

48. Teachers usually expect their pupils to attain appropriately high standards, both in terms of academic achievement and behaviour. In art, expectations are particularly high and are used to set targets for project work, both long and short term. In fact, expectations are high enough in art to develop in pupils a professional approach to materials. In science, on the other hand, teachers do not expect enough of their pupils in terms of the amount of work that can be completed in a lesson, nor do they always expect pupils and students to wear safety goggles at appropriate times. In religious education, the highest attainers at Key Stage 3 tend to be held back by the worksheets that do not allow them sufficient space for extended written work. Across the school, expectations are higher at Key Stage 4, where teachers make use of GCSE criteria to set the standards and usually target for a grade above the one that the pupils themselves will be aiming for.

49. Lesson planning is good at Key Stages 3 and 4 and satisfactory in the sixth form. In mathematics, plans make clear what pupils are expected to have learnt by the end of the lesson. In religious education, planning is meticulous with really innovative ideas to introduce lessons. In science, lessons are usually carefully planned but there is too much emphasis on providing activities rather than ensuring that pupils are actually

gaining understanding or skills. In economics, planning is poor with little more than a list of ideas for the whole of the course, both GCSE and A level. The opposite is seen in the teaching of business studies where planning is detailed and perfectly matches the course requirements, particularly at GNVQ. The results are clear in the differences in standards of attainment in the subjects.

50. Most subjects use an appropriate range of teaching methods. Good approaches were observed in modern foreign languages, such as the physical activities in Year 9 where the teachers asked the pupils to stand and touch different parts of their bodies as teachers said the French words or in the sixth form where students had prepared ideas, and had to defend them to the teacher and other students in preparation for discussion with the A level examiner. These activities ensured maximum concentration and involvement of the pupils, and were really enjoyed. In most other subjects, however, it tends to be a case of both strengths and weaknesses. In information technology, for example, the recaps at the start of lessons are most effective in overcoming problems that pupils have in retaining information but the worksheets used are the same for all pupils and the lower attainers cannot understand them. In some physical education lessons, the teachers used probing questions to encourage pupils to develop skills of analysis and evaluation, whereas in other lessons this approach was totally lacking. In most subjects teachers do not have the strategies themselves to support pupils who do not speak English and do not have sufficient extra help in lessons.

51. Teachers usually maintain a good level of behaviour and deal well with potentially disruptive pupils at Key Stage 4. The methods used vary, but except for some lessons in physical education and science, all are equally effective. Teachers of art maintain excellent standards of discipline through a firm but friendly and supportive environment. In religious education, pupils are so interested in the lessons that they do not consider misbehaving. In science, on the other hand, some pupils are allowed to avoid doing the tasks set or to continue talking throughout the lesson, which also occurs in some physical education lessons.

52. Teachers make good use of time and resources at Key Stages 3 and 4, but the pace of lessons is sometimes too relaxed on A level courses. Support teachers are used very effectively to help pupils with statements of special educational needs and, where available, pupils who do not speak English. The staff supporting pupils with special educational needs often share their time with other pupils who do not speak English and are not receiving extra support at that time. Most lessons are taught at a brisk pace but there is insufficient use on the part of some teachers of a suitable range of resources, particularly computers, and this occurs in many subjects.

53. Marking is generally satisfactory at Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form, but good at Key Stage 4. The best marking, such as that in art, reinforces the work carried out in lessons and explains what pupils need to do in order to improve. In other subjects, such as design and technology and information technology, marking is usually confined to ticks with few helpful comments. The innovative assessment scheme introduced in religious education is proving most successful in motivating pupils, by linking attainment to the award of certificates. Assessment in the GNVQ courses in the sixth form is particularly good and motivates students by setting clear targets for their improvement.

In economics, on the other hand, marking is cursory and unhelpful, with very limited records kept.

54. The setting of homework is satisfactory. Parents reported that, in general, the amount of homework was appropriate and the findings of the inspection agree with these sentiments. The homework that is set in information technology is usually highly challenging and is most effective in developing pupils' research skills. In science, the tasks are interesting but teachers do not always insist on their completion.

55. Teaching has shown great improvement since the last inspection. The proportion of lessons taught to a satisfactory standard has risen from 80 per cent to 94 per cent. The proportion of lessons where teaching reaches a good or better standard has risen from 33 per cent to 55 per cent. This improvement has been brought about by the senior management's good system for the monitoring of teaching and the subsequent actions that have been taken to address the deficiencies identified; in particular the changes in the management of subjects. The school has addressed well the key issue from the previous inspection with respect to teaching strategies.

#### **55. The curriculum and assessment**

56. Curriculum arrangements are satisfactory at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, but unsatisfactory at Key Stage 3. The length of the taught week, at 23 hours 50 minutes of taught time, is below the national average and national recommendations.

57. The breadth, balance and relevance of the curriculum at Key Stages 3 are unsatisfactory and there are some inequalities of access. The curriculum includes all subjects of the National Curriculum as well as religious education and personal, social and health education. However pupils studying Urdu lose one third of their lessons in physical education and are unable, therefore, to receive their full National Curriculum entitlement, resulting in poor progress for these pupils. There is insufficient time allocated to geography in Year 9. Similarly, there is insufficient time devoted to the teaching of information technology to ensure that all pupils receive their entitlement and the elements of measurement and control and the effects of information technology in the National Curriculum are not taught in sufficient depth. Under the present arrangements, boys in Key Stage 3 are unable to study dance as part of the physical education lessons. A small group of Year 8 pupils, for whom English is a second language, are at present, withdrawn from music and so are not taught all of the National Curriculum programmes of study. These arrangements for withdrawal are not appropriate as the pupils need the immediacy provided by support in lessons.

58. The Key Stage 4 curriculum is broad, but the balance and relevance are inappropriate for some pupils. Some pupils study three separate sciences where a course in either single or double award science would be more appropriate. For example, some pupils who have very limited English or are on stage 5 of the special needs register. For the highest attainers, however, the course adds considerable breadth to the curriculum. A small group of pupils follow a work related learning course at a local college. Whilst this is a most appropriate course, the pupils involved have not been officially disapplied owing to a hold-up with the paperwork from the Department of Education and Employment. Some pupils do not receive lessons in information

technology and this is a breach of statutory requirements. The breadth of the curriculum is enhanced by the opportunities to follow either full or short GCSE courses in several subjects.

59. The school offers a wide range of courses in the sixth form leading to A, A/S and GNVQ qualifications. This provision is enhanced considerably by the arrangements with other schools to share sixth form teaching, so that the school can cater, for example, for the single student wishing to study music. However, only those students who study A level general studies receive religious education and the arrangements for physical education in the sixth form are poorly structured.

60. The curriculum is appropriately planned to create a smooth transition between key stages and there are also links with primary schools to ensure continuity and progression in pupils' education. Pupils in most subjects are placed in appropriate groups. However, the problems caused by the separate sciences mentioned above also lead to very large groups with a vast range of levels of attainment within them. Teachers find it impossible to plan lessons to cope with such a range of attainment levels in a single group. The links made with a local university considerably enhance the provision for students in the sixth form and make them aware of the ways in which they can progress further with their education using the qualifications they have gained at school.

61. A well-planned programme of personal, social and health education promotes the personal development of pupils throughout the school and prepares them for adult life. The programme includes health education, sex education, bullying and issues of drug misuse, all of which are comprehensively covered. The structure of this course allows it to build progressively throughout the pupils' school life. The provision for careers education and guidance is good and the school encourages all subjects to contribute to the careers guidance of pupils. The programme in Key Stage 4 includes the opportunity for all pupils to attend an appropriate work experience placement. The school provides students in the sixth form with good career and educational guidance.

62. The school makes available a wide range of extra-curricular activities, at lunchtimes and after school, which enrich the curricular provision. In addition to music, drama and sport, many departments offer curricular clubs, activities and educational visits and several offer valuable opportunities to study for extra GCSE examinations. However, only about a quarter of pupils participate regularly in extra-curricular sport, which is lower than normally seen. Seven members of staff supervise these sporting activities.

63. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are satisfactory at Key Stage 3. All subjects carry out regular assessments and, at the end of the key stage, provide the required teacher assessments of pupils' attainment in relation to the National Curriculum. Some departments, notably mathematics, regularly assess the National Curriculum levels which pupils achieve throughout the key stage and use this data to build a secure understanding of pupils' attainment compared with national standards. This very good practice is not yet consistently followed in all subjects. Many departments do not use National Curriculum levels in their regular assessments through the whole key stage. This led to inaccuracies in the 1999 teacher assessments in science, design and technology and information technology. The shortage of precise

information about the levels they are achieving in many subjects means that pupils do not have a clear idea of their attainment in relation to national standards, nor do they have the opportunity to use the levels to set targets for their future attainment in those subjects.

64. In Key Stage 4, the procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are good. All subjects make regular assessments that are usually accurate and reliable. Pupils are well informed about their attainment in relation to GCSE standards and they are aware of their targets for the final GCSE grades. In the GCSE short course in religious education there is particularly effective use of gold, silver and bronze awards which relate to GCSE grades. These awards are successful in making pupils aware of the standards they are achieving, encouraging them to make further effort and increasing their rate of progress.

65. Assessment procedures in the sixth form are satisfactory. There are particularly thorough assessment systems within GNVQ courses and these are gradually influencing assessment strategies in other subjects.

66. The assessment arrangements for pupils with special educational needs are good. There is effective screening to identify pupils' needs. The individual education plans are appropriately detailed and set precise and measurable targets. Individual subjects make their own contribution to the plans and set specific targets for pupils within the subject. There are regular reviews to assess pupils' progress in relation to these targets.

67. The school makes good use of its assessment information in Key Stages 3 and 4 and satisfactory use in the sixth form. In Key Stage 3 the school has a comprehensive set of data on pupils' attainment on entry to the school and uses the information to set realistic targets for the end of Key Stages 3 and 4. This is particularly useful in raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can do. At the end of Year 10, all the available assessment information for individual pupils is assembled to give a clear indication of each pupil's progress in every subject and to identify any areas of individual under-achievement. The school then provides mentoring where it is needed. The system also provides a valuable tool for monitoring the performance of subject departments. In the sixth form, assessment information is used effectively to monitor students' progress throughout Years 12 and 13 and examination results are analysed to compare attainment in the various subjects. However the school is not currently using sixth form assessment data to measure the progress or 'value added' for individual students or groups of students in the various subjects.

68. Within individual subjects, there are several examples of departments adjusting their curriculum planning in the light of assessment findings. For example, the English department is experimenting with teaching boys and girls separately in response to the difference in examination results between the two groups. The coursework topic in GCSE history has been changed following feedback from the examination board on pupils' attainment in different topics.

69. At the time of the previous inspection there were weaknesses in assessment procedures within several subjects and in the assessment of pupils with special

educational needs. Teachers did not make enough use of the available assessment data. The school has made good progress and overcome most of the weaknesses in assessment identified at that time. However, there are still insecurities in some teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 3.

#### **69. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

70. The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are effective initiatives in most areas of school life but these are not co-ordinated or evaluated sufficiently.

71. There is a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual development. The frequency of acts of collective worship does not meet statutory requirements. Pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 attend three assemblies per week but the provision for sixth form students is much less frequent. Acts of collective worship are usually of at least good quality and contribute to spiritual and moral development. During the inspection, however, there were outstanding examples of worship throughout the school on Remembrance Day with involvement by pupils and the laying of wreaths. The two-minute silence was observed with genuine respect and reflection. The school's commitment to racial equality underlines respect for the values and beliefs of other people. Religious education gives pupils a good knowledge of the faiths represented in the school emphasising the importance of faith in many pupils' lives. It also gives some opportunities for pupils to develop their ideas about issues such as the evil in the world and the concept of eternity. The sense of mystery is explored through literature whilst in geography pupils reflect on the consequences of man's treatment of his environment. Opportunities, which present themselves in other subjects, are not always recognised fully.

72. The school makes a good contribution to pupils' moral development. What it considers to be right and wrong is made clear through the home/school contract and a 'good behaviour pack'. There are well-publicised school rules and codes of conduct and a consistent expectation by staff of good behaviour. Whilst there is a pleasing atmosphere of trust in which pupils can develop their self-discipline there are some areas of the school where a more obvious supervision at times of pupil movement would reinforce expectations. All pupils including the sixth form take part in personal and social education that puts a strong emphasis on caring and responsible behaviour through the health education programme. Standards and expectations are also emphasised through assemblies and the pastoral system. Welcome support is also received through the work on site of youth and community workers. Religious education and geography encourage pupils to explore moral issues and to compare the moral codes of religious and secular societies. Pupils are taught the correct behaviour associated with different aspects of information technology and physical education insists on recognition of rules and the importance of fair play.



73. There is very good provision for pupils' social development. The excellent example of respect for individuals and tolerance of differences set by members of staff ensures that pupils from different backgrounds and cultures work harmoniously together. If there are problems of relationships pupils know to whom they can turn whether adults or the well-trained pupil counsellors who take a leading role in the school's Information Station. Considerable effort has gone into making the school site a pleasant environment and providing social facilities such as the sixth form common room and seating around the building. Most subjects give opportunities for pupils to learn to collaborate and there are many opportunities for participation in residential programmes and visits. Pupils take some responsibility for their own learning in class and an extensive programme of extension classes and extra-curricular activities provide opportunities for pupils to involve themselves by choice in an enriched curriculum. One of the outcomes from the active, elected, school council has been a document compiled by pupils advising others how they can get the best out of school. There are year councils, form captains and prefects who play an important role. An outstanding example of an opportunity given for older pupils to take real responsibility is their leadership of the Information Station. This pupil support facility has been successful in winning a major award from the Prince's Trust. It is supported by the youth and community service and many local welfare groups. Other opportunities for developing a sense of responsibility are provided through the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, participation in Young Enterprise awards and the sixth form community attachments.

74. The school plays a leading role in local organisations that promote racial equality. It participates in local exhibitions and displays whilst using the valuable resources of the area to enrich courses in geography, business education, religious education and history. The Year 10 work experience programme culminates in a major exhibition that is well attended by members of the leaders of the local community. Year 7 hold an annual Community Day on which pupils learn about local services such as police and the fire and rescue service. Members of the sixth form participate in a community service scheme. Many pupils from Asian backgrounds chose to come to the school because they knew that they would be safe there.

75. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. The school clearly values the fact that it draws pupils from a number of cultural communities. It welcomes traditional dress as part of the school uniform. Urdu is taught to examination level but more could be done to demonstrate and celebrate the contribution that different communities have made to mathematics, art, music and literature. Through history and religious education pupils learn about each other's faiths and cultures and there are opportunities for them to experience shared cultural heritage through participation in music and drama productions as well as visits by an opera company and artists in residence. There are regular visits to art galleries, museums and theatres and opportunities to study some of the culture of Europe, Africa and Asia through visits, correspondence and subject courses. Notable is the compact which has been forged with the University of Derby through which pupils from different cultures are familiarised with university life. The school appreciates the reservations that sometimes exist when Muslim girls move into Higher Education and this scheme seeks to ensure that they can make the transition in a manner that is acceptable to them and their community.

76. There have been significant improvements in this area of the school's provision and

the key issues from the previous inspection regarding spiritual and cultural development have been addressed successfully.

#### **76. Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

77. Pastoral care of pupils remains good, as at the previous inspection. The good arrangements in place for the induction of Year 7 pupils help them to settle happily when they first join the school. Recent changes in pastoral organisation allow greater continuity in the support tutors give to their groups.

78. Academic guidance is good overall. The school 'planner' given to each pupil includes useful information as well as encouraging a sense of personal responsibility. Subject teachers provide pupils with effective support and advice and a range of certificates is used to recognise and encourage effort and achievement. Through a new initiative all pupils are helped to set targets regularly for themselves in their planners. Good examples of this are seen, for instance sixth form students are well supported by their tutors in deciding targets and reviewing their progress towards them. There are, however, instances where this initiative is not followed so effectively, so that the targets recorded are rather vague and general. Advice and support for older pupils, and for sixth form students, includes a good programme of careers' guidance.

79. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported, with the help of good liaison with the educational psychologist and special needs' support services. Specialist support for those pupils whose first language is not English and have recently arrived in this country is inadequate overall, though on occasions where individuals have such support in lessons, it enhances the way that they take part and helps their progress. A few older pupils are helped by schemes for them to attend vocational courses, suited to their needs, at other institutions.

80. Management of behaviour is satisfactory overall. A good policy with accompanying guidelines is in place to guide staff and this is for the most part successfully implemented, contributing to the general good behaviour seen during the inspection. Two aspects of behaviour management are less successful. Firstly, when pupils are moving around the school between lessons, supervision, to ensure orderly movement in crowded doorways and corridors, is at times inadequate. Secondly, although the school's willingness to persevere where pupils have continuing difficulties with their behaviour is reflected in an average proportion of permanent exclusions, the high number of fixed term exclusions causes concern. While a significant number of serious incidents at the school do demand the use of exclusion, at times there is room for an alternative response. The school recognises this and is attempting a change of approach, for instance in recent months exclusion has not been automatically imposed for smoking. As yet consideration of alternative sanctions, and support for pupils likely to be excluded, has not reversed the rise in fixed term exclusions.

81. Co-operation with other local schools and with the local education authority very recently led to the opening of a small 'pupil referral unit', which a few pupils are attending on a part time basis for a limited period. This arrangement has good potential to meet the needs of individuals who have ongoing difficulties arising from their attitude or behaviour.

82. Bullying is regarded as unacceptable in the school community, and most pupils and parents are confident that effective steps are taken to tackle any incidents reported to staff. A group of trained pupils themselves run an Information Station that contributes to the support and advice available to others in the case of bullying or other worries.

83. Procedures for recording attendance are good. A new system for clerical staff to follow up unexplained absence on the second day is in place. The introduction of a new computerised system is very recent, so that the potential benefits for monitoring and promoting attendance are yet to be reaped. Good measures already in place involve pupils in monitoring their own attendance, and rewards for good attendance. Efforts made by the school are backed up by appropriate liaison with the education welfare service. The efforts made by the school have resulted in significant improvements in both the overall rate of attendance and the proportion of unauthorised absences.

84. Various satisfactory routines, such as arrangements for first aid, are in place to promote pupils' welfare. Procedures are in order for responding to any child protection issues that arise. Arrangements exist for monitoring health and safety, and for completing risk assessments, but in some instances these arrangements are not followed successfully.

85. Concerns regarding health and safety, arising during the inspection, include: a new science laboratory with no main valve on the gas supply; use of a fume cupboard that had previously failed a safety test; non-use of safety goggles in science and a hole in a laboratory floor. These points were raised with the Headteacher during the inspection and are being addressed.

#### **85. Partnership with parents and the community**

86. Parents generally give satisfactory support to the work of the school, and teachers welcome and encourage their involvement. A variety of good links with local business and industry are established, so as to support pupils' learning.

87. There is a satisfactory flow of information to parents. Helpful booklets about the curriculum are issued in the various year groups, and parents appreciate the newsletters about events and pupils' successes. The Governors' Annual Report however is far too brief. For instance it does not mention progress in following the action plan from the previous inspection, and information about the provision made for pupils with special educational needs is not full enough. On occasion suitable use is made of a pupil's organiser to communicate between teacher and parent. Annual reports about pupils' progress are satisfactory. Comments give a helpful general account of the individual concerned, but with little subject-specific information about what he or she has learnt. Often parents of only around half the pupils attend the consultation meetings offered with teachers, though rather more come when particular topics, such as Year 9 option choices, are being considered. Parents do support pupils' learning by coming to special events such as the exhibition of GCSE art work.

88. Satisfactory steps are taken to inform and involve parents whose first language is other than English, for instance staff are available to translate documents such as the

new home/school agreement. Good efforts are made to develop partnership with parents of pupils who have statements of special educational needs, but their response is disappointing. They often fail to attend annual reviews of statements.

89.The parents' association has few active members but works successfully to raise funds for extra resources, for instance to help supply each pupil with a well-produced 'organiser'.

90.Liaison with feeder primary schools makes a good contribution to learning. The annual concert performed by a large number of primary and secondary pupils is a notable occasion. Attention is being given to renewing and extending other beneficial curricular links, for instance English teachers have visited literacy lessons.

91.Partnership with the local community has been fostered in several relevant areas since the last inspection and on balance is now good. For instance a residential visit for Year 9 pupils to a local university, together with a Compact scheme for Sixth Form students, is helping to raise aspirations. Good links with many organisations and businesses ensure the success of the work experience programmes and also play an important part in a few other subject areas including GNVQ and business studies. Activities that follow Year 10 and Year 12 work experience have a good focus. Pupils and students mount displays to demonstrate what they have done and learnt, and the resulting exhibition is visited by both parents and employers.

92.Liaison with the local Training and Enterprise Council and the Youth and Community Education Service help the development of further productive links to the mutual benefit of pupils and community organisations.

## 92. THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

### 92. Leadership and management

93. The quality of leadership in the school is good. The Headteacher provides very good leadership and is supported well by the other members of the senior management team whose individual skills complement those of their colleagues. There is a good emphasis on raising standards throughout the school and challenging targets are set for the school's performance. In some respects, the targets are rather over ambitious, but the ethos of aiming very high and falling slightly short in some years is generally a good one and encourages staff to increase their efforts still further. The quality of leadership at a middle management level is more variable. In some subjects, the heads of department demonstrate strong leadership and in particular the newly appointed head of geography has reversed trends of previously unsatisfactory progress in the subject in a very short time. The opposite is seen in science, where unsatisfactory leadership has led to falling standards of attainment and in the business studies department where other members of staff are having to take the lead in improving standards in business studies whilst standards in GCSE economics remain among the worst in the school. The governing body has a good working knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and supports the work of the school well.

94. Planning for the school's future, a key issue at the time of the previous inspection, is now satisfactory. The senior management team has identified most of the school's deficiencies and has drawn up plans of good quality to address them. The areas identified are comprehensive and already cover almost all of the issues identified in this report. However, the success of the school development plan relies to a large part on the quality of the departmental development plans, which are much more variable in quality. In English, for example, the plan is detailed and provides clear guidance on areas such as strategies to improve the progress made by boys. In business education, religious education and science, however, the plans are far too vague. The good planning that exists for special educational needs in the school has led to one of the key issues from the previous inspection being met most successfully.

95. The monitoring and support of teaching and curriculum developments are good. The basis for the monitoring of teaching is the good appraisal system that is in place. However, this is significantly enhanced by the monitoring of teaching that is carried out by line managers. This system is proving effective in both raising the quality of the teaching of individual teachers and identifying where management weaknesses are having a significant impact on teaching. This level of monitoring is supported by regular visits from outside consultants. The whole system operates in a supportive way, with agreed targets for improvement where necessary. Staff appreciate the system and feel well-supported.

96. Curriculum developments are monitored and supported well through termly reviews with the line managers and, like the monitoring of teaching, this is supported by at least three visits per year from outside consultants. The reviews each have a specific focus such as examination results, development planning or progress towards targets. Notable successes include the introduction of the GNVQ programme in the sixth form and the improved provision for pupils with special educational needs. The school now

meets the requirements to teach design and technology and religious education to all pupils in Key Stage 4, which was not happening at the time of the previous inspection. Governors play a sound role in monitoring the work of the school through written reviews, reports, examination results analyses, and by calling individuals to meetings to explain aspects of the school's work.

97.The school is successful in meeting its aims through the consistent implementations of its policies and the good values that it promotes, particularly in the area of racial harmony. Monitoring, special educational needs and the role of middle managers were key issues at the time of the previous inspection and all have been addressed successfully. The support for pupils with English as an additional language remains a deficiency, despite the strenuous efforts made by the school.

98.The governing body, however, fails to meet all of its statutory requirements. There is no provision for a daily act of collective worship; students in the sixth form do not all receive lessons in religious education; there is insufficient information technology taught to satisfy the National Curriculum at Key Stages 3 and 4; not all pupils receive their entitlement to music or physical education at Key Stage 3; the paperwork on the formal disapplication of pupils at Key Stage 4 is not up to date and there is important information missing from the governors' report to parents.

99.The provision of information technology and religious education were key issues at the time of the previous inspection and remain so. The provision of an act of collective worship was a key issue at the time of the previous inspection and remains a weakness.

100.The school has made good progress since the previous inspection. Examination results at GCSE level have risen at a rate that is faster than the national average and the introduction of GNVQ courses has led to students achieving above the national averages in those subjects. The number on roll has risen significantly. A focus on improvement combined with changes in staffing have led to improved standards in many subjects and, most importantly, the quality of teaching has risen dramatically.

101.Given the good teaching that is now firmly in place and the senior management team's ability to identify and address the school's weaknesses, the school is well placed to continue its improvement.

#### **101. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

102.The school has sufficient staff in most areas to meet the needs of the curriculum. Subjects are taught by teachers who have specialist qualifications or who are qualified through experience. There is a good balance between long serving and newer staff and all teachers benefit from an equitable amount of non-contact time. At the time of the previous inspection, the inappropriate qualifications of teachers were depressing standards in some subjects. This is no longer the case. However, there are insufficient support teachers and assistants to meet the needs of pupils for whom English is an additional language and as a result of this poor provision a significant proportion of them make unsatisfactory progress.

103. Newly qualified teachers benefit from an induction programme that is well organised. In all subjects good subject-specific support is provided, except for science and aspects of business education, where it lacks the depth to enable its recipients to improve their skills rapidly and confidently.

104. Appraisal is well established and takes place on a regular cycle. There has been a good improvement in the arrangements for the professional development of staff since the previous inspection. There is now a professional development committee in place, which considers needs identified by subject managers alongside other school, local authority and national initiatives, and relates these to priorities in the school development plan. The extent to which professional development contributes to school improvement is also evaluated. The provision for the professional development of middle managers is particularly effective with the opportunity for them to achieve diplomas in subject leadership.

105. The school has sufficient accommodation to meet the needs of the present number of pupils and its quality is satisfactory overall. Drama is taught in classrooms and this restricts pupils' capacity to express themselves fully through movement. The music practice rooms are not soundproof and this has not improved since the previous inspection. There is a good display of pupils' work around the school both in corridors and classrooms, but few examples of multicultural displays or signs around the school. This was noted in the previous inspection and there has been no improvement. The site is well cared for with a good level of cleanliness and is free from graffiti. The grounds around the school are attractive and maintained regularly. The school provides a pleasant learning environment.

106. The quality of pupils' learning is supported by an adequate quantity of books, equipment and materials provided in the majority of subjects. The range available is limited in modern languages and for Key Stage 3 in science. Resources are in sound condition and accessible to all pupils. The new school library provides an attractive learning environment and is well used by pupils at breaks and lunchtimes. During lessons subjects make regular use of its facilities. The careers' section is well-stocked. There is a good balance between leisure and academic reading material. Library provision for students in the sixth form restricts opportunities for extended reading and is particularly poor in science, religious education, art and business. Pupils' use of information technology is very restricted by the number of computers available in the school and is, in part, responsible for the schools failure to meet statutory requirements for the teaching of information technology. Few pupils have computers at home and only two of the A level students studying computer studies have access to computers outside of school. Insufficient access to computers limits pupils' opportunities in many subjects but particularly in art, mathematics, modern languages and physical education. Pupils' learning is enriched by the good use made of a wide range of external resources, including visits abroad, trips to museums, galleries, field centres and involvement in local businesses and leisure facilities.

#### **106. The efficiency of the school**

107. Financial planning is sound. Projections are made of future expenditure based on likely changes to the number of pupils on roll, the planned curriculum and associated

teaching requirements but uncertainties over sixth form intake make such projections tentative. The school's prudent management of funds allowed a build up of an appropriate level of contingency funding to safeguard against any unforeseen expenses by the end of the last full financial year. Uncertainties over income in the present financial year have made it necessary to allocate some of the carry-over to offset any unforeseen budget shortfalls. The cost implications of priorities identified in the school and departmental development plans are not all calculated and thus impair the setting of realistic targets for the school. Financial planning is supported well by established and effective financial procedures and a realistic timetable for planning the budget.

108. The deployment of teaching staff is good overall although income for pupils in Key Stage 4 is subsidising both Key Stage 3 and the sixth form to a small degree. The provision of smaller teaching groups for lower attainers, together with small withdrawal classes for pupils with special educational needs, is having a positive impact upon the progress of these pupils. Teaching costs as a whole are above average but this reflects the higher costs of an experienced teaching force within a very stable school staffing situation. The use of the information technology teacher as a technician is not, however, an efficient use of his time. All non-teaching staff are deployed satisfactorily particularly learning support assistants for special educational needs who contribute very positively to the good progress of these pupils towards the targets on their individual education plans. The funding received for staff development is used effectively to support improvement in the overall quality of teaching. Accommodation at the school is utilised effectively, although not all departments make sufficient use of the opportunity to book time in the specialised information technology rooms. The utilisation of the school's resources for learning is good.

109. Financial control procedures are good and function very effectively. The governing body plays a key part in this process by monitoring expenditure and evaluating its effectiveness. The good day-to-day financial management and administration in the school reflects the use of effective procedures by the school administrator and the appropriate use of information technology to support financial monitoring and control. In this, the school benefits from high quality financial support from the local education authority. The local authority carried out an audit of the school's financial procedures in November 1997 which indicated that financial procedures were generally sound. All but one of the recommendations of the audit have been fully implemented, the outstanding item being the need to improve procedures for the writing off of inventory stock which are not yet in place.

110. Since the previous inspection the school's financial management has improved. The previous inspection report indicated that the school's financial control was efficient; this is still the case. However, financial planning was judged to be poor and in this area there has been significant improvement since procedures are now sound. Since 1993, the number of pupils on roll has risen by over 23 per cent which has reduced some of the uncertainty which made financial planning difficult at the time of the last inspection. Shortcomings identified in the allocation of funds to subject departments and the control of funding for the education of pupils with special educational needs have been rectified.



111. In view of the well below average income per pupil, the rising trend in examination results, good progress of the majority of pupils, good behaviour and the overall good quality of teaching, the school is now giving good value for money.

## 111. PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

### 111. ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

#### 111. English

112. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests the proportions of pupils attaining Level 5 and above and Level 6 and above were both well below the national averages. The trend in results in the past has broadly mirrored the national trend, although results have been getting closer to the national average. The average National Curriculum points score attained by pupils in 1999 was well below the national average for all schools and for schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, reflecting their attainment on entry to the school which was well below average. The attainment of boys was not significantly different from that of the girls. Results in English were similar to those in mathematics and better than those in science.

113. In 1998 the proportions of pupils attaining GCSE grades A\* to C and grades A\* to G in English were both well below the national averages. In English literature the proportion attaining grades A\* to C was well below the national average and the proportion attaining grades A\* to G was in line with the national average. Results over the past three years, and results attained in 1999, are broadly similar. Attainment in both subjects was average in comparison with other subjects in the school. The attainment of girls was better than that of boys.

114. Results attained in English at A level in 1998 were below the national average. Results were similar to those attained in recent years and those attained in 1999.

115. Evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that attainment is now below the national average in Key Stages 3 and 4 and is in line with the national expectation in the sixth form. In Key Stage 3 the improvement is mainly explained by higher standards of attainment on entry to the school amongst pupils who are at present in Year 9. In Key Stage 4 it is school policy to enter lower attaining pupils for a certificate of attainment rather than GCSE. If such pupils were to be entered for GCSE, a substantial proportion of them would achieve a grade and improve the school's GCSE results. Effective teaching strategies in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form are driving up standards.

116. Pupils' skills in speaking and listening are a relative strength at all levels in the school. Most enjoy taking part in oral work. Higher attainers possess a sound vocabulary and have the capacity to use language flexibly, as was seen, for example, when a group discussed how persuasive language was being used in an article on boxing. Lower attainers possess a limited vocabulary, tend to speak briefly and to assert a view rather than explain themselves fully. However, they usually speak confidently, as was seen when a group of lower attaining pupils took turns in improvising a scene based upon "Christmas Carol". Pupils' capacity to listen attentively improves as they move up the school, and examples of pupils taking detailed notes from group discussions were seen in Year 11 lessons. By the age of 19 students are ready to engage in discussion, and a Year 13 class participated fully in a "hot-seating" exercise based upon James Joyce's "Dubliners", but the majority lack the technical

vocabulary to be able to effectively discuss literature.

117. By the age of 14 pupils read novels and poems that are appropriate for their age. Higher attainers read aloud with appropriate expression, good pace and clear diction. Such pupils are able to explain how the poet creates a sense of mystery in "Flannan Isle". Lower and middle attaining pupils, who are in the majority, read slowly and deliberately and lower attainers need help from the teacher to enable them to establish meaning. By the age of 16 pupils read a range of more demanding texts. Many pupils are able to compare works of fiction and good quality work was seen on comparing the treatment of minorities in "To Kill a Mockingbird" and "The Country of the Blind". Lower and middle attainers understand the gist of the text rather than the detail of it. By the age of 19 pupils use their reading skills to study prescribed texts and are able to understand the salient features of them and to empathise with the characters, but they do not go on to read more widely.

118. By the age of 14 higher attaining pupils can write in a variety of styles, including narrative, description and reporting. Middle and lower attainers lack the necessary vocabulary to be effective across the same full range of writing. By the age of 16 pupils widen their scope and some good quality discursive work was seen. Many pupils redraft their work carefully to improve it. Desktop publishing skills are also used to redraft work and to improve its appearance, as was seen, for example, when a group of middle attaining Year 11 pupils were seen paying attention to detail as they were producing their final draft of a report on a media topic. However, inaccurate spelling, punctuation and grammar mar the work of the majority of middle and low attaining pupils. By the age of 19 pupils produce accurate summaries and good quality reports, for example on the development of children's television, but the majority do not produce analytic writing of rigour or depth.

119. Progress at Key Stage 3 is satisfactory and at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form it is good. Lower attaining pupils in Key Stage 3 make good progress, especially in self-confidence, in drama lessons. As was seen in the GCSE results for 1998, boys' attainment is lower than that of girls overall and, more particularly, boys are failing to attain higher level grades to the extent that might be expected of them. In response to this situation, the department reviewed its teaching strategies, and this has resulted in single-sex groups. In these groups, methods of teaching are used which are intended to improve motivation and increase progress. For example, in one higher attaining set of boys, pupils were encouraged to be competitive when learning the spelling and meaning of words. The evidence of this experiment so far suggests that it is being successful and is enabling all pupils, girls and boys, to make good progress. In the sixth form, students make good progress in response to good teaching. Pupils with special educational needs make progress at the same rate as other pupils. When pupils with English as an additional language are provided with support, they also make progress at the same rate as other pupils. However, a significant proportion of such pupils does not receive support and their progress is often unsatisfactory.

120. Pupils' response at Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form is satisfactory and at Key Stage 4 it is good. Pupils mostly co-operate well with their teachers and with each other. They are generally attentive and work on the tasks set. Pupils mostly treat each other and their teachers with respect. In a small proportion of Key Stage 3 lessons,

where the teacher's discipline was not effective, pupils' behaviour was inappropriate. In Key Stage 4, pupils have responded well to the new teaching strategies and work with a good level of concentration. In the sixth form, pupils are usually conscientious, but only the higher attainers display the level of initiative that might be expected of pupils of this age group.

121. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 3 and is good at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. When teaching is good, teachers take the prior attainment of pupils' into account when planning their lessons and co-operate closely when devising teaching methods, which will enable particular groups of pupils to make good progress. They also display good subject knowledge, plan lessons carefully, communicate the purpose of the lesson to pupils, introduce a variety of tasks into the lesson, maintain a good pace and have high expectations. When teaching is less effective or poor, the teacher does not control the class effectively. Marking is mostly of a good quality and pupils are provided with guidance on what they need to do in order to improve. A small proportion of marking provides comments, but pays insufficient attention to inaccuracies at the word and sentence level to enable pupils to learn from their errors.

122. Leadership and management of the department are good and have helped to raise standards. However, in order to improve standards further the school should improve the support provided for pupils for whom English is an additional language; ensure that the best practice is shared by all teachers; provide suitable accommodation for drama and provide pupils with a clearer understanding of the National Curriculum levels so that they, and their parents, can better assess their progress.

123. Teaching has improved since the school was last inspected and is now good. There was no clear judgement on attainment in the previous report against which to judge progress.

### 123. **Mathematics**

124. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests the proportions of pupils attaining Level 5 and above and Level 6 and above were both well below the national averages. The trend in results in the past has broadly mirrored the national trend, although results have been getting closer to the national average. The average National Curriculum points score attained by pupils in 1999 was well below the national average for all schools and for schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, reflecting their attainment on entry to the school which was well below average. The attainment of boys was significantly better than that of the girls. Asian pupils did not achieve as well in the tests as other pupils, but the gap in attainment was narrower than it had been when pupils entered the school. Results in mathematics were similar to those in English and better than those in science.

125. The proportions of pupils achieving grades A\* to C in the GCSE examinations in 1998 were well below the national average and the proportions of pupils achieving grades A\* to G were far below the national average. In that year, pupils' achieved lower GCSE results in mathematics than other subjects in the school. In 1999 there was a significant improvement in results that continued the improving trend. Pupils' achievement at GCSE was in line with other subjects in the school and there was good progress in attainment from Key Stage 3.

In 1998, 24 pupils were entered for GCSE statistics and the attainment of pupils was in line with national averages. In 1999, 6 pupils were entered for the examination and all achieved A\* to C grades.

126. In 1998, 8 students were entered for GCE A level mathematics and results were below the national average. In 1999, 7 students were entered and results improved.

127. In work observed during the inspection, attainment at the age of 14 is below the average expected of pupils of the same age nationally. In 1999 there was a decline in results in National Curriculum tests but the prior attainment of that cohort was lower than previous years and the attainment observed in the current Year 9 is similar to that reflected by previous years' results. Middle attainers understand and use the probability scale from 0 to 1. They explain why the probability of the sum of two dice is a binomial distribution (but not using those words!). Low attaining pupils and those with special educational needs recognise right angles in turns and are beginning to use language associated with angles. They have a sound mental recall of number bonds to 10 times 10 and can add and subtract decimals to 2 decimal places. They need to use

calculators to change fractions to decimals but the middle attainers show good techniques in division and write decimals to two decimal places in their answers. High attainers competently use all four number bonds in calculations with directed numbers. In problem solving, they carry out substantial tasks when investigating the problem of shaking hands. Where the rule is linear, the majority find the rule for the  $n$ th term of the sequence of numbers they have recorded. Very good work is seen where the highest attainers find a rule for the  $n$ th term of a quadratic sequence.

128. In work observed during the inspection attainment at the age of 16 is below the level expected nationally. There has been an improvement in teaching strategies and this has not yet been reflected in the GCSE results. High attainers show a good understanding of trigonometric ratios and extend their learning to applying the sine and cosine rules. Middle attainers draw on their mathematical knowledge of shape, space and measures in their answers to investigations. Pupils still generalise their solutions in words and have not progressed to writing algebraic notation to describe the solutions. Low attainers are beginning to develop sound skills in reasoning when they work out the largest volume of the box. Their number skills are weak, however, and they have difficulty manipulating 2 figure numbers.

129. In work seen during the inspection, pupils' standards of attainment at the age of 19 are in line with course expectations. In pure mathematics, students have a good understanding of absolute and relative errors in calculations. They understand and apply partial fractions when differentiating. In mechanics, students use Newton's laws of motion appropriately when calculating the velocity of, and the distance travelled by, projectiles. Diagrams are clear and accurate. Answers are structured well and corrections carried out. Students use the formula to calculate the probability of mutually exclusive events with confidence.

130. Progress is good at both Key Stages 3 and 4. Progress is satisfactory in the sixth form. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 3 and attain better levels in their National tests than would be predicted from their performance at Key Stage 2. Similarly, pupils gain higher grades at GCSE than would be expected from their test results at the end of Key Stage 3. At both Key Stages 3 and 4, there are examples of very good progress in lessons. Good progress can be attributed to the high level of expectations that stimulate pupils to think mathematically. Teachers use teaching strategies and methodology that achieve a good balance between explaining, discussing and practising new mathematics. This fosters a thorough understanding of the subject. Pupils make good progress where they consolidate previous work at the beginning of a lesson. This was seen in a lesson where inequalities in algebra were revised at the beginning of the lesson. Pupils applied the new techniques and quickly progressed from substituting in simple expressions to more complex ones. Very good progress was seen at Key Stage 4 where middle-attaining pupils investigated the greatest area of land that could be enclosed by a fixed length of fencing. They consolidated and practised skills learnt in other areas of mathematics. This progress is achieved through well-prepared worksheets that guide pupils through the stages for completing coursework. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers, as do pupils for whom English is a second language who recognise the meaning of numbers much more quickly than words. A group of lower attainers, who are supported by the SRB scheme make particularly good progress in mathematics.

131. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good throughout the school. Pupils generally concentrate well in lessons and listen attentively to their teachers. In the better lessons they respond well to questions and give clear answers. Behaviour is at least good and is frequently very good in lessons. The better behaviour is seen where teaching strategies effectively maintain pupils' interest and involve them in discussions. Pupils listen to explanations and instructions without distracting others. They handle

equipment sensibly, for example when doing practical work and take good care of their books and other resources. Relationships with each other, their teachers and other adults are very good. Pupils are courteous and show respect for other people. They work well independently and will also help each other with work when appropriate. When given the opportunity they work well together in pairs, sharing ideas. Pupils enjoy their lessons and are proud of their achievements.

132. Teaching is good at both Key Stages 3 and 4 and satisfactory in the sixth form. Teachers demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of mathematics. They explain tasks clearly and use mathematical terms appropriately. The planning of lessons is good and make clear what teachers expect pupils to have achieved and understood. There is good use of questioning to assess pupils' knowledge and understanding. In the better lessons, teachers use challenging questions to promote good understanding. The management of pupils is good. In the most effective lessons, the pace is brisk and there is a good balance between explaining, discussing and individual practice so that pupils have a good understanding. In these lessons the interest and motivation of pupils is maintained and this promotes good progress in understanding. Homework is set and marked regularly. It reinforces knowledge and understanding acquired during the lesson. Teachers generally use constructive comments on pupils' work that encourages them to progress and to extend their understanding.

133. The quality of leadership and management is good; the head of department places great emphasis on raising achievement and enjoyment in mathematics and there are clear plans to improve standards. Teachers visit the local primary schools and work with their primary school colleagues. They have extended the pupils' use of their primary work by adopting the textbooks they have used and this is significantly improving progress at the start of Year 7. Information technology has not been integrated into schemes of work and the use of information technology is limited by limited access to computers and by teachers' lack of competence and confidence.

134. There has been a steady improvement in examination results since the last inspection. Teaching has improved significantly.

#### 134. **Science**

135. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests, the proportions of pupils at the age of 14 achieving levels 5 and above and levels 6 and above were well below both national averages and the averages for schools taking pupils from similar backgrounds. More boys than girls achieved levels 5 and above. Asian pupils did not achieve as well in the tests as other pupils, but the gap in attainment was narrower than it had been when pupils entered the school. Results in science for 1999 were not as good as those in English and mathematics. The average levels for science improved between 1996 and 1998 but fell in 1999.

136. In the 1998 GCSE double award science examinations, the proportion of pupils gaining grades A\* to C was well below average but all those who entered gained grades A\* to G. Results were below the national average in physics and well below average in biology and chemistry. Overall, in 1998, the proportions of pupils gaining



grades A\* to C or A\* to G in science subjects were well below the national average. Girls do better than boys in separate science subjects but there is no consistent difference in attainment between boys and girls in double award science. Asian pupils do not achieve as well as other pupils in the separate sciences but they achieve a higher proportion of grades A\* to C in double award science. If the GCSE science results are compared with the average attainment across all subjects in the school, pupils did slightly better in physics, gained average results in chemistry and their results in biology and double award science were below average. Pupils' attainment in GCSE science examinations declined between 1998 and 1999, except in biology where there was an improvement. Pupils following the Certificate of Achievement course in science all achieved distinctions in 1998 and 1999.

137. In the 1998 A level examinations the results in physics were in line with the national average and those in biology and chemistry were well below average. In relation to other subjects in the school, results in physics were average and those in biology and chemistry were below average. A level results in biology improved between 1998 and 1999 but those in chemistry and physics declined.

138. In work seen during the inspection, pupils' standards of attainment at the ages of 14 and 16 are well below the levels expected for pupils of the same age nationally. Most pupils have a basic understanding of the topics they are studying but they often respond hastily and inaccurately to unfamiliar questions. Higher attaining pupils achieve standards that match the levels expected nationally. For example, some pupils in Year 9 have secure understanding of pollination and fertilisation in plants and some in Year 11 understand the main features of the periodic table and the significance of the outer electrons. Most pupils have satisfactory practical skills but their investigative skills are below the levels expected for their age and their evaluation of experiments is a particular weakness. Pupils' numeracy skills are below average and they often fail to state the appropriate units in calculations and on graphs.

139. Attainment in the sixth form is below average for students following A level science courses. In the current Year 13, attainment is average in chemistry and below average in biology and physics. These levels of attainment broadly reflect the attainment of the different groups of students when they enter the sixth form. A few students have a level of understanding which is above average. For example, in A level physics, some students accurately describe and explain the motion of an electron in electric and magnetic fields.

140. Pupils make unsatisfactory progress in both Key Stages 3 and 4. They enter the school with attainment which is below the national average and gain GCSE results at the end of Key Stage 4 which are well below average. In the majority of individual lessons, pupils make satisfactory progress and, occasionally, progress is good. For example, in one lesson, lower attaining pupils in Year 9 identified the means of seed dispersal in several plants, constructed a model helicopter and began to investigate the factors affecting its rate of fall. Pupils do not make enough progress in the minority of lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory and there are also other factors which cause pupils to make slower progress than they should do over the longer term. In most year groups, pupils have one lesson in each strand of science each week. This produces relatively long gaps between lessons in a particular topic and makes it more difficult for

pupils to retain information from one lesson to the next.

141. There is no significant difference between the progress made by boys and girls or between pupils from different ethnic groups, but pupils who have only a limited command of English make slower progress than others. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language usually make similar progress to that of the others in their group. However, where pupils receive additional in-class support, particularly in Key Stage 3, they often make better progress than their classmates because their concentration is enhanced by effective, one-to-one questioning from the support assistant. Occasionally, a pupil needs additional language support, does not receive it and makes little progress.

142. In the sixth form, students who enter the courses with appropriate attainment in GCSE examinations make satisfactory progress. However, those students whose basic knowledge and understanding from Key Stage 4 are insecure cannot benefit sufficiently from the satisfactory teaching they receive; they make unsatisfactory progress and do not succeed in gaining A level qualifications. Students do not all receive sufficiently clear advice about their chances of success in A level science courses.

143. Most pupils have satisfactory attitudes to their work in science and their behaviour in lessons is usually good. However there is a significant minority of pupils whose attitudes are too relaxed and they require much encouragement and pressure from the teacher to induce them to make a genuine effort. There are often gaps in their books where they fail to complete homework tasks. They are generally quiet and cooperative but find it difficult to listen and concentrate. Occasionally, when teaching is less effective, low level chatter persists while the teacher is speaking. Students in the sixth form have satisfactory attitudes to their work. They concentrate well in class and contribute appropriately in response to teachers' questions. A few pose questions of their own to confirm or extend their understanding, but this active role in learning is not well developed. Some students do not organise their files as carefully as they should.

144. The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory in Key Stages 3 and 4 and satisfactory in the sixth form. In the majority of individual lessons, teaching is satisfactory and sometimes good or very good. However, one in five lessons is unsatisfactory or, occasionally, very poor. There are also weaknesses which recur in lessons which are otherwise satisfactory and which reduce pupils' long term progress. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of their subject and most manage pupils effectively. However, in both Key Stages 3 and 4, teachers often do not expect enough of pupils in terms of the pace at which they can work and lessons proceed rather slowly. Lessons are usually carefully planned but there is too much emphasis on providing activities rather than ensuring that pupils are actually gaining understanding or skills. Teaching was good, for example, when Year 13 biologists were challenged to draw the microscopic structure of a muscle from a demanding set of instructions. Teaching was unsatisfactory when some pupils were allowed to avoid doing the tasks set or to spend too much time on routine, mechanical activities or when the teacher did not control pupils' behaviour effectively. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and most give helpful suggestions for improvement. The homework tasks set are often interesting and useful but they are not always completed by pupils.

145. In Key Stage 4, around 20 per cent of pupils follow courses in the separate science subjects. Some lower attaining pupils choose to study the separate sciences despite these courses not being the most appropriate for them. The division of the year group into separate science and double award groups also means that there is a wide range of attainment in the various teaching groups. Under these circumstances, teachers find it difficult to plan lessons that meet fully the needs of all pupils in the group. When planning is unsuccessful, the lesson is appropriate for middle attaining pupils but does not sufficiently challenge higher attainers, nor does it enable lower attainers to make enough progress.

146. The department makes occasional use of the school's information technology facilities when, for example, pupils seek information about famous scientists. However, the department lacks a suitable computer which could be moved between rooms to provide additional activities within science lessons. The department is aware that it does not make enough use of information technology to support learning in science.

147. The leadership and management of the department are unsatisfactory because there is not enough emphasis on ensuring that pupils make the best possible progress. In particular, there is insufficient monitoring of, and support for, teaching to ensure that all pupils experience teaching which is at least satisfactory. Development planning does not focus sufficiently on raising attainment and lacks some of the detail needed in an effective working document. The department undertakes regular assessment of pupils' attainment at all stages but in Years 7 and 8 it does not assess in terms of National Curriculum levels. This leads to assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 which are not as accurate as they should be and to pupils in Key Stage 3 not being sufficiently aware of their attainment in relation to national standards. Library provision for students in the sixth form restricts opportunities for extended reading. There are several weaknesses in relation to health and safety in the department: pupils are not always required to wear eye protection in situations where it is necessary; the fume cupboards have not been appropriately tested to ensure that they are functioning correctly; there is no readily accessible emergency cut-off for the

gas supply to one laboratory.

148. The department has made unsatisfactory progress since the previous inspection. The quality of teaching remains broadly the same but attainment has fallen in both key stages and in the sixth form.

## 148. OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

### 148. Art

149. The number of pupils gaining both A\* to C grades and A\* to G grades at GCSE in 1998 was well above the national average. Art was the most successful subject at the school at GCSE and girls achieved their best results in this subject. In the 1999 GCSE examination the proportion of pupils gaining A\* to C grades increased significantly and maintains a rising trend of success in art irrespective of gender, ethnicity or background. In both the 1998 and 1999 GCE A level examination the subject's 100% pass rate was maintained but the average points score per candidate was below average.

150. At the age of 14 pupils' attainment is above the level expected nationally in practical work and in line in the areas of knowledge and understanding. In a project observed on still life all pupils could confidently make observational drawings, refine their ideas to include development of enlarged sections, translate their work to larger painted pieces and then modify their material to produce high quality three dimensional relief work. Substantial displays of their work derived from study of Picasso demonstrate striking use of the application of colour and developing skills in abstract design. In discussion many pupils are able to relate their ideas to the work of artists studied and make some evaluative comments on their own work. Pupils are less familiar with work outside the western tradition and they lack confidence in use of art specific terminology. At the age of 16, pupils' attainment is well above national expectations in practical work and in line in areas of knowledge and understanding. Pupils have a very good grasp of the need to develop work in progress and fully understand how initial stimuli and ideas have to be subject to an ongoing process of refinement. Their confidence in observational drawing and the application of colour in a variety of media is particularly good and at times excellent. A project inspired by Asian patterns and Gustav Klimt was often outstanding in its use of colour, imaginative abstract design and the professionalism of the final piece. Projects initiated by study of Matisse, Braque and Marc generated much skilful work on landscape and flowers. Pupils' sketch books are used very well to develop ideas. Research work on artists is satisfactory but few pupils make use of computers as sources of evidence. Many pupils can make critical evaluations of their work but demonstrate some insecurity in their use of appropriate terminology.

151. At the age of 19 the few pupils studying art produce work in line with course expectations. In their individual projects pupils demonstrate confident drawing and refining skills in portrait work in a variety of media and striking applications of colour and abstracted design in work on fruit. Sketch-books are used substantially to develop ideas. Research study work on themes of their own choosing are well designed and illustrated but the written content is very modest and lacks insight. Computers are underused for research work.

152. At Key Stages 3 and 4, pupils make very good progress and progress is good in the sixth form. Progress in investigating and making skills is often very good in observational drawing, design work and the application of colour. Progress in knowledge and understanding is satisfactory. At Key Stage 4, all pupils make very

good progress in the practical areas of the curriculum. Progress in the acquisition of critical skills and knowledge of artists is good. In the sixth form, pupils make good progress in the practical aspects of the course for which they opt and satisfactory progress in their research work.

153. Pupils demonstrate very good attitudes in art lessons. They have a genuine enthusiasm for their work reflected in the high levels of serious concentration once engaged in their practical work. They develop excellent working habits in Year 7, which remain with them throughout the school. In all lessons, the majority of pupils work independently of the teacher. Behaviour is excellent and pupils form friendly working relationships with each other and their teachers. They are very willing to assist with the organisation of resources and many continue their work out of the formal timetable. Many pupils opt for the GCSE course.

154. The quality of teaching is very good. Pupils benefit from teachers who are skilled practitioners with valuable experience gained in the professional art world. This is reflected in demonstrations during lessons and the use of teachers' own quality resources (e.g. work on portraits). Teachers set high expectations of all pupils with realistic short term and long term goals for each project, supported by frequent and regular marked homework. Lessons are very well planned to give a clear sense of progression with completed work skilfully displayed about the school and in the art rooms to celebrate pupils' achievements. Individual lessons are meticulously organised with maximum time given over to practical work. Pupils are set high standards of organisation at Year 7 and quickly develop a professional approach to the use of materials. Teachers make skilful use of questioning to ensure pupils can see how current work relates to the overall course and any research completed on artists. Standards of discipline are excellent and pupils benefit from a consistent, firm and friendly supportive environment. The progressive assessment undertaken effectively ensures pupils' progress, since it constantly reinforces the goals set in lessons. However pupils are not always clear how this relates to GCSE criteria or the National Curriculum. In the sixth form, teachers require alternative strategies for motivating the small cohort of pupils and developing their depth of understanding of artists' work.

155. The quality of pupils' art education is enriched by the high-quality exhibitions mounted of their work in school and locally. There are trips provided to national collections and occasional artists-in-residence. However these are limited in number and not open to all pupils. Pupils work in a limited range of materials. The potential for art to enrich pupils' spiritual experience is missed and at Key Stage 3 examples of world art are limited. Pupils have no opportunities to explore computer-generated artwork. Library provision for students in the sixth form restricts opportunities for extended reading.

156. There has been good progress made since the last inspection in pupils' attainment and the quality of teaching.

#### 156. **Business education**

157. The proportion of pupils achieving grades A\* to C in the GCSE economics examination in 1998 was far below the national average and none of the pupils entered

in 1999 achieved a grade C or above. This outcome was in line with achievements in recent years. Results in economics in both 1998 and 1999 were among the worst in the school. The results of those pupils entered for GCSE accounts, whilst very low, cannot be compared with the national situation as there are no national statistics. In the GCE A level examinations in economics in 1998 the average points score of students was below the national average. The results in 1999 were similar. Half the number of students studying in the sixth form now follow GNVQ courses and the results in GNVQ Intermediate and Advanced Business were above the national averages in 1998 and remained high in 1999.

158. In work seen during the inspection, pupils' standards of attainment in economics at the age of 16 are below the level expected of pupils of the same age nationally. In their oral responses in classes the great majority display a sound knowledge and understanding of the topics covered. In a Year 11 lesson, for instance, pupils demonstrated, in both their answers to their teacher's questions and in the graphs they compiled, that they understood that a firm's marginal costs are equal to its marginal revenue. The written work that the large majority of them produce, however, lacks the clarity of expression and the detailed explanation of their opinions that is essential to the achievement of high grades in examinations. The low number of pupils of higher attainment who do produce convincing written work understand, and explain clearly, concepts such as revenue, total costs and profit. The pupils who follow the recently introduced GCSE business studies course produce more convincing work, as in the lesson in which they showed clear understanding of supply and demand, and that the location of businesses is closely linked to the surrounding infrastructure. The first examination entries in that subject will be in the Year 2000.

159. In work seen during the inspection students' standards of attainment at the age of 19 in A level economics are below the level expected of students of the same age nationally. Students continue to show greater knowledge and understanding in oral responses in lessons than is reflected in their written work and examination results. In a Year 13 lesson, for example, students demonstrated sound grasp of the notion of opportunity cost and, in discussion, appropriately applied the principles of the inelastic supply of labour to the problem set for them. The work seen of the students following GNVQ courses confirms the greater success that they experience in courses that are suited to their needs and they are achieving above the expected level. Their knowledge and understanding of varying kinds of business organisations develops well and they benefit greatly from their contacts with, and visits to, local firms.

160. The progress pupils make in economics by the age of 16 is unsatisfactory. A great number of them do not develop the literacy skills to display successfully, in writing, the knowledge and understanding they show when asked questions in class discussions. There are no systematic strategies in place to help them overcome this obstacle to their progress; marking and assessment of their work is deficient in explaining to them what they have to do in order to improve. The pupils taking the GCSE business studies courses, recently made available, benefit from a more coherent and structured framework. Progress of students following post-16 courses is of a similar nature. In economics progress is unsatisfactory, whilst in GNVQ courses, where they work in the context of clear subject objectives and receive detailed feedback on their work,

progress is good.

161. The attitude of pupils is good in both key stages. They behave well, concentrate on their work in class, and respond positively to their teachers. Pupils collaborate well with each other and show maturity in their dealings with adults, particularly when communicating with local firms. Pupils respond well to opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning; this is especially evident in GNVQ courses.

162. The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory in economics but satisfactory in GCSE and GNVQ business studies. Teachers' command of subject knowledge and their management of pupils are good in all courses and across all lessons. However, in areas of teaching that are central to the issue of pupils' attainment there are major differences between the courses. The effectiveness of planning, the use of appropriate learning styles, the use of curriculum time, the quality of marking and assessment of pupils' work, and the effective use of homework, are all good in the teaching of GNVQ and GCSE business studies. These important elements of effective teaching are deficient in economics and, as a consequence, pupils are not provided with the information that they need about how to improve. The teaching does not offer the strategies for overcoming the difficulties that pupils have in expressing, in convincing writing, the knowledge and understanding that they demonstrate when answering questions in class.

163. The leadership offered by the head of department is unsatisfactory. Schemes of work in economics are merely lists of topics covered during the course; they do not set standards for teaching, or for the marking and assessment of pupils' work. In the courses where these important features are in place, as in GCSE business and GNVQ, they are the result of the work of other teachers. The poor quality of leadership reflected in these facts has a negative impact on pupil attainment, as the results in public examinations in economics show. Library provision for students in the sixth form restricts opportunities for extended reading.

164. The previous inspection report did not include a separate section on this subject area. There were no clear and detailed judgements reported that allow for valid and informed comparisons to be made between the situation then and the one now reported.



#### 164. **Design and technology**

165. The proportions of pupils gaining A\* to C and A\* to G grades in GCSE are far below the national averages, although results show a rising trend over the past three years. All pupils take either a full or short GCSE course in the subject, but entries are very low in all areas. Performance is usually better in resistant materials than in food and textiles. It is very poor in systems and control and graphic products. The results are similar to those obtained by the same pupils in the other subjects that they studied. There are no courses in the sixth form.

166. The attainment of pupils in design and technology at the age of 14 is below the level expected nationally. The attainment of girls is higher than that of boys. By the end of the key stage, pupils' practical skills are good. Most finished products, in all materials, are satisfactory and some are good, but much of the work is pre-designed and pupils have insufficient skill in creating and designing for themselves. Theory is weak as many pupils do not keep their folders in order and do not fully understand the processes of design from first attempts to finished and evaluated results. In food lessons, they handle tools safely and know about hygiene when preparing food. They lack skill in creating new dishes, but they understand about nutrition, weighing and consistency. Many pupils are not adept at designing, but general graphic skills in working out perspective and isometric drawing from given examples are good. Some colour work is primitive and many pupils have little idea of shading or letter formation for headings on design sheets. Pupils use successfully a limited range of tools in the construction workshops for cutting, shaping and smoothing, but many do not arrange their work well enough as they are doing the tasks. In general, pupils are accurate when using power tools, such as the pillar drill. In textiles, pupils know about threading up and using the sewing machines, but a few pupils lack skill in straight machine stitching and some cannot do small hand stitching. Many pupils use information technology to present their work and create folder covers and most work is well-presented.

167. The overall attainment of pupils in design and technology at the age of 16 is below the level expected nationally. Attainment in lessons does not always match examination results as too few pupils are entered for the examination. Practical skills are good. Pupils understand the process of designing from research and analysis of problems to making and evaluating results against original specifications. Skills in using tools are sound and pupils work safely, but often too slowly. Many design sheets are well presented. Pupils do not, however, present enough course work to satisfy the demands for entry at GCSE. Most portfolios show some well-created design sheets at the beginning of the projects, but many untidy and ill-researched towards the end. Most pupils set themselves targets, but do not keep to their time plans and rush to finish work for marking and assessment.

168. Pupils make satisfactory progress over both key stages. Their skills in making things increase as the projects are intended to ensure that pupils use the full range of tools and materials as they move through the school. At the beginning of Key Stage 3, pupils enter school with few practical skills other than working with recycled media and the more pliable materials. They work on short skill-based projects which give them an understanding of which tools are best for which processes and progress to designing

things for themselves towards the end of the key stage. Pupils make the quickest progress in practical skills and slowest in designing skills. In general, pupils make the greatest amount of progress in electronics. Initially, in Year 7, few pupils have any idea of cutting and stripping wire, creating and testing a circuit or soldering, but by the end of their first module, produce a hand held test game which lights up if the answers are correct. This project is very challenging as it also includes use of the vacuum former for the casings and includes information technology to help with the packaging designs. Throughout the school, pupils gain confidence to try to do things after they see demonstrations by their teachers. Pupils with special educational needs and those pupils who do not speak English very well make satisfactory progress in practical skills, but poor progress in theory as the task sheets are often too difficult for them to read and understand. The higher-attaining pupils are insufficiently challenged by most of the theory work, as it is set at too low a level for most of them, but do demonstrate good progress in practical work as they usually set themselves enough work to do. The scheme of work in Key Stage 3 is modular and pupils experience various material areas over the first two years in school. When they revisit an area, many pupils forget their original work and have to relearn the basics before they can make progress. Many pupils in Year 9 make insufficient progress as much of their work is in relearning and not building on to prior knowledge. Pupils in Key Stage 4 make best progress in analysing design problems and devising solutions to them. They make poor progress when they are left too long to their own devices without sufficient teacher support and guidance.

169. The response to design and technology is mainly good. Most pupils appear to like their technology lessons, are very keen to make things and try very hard in lessons. They are well behaved, listen to instructions and settle to work quickly. Pupils speak courteously to their teachers, some make sensible comments when watching demonstrations and they answer questions politely, but few ask them. A few of the higher attaining pupils are very confident in speaking about how they achieved their results. Some of the lower attaining pupils find the demands of drawing too much for them and are sometimes unenthusiastic in lessons. Relationships are good. Pupils get on well together. They help each other, wait turns patiently for equipment and sometimes praise their friends for their efforts. Pupils organise themselves well, try before asking for help and work steadily throughout their lessons. Most pupils show good perseverance, even when they find tasks hard, such as sawing mild steel or trying to machine in a straight line. Many pupils are adventurous, especially in food lessons, where they try to be creative and are extremely generous in sharing their food. Although some pupils hand in very scrappy homework, most pupils are proud of their achievements.

170. Teaching in design and technology is satisfactory. The best teaching is in electronics lessons at Key Stage 4. Subject knowledge is good. Teachers pass on good craft skills by giving careful demonstrations. They plan work that will interest the pupils and build up their knowledge of tools and materials, but occasionally the projects are mismatched to pupils' ages and levels of attainment. For example, a current Year 8 project in plastics is too easy. A joint metal and wood litter-picker is well devised, but not really motivational for pupils in Year 8. There is sometimes an uneven balance between aspects of designing and aspects of making. Teachers set realistic targets for lessons, which usually proceed as planned. There is a good balance between giving

information and allowing pupils time to work. A particularly good feature of many lessons is the one-to-one help given. Teachers treat all pupils equally, know which pupils require support, those who need encouragement and the ones who should be persuaded to work harder. Pupils' class work and homework is marked and graded, but occasionally marking is thin. A tick or a comment such as 'well done' does not tell a pupil how the work should be improved.

171. There is a new head of department who provides effective leadership and has increased technician support. However, there remain large numbers of pupils who are perfectly capable of passing GCSE if they were made to produce the required coursework.

172. Standards of attainment and the quality of teaching are similar to those found at the time of the previous inspection.

### 172. **Geography**

173. In the 1998 GCSE examinations the proportions of pupils gaining passes at grades A\* to C and A\* to G were well below the national averages and 1999 results were similar. Pupils' performance was worse in geography than in the other subjects that they studied in 1998 but there was a marked improvement in 1999 and results were similar to other subjects. Inspection findings showed that standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 were better than GCSE results indicated. This was because pupils' oracy skills far exceeded their writing skills, which limited their access to the examination system. This was particularly the case for pupils for whom English was not their first language. Results have shown an improving trend since the last inspection. In 1997 and 1998, girls out-performed boys, the gap in attainment being far in excess of what is the case nationally. However, provisional results for 1999 indicate that the trend has been reversed with boys producing better GCSE scores than girls. There is a marked difference in attainment between different ethnic groups, reflecting the language difficulties of some Asian pupils. The improving trend in results over the past four years reflects improvements in the quality of teaching, a well structured revision programme with well supervised coursework and additional revision classes. There have been no recent examinations in A level geography.

174. In the work seen during the inspection, attainment at the age of 14 and 16 is below the level expected nationally. At the age of 14, pupils' sense of place with regard to maps of Britain, Europe and the world is very poor and has a negative impact upon their understanding of context in geographical case studies. Pupils have a sound understanding of plate tectonics and associated landforms. However, the use of extended writing is limited and pupils write in a relatively narrow range of genre. Pupils' oracy skills and self-esteem are enhanced by the appropriate use of oral presentations to other pupils in the class. Pupils have a good understanding of geographical processes at work in their local environment through the study of traffic flows, a local power station and microclimates. The application of information technology skills in geography is developing well but there is insufficient regular use of graphs to portray geographical data. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils show an understanding of demographic change, can construct charts of population data in the form of population pyramids and show a good knowledge of tectonic processes together with the human

response to earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. Written work remains a weakness however.

175. At Key Stage 3, pupils make satisfactory progress overall with higher attaining pupils making good progress where the work set contains a good level of challenge. A minority of pupils for whom English is not their first language, make poor progress owing to a lack of suitable in class support. Pupils' cultural development at Key Stage 3 is limited by the lack of fieldwork outside of the local area. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. Progress continues to be satisfactory overall through Key Stage 4 for pupils of all attainment levels. However, the long-term progress of some Year 11 pupils has been retarded by unsatisfactory teaching provision during Year 10. Progress of students in Year 12 is good in response to good classroom teaching.

176. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is usually good but some Year 7 classes show a lack of motivation and the noisy behaviour of some pupils had an adverse effect on progress. However, most pupils demonstrate a good level of motivation in geography although this is not reflected in the take up of the subject as a GCSE option, which remains limited despite a recent upturn. The most effective teachers are sensitive to pupils' varying spans of concentration and skilfully vary activities and experiences to sustain pupil interest. Pupils have good working relationships with their teachers and respond well in question and answer sessions. Their capacity for personal study is being developed well at Key Stage 3 through opportunities to carry out enquiry and decision-making tasks and to work collaboratively in groups. At Key Stage 4, pupils work well independently in carrying out GCSE coursework assignments. Sixth form students apply themselves well to A level work showing good levels of commitment and interest.

177. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at both Key Stages 3 and 4 and good in the sixth form. In the one unsatisfactory lesson observed, there was insufficient attention paid to the need for all pupils to understand the task set which resulted in some pupils drifting off task, becoming noisy and making unsatisfactory progress. In the majority of lessons, however, tasks contain a suitable level of challenge. Teacher expectations were very high in the sixth form. Teachers apply their subject knowledge satisfactorily in lessons at Key Stage 3, while at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form teachers make very productive use of their subject knowledge. Lesson planning is satisfactory at both Key Stages 3 and 4 but is outstanding in the sixth form where lessons contain a wider range of stimulating student activities. The most effective teachers employed a wide range of teaching and learning styles while less successful lessons were teacher-led and allowed pupils to maintain a passive role. Classroom organisation and control are good in lessons in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form but inconsistent at Key Stage 3. Most lessons are taught at a brisk pace but there is insufficient use on the part of some teachers of a suitable range of teaching and learning resources particularly information technology, a range of text book materials and, to a lesser extent, videos. Marking is generally accurate and carried out regularly with the use of helpful diagnostic and encouraging comment in the best cases. Homework is set regularly and is used effectively to extend classroom learning.

178. The department is well led; the curriculum is generally well planned but requires

further opportunities for pupils to experience information technology. The lack of sufficient teaching time in Year 9 places limitations on the department's ability to consolidate learning at the end of Key Stage 3 and build a sound foundation of knowledge to draw upon in the following key stage.

179. Since the last report the department has made significant progress through the good leadership provided by the new head of department. GCSE points scores have shown a steady improvement. Teaching has improved from the unsatisfactory levels noted in the last inspection but a key task facing the department is to raise the overall quality of teaching to the high levels of competence shown by the most effective teachers. Assessment, which was described as insecure in the last inspection, has shown a marked improvement.

### 179. **History**

180. The proportions of pupils achieving grades A\* to C and A\* to G in the GCSE examinations in 1998 were in line with the national averages. This trend continued in 1999. Results in history in 1998 were similar to those obtained in other subjects in the school. Boys performed less well than girls in 1998 but obtained their best results in history. Results in the GCE A level examinations in 1998 were well below the national average, and this trend continued in 1999.

181. In work seen during the inspection pupils' standards of attainment at the age of 14 are in line with the level expected for pupils of the same age nationally. Pupils have a sound knowledge of the main events and people of the topics studied. In both oral and short written answers to questions requiring the extraction of information from historical sources, the great majority of pupils display that knowledge with success. Pupils of all levels of attainment, for instance, confidently explain that contemporary views about how pleasant it was to live in England in 1500 depend upon the status and affluence of the witness. During lessons on that topic and others, including the development of the canal system in the 18th century, they show that they understand the link between the causes and the consequences of important events and that they brought about far reaching changes to life in Britain. The proportion of pupils of higher attainment who produce convincing longer written answers, to questions requiring selection of relevant information and sustained reasoning, is in line with that expected nationally. These pupils show such qualities, for example, in work requiring them to evaluate each others' presentations to the class on changes resulting from the Agricultural Revolution in 18th century England.

182. In work seen during the inspection, pupils' standards of attainment at the age of 16 are in line with the level expected of pupils of the same age nationally. Pupils show good knowledge, of the topics they study, in their oral responses and in written answers to questions based on sources of historical information. They know, for instance, the reasons for the late entry into World War 1 of the USA and the vital impact of that decision on the outcome of the war, and that there were many groups who had opposing views to Hitler in Germany in the 1930s. The mature critical judgement which they develop is exemplified by the lesson in which they graded accurately sample examination answers, according to GCSE criteria, explaining the reasons for their views in answer to searching questions

from their teacher. A number of pupils which is similar to the national average express their knowledge convincingly in written answers that need explanations, in greater depth, of the reasons for events and the actions of people in power. Their work on the analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the Weimar Constitution, set up after the Peace Settlement of 1919, illustrates this well. Students' attainments at the age of 19 are in line with course expectations, based on their work in lessons and their written assignments. They demonstrate secure depth of knowledge in their oral answers and presentations and produce essays which satisfactorily support, with relevant evidence, the views they propound. The difference between the attainment observed and the results of A level examinations reflects the changing attainment of the students, each year, on entry to the sixth form.

183. Pupils make good progress at Key Stage 3. Their knowledge and understanding become increasingly secure, which they demonstrate well when responding to questions asked of them by teachers during class discussions, as in a lesson comparing sources of information on life in Tudor England. The development of writing skills is equally secure for the pupils of higher attainment, who support their opinions well with relevant evidence. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is good. They benefit from teachers who understand their learning difficulties, plan lessons effectively, use materials well matched to their curricular needs and have high expectations of their work.

184. The progress of pupils at Key Stage 4 is good. Pupils make important gains in their appreciation of the need to answer questions in sufficient detail and for care in selecting relevant information to support their opinions. This is illustrated by answers on the experience of black Americans during the 1920s; a good level of understanding is apparent, and only a small minority of pupils finds it difficult to use key terms and grasp concepts. Students studying for GCE A level make satisfactory progress when taking into account their levels of attainment on entry to the sixth form. However, students currently in the sixth form are making good progress in the selective and accurate use of supporting evidence. This is demonstrated well, for instance, in their oral presentations to the class about the basis and nature of power in four communist regimes in Eastern Europe between 1956 and 1985. Students develop good research skills, effectively using library, and information technology sources, including the internet. They make full use of the links with Derby and Staffordshire Universities provided by the school. For instance, impressive coursework assignments, on subjects including the absence of resistance from inmates of Nazi concentration camps and the impact of the Soviet communist regime on famous composers, involve communications with the Holocaust Education Trust, the Serge Prokofiev Archive, and a professor at Oxford University.

185. The attitude of pupils is good throughout the age and attainment range. They behave very well, show interest and enjoyment, respond willingly to their teachers, listen attentively, and concentrate well. Examples of this include: the Year 8 lesson in which pupils with special education needs worked with total concentration during the lesson and eagerly responded to the fact that they could undertake their next written task for homework and the lively discussion, in a Year 13 lesson, on the critical relations between Hitler and the German army between 1932 and 1945. The standard of presentation of written assignments of most pupils across the age range conveys the

pride and interest they have in their work. When required to work in collaboration with each other pupils of all levels of attainment cooperate well and display respect for the opinions of others. Pupils respond well to opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning. They relate very well to their teachers and other adults, and show a good level of respect for their own, and others', books, equipment and surroundings.

186. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. Teachers' subject knowledge and management of pupils is good. Lessons are planned well and teachers consistently use a wide range of teaching and learning strategies that properly challenge pupils of all levels of attainment. Particularly significant, in the context of the subject teachers' constant drive to raise pupils' attainment, are the good expectations they have of pupils' attitudes to work and behaviour. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly but the use of longer, more analytical, comments on pupils' work, aimed at informing them how to improve their writing, is infrequent at Key Stage 3. Resources are of good quality and are used well by teachers. Homework is regularly set and of a generally useful nature that extends opportunities for pupils to learn.

187. Good use is made of classrooms and corridors to display pupils' work and this contributes strongly to the encouraging atmosphere that pervades the subject area of the school. There is a programme of educational visits outside school that enhances the learning of pupils in each of the key stages. Pupils in Key Stage 4 value, and make good use of, the Thursday lunch-time History Study Club.

188. The subject has made good progress since the last inspection. Standards of pupil attainment have been maintained, and teaching, then described as satisfactory, is now good. The good leadership being provided by the newly appointed head of history is a significant factor in this improvement.

#### **188. Information technology**

189. The proportion of pupils gaining A\* to C grades in GCSE is well below the national average and has not changed significantly over the past three years. The number of pupils gaining A\* to G grades is in line with the national average. There are differences in attainment between GCSE information technology and GCSE keyboarding. Results in the latter examination are above the national average. The proportion of pupils gaining distinction certificates in the text and word-processing examinations is high. Results at A level are broadly average.

190. The attainment of pupils at the age of 14 is below the level expected nationally. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils know how to log on to the network, call up programs and work with them. Most pupils know how to save and print their work. They understand how to write words and present text in different forms by changing size, style, emphasis and colour. A few pupils use desk top publishing programs to make posters and folder fronts and can make text appear shaped or shadowed. Screen art work is weak. Most pupils know how to insert pictures into their work, by calling up clip art, but few are adept at creating their own. Many pupils can obtain information from a compact disc and some know how to search the Internet, but they do not know what to do with the information gained. Most pupils know how to collect data and make records to add information to a database, some can sort it alpha-numerically, but few can frame questions to get results. Some pupils can produce graphs, but many do not know which type of graph to use for best presentation of data. Work with a spreadsheet is sound. Pupils know about cells, columns and rows and that calculations can be carried out by inserting a formula. Only the higher attaining pupils fully understand about creating the formulae and how they work. Data monitoring is weak. Pupils rarely use sensors to record changes over time. Pupils do not do much work with computer control beyond



moving a screen robot nor do they learn about the wider implications of information technology in society.

191. The attainment of pupils at the age of 16 is below the level expected nationally. Attainment in lessons is above the examination results as pupils demonstrate more skill and powers of analysis than the results indicate. By the end of Key Stage 4, most pupils are computer literate and competent in using a range of software. They work on a situation which requires some computer assistance, spot which kinds of software could be used and the necessary input and output devices. Pupils understand about data communication and the need for laws to protect the public. Examination results are below the levels of attainment observed in lessons because many pupils do not value their course work and their work files are thin. Folders are undervalued by the pupils, who keep papers in them haphazardly. Most pupils have difficulties in revising from the disorganised paperwork.

192. The attainment of students in A-level computer studies is below the national average. Many students who join the course have not taken GCSE and find difficulties in learning basic skills which have to be mastered before the A level work can begin. By the end of their two year course, most students can manage to use most of the functions on the computers and have a sound grasp of programming. They can evaluate computer packages and assess their efficiency. Most can analyse and give opinions about a problem but find difficulty in identifying the potential users of a system or the tasks that may be involved. They can develop algorithms as flow charts, but many lack real logic and reasoning skills. Students' work on evaluating the social, moral, ethical and economic impact of computers on society is weak.

193. Whilst pupils at Key Stage 3 make good progress in individual lessons, there are too few of them and progress overall is unsatisfactory. Most pupils make good progress in Year 7 as they have a full course of lessons which gives them the necessary skills in communicating and handling information. On entry to the school, most pupils have used a computer, played games, written words and drawn pictures. Pupils build on to this prior knowledge and make good progress in manipulating text, presenting information and calculating. In Year 8, pupils only have a few discrete lessons and rarely use computers in other subjects. Pupils in Year 9 are expected to do all their information technology through other subjects. As many subject teachers do not take their pupils to the computer rooms on a regular basis, pupils in Years 8 and 9 are not receiving their entitlement in the subject nor are they making sufficient progress.

194. Progress at Key Stage 4 is good for those pupils on examination courses, but others receive little information technology education and make poor progress. During the inspection, pupils in Year 10 made good progress in understanding the components of a computer system and others made good progress during a twilight session on correcting errors and reading manuscripts. Many pupils are using their keyboard skills well which is improving the speed at which they type. A group in Year 11 made very good progress using control systems. The previous work on watching a demonstration of data logging aided their understanding and helped them to apply it to the current problem. The teacher had created a good set of booklets for the pupils to use as background material. In general, pupils who do their homework and those who have access to computers at home make the most progress. Pupils with special educational

needs are usually paired with more confident friends who help them with practical skills, but they make insufficient progress in work with words and numbers. Some pupils have additional support and make satisfactory progress, but the necessary support is not always available. Pupils who do not understand much English are given good support by language assistants and make satisfactory progress at the keyboards. Progress on the A level course is good. Students join the course with below average levels of attainment and leave with A level results that match the national average.

195. At the beginning of Key Stage 3, pupils' response in lessons is very good. They are keen to learn, listen well, watch demonstrations carefully and try hard to do their best. Pupils are curious and keen to find out what the computers will do. The interest wanes towards the end of the key stage as pupils work mainly on basic skills and not on all the new aspects they were taught in Year 7, but when they have opportunities to show their skills they are determined to succeed. During lessons, across all key stages, pupils are well behaved and behaviour during the twilight sessions is exemplary. Pupils know that they have to treat the equipment with care and they accept the restrictions concerning accessing the Internet. Relationships between pupils and with teachers are good. Many pupils help each other when they get stuck, they share the tasks and make joint decisions about the next steps when they have to share computers. Many pupils show good independence and pride in their work. After the end of one lesson during the inspection, over half the class in Year 8 asked to stay in to do extra work.

196. The quality of teaching is good. There is more very good teaching at Key Stage 4 than in Key Stage 3 as the challenges offered are greater. Teachers are enthusiastic about the subject, give the pupils good information and pass on worthwhile skills. Lessons are usually conducted at a brisk pace and pupils have enough time to get on with their own work. As many pupils do not retain knowledge from one lesson to the next, recaps are useful, with searching question and answer sessions. The main strength of the teaching is in the very good help given to individual pupils during lessons. Teachers are very adept at encouraging pupils to persevere and helping them out of difficulties. Often the set homework is challenging, where pupils have to complete research before the next lesson, but teachers are mindful that not all pupils have their own computers. In class, too often, all the work sheets are the same, so some of the lower-attaining pupils cannot understand them. Marking needs attention. Mere ticks and marks do not tell pupils how they should improve or correct their work.

197. Most subject teachers have received training in the use of the computers and are keen to use them, but few plan far enough ahead to ensure that the rooms are available when they need them. Some departments, such as design and technology, special needs and history often use computers, but others such as art never do so. Where teachers make efforts, the use of the equipment is good, such as in a geography lesson with Year 7 on map work and in a religious education lesson where pupils in Year 7 searched the compact discs for information about sacred books. In looking at pupils' work books across the curriculum, there is evidence that some pupils use their skills, but not often enough to secure entitlement or to progress. The amount of information technology work seen in books dwindles towards the end of Key Stage 3, but builds up satisfactorily in the sixth form.

198. Leadership by the head of department is good, but is unsatisfactory at a senior

level as there is insufficient time allocated to the subject to ensure that pupils receive their entitlement and make satisfactory progress. There are insufficient computers in the school to allow the subject to be developed effectively. As there is no technician, the head of department has to maintain the system, which was and still remains an efficiency issue.

199. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection, but standards remain at a similar level owing to the lack of lessons.

#### 199. **Modern foreign languages**

200. All pupils study French in Year 7. Some pupils also choose to study Urdu in Years 8 and 9. Pupils then choose to learn French or Urdu in Years 10 and 11. Urdu is currently taught at A level.

201. In 1998, GCSE results in French were well above the national average, but were lower in 1999. In 1998 Short Course, French results were well above average, and were similar

in 1999. The 1998 GCSE results in Urdu were in line with the national average, and they were similar in 1999. In 1998 'A' Level results in Urdu were well above average, and they were similar in 1999. In general boys do as well as girls at GCSE.

202. In the work seen during the inspection, attainment at the ages of 14 and 16 is in line with the level expected nationally and above the course expectations in A level Urdu. In Key Stages 3 and 4 most pupils are stronger at listening, speaking and reading, and weaker at writing. In French, pupils' listening, speaking, and reading skills are average, but writing is below the level expected. In Key Stage 4 some pupils are achieving good standards in writing. Pupils can understand the spoken target language of their teachers and cassette tapes, and can follow instructions and answer questions on the gist or detail of what they have heard. Pronunciation and intonation are satisfactory. Pupils are able to communicate what they need to say and are able to give information and respond to various stimuli. Some able or confident pupils use French spontaneously. In Urdu the vast majority speak fluently and understand the spoken language very well. Reading and writing skills in Urdu depend on the knowledge of the pupils, but are often very good, especially at 'A' Level. The most significant weakness is that a number of pupils do not check their written work carefully enough, and make unnecessary spelling mistakes.

203. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress at both key stages and in the sixth form. In speaking they can express more sophisticated opinions and give and seek more complex information as they advance. They move to understanding the gist as well as details when listening and reading. When writing they progress from phrases to sentences, paragraphs and letters. Pupils are making better progress than that at the time of the last inspection.

204. The vast majority of pupils behave well. They show interest in their work, sustain their concentration, and develop satisfactory study skills. Their response is often good or very good in Key Stages 3 and 4. It is very good in the sixth form. Many pupils show an obvious sense of enjoyment in lessons. They work well in pairs and groups, and

sometimes have opportunities to use their initiative in creating role plays and working independently. Their positive attitudes enable them to maintain the school's standards. However, a few pupils find it difficult to concentrate and achieve their potential.

205. In Key Stages 3 and 4 the quality of teaching is good. It is also good in the sixth form. The quality of teaching ensures good progress. The teachers plan a sequence of activities, are proficient in the target language, project their voices clearly, and have good accents in the languages they teach. Some use the target languages for large parts of the lesson, but others use too much English in French lessons. They use overhead projectors effectively to increase learning. Standards of discipline are generally good. Though the work is usually matched to the ability of the pupils, a closer match is needed in some classes, particularly for written work. Time is used well, and most teachers are good at encouraging oral work in pairs or groups. However, some teachers do not use pair work sufficiently. Staff display pupils' work, maps, posters, and other authentic material, which increase the pupils' knowledge of the languages and countries concerned. However, more maps and display are needed in some classrooms. Pupils are assessed regularly, and results inform subsequent teaching. Useful homework is set regularly. The teaching of pupils with special needs is satisfactory, and meets the needs of these pupils as well. Teachers manage classes well, and involve pupils in physical activities where possible. For example, in Year 9 French classes the teachers asked the pupils to stand and touch different parts of their bodies as teachers said the French words. In a Year 10 French class the teacher asked pupils to describe details of a house to a partner, who added the names to rooms on a blank house plan. All these activities ensured maximum concentration and involvement of the pupils, and were really enjoyed. In a sixth form Urdu lesson, pupils had prepared ideas, and had to defend them to the teacher and other pupils in preparation for discussion with the A level examiner: this provoked some lively and humorous exchanges.

206. Visits to France encourage social interaction and personal responsibility. The text books and other materials used together with the visits abroad help develop awareness of the diversity and richness of other cultures. The quality of most teaching, the attitudes of most pupils, visits to France, and the leadership of the head of department have a positive effect on standards. However, the limited resources and insufficient use of the target language and information technology, are preventing teachers from achieving higher standards. The department is well organised, and has prioritised development plans. This has a positive effect on standards.

207. Examination results and the standard of teaching have improved since the school was last inspected.

#### 207. **Music**

208. There were too few pupils taking GCSE in 1998 to make comparisons with the national averages. In the most recent GCSE examinations, from an entry of fifteen pupils, 40 per cent achieved A\* to C grades and all pupils achieved A\* to G grades.

209. In the work seen during the inspection, the attainment of pupils at the ages of 14 and 16 is in-line with the level expected nationally. By the age of 14, pupils describe

and compare periods of music whilst relating music to its historical context. The majority recognise characteristics that are the same and those that change between periods and styles and describe and understand simple musical forms. They perform on classroom instruments with control and confidence and maintain an individual part in ensemble work with awareness of other performers. Singing is well-developed, with most pupils performing with appropriate breath control and phrasing. However, the majority of pupils do not yet use the available computer based music systems within the department in their compositions or performances. In performance work on keyboards, many of the pupils do not perform confidently using two hands. A small group of pupils, for whom English is not the first language, are withdrawn from music in Year 8 and therefore do not receive their full entitlement to the National Curriculum and this leads to attainment which is well below that of other pupils.

210. By the age of 16, pupils compose in various styles and forms and use a full range of musical devices and instrumentation. All pupils use an appropriate range of information technology to create, refine and record their work and finished scores are notated in staff and graphic forms. They understand, recognise and discuss, the main periods of musical history, popular styles of the Twentieth Century, and music from other cultures around the World. Most pupils perform on their chosen instrument with confidence and control and the most able perform with a sense of phrase and a full range of dynamics. The attainment of many pupils, is supported by the work of the visiting peripatetic teachers and the wide range of extra-curricular activities offered by the department. The attainment of the one music A level student in Year 13 is in-line with the course expectations. The student has an understanding of the full range of historical periods being able to compare and contrast periods and styles and makes coherent and cogent comparisons between them. In compositions the student uses a full range of styles and forms.

211. Progress of pupils in music at Key Stages 3 and 4 is good. There is insufficient evidence available to reach a judgement on progress in the sixth form. At both key stages pupils acquire and consolidate key skills in performing on classroom instruments and make good gains in consolidating and developing key skills in composition, both as individuals and in groups. They develop an understanding of staff notation and how to apply this knowledge to their performances, compositions and appraisals. The progress of those pupils identified with special education needs is similar to all pupils except for the small group who are withdrawn from music in Year 8, and their progress is poor. Pupils in Key Stage 4 make satisfactory progress in developing and consolidating aural awareness skills and in applying these to appraisal of music. They are applying previous learning and knowledge of style, form, instrumentation in their appraisal, analysis and evaluation of music. At Key Stage 4, progress is satisfactory in developing keyboard and improvisatory skills and pupils make good progress in composition. There are no significant variations between boys and girls or ethnicity at any key stage except for the small group of pupils who are withdrawn in Year 8. The progress of those pupils who are identified to have special educational needs, being well integrated in to main stream lessons, is similar to other pupils.

212.The overall response of pupils to music is good. They listen attentively and are keen to answer questions. There is generally an enthusiastic attitude to work and tasks with good levels of concentration and pupils persevering to achieve a desired end result. Pupils work well together in pairs and groups and behaviour is generally very good. Most select and use resources appropriately and particularly at Key Stage 4, there are very good relationships between pupils and with staff.

213.Teaching is good. Strengths of the teaching are a solid understanding of the subject with the production of appropriate listening and practical support resources. Teachers' make good use of question and answer to inform their teaching and assessment and this helps consolidate learning. Lessons have clear objectives. Targets are set and there is a wide variety of inter-related tasks. The management of pupils is good, leading to good behaviour and discipline and the teachers use praise and encouragement effectively to involve and motivate all pupils. Teachers move around groups effectively to ensure an appropriate level of challenge matched to pupils attainment, with a stress on accuracy, for example in the use of appropriate performance techniques on keyboards. Homework is set and used appropriately. However, teachers do not retain pupils work from previous years in Key Stage 3, in order to consolidate learning and monitor and track progress.

214.There are good assessment schemes at both Key Stage 3 and 4 and all pupils' work is assessed, and the grading criteria are clearly stated and understood by pupils. The department makes effective use of individual education plans which have subject specific targets. However, exemplars to support teacher assessments are not kept within the department and reports to parents do not give enough detail of what it is that pupils can and cannot do. The curriculum gives opportunities for pupils to look at values and beliefs, as for example, the slave trade to America leading to jazz and modern "pop" music. All pupils are encouraged to reflect upon their achievements and those of their peers and are given opportunities to take responsibility for their learning, through group work, individual composition, performance and research. The head of department gives a clear educational direction for the subject, and teaching is monitored and supported well. The department has a positive ethos which is reflected in the positive attitudes to work, good relationships and a commitment to high standards.

215.Standards of attainment and the quality of teaching are similar to those found at the time of the previous inspection.

#### **215. Physical education**

216.The proportion of pupils who gained grades A\* to C in the 1998 GCSE examinations was far below the national average although all but one gained a pass at grades A\* to G.

In 1999 there was some improvement in the number of pupils who gained grades A\* to C. Boys outperform girls in this examination, but there is little difference in the performance of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. Pupils' results in physical education are similar to the results they gained in other subjects they studied. The 1998 A level results were in line with the national average. The four pupils who took the examination in 1999 passed.

217. In work seen during the inspection, pupils' standards of attainment at the ages of 14, 16 and 19 are in line with the levels expected for pupils of the same age nationally.

By the age

of 14 the majority of pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the need to warm up before strenuous exercise and they know the appropriate exercises to use. Standards in games are satisfactory. Many pupils perform skilfully in practice and apply their skills in cooperation with others in small-sided games. Some pupils plan effectively for performance, by demonstrating the ability to anticipate, move to the ball and to intercept. Standards in gymnastics are generally sound, and most pupils can demonstrate stillness in balance. Some perform with good body tension and control, but many pupils have yet to develop precision and control in movement. Good work takes place in dance where pupils use action words, selected from a poem, to create a group dance. They discuss their work effectively and show imagination and versatility in performance.

218. By the age of 16, pupils apply their knowledge, skills and understanding of rules and tactics, effectively, for example in soccer. In dance, they are successfully involved in the continuous process of planning, performing and evaluating, as they choreograph the introduction to their own group dances. Attainment in GCSE badminton practical is average, with some pupils performing at a higher standard, and a few who have yet to master the basic skills and understanding of the game. GCSE written coursework reflects a limited knowledge and understanding of theoretical aspects. By the age of 19 students' standards of attainment are average. No practical A level activities were observed; however, written coursework indicates a generally satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the theoretical aspects of the course.

219. Standards in extra-curricular sport are sound, and individual pupils gain representative honours at district and county level. The school currently has pupils representing the county at netball, gymnastics, rugby and athletics. The Year 10 netball team was champion of Burton and District League for the past three consecutive years, and in 1999 the Years 9 and 10 cricket team had a particularly successful season being a close contender for the Burton and District League Championships.

220. Pupils' progress in lessons is satisfactory at Key Stages 3 and 4, but progress in Key Stage 3 is unsatisfactory, overall, because some pupils do not have access to the full National Curriculum and these pupils make poor progress. Progress is satisfactory in the sixth form. Most pupils respond well to sound teaching, work at a steady pace and make good use of opportunities to practice. Effective gains in knowledge, skill and understanding are evident in most games lessons, where pupils consolidate skills, learn to anticipate play and develop teamwork in both key stages. Discernible progress is evident in some lessons, as pupils refine their skills through repetition and practice; for example in badminton where pupils of all levels of attainment achieved success in making their opponent move on court. Pupils' evaluation skills develop well in some lessons. This was well illustrated in netball, where pupils observed and commented on each other's work. Lower attaining pupils often make sound progress because they are interested and teaching is planned to allow careful development of skills, as seen in a Year 7 hockey lesson. Higher attaining pupils make good progress when tasks build on previous learning, and they are enabled to apply their knowledge, skills and

understanding strategically, such as planning tactics in a Key Stage 4 soccer lesson. Pupils identified as having special educational needs are well integrated into the physical education programme and progress at the same rate as their peers. This was well illustrated in a dance lesson where a pupil took a leading role in choreographing her group dance. Opportunities are provided for pupils of all ages and abilities to participate, and make further progress, in their chosen extra-curricular activities.

221. Pupils' attitudes to learning are satisfactory. Most pupils are well motivated and enjoy the subject. These positive attitudes are reflected in high levels of participation in lessons. Pupils are usually well behaved, although there are some instances of immature behaviour detracting from the quality of learning, and leading to loss of concentration on the tasks. On occasions, there is also low-level chatter and noise as pupils are working. Some pupils' listening skills are unsatisfactory, particularly if they are inactive for any length of time. Groupwork is a feature of most lessons and pupils usually work well together; good collaboration takes place in dance. Independent learning skills develop well when pupils are given opportunities to take responsibility, such as planning tactics in games, undertaking the role of captain and warming up, independently, in preparation for lessons. Sixth former students enhance their own personal development by assisting staff with younger pupils' games, and senior pupils also take a lead in extra curricular activities.

222. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. No sixth form teaching was observed. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and build up their confidence using praise and encouragement. This contributes significantly to the good standards of dress and high levels of participation in lessons. Teachers know their subject well, prepare thoroughly and share the lesson objectives with pupils. They use resources effectively to support learning. The strongest teaching has a clear focus based on raising the standards of attainment. In the best lessons, teachers combine good subject knowledge with a range of teaching strategies, which enable pupils to demonstrate knowledge and understanding through planning and evaluating as well as performing; such as in a Year 11 soccer lesson where pupils' evaluation of their own and others' work was central to the learning process. Skilful, probing questioning, which helped pupils to analyse and evaluate, was a feature of the good teaching observed in a netball lesson. In the majority of lessons, tasks are appropriately matched to pupils' abilities and challenge pupils physically and intellectually. Although teaching is satisfactory, there are some inconsistencies, which result in a loss of focus and reduce the pace of learning. For example, teachers' pupil management and organisation varies. In some lessons teachers do not always ensure that all pupils are still and concentrating before they speak to the class, and often, when explanations and demonstrations are conducted slowly, this exacerbates the restlessness of the pupils. A weakness in some lessons is the lack of opportunity for pupils to evaluate their own and others' work. In examination classes teachers mark work regularly and the quality of marking is sound. Some marking, particularly at A level, gives helpful suggestions for how pupils could improve their work.

223. The curriculum is broad and balanced, but there is an equality of opportunity issue, as boys do not have access to the dance programme of study in Key Stage 3. A significant number of Year 8 and Year 9 pupils, who are withdrawn to study a modern foreign language, lose over a third of their physical education curriculum time and do



not have access to the full National Curriculum. There has been little progress in response to the issue raised in the previous inspection, concerning provision for the Sixth Form. Staffing constraints mean that it has not yet been possible for the department to implement its plans for providing the Community Sports Leader's Award course for sixth form students.

224. Since the last inspection, standards of attainment and the quality of teaching have been maintained at Key Stages 3 and 4. There was no judgement on attainment in the Sixth Form in the previous inspection report.

#### **224. Religious education**

225. In 1998 results for pupils following the full GCSE course were broadly in line with national standards at grades A\* to C and above national averages in grades A\* to G. They were among the best in the school. In the GCSE short course results at both A\* to C and A\* to G were well above national averages. In this examination Asian pupils attained at a higher level than other candidates and girls outperformed boys. There were no candidates for A level. The most recent results show a further improvement in the results of candidates for both GCSE examinations and boys results are now broadly in line with girls. There were two successful candidates in the most recent A level examination.

226. By the age of 14 the attainment of pupils is satisfactory being broadly in line with the expectations of the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus. They have a sound factual knowledge of the beliefs, practices and symbolism of Christianity and at least two other religions. They are able to correctly identify features with their appropriate faiths and can draw parallels between them, for example the manner in which respect is shown for the Torah and the Quran. They are less able to reflect on the awe and mystery of religious belief. By the age of 16 the attainment of pupils is good. They have deepened their knowledge of Christianity and Islam and know how believers in these faiths address ultimate questions and moral issues. They understand the importance of religion in modern life for believers and how the media portrays religious issues. Because of the limited demands made by the GCSE short course which is followed by the majority of pupils the attainment of the highest attainers is not commensurate with their potential.

227. By the age of 19 students, following the A level course attain at a satisfactory level in their study of Islam and the philosophy of religion. However other students receive only a very limited amount of religious education in the General Studies course or none at all. The attainment of these is unsatisfactory and fails to meet the expectations of the Agreed Syllabus. Throughout the school, boys and girls attain at a similar level.

228. At Key Stage 3, progress is good. Pupils acquire and consolidate their subject knowledge and many have good recall of work covered previously. They develop their understanding and their ability to explain what they understand. Some highest attainers are making insufficient progress in the skills of exploring and explaining the subject in depth because of insufficiently high expectations of them to produce extended written and oral responses. Pupils with special educational needs make progress similar to others through support and well matched resources which take note of pupils' individual

education plans. Some pupils who have English as an additional language fail to make sufficient progress because of a shortage of support staff.

229. At Key Stage 4 the majority of pupils including those with special educational needs make good progress in both GCSE courses. Progress of those following the short course is especially good due to well-structured and stimulating teaching and an innovative and informative assessment system. Whilst higher attaining pupils gain good results in the short course examination, they are capable of making even better progress if they were to study for the full GCSE. Students in the sixth form following the A level course make satisfactory progress in a purposeful and sensitive tutorial setting. Other students make unsatisfactory progress due to a lack of subject provision.

230. The attitude of pupils to the subject is good with very good relationships between pupils and teachers. Pupils show interest in their work and have a high level of commitment to success. Behaviour is good except in isolated instances when the expectations of the teacher are insufficiently demanding. Written work is normally well presented and homework completed. Some pupils are prepared to make considerable effort to use library and information technology resources to enhance their work. During the week of the inspection there were few examples of pupils working collaboratively for any extended period or opportunities for them to take responsibility for their own learning although schemes of work indicate where such opportunities might occur. There are good examples of well produced course work in both Key Stages 3 and 4. Pupils respect each other's cultural background and are sensitive to the needs and feelings of those from cultures other than their own. Religious artefacts and other materials are treated appropriately.

231. The quality of teaching in both Key Stages 3 and 4 is good. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and their planning is meticulous. They introduce lessons with imaginative approaches that gain pupils' interest. This interest is maintained through the use of a wide variety of teaching strategies ranging from individual reading to the use of the Internet. Questioning is targeted well and instructions given clearly. Discussion is encouraged but there are too few opportunities for pupils to reflect on their work and to explore the mystery and excitement often associated with religious ritual. In most lessons, time is used fully and an appropriate pace maintained. Work is matched well to the needs of most pupils including those with special educational needs, although teachers could expect more from the highest attainers. For example, in Year 7 there is too much use of printed sheets on which pupils make their responses. Whilst this supports lower attaining pupils it gives insufficient scope for more extended responses by more able pupils. Well designed homework tasks are set each week. Books are marked in a helpful and informative manner that is understood by pupils. In Key Stage 4 teaching is especially good in the GCSE short course. It is extremely well structured and interesting and the innovative and informative assessment system motivates pupils to strive for high standards. In the small sample of sixth form classes seen teaching was satisfactory being informed and sensitive within a structured tutorial environment which encourages mature responses from students.

232. The subject enjoys good leadership that ensures a positive ethos and high standards. GCSE and A level courses are well chosen and the rapidly growing entry and good results in the short GCSE course are proving a powerful motivation for pupils.

Assessment of pupils' work at Key Stage 4 makes a major contribution to high standards. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It informs pupils about the faith and culture of pupils in the school and makes a positive contribution to excellent intercultural relationships. Through exploring moral issues and religious and secular codes of behaviour it explores issues of right and wrong. Library provision for students in the sixth form restricts opportunities for extended reading.

233. Since the last report standards of attainment and the quality of teaching have improved significantly. Suitable courses have been established in Key Stage 4 and schemes of work now fully comply with the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus. GCSE results have improved and are now above the national average. A viable A level group has been established. There is still insufficient provision in the sixth form and the school does not yet fully meet statutory requirements in this respect.

## 233. PART C: INSPECTION DATA

### 233. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

234. The inspection team consisted of thirteen inspectors. During the week 189 lessons and a sample of registrations, assemblies, tutor periods and extra curricular activities were observed. Lessons of all subjects of the curriculum were observed. All teachers were seen teaching at least once and most were seen three or more times. All the available work of pupils from each year group was inspected. Six pupils from each year group were formally interviewed and informal discussions were held with many more. The work of further pupils was requested and inspected in particular subjects. Throughout the week the work of many more pupils was examined in lessons.

235. The Registered Inspector, accompanied on one occasion by his deputy made two visits to the school prior to the inspection. During these visits meetings were held with the Headteacher, chair of the governing body and all available staff. During the week of inspection 60 planned and several unmetabled interviews took place and one inspector visited a local feeder primary school. Informal discussions were held with many staff. A large amount of documentation was analysed by the inspectors before they arrived at the school. The Registered Inspector and his deputy held a meeting attended by 14 parents before the inspection and considered 92 responses from parents to a questionnaire about their opinions of the school.

## 236.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 – Y13	879	34	128	191

### Teachers and classes

#### Qualified teachers (Y7 – Y13)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	54.95
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16

#### Education support staff (Y7 – Y13)

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked each week	283.4

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes:	76.3
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Average teaching group size:	KS3	23
	KS4	20

### Financial data

Financial year:	1998/1999
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	£
Total Income	1 828 437
Total Expenditure	1 788 262
Expenditure per pupil	2 084
Balance brought forward from previous year	(10 190)
Balance carried forward to next year	29 985

Figures in parenthesis indicate negative values

## PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:	879
Number of questionnaires returned:	185

### 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	17	64	14	3	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	28	60	6	3	1
The school handles complaints from parents well	15	51	18	5	2
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	27	63	6	2	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	27	52	11	3	1
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	26	57	8	3	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	33	53	8	3	1
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	22	65	5	4	2
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	25	51	16	4	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	23	52	14	7	1
My child(ren) like(s) school	35	54	6	3	2