

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **HEATHFIELD HIGH SCHOOL**

Earl Shilton, Leicestershire

LEA area: Leicestershire

Unique reference number: 120241

Headteacher: Mr Nigel Boyd

Reporting inspector: Mr Peter Matthews  
5493

Dates of inspection: 24 – 26 September 2001

Inspection number: 188975

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 to 14
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Belle Vue Road Earl Shilton Leicestershire
Postcode:	LE9 7PA
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Linda Harrison
Date of previous inspection:	20 May 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
5493	Mr Peter Matthews	Registered inspector		<p>Equal opportunities</p> <p>English as an additional language</p> <p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p> <p>How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p>
19436	Mr M O'Malley	Lay inspector		<p>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
1412	Mr K Gould	Team inspector	Mathematics	<p>The school's results and pupil's achievements</p> <p>How well are pupils taught?</p>
31146	Mrs P Brooks	Team inspector	English	
30294	Mr D Gower	Team inspector	Science	
8119	Mr D Milham	Team inspector	<p>Design and Technology</p> <p>Information and Communication Technology</p>	
4696	Mr J Bowden	Team inspector	Art and Design	

15479	Mr C Land	Team inspector	Geography	
3902	Mr J Harrison	Team inspector	History	
11452	Mrs R Armistead	Team inspector	Modern Foreign Languages	
12008	Mr D Bray	Team inspector	Music	
30928	Mrs P Eames	Team inspector	Physical Education	
1153	Mr S Lavender	Team inspector	Religious Education	
22108	Mrs M York	Team inspector		Special Educational Needs

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Heathfield High School is an 11–14 Community Middle School maintained by Leicestershire County Council. There were 663 pupils (337 boys and 326 girls) on roll at the time of the inspection, almost all of whom were of white, British origin. Just over one fifth of pupils have special educational needs (SEN), broadly in line with the national average, and 3.6 per cent of all pupils have a statement of SEN, which is above the national average. On entry to the school, pupils' attainment by the age of eleven is regularly amongst the lowest in the county. This picture is confirmed by school-based testing, nationally validated. Around 12 per cent of pupils are eligible for a free school meal which is about average. In addition, evidence from censuses and surveys of adult literacy and numeracy suggests that there is marked cultural and educational deprivation in the catchment area. Crime has increased in the neighbourhood over recent years. Since the previous inspection five years ago, successive headteachers have been absent ill for a total of over two years. The school has set up a unit to support pupils with attendance or behavioural difficulties.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Heathfield High School provides a satisfactory standard of education. It has some clear strengths but also a number of areas where substantial improvement is required. Pupils make good progress in mathematics and science during Years 7-9. Teaching is satisfactory overall (and much is good). Satisfactory progress is made in all other subjects except English when progress is too limited. The schools' leadership team is committed to continuing improvement in standards, knows the schools' strengths and weaknesses and has the capacity to lead the school forward. The school is giving satisfactory value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- The standards reached in mathematics and science from a low starting point.
- It has secured significant improvement in the quality of teaching, promoting a substantial amount of very good and excellent teaching.
- The attitudes and behaviour of pupils in class are good.
- Relationships among pupils and with teachers are very good; provision for social and moral development is good.
- The provision in the Student Support Centre is very good.
- Financial planning, control and actions to secure best value are good.
- Some aspects of the modular studies course are highly innovative and very well taught.

#### **What could be improved**

- Standards in English and literacy are not high enough.
- Lesson observation and management arrangements need considerable tightening; governors need to hold the school more accountable.
- Pupils and their parents need to know more clearly the standards pupils are achieving and what, specifically, they can do to improve and reach their targets.
- All pupils, but especially the more able, need more opportunities to work independently, using research skills.
- Some aspects of ICT across the curriculum are unsatisfactory.
- Attendance levels are unsatisfactory despite good systems to promote attendance.
- Spiritual and cultural provision (especially with respect to non-European cultures) are underdeveloped.

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*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the previous inspection in 1996, the school has made satisfactory progress. Standards have risen in mathematics and science. The quality of teaching has risen significantly. Standards of attainment and the quality of teaching in modern foreign languages have risen considerably. These were key issues in the previous report. Allocation of time to subjects is now satisfactory. The progress of pupils with special educational needs has improved, and the classes for pupils who are withdrawn for extra help are better used and planned. Self-evaluation has become a part of the school's philosophy. Too little progress has been made in monitoring the quality of teaching and analysing some aspects of the school's results. Pupils do not know clearly the levels at which they are working. No one teacher has an overview of the progress of each individual pupil across all subjects. The school continues to give satisfactory value for money. It has been successful in reducing its costs.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 9 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key	
	all schools			similar schools		
	1998	1999	2000	2000		
End of Key Stage 3 tests	C	C	D	D	well above average	A
					above average	B
					average	C
					below average	D
					well below average	E

On entry to the school, pupils' attainment at the age of 11 is below national averages and usually the lowest in Leicestershire schools. Standards in mathematics and science were below the national average in 2000 but improved to close to national average in 2001. Performance in English is unsatisfactory. The school's improvement has been less rapid than nationally, mainly because of standards in English.

The value added to attainment during Years 7–9 is around the average compared with other Leicestershire schools in all three core subjects. Standards by the age of 14 in other subjects, as determined by teacher assessments, are also below national averages. However, standards of work seen were often above those expected and were good, for example, in design technology and physical education. Strengths in standards observed include: creative writing in English, the work of higher attaining pupils in Year 9 mathematics, investigative skills in Year 9 science, pupils' use of geographical skills, and practical skills in design technology.

The school's targets for the end of Key Stage 3 are appropriate and represent a good level of challenge. Whilst previous results show some gender differences in many subjects, observation revealed fewer differences in attainment than in the past. Pupils with special educational needs are making satisfactory progress. Gifted and talented pupils have made less progress overall than they should, especially in English.



## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes are good. The majority are well motivated, willing to learn and concentrate well. Pupils like the school. Pupils' relationships with each other are good. Personal development is promoted well by the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour in class is good. Outside the classroom a minority are boisterous. Pupils respect each other. Although some bullying occurs, it is dealt with well. Pupils and parents report that behaviour has improved since last year. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their behaviour and its impact on others.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' relationships with each other and with adults in the school are very good. They can work effectively in small groups. The Year 8 residential experience is very effective. Pupils show patience towards each other and willingly take on responsibilities. More opportunities to do so are needed.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory and below the national average. Unauthorised absence is too high. Systems to promote good attendance and to tackle those who fail to attend regularly are both good.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 11-14 years	aged 14-16 years	aged over 16 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	N/A	N/A

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

The proportion of high quality teaching is a strength of the school. The teaching in English and mathematics is good; it is satisfactory in science. Most lessons are characterised by a high degree of mutual respect between teachers and pupils which supports learning. In the best lessons, praise is used expertly to motivate; the teachers' expectations are high; and the blend of challenge and pupil enjoyment excellent. In unsatisfactory lessons, lack of challenge and slow pace cause pupil inattentiveness. Comments in pupils' books often do not set short-term targets for improvement. Homework is too limited in quantity and quality. Whilst many departments are promoting literacy through the display of key words, and pupils take pride in their handwriting and presentation skills, too little marking is concentrated on correcting technical words and, overall, the emphasis on improving written English is too low. Pupils with special educational needs are well taught. The most able children are insufficiently challenged in some subjects.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum is broad, balanced and open to pupils of all abilities. A modular studies programme enables pupils to experience a wide range of worthwhile activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. It is better for those with a statement of special educational needs than for pupils at lower levels of the Code of Practice. Targets for statemented pupils are well matched to learning needs; other pupils' targets need to be more specific. The role of the Student Support Centre is very good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall. Provision for social and moral development is good. Very good relationships support social growth, and pupils understand the values which support the school's ethos. Provision for spiritual and cultural development is unsatisfactory. Opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own beliefs and to learn sufficient about the traditions and contribution of non-European cultures are too often missed.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. The school deals with incidents of bullying well. Behaviour is monitored well. Twenty-two Year 9 pupils have been trained as peer counsellors. Pupils are well known as individuals and confident in raising concerns. Neither marking nor reports tell pupils and parents sufficiently often what a pupil needs to do to improve. An overview is needed of each pupil's standards across all subjects.

The school works satisfactorily in partnership with parents. Whilst reports are variable in quality, parents are regularly consulted and feel welcome in the school. The Study Support Centre caters very well for the needs of school phobic and emotionally disturbed pupils whilst maintaining the teaching of the National Curriculum. The modular studies course has exciting elements, appreciated by pupils, which are well taught, for example, Team Building, Parenting Skills and Psycholinguistics. It also contributes to the extra-curricular programme in an inclusive way. Some Year 8 pupils do not take food technology and some elements of the statutory requirements in ICT are also missing. A newly introduced behaviour policy, welcomed by pupils and parents, underpins the school's care for its pupils. Pupils are frequently encouraged to report oppressive behaviour. There are very good transition arrangements to the Upper School, much appreciated by parents. The progress pupils make in all subjects needs more thorough tracking and analysis.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. Good progress has been made in raising the quality of teaching and of standards in mathematics and science. Regular lesson observations have now begun, having been delayed. Management arrangements need reviewing. Standards in English need to be raised. The work of middle managers is always satisfactory and sometimes good. The School Development Plan has the right priorities, but needs more specific actions within it. The headteacher, senior managers and staff are

	all committed to raising standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors have not been sufficiently involved in determining the direction of the school; nor have they had sufficient training or access to data to hold the school accountable for its standards. However, the Chair and other key governors have the knowledge and appetite to move forward, building on their own training day last April. The Finance sub-committee has worked very effectively. The governing body has the capacity to be a strength of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has developed a self-evaluation culture using focussed reviews of departments, pupil and parent questionnaires, and the setting of targets in English, mathematics and science. It knows its strengths and weaknesses well. However, less attention has been given to standards in other subjects.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes very good use of its income which is below average for a school of its size. It compares its expenditure pattern with that of similar schools. It projects its spending forward carefully. Financial control is very good. Specific grants are carefully targeted to improve provision and attainment. The match of teachers to the needs of the curriculum is satisfactory. Accommodation is satisfactory and the school has enhanced it through the provision of two new ICT suites and better playground facilities, supported by the PTA. Resources are appropriately allocated to departments, but some receive well below national average amounts because of the lower than average income. The school gives careful consideration to all its spending options when purchasing resources and supplies. It has cut costs considerably by robust negotiation with suppliers.

The leadership and management of the school has secured some improvements in standards, promoted good relationships and equality of opportunity, and introduced an effective behaviour management policy. Standards have yet to rise significantly in English. Management meetings need to be more frequent and have the actions recorded.

### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The new behaviour management system.</li> <li>• The school expects pupils to work hard and achieve their best.</li> <li>• Pupils are making good progress.</li> <li>• Teaching is good.</li> <li>• Parents feel comfortable approaching the school.</li> <li>• The school helps pupils mature.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of homework pupils receive.</li> <li>• Better information on pupils' progress.</li> <li>• More information about pupils' withdrawal for extra support.</li> <li>• The range of extra-curricular activities.</li> </ul>

The findings of the inspection team support parents' views on the new behaviour system, the quality of teaching and the quality of provision for pupils' personal development (although more opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning, and within the school, are desirable).

Pupils are making good progress in mathematics and science but not in English. The school welcomes approaches from parents. It has the right expectations of its pupils.

The inspection team agrees that the quantity of homework set should be reviewed (and that tasks should extend the horizons of pupils of all abilities). Reports need to be clearer about the levels of attainment being reached and about ways to improve performance. The school has written to parents whose children are withdrawn from extra support – further, more detailed, contact would be helpful. Extra-curricular sporting activities are well catered for, and there are many trips and excursions. The modular studies scheme contains many activities that could be provided after school. By including them in curricular time, the school has ensured that all pupils participate. Musical and drama activities are less common than in many schools.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. The school's overall performance in Key Stage 3 tests in the core subjects in 2000 was below the national average, compared with its average performance in 1999. The 2001 results, however, place the school around the national average. Over the last few years the trend in the school's results has been below the national trend. It is the performance in English (and to a much lesser extent science) which has been responsible for this below average trend.
2. The school's performance in English was below national averages in 2000 at both Level 5 and above and Level 6 and above. A similar situation prevails this year. End of Key Stage 3 results in mathematics and science show an improving picture. In 2000, results at both Level 5 and above and Level 6 and above were close to national averages. Results in 2001 show an improvement beyond the 2000 results. In 2000, the school's results were above average in mathematics and science when compared to results in similar schools. They were below average in English. In 2001, the results in mathematics and science were well above average when compared with similar schools. They remained below average in English. Over the last three years the relative performances of boys and girls have varied but, in general, boys have underperformed in relation to national averages. Girls have usually performed at or above national averages.
3. The overall standards achieved by pupils are below average in relation to national standards when they enter the school; this is shown by their results in the National Curriculum tests taken over the last few years and in other nationally recognised tests. Pupils make good progress in mathematics and science from this below average starting point. Boys and girls make unsatisfactory progress in English. This is especially true for less able boys and more able pupils. There is a significant number of pupils, especially of less able boys, who are not entered for the national tests. Provision is unsatisfactory in English. This is because schemes of work do not fully cover the requirements of the National Curriculum, and pupils' progress is not sufficiently monitored so that pupils do not know what standards they are working at, and what it is they need to do to improve.
4. By Year 9, standards in English are average for speaking and listening. Pupils are eager to talk to their teachers but their responses to questions asked in class are usually brief and unsustained. In most lessons seen, pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to extend their range of oral skills as discussions are led by the teacher. There are usually silent members in each class. All pupils listen attentively to the teacher and to each other. Reading levels are below the national average. This is because there is no systematic development of pupils' independent reading. The range of reading materials used in class, and for writing purposes, is limited. Pupils are able to extract information and recount the story line of a literary text but no opportunities were seen, either in lessons or in folders of written work, for critical analysis of the authors' purposes or style. Pupils make significant progress in creative writing; some excellent examples of stories, description and poetry were seen across the whole age and ability range. Overall, levels of accuracy in punctuation and spelling are below average and pupils are not required to write for a sufficient range of purposes. There is evidence that pupils are able to draft their work and word-process their finished pieces

but there is no systematic provision for ICT in English lessons. Pupils with special educational needs are provided with too few opportunities for extended writing.

5. Across the curriculum, there is a general awareness amongst teachers of the importance of literacy. Key words are displayed in most classrooms to aid the spelling of subject-specific vocabulary. Good quality booklets to support writing have been produced by the design technology department. Writing frames are being used in Year 7 English lessons as part of the successful introduction of the National Literacy Strategy for this year group. Pupils take pride in their handwriting and presentation.
6. There is, however, little promotion of reading across the curriculum. Marking does not help promote literacy development as there is little evidence of the correction of spellings or punctuation errors. The literacy working group will need to ensure the coherent application of the literacy policy as a priority to raise standards.
7. Provision for the development of numeracy skills is satisfactory. Several departments contribute to and make use of number skills. In science, for example, numeracy is being developed well by the use of mathematics in measurements and calculations and by the use of tables, charts and graphs to process information. There is, as yet, no whole school approach. Year 7 pupils show developing understanding in pattern spotting; most can describe how to calculate the next term in a sequence. Some pupils can articulate the general formula in an investigation. Pupils in higher sets in Year 9 are able to calculate the mean of a set of grouped data. They understand why the middle value of each group is used and can explain this to others. They can show good critical analysis of whether the data should be believed. By Year 9, higher attaining pupils make proficient use of Pythagoras' theorem. They have very good recall of number, being able to mentally calculate the sum of the squares of two numbers. Numeracy standards are, overall, satisfactory, although pupils in some lower sets do need further support. Middle-attaining and higher-attaining pupils are able to recall number facts accurately and to use aspects of mathematics in other areas of the curriculum. Lower-attaining pupils have weaker numeracy skills. Some of these pupils, for example in Year 8, have difficulty in recalling multiplication facts such as  $4 \times 8$  and resort to using their fingers, or strategies such as counting on.
8. In science the majority of pupils in Year 9 are achieving national standards. This suggests that the upward trend in SATs results will continue. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress and there are no significant gender differences in science throughout the key stage.
9. Standards in art are satisfactory overall, though variable within aspects of the subject. For example by the end of Year 9 pupils have developed good control of a range of technical skills using two-dimensional and three-dimensional media, and choose appropriate tools and equipment for the task, using them effectively. Standards are less satisfactory in observational work, where many pupils find difficulty in recording from first-hand sources in two dimensional media, and by the end of Year 9 show little progress or confidence.
10. Good standards are achieved in design and technology. Pupils experience a wide range of processes and skills. All pupils make at least satisfactory progress. Their practical work is of very high quality.
11. The standards achieved in geography by age 14 are in line with national expectations. Their use of geographical skills is a strength. In Year 7, they can draw useful sketch

maps of the local area and can locate places on an O.S. map using grid references. By Year 9, pupils can explain how maps are used to show information in different ways and can locate areas of the world where earthquakes and volcanoes are frequent. Pupils' achievement in history is satisfactory. Recent assessment results show that by the end of Year 9, students' attainment is below the national expectation and boys' significantly below that of girls'. Knowledge of the past is satisfactory and many students have effective research skills. However, understanding of causation, change and interpretations is less secure.

12. The use of ICT across all subjects is unsatisfactory. In taught lessons, however, pupils make satisfactory progress and attain satisfactory standards. Pupils experience elements of finding things out, developing ideas, and exchanging and sharing information, although little work was seen where pupils were reviewing, modifying and evaluating work as it progressed. Pupils were able to enter, save and retrieve, generate and present work.
13. By the age of 14, attainment is below national standards in French and German. Pupils make good progress in Year 7, particularly in German, but this is not maintained in Years 8 and 9. Most pupils can understand simple dialogues and pick out details from short passages spoken by native speakers. They can also write short sentences using familiar language. However, the skills of many pupils in speaking and reading the languages are underdeveloped as insufficient opportunities are given to practise at length
14. By the end of Year 9, attainment in music is below national expectations. Pupils lack performing skills. Despite this lack of skill, most pupils have good listening skills and are able to fit their part effectively into an ensemble.
15. When pupils enter the school at Year 7, their standards in physical education are below average. Standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 9, as judged by teachers' assessments, are also below the national average. Pupils do, though, make satisfactory progress. The work of current pupils indicates that by the age of 14 more will achieve the standards expected nationally than has previously been the case.
16. In religious education, attainment in Year 8 is generally below average. During the inspection it was not possible to see any Year 7 or Year 9 lessons or see any significant amounts of work from Year 9. Pupils display some knowledge and understanding of religions. However, overall standards in Year 8 are below expectations since many of the written tasks they are required to complete are too simple.
17. Pupils with special educational needs are achieving satisfactory standards in lessons and make satisfactory progress. The school's targets for attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 are appropriate and challenging. It is making good progress towards the targets for mathematics and science, but not in English. The school analyses its results carefully to measure the progress made by all pupils and to look at trends in relation to gender. More able pupils make satisfactory progress, but would make faster progress if more consistently offered challenging tasks.

#### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

18. The high standards in attitudes, values, and personal development noted at the previous inspection have been maintained.

19. Pupils' attitudes to school are good. They like school and willingly take part in what the school has to offer. Similarly, pupils' attitudes to learning are good. The majority are well motivated, willing to learn, and consistently apply themselves to the task in hand. A few pupils get distracted and find it hard to concentrate, but are managed well by teachers. Many pupils take part in the inter-tutor group competitions in hockey, netball, football, and rugby.
20. Pupils' behaviour is good: this has a significant, positive impact on their learning. There is some boisterous play during break times but this is managed well by teachers and support staff. Pupils are trustworthy and show respect for each other's property. Behaviour last year was reportedly poor but the school has worked effectively to address this. There are some incidents of bullying but they are quickly and successfully addressed.
21. The rate of exclusions is in line with many similar schools. All the exclusions were for good reasons; the fixed period exclusions were kept as short as possible. There is good support for pupils who are at risk of exclusion, particularly through the Student Support Centre.
22. When pupils misbehave they are encouraged to reflect on what has happened and to consider the impact on others. They learn to listen, think, and consider the consequences of what they do. They respect each other's contributions, and support each other well. For example, in Year 8 religious education, one pupil was not confident with reading out in class. The other pupils were patient and respectful. In this way they build each other's confidence to try things out. Pupils speak highly of the way in which a residential visit to the Outward Bound Centre at Aberglasyn helped them to support each other in meeting the various challenges and fears they faced.
23. Older pupils respond well when they are given the opportunity to take initiative such as running the school bank and helping in the library or office. However, there are comparatively few opportunities for taking responsibility within the school, particularly for the younger pupils. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning through research and investigation.
24. Pupils' relationships with each other and with their teachers and other adults in the school are very good. They work effectively in pairs and small groups, such as when organising role plays in modular studies and collaborating with their work in science. This has a very positive effect on their learning.
25. Attendance is unsatisfactory. Attendance last year was 90.7 per cent, which is well below the rate for schools of a similar type. Unauthorised absence last year was 1.9 per cent, which is very high compared to these schools. Good action has been taken recently to improve attendance and improvements are already starting to show. For example eleven pupils with notably poor attendance last year have improved their attendance this year, and the overall attendance rate for this September (93.2 per cent) is better than the previous September (92.5 per cent). There was some truancy from lessons last year but this has now been eradicated. There is a little lateness to registration at the start of the day, but pupils arrive in class punctually and lessons start promptly.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**



26. In lessons observed during this inspection, the quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in 94 per cent, good or better in 51 per cent and very good or better in 19 per cent. Six per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory. This represents a marked improvement on the findings of the previous inspection and is also a significant improvement on the judgements of a Local Education Authority review team in Summer 2001. On balance, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. It is good in English, mathematics, design and technology, geography, information and communications technology and PE and satisfactory in science, art, history, modern foreign languages, music and religious education. The small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching included two out of three lessons taught by a supply teacher. There were no differences in the quality of teaching relating to particular age groups or abilities.
27. The great majority of pupils are keen to learn well. Teachers manage pupils very well and most have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Relationships between pupils and their teachers are very good. There is a high degree of mutual respect. These features create a good learning atmosphere in which pupils do succeed in their learning. In an excellent German lesson, for example, the teacher made effective use of the target language; excellent use of appropriate praise and encouragement motivated pupils and ensured that they achieved the teacher's high expectations. Swift progress was made in this lesson. In an excellent PE lesson, support staff played an essential part in ensuring a safe and caring environment. The lesson had an excellent mix of skill acquisition, challenge and enjoyment.
28. In the less than satisfactory lessons, teachers made too little demand on what pupils should achieve, lesson planning was weak, teachers spent too long on explanations and, as a consequence, pupils became distracted and inattentive. Pupils spent too much time engaged in low level activities. Lack of pace of learning was a common feature in these lessons.
29. Teachers have good subject knowledge; they use a good range of teaching methods, although better use could be made of ICT to demonstrate, collect data and to engage pupils' interest. Pupils are prompt to lessons and most teachers make effective use of the hour-long sessions. The use of ongoing assessment is unsatisfactory. Work is marked but there is inconsistent practice between teachers. Pupils need to be better informed as to the standards they are achieving and, specifically, what they can do to improve.
30. Over the past two years some subjects, for example, English, have been affected by the loss or absence of teaching staff. These difficulties have been compounded by problems in recruiting high calibre, temporary replacements. This situation has been largely out the school's control due to the national shortage of teachers. Undoubtedly, the progress of some pupils has been adversely affected.
31. Parents suggested that the quantity of homework was unsatisfactory. The inspection team agrees with parents. Homework is limited in quantity and quality. This is compounded by the failure of some pupils to note what homework is required of them and for pupils' planners to show the school's homework timetable.
32. In the previous inspection it was observed that teaching was less than satisfactory in modern foreign languages. This is now improved. Although some unsatisfactory teaching was seen, some good and excellent teaching in this subject was also observed. The assessment of pupils' progress has improved though the previous inspection commented: 'In lessons pupils are usually given useful oral feedback but the

extent to which comments on written work help pupils to improve is more variable.' This still pertains. Teachers now make better use of the targets from pupils' Individual Education Plans.

#### **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?**

33. The quality, range and breadth of learning opportunities offered by the school are good. The deficiencies noted in the previous report in relation to provision for geography, history and religious education have been made good. However, the particular system devised for the sub-timetabling of these three subjects over the school year can cause problems of continuity, as it can for some groups of pupils within the art and design carousel. One group of Year 8 pupils do not receive lessons in food technology.
34. Particular strengths of provision include:
- a very good Inclusion Unit, known as the Student Support Centre, which provides both for pupils with school phobia and those with emotional and behavioural difficulties who, for a time, cannot cope with whole class teaching in all subjects. This unit ensures that all these pupils follow the National Curriculum at an appropriate level.
  - a very well structured careers education programme for Year 9 which is taught later in the school year and was, therefore, not observed.
  - an innovative modular studies course, taught for two hours a week to all pupils. This course includes a number of imaginative topics, for example, Team-building, Psycholinguistics and Parenting Skills. The quality of teaching in these and other elements observed was very good indeed, and pupils reported their enthusiasm and pleasure for these topics.
35. Pupils are not receiving their entitlement to full coverage of ICT within the National Curriculum, and all the requirements of the English programmes of study are not being met.
36. The school has begun to implement some strategies for enhancing literacy and numeracy. Effective support for lower attainers was seen within the modular studies scheme. Overall, however, the effectiveness of the literacy work is limited and the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy planned for this year with the LEA consultant support is urgently required.
37. The provision made for personal, social and health education is satisfactory overall and good in relation to health, sex and drugs misuse education. Pupils were able, without embarrassment, to discuss what they had learned about sexually transmitted diseases with an inspector, displaying knowledge and sensitivity towards each other in the discussion. The effectiveness of the morning pastoral time is inconsistent. Some high quality pastoral discussion and activities were observed, as were some sessions where little was learned or achieved. In one Year 7 session, pupils were encouraged to reflect upon what they had learned about themselves and each other in their first month at the school. In a Year 9 session, by contrast, pupils chatted casually whilst the teacher signed pupils' planners.
38. There is good provision for equality of access and opportunity within the curriculum. All pupils, including those with SEN, experience the full range of subjects on offer. Those educated, in part, in the Inclusion Unit continue to have their entitlement to the National Curriculum through careful liaison between the Unit staff and class teachers. Some withdrawal from class for those with learning needs takes place and this system is now

much better than at the time of the previous inspection, although further refinements are needed.

39. On balance, provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Provision for social development is good, with the school's behaviour management system allied to other record systems encouraging a responsible attitude towards the institution and its members. The quality of relationships is very good, supporting social development. The work of the physical education department in promoting paired evaluation and other co-operative activities plays a very good part in this area of the school's work. More opportunities for pupils to take responsibilities within the school would aid further development.
40. Provision for spiritual development is unsatisfactory. Observed assemblies were satisfactory or good in quality and offered pupils the chance to reflect. However, an act of collective worship does not take place daily. Opportunities in religious education to reflect upon the beliefs and values of different religions are present in the scheme of work, and pupils were seen discussing the nature of a contemporary 'miracle'. However, over the curriculum as a whole, there are many missed opportunities for pupils to consider some of life's fundamental questions and to develop their own beliefs.
41. Pupils' moral development is good. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong, and understand the values, such as honesty and respect for others, that lie behind the school's ethos.
42. Pupils' cultural development is unsatisfactory. Whilst there are increasing opportunities to visit artistic and cultural venues in the area, and to learn well from these experiences, many other opportunities for development are missed. The school's provision places comparatively little emphasis on the artistic products of culture other than British (although there are trips of France and Germany in alternate years), and there is insufficient emphasis on the traditions and contributions of cultures beyond Europe to the richness of the world's heritage.
43. The library as a support to the curriculum and to learning was a concern in the previous inspection report. Improvements have occurred:
- more classic English fiction is available;
  - there is a good careers education section;
  - the stock is at least adequate in all curriculum areas except for the provision of work by writers from non-European cultures, and a lack of attractive junior poetry books;
  - it is well financed;
  - pupil monitors run the library efficiently at lunchtime;
  - analysis of borrowing will be easier once computerisation is completed; and
  - the library is freely available to pupils at lunchtime and on two evenings after school.
44. However, particular weaknesses exist, which means that the library is not yet playing its full part in promoting attainment across the curriculum. In particular:
- there is significant under usage of the library for books either in lessons or at lunchtime, although its computers are used extensively;
  - there is very little borrowing of fiction by Years 8 and 9, or by boys in general;
  - English currently makes virtually no use of the library for independent reading or the promotion of research skills; and

- very few departments use the library on a regular basis.
45. The modular studies programme (referred to earlier) also contains some elements such as orienteering and musical activities that would normally be offered as extra-curricular activities. By including them within the taught curriculum the school ensures that all pupils participate (through the rotation of activities) in these experiences. This enhances the school's ethos of equality of access. This programme is supplemented by a comprehensive range of extra-curricular sporting activities for girls and boys alike. Musical and dramatic productions are less common than in many schools. The overall provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory.
46. There are good community links which enrich pupils' learning. The local community police work closely with the school to promote a positive image of policing. They spend some time in school most days, lead assemblies, and work with the pupils in the modular studies programme. Similarly, representatives from "Youth for Christ" also lead assemblies and support the modular studies programme, particularly in relation to health and sex education. They also run the "Rock Solid" lunchtime club. HSBC has helped the pupils set up a school bank, and a local author has worked with the pupils during Book Week. South Leicestershire Victim Support Group has run a course to help pupils address bullying. There are good links through the Leicestershire Education Business Company. Senior staff attend management development workshops, local industrialists work with the pupils on careers awareness, and the Leicestershire Magistrates Committee runs a "mock trial" as part of modular studies. Leicestershire Careers and Guidance provide teaching materials and funding for the careers library. Two Year 9 boys attended a Royal Navy Careers Course in Cornwall. The school organises regular trips to Germany and France, and visits to such places as the Imperial War Museum, Bradgate Park, and the Aberglaslyn Outdoor Pursuits Centre. Pupils have displayed their art at an exhibition in St Mary's Church, Hinckley.
47. There are good links with partner schools. There is effective transfer of information from the primary schools, and onto the William Bradford Community College, which parents particularly appreciated. The arrangements for introducing pupils to their new schools are good. These include a two day programme at Heathfield for Year 6 pupils, and three days introduction for Year 9 at the College. There are regular curriculum meetings through the Hinckley Development Group, English teachers have observed literacy in the primary schools, and there are bridging projects in humanities. Termly subject meetings and bridging projects in English, maths, and science are used to improve curriculum links with the College, which also help to prepare Year 9 pupils for the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. There are competitive fixtures in sport with local schools and the pupils take part in county cross-country and area athletics championships.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

48. The school provides satisfactory care for its pupils. The standards noted at the previous inspection have been maintained.
49. There is good exchange of information from the primary schools. A two-day induction programme for new pupils, and a parents' evening to discuss concerns, help pupils in Year 7 to settle into their new school. Teachers stay with the same tutor group for all three years and know the pupils well. The school works effectively with outside agencies to give extra support. Parents are confident to approach the school with their concerns, and the pupils readily seek help from staff. In these ways the school ensures

that the individual needs of pupils are met, they are happy, and confident to get on with their learning. There are effective arrangements for child protection, health and safety.

50. There are good procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance. All unexplained absence is followed up. The home-school liaison officer telephones on the first day of absence, and visits as necessary. Lateness is monitored and, when appropriate, punished. The Student Support Centre helps pupils who are anxious about attending school, sometimes with their parents in attendance. Good attendance is rewarded with certificates and vouchers, and there is a trip for the tutor group with the best attendance. There are appropriate sanctions for lateness and truanting, and a system for monitoring pupils who miss lessons. Pupils monitor their own attendance in the student planner. Leaflets are sent to parents explaining the procedures for notifying absence and asking for their support with attendance and punctuality. Letters are posted home for pupils with unsatisfactory attendance and, where possible, condoned absence is challenged. Most of these good arrangements were started last term and already the attendance of some pupils is starting to improve. However, there are still many pupils with unsatisfactory attendance and it will take time to address this. The Education Welfare Officer visits weekly, but this additional support concentrates primarily on a very small number of pupils with high levels of recorded, unauthorised absence. There are a number of pupils with very poor attendance records, but there have been no prosecutions.
51. The arrangements for monitoring and improving behaviour are good. Behaviour has deteriorated since the previous inspection, and the school has worked well to address this. New procedures have been introduced with extensive training for staff, consultation with pupils and good communication with parents. Pupils know the rules, and value the system of rewards. The hierarchy of sanctions is appropriate: it encourages pupils to think about the consequences of their actions. Incident sheets are used to keep tutors, heads of year, and heads of departments properly informed. Parents are involved as necessary and can monitor their children's behaviour through the record of commendations and stamps in the student planner. An "involvement" report is sent to parents in the autumn term. This interim report includes grades for behaviour, effort and completion of homework, and is followed with a meeting wherever there are concerns.
52. The school is effective at eliminating oppressive behaviour. A modular studies programme includes a topic to discourage and address bullying. Pupils are encouraged to raise concerns and any bullying, racism, or sexism is quickly addressed. Twenty-two pupils in Year 9 have been trained in listening skills in preparation for their role as peer counsellors.
53. Arrangements for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are satisfactory. There are formal procedures for monitoring behaviour and effort, and the system of rewards encourages pupils to be organised. Many teachers have good contact with pupils during tutor periods and this provides an opportunity to discuss problems. Tutors help pupils complete personal statements in Year 7 and Year 9. There is good transfer of information from the primary schools, and pastoral records are passed on to the College. Overall, pupils are well known as individuals and they are confident to raise concerns. Tutors and heads of year are quick to give support where needed. There are effective arrangements for identifying and supporting pupils with special educational needs, including the Student Support Centre.

54. The school has a well-thought-out and detailed assessment policy which includes clear guidance on marking. It requires that pupils should know what they have achieved, the progress they have made, the effort shown and the use of rewards. However, this policy is implemented inconsistently across departments. Practice in physical education is very good and can serve as an exemplar to the rest of the school. In all subjects, pupils are given strong encouragement to learn.
55. Overall, marking is unsatisfactory because it fails, too often, to indicate to pupils what they need to do in the short term to improve in the subject. Insufficient attention is given to correcting the spelling of technical vocabulary in many subjects. Reports to parents have improved since the previous inspection, but still contain variations between subjects and do not regularly identify appropriate, pupil targets for improvement. The school has reviewed its arrangements for parents' evenings (which were a concern at the pre-inspection parents' meeting) and is trialling an appointments system following consultation with parents. Provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs meets statutory requirements.
56. The school's use of data related to pupils' performance during the key stage has improved. There remain some weaknesses in relation to the continuing analysis of interim tests by gender or specific groups so that action can be taken.
57. To support pupils' development the school has introduced, since the previous inspection, a system of target-setting, once during Year 8 and again during Year 9. This has the potential to raise standards further. However, to be fully effective, the school needs to:
- improve its tracking of an individual pupil's progress;
  - ensure that each pupil's progress across all subjects is looked at carefully for disparities in progress;
  - be sure that teacher assessments in the foundation subjects, during and at the end of the key stage, are secure and well-moderated.
58. The school has introduced an effective mentoring scheme by senior staff for Year 9 pupils who are at risk of under achievement in the core subjects. The outcomes of the scheme demonstrate its worth and have been evaluated well by the school. Some pupils with poorly developed swimming skills benefit considerably from intensive support through the modular studies scheme.
59. Overall, although some progress has been made in developing assessment procedures which promote higher standards, this aspect of the schools' work remains unsatisfactory.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

60. Parents are satisfied with the quality and effectiveness of what the school provides and achieves. The school's links with parents are effective and the involvement of parents has a satisfactory impact on the work of the school.
61. Overall, the quality of information provided for parents is unsatisfactory. This is because parents are not sufficiently well informed about their children's progress. The arrangements for parents' evenings are satisfactory; these include an extra meeting in the autumn term to address particular concerns. The student planner is a useful link between home and school. It provides a continuous record of pupils' application and behaviour in class, and includes a page for recording "notes of praise". Parents are

kept informed when there are problems. However, the standard for end-of-year reporting is Inconsistent; overall, parents do not receive sufficient information on how their children's work compares with the standard expected, and what they need to do to improve. Parents are appropriately involved in annual reviews of statements of special educational needs.

62. Parents receive regular newsletters. Together, the prospectus and governors' report provide a satisfactory summary of the school's provision and achievements. However, there are some omissions in the prospectus and therefore it does not meet statutory requirements.
63. The links with parents make a satisfactory contribution to pupils' learning. Some pupils systematically record their homework in the student planner, and a good number of parents regularly check to see what their children are doing. The school regularly consults with parents through the newsletters and questionnaires. Parents are confident to approach the school with questions or problems, and the school is quick to involve them when there are concerns. The Student Support Centre provides a unique opportunity for parents to support their children during school time. Attendance at parents' evenings is generally good and many parents support their children at events such as award assemblies and school productions. The Parent Staff Association meets regularly to organise events and raise funds.

#### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

64. The leadership and management of Heathfield High School is, overall, satisfactory. However, its impact on some aspects of the school's work has been limited, mainly because of significant periods of illness experienced by the former and the current headteachers. Shortly after the previous inspection, the then headteacher was absent for twelve months before retiring on grounds of ill health. A further six months elapsed before the new headteacher began work and the impetus to implement the governors' action plan was weakened. Most recently, the current headteacher was ill for nine months, returning to school in June 2001, on a lightened workload, before fully taking over control from late August 2001. Again, and especially as this absence coincided with an increase in discipline problems caused by pupils with behavioural difficulties, (some of whom were late entrants to the school), the remaining school leaders understandably focussed mainly on the immediate, rather than the longer term.
65. The strengths of the school's leadership and management are:
- the knowledge the headteacher and senior staff have of the school's strengths and weaknesses;
  - the commitment to promoting good relationships, good behaviour and equality of opportunity within the curriculum;
  - a strong commitment, inspired by good leadership, to improve standards further;
  - the knowledge and understanding of the Chair of governors and other key governors, and their determination to develop their skills in order to help the school improve further by holding it accountable for its standards;
  - very good financial planning to ensure that future budgets, at a time of possible demographic change, are sustainable;
  - financial control which is very good; and
  - the school's effectiveness in negotiating efficient contracts in order to reduce costs.

66. Areas for development within leadership and management are:

- to ensure that the standards achieved in Key Stage 3 English at least match those achieved in mathematics and science so that all the school's targets are met;
- to ensure that standards in the foundation subjects (where teacher assessment is often not fully secure) match standards in the core subjects;
- to implement a structured, routine plan for regular and rigorous classroom observation by subject leaders;
- to ensure that line management itself is regular, rigorous and recorded;
- to promote the use of ICT across the curriculum; and
- the development of the governors' strategic and accountability roles.

67. Since the previous inspection, the quality of teaching has risen significantly overall: the amount of very good and excellent teaching observed has doubled. The proportion of satisfactory or better teaching has also risen markedly since a Local Education Authority (LEA) review in the summer of 2001. This rise in quality is linked to the school's self-evaluation activities undertaken since the previous inspection which have included:

- reviews of subject areas by Heads of Departments;
- the use of pupil questionnaires on a number of occasions;
- the use of parental surveys;
- the tracking of a pupil's day's experience by senior staff on several occasions; and
- the careful evaluation of specific developments such as the very successful Inclusion Unit.

68. The regular observation by line managers or SMT of all teachers, planned for 2000/01 in a phased manner, did not take place, although it has now begun. This activity needs a high priority and should include observation of the modular studies programme and of pastoral time, in order to continue to improve standards and, particularly, to disseminate good practice. Nevertheless, the leadership and management exercised by heads of department and heads of year is always satisfactory and, amongst well-established middle managers, is good in mathematics, science, design and technology, modern foreign languages and physical education. The leadership of the SEN department is satisfactory.

69. The school has implemented, as required, a performance management system which the visiting external assessor graded as satisfactory, with the comment that systematic lesson observation has not been in place. A system is in place for the setting and reviewing of performance targets.

70. The school's leadership has introduced an effective Behaviour Management system, seen to be working well and appreciated by parents and pupils. This was in response to their analysis of the needs of an unusually difficult year group. Leadership activities have successfully promoted very good relationships.

71. The governing body has undergone very significant changes in its composition in the past year. The Chair, elected in autumn 2000, was extremely effective during the time of the headteacher's illness, displaying imagination and determination in her dealings with LEA officers and advisers. The governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities except for some aspects of the National Curriculum. Some other aspects of their work have been unsatisfactory. They have not been involved at an early enough stage in determining the priorities which drive the School Development Plan, nor active enough in monitoring progress towards its outcomes. The inexperienced Curriculum Committee, whilst learning last year much about the curriculum, has not had the knowledge or the data with which to hold the school accountable. Discussion of



attendance figures by the whole governing body has been cursory. The Finance sub-committee, on the other hand, has worked efficiently and effectively.

72. The governing body now has the capacity to become a significant strength of the school, and those governors interviewed, especially the Chair and the Chair of the vital Curriculum Committee, displayed the knowledge, understanding and desire required for the governing body, with the assistance of some external training, to become fully effective. Governors had begun to inform themselves better during a day in school last April, and had already determined upon an external review of their practices.
73. The school's use of its limited income is very good. Budgets are carefully planned and local benchmarking information used to question spending allocations. The school has projected its pupil roll through the next five years, noted a significant rise and subsequent fall in the likely number of pupils it will receive because of demography, and begun to plan the necessary action to cope with both expansion and contraction.
74. Financial control is good: the minor recommendations of successive external audits have been acted upon. Specific grants are directed towards the right educational projects and continuing professional development is well funded and targeted on the school's needs. Further training for those who support pupils with special educational needs would be helpful. New Opportunities Fund training is planned to be completed this year. Governors and school-based staff have obtained significant reductions in costs from utilities and other suppliers by shrewd negotiation to the benefit of the school budget.
75. The match of teachers and support staff to the needs of the curriculum is satisfactory. Teachers, new to the profession or the school, are inducted well. The match of teachers' expertise to the curriculum is satisfactory. The contribution of those who support teachers in classrooms is good. The work of administrative staff is also good, and the observed helpfulness of reception staff is first class. Accommodation, too, is satisfactory, and has been enhanced in a planned way to provide for new needs, for example, the creation of two ICT suites and the Student Support Centre. Redecoration is planned carefully. Playground facilities have been developed through the fund-raising activities of the Parent Staff Association (PSA).
76. The school's income is below the national average. It makes good use of what it receives, although some key staff, for example the attendance co-ordinator, receive fewer non-teaching periods for this responsibility than is ideal. Equally, the appointment of an administration officer to work on attendance issues is an imaginative move and is well justified by the quality of provision to promote good attendance. Distribution of money to departments, partly via a formula and in part related to their development plans, is equitable but some departments, for example art, receive much less than the national average. Good use is made of new technology to help the school administer itself efficiently. Pupils make good use of the computer facilities available to them.
77. The school has reviewed its planning procedures for the School Development Plan. The current priorities and targets are wholly appropriate. However, the detail in the plan, relating to the tasks associated with the priorities, are not well developed. A sharper approach to this aspect of planning with as speedy a timetable as possible would enable the school to move forward more swiftly. Departmental plans refer to whole school priorities, but they are very variable in quality relating to subsequent actions. They are in need of a tighter review at the start of the process. Monitoring of

progress on the overall and departmental plans needs to be much more regular, tightly focussed and reported to governors.

78. The key task facing the school's leaders is to raise standards in English. They have done well to do so to the extent they have in mathematics and science. Impediments to progress need now to be removed in English and hence in the promotion of literacy throughout the school in a deeper way than is currently the case. The planned line management of the English department by the headteacher, and the external support via Phase 1 of the Literacy Strategy in the LEA will both be crucial in this regard.
79. Since the previous inspection the school has made satisfactory progress in sometimes difficult circumstances. Standards in mathematics and science have risen in relation to national averages and within the context of similar schools. Although in absolute terms standards in English have risen, the amount and speed of the rise is insufficient. The quality of teaching has significantly improved and, in particular, standards of tracking and attainment have improved significantly in modern foreign languages – a key issue in the previous report. The balance of time allocated to humanities and arts subjects has been reviewed and improved, as required by the previous report, although some issues of continuity remain. The effectiveness of withdrawal lessons has improved. Parents commented favourably on the way they support pupils' learning. Further refinement will be necessary with the introduction of National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and the 'catch-up' provision within modular studies.
80. The provision for pupils with SEN in mixed ability lessons is much improved since the previous inspection, as is the use of Individual Education Plans, although their targets should be more specific and the plans should record the provision made for these pupils. Progress of a more limited nature has been made on the key issues relating to data analysis and quality assurance. The school has embraced the notion of self-evaluation and introduced a number of worthwhile techniques to help it know its' strengths and weaknesses well. However, at present, no one teacher has an overview of the progress towards targets in each subject for each single pupil. Pupils are not sufficiently aware of the levels they are achieving and nor are their parents. Analysis of data and targets by gender and by the prior attainment of discrete groups of pupils is not taking place.
81. Pupils join the school with below average attainment at the end age of eleven. This evidence is supported by the MIDYIS tests and their reading ages. Although the take-up of free school meals is only 11 per cent, (close to national average), other evidence provided by the school demonstrates a lower-than-average socio-economic background for its pupils. This evidence is firmly rooted in LEA data, national data and police data. Some families with a difficult history have been re-housed from Leicester by local housing associations. Standards have risen in mathematics and science and the value-added to attainment overall is close to the Leicestershire average. Much progress has been made in relation to the quality of teaching overall, and in modern foreign languages in particular. The school has sought to become a self-evaluating institution. Although structured lesson observations have only recently begun, the school knows its strengths and weaknesses. The school's costs are below national averages. Despite the attainment in English, the school is giving a satisfactory standard of education and satisfactory value for money.
82. Evident in the work of all managers is a clear direction towards the raising of standards. The school has the capacity to do so.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- 1) In order to raise attainment in English specifically, and raise standards of literacy generally, governors and the headteacher should ensure, as a matter of urgency, that:
  - Years 8 and 9 schemes of work in English are revised so that all elements of the National Curriculum are met, especially with respect to promoting a wider range of reading and writing than at present, and enhancing speaking and listening skills; (paragraphs 83, 87)
  - there is a sharper focus on equipping pupils for success in Key Stage 3 tests and close monitoring of non-entries, gender-based outcomes, and the results of the brightest pupils; (paragraphs 84, 88)
  - a new School Development Plan is finalised and includes the provision of time, finance, specialist support and line-management by the headteacher as planned; and (paragraphs 78, 89)
  - the National Literacy Strategy is fully implemented. (paragraph 88)
  
- 2) Management arrangements need to be reviewed so that:
  - the governing body has both the training required and the necessary data to hold the school accountable for its standards; (paragraphs 71, 72)
  - the governing body is involved at an early stage of the creation of the School Development Plan, and in regularly monitoring the Plan which needs a more sharply focussed set of actions than at present; (paragraph 71)
  - line-management of heads of departments is more frequent and rigorous, and is recorded; and (paragraph 66)
  - observation of lessons by line managers and members of the senior management team is frequent and is used to assist the dissemination of good practice. (paragraph 68)
  
- 3) To promote higher overall attainment the school should:
  - ensure that the marking of pupils' work regularly indicates the levels achieved and what, specifically, needs to be done to improve; (paragraphs 29, 54, 55)
  - ensure that reports to parents also indicate levels and targets for improvement; (paragraph 55)
  - review each pupil's targets and performance across all subjects so as to investigate any variations; (paragraph 57)
  - give more opportunities to all pupils, and especially the most able, to work independently, using research skills and including more open-ended tasks; (paragraph 17)
  - promote much greater use of the library to support all learning and, particularly, independent reading; and (paragraph 44)
  - review both the quantity of homework set, and the challenge it provides. (paragraph 31)
  
- 4) Improve standards in ICT by:
  - recording centrally all the achievements of pupils across the curriculum; and (paragraphs 135, 143)
  - monitoring the delivery of the ICT component in each subject's National Curriculum programme of study so as to fulfil statutory requirements. (paragraphs 135, 143)

- 5) Improve the provision for spiritual and cultural development by:
- providing more opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to reflect on their own beliefs and values; (paragraph 40)
  - complying with the statutory requirement for a daily act of worship; and (paragraph 40)
  - consciously preparing pupils for life in our multi-cultural society by increasing their knowledge and understanding of the contributions and traditions of non-European cultures. (paragraph 42)

The school may also wish to consider the following:

enhance, where possible, the school's good measures already undertaken to improve attendance rates further by focussing particularly on pupils whose attendance rates are persistently low. (paragraph 50)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### *Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection*

Number of lessons observed	115
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	26

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3%	16%	32%	43%	5%	1%	-

*The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.*

### *Information about the school's pupils*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Y7 – Y9
Number of pupils on the school's roll	663
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	75

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Y7 – Y9
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	23
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	129

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	45

## Attendance

### Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.4
National comparative data	7.7

### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.9
National comparative data	1.1

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2000	106	116	222

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	43	64	64
	Girls	70	75	68
	Total	113	139	132
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	51 (67)	63 (58)	61 (51)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	19 (28)	37 (27)	26 (16)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	42	65	51
	Girls	71	80	68
	Total	113	145	119
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	51 (74)	65 (66)	54 (77)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	21 (42)	27 (30)	22 (27)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (28)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

**Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	3
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	648
Any other minority ethnic group	7

**Exclusions in the last school year**

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	17	4
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

*This table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

**Teachers and classes****Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 - Y9**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	38.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.3

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Education support staff: Y7 – Y9**

Total number of education support staff	13.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	316

**Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y9**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	80.3
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**Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y9**

Key Stage 3	21.8
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**Financial information**

Financial year	2000 - 2001
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	£
Total income	1,562,614
Total expenditure	1,575,993
Expenditure per pupil	2,353
Balance brought forward from previous year	69,578
Balance carried forward to next year	56,199

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	663
Number of questionnaires returned	258

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	38	48	11	2	1
My child is making good progress in school.	40	44	7	0	9
Behaviour in the school is good.	28	48	9	2	13
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	21	49	12	2	15
The teaching is good.	25	55	5	1	14
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	22	44	16	3	15
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	44	48	3	0	5
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	41	2	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	22	45	18	2	14
The school is well led and managed.	20	53	8	2	18
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	28	52	6	1	13
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	20	36	12	5	26

### Other issues raised by parents

Many parents of Year 7 pupils commented, in writing, that their experience of the school was too short to allow a considered response to many questions. This explains the high percentage of 'Don't know' responses to most questions.



## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **ENGLISH**

83. The quality of provision for English is currently unsatisfactory.

#### Strengths:

- quality of teaching: teachers have secure subject knowledge and employ appropriate methods;
- initial implementation of Key Stage 3 Literacy in Year 7;
- classroom management skills and the quality of relationships.

#### Areas for improvement:

- standards;
- regular monitoring of teaching and learning to ensure consistency across the department;
- systematic monitoring of pupil progress so that pupils know the standard at which they are working and what it is they need to do to improve;
- ensuring that lessons offer appropriate challenge to all ability levels through the use of differentiated materials and tasks;
- revision of Year 8 and Year 9 schemes of work to meet the full requirements of the National Curriculum for English. At present there is no systematic planning across the department.
- speaking and listening schemes need to include the teaching of specific skills such as:
  - arguing a case
  - discussing an issue
  - listening critically to the views of others
  - dramatic techniques;
- pupils need to read a wider range of texts:
  - literary non-fiction
  - media and the moving image
  - major writers from other cultures
  - independent reading for pleasure
  - electronically stored information and reference books;
- pupils also need to write in a wider range of forms, for example:
  - analytical responses to literary texts
  - brochures, reports, instructions
  - essays which argue a point of view
  - structured responses to specific essay questions
  - a sharper focus on equipping pupils for success in Key Stage 3 tests;
  - the production of an improved departmental development plan, with the support of the senior management team.

84. Standards in English in national tests at age 14 were below the national average in 2000 and 2001, having fallen since 1999. Standards are well below average when compared to similar schools. Overall, progress is unsatisfactory. Boys and girls make less progress than expected and there are significant numbers of pupils, especially less able boys, who are not entered for the written papers. Nor do able pupils progress as well as they should.

85. By Year 9, standards are average for speaking and listening. Pupils are eager to talk to their teachers but their responses to questions asked in class are usually brief and unsustained. They engage in group discussion with confidence. In one Year 8 lesson, a collaborative writing task, which demanded the use of personification, produced creative, oral responses, and in a Year 9 lesson pupils worked on basic interviewing techniques. In most lessons seen pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to extend their range of oral skills as discussions are led by the teacher. There are usually silent members in each class. All pupils listen attentively to the teacher and to each other. Reading levels are below the national average. There is no systematic development of pupils' independent reading. The range of reading materials used in class, and for writing purposes, is limited. Pupils are able to extract information and recount the story line of a literary text but no opportunities were seen, either in lessons or in folders of written work, for critical analysis of the authors' purposes or style. Pupils make significant progress in creative writing and some excellent examples of stories, description and poetry were seen across the whole age and ability range. Overall, levels of accuracy in punctuation and spelling are below average and pupils are not required to write for a sufficient range of purposes. There is evidence that pupils are able to draft their work and word-process their finished pieces but there is no systematic provision for ICT in English lessons. Pupils with special educational needs are provided with too few opportunities for extended writing.
86. The behaviour of pupils is usually good and, in over half of the lessons seen, was very good or excellent. Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and their teachers, is a strength of the department. Teachers, without exception, employ methods which promote a positive ethos for learning, co-operation and courtesy, and levels of concentration were high in almost all lessons. As pupils progress through the school they would benefit from more opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning. For example, in one Year 9 poetry lesson, where discussion was led by the teacher, pupils would have been able to form opinions on their own or in groups.
87. The quality of teaching seen was good overall and most teachers had very good or excellent aspects to their work. They have good knowledge of the subject and the very good teaching of creative writing produces above-average work. The recent introduction of the National Literacy Strategy in Year 7 is proving successful; all teachers are handling the new materials with confidence. In general, the pace of lessons is good with a range of activities which sustain pupil concentration. Schemes of work for Year 8 and Year 9 are inadequate; they do not ensure that the full National Curriculum for English is systematically covered. There is thus potential non-compliance with statutory requirements. With mixed ability classes there was a lack of differentiation in the work set. On one occasion, able pupils found the simple extraction of facts from a ghost story lacked challenge; on another, less able pupils were struggling with the use of connective phrases. Marking is inconsistent across the department. There are examples of good practice, where targets are set at the end of work, but, in general, pupils are left in doubt about the standard at which they are working and what they next need to do to improve. Tracking and monitoring of individual pupil's progress is not yet a central part of assessment. Currently, no systems exist for departmental standardisation of marking or the award of National Curriculum levels and there is no framework for the assessment of speaking and listening.
88. Over recent years issues of staffing have hampered progress and the department does not yet have a full complement of permanent teachers. The current team has many strengths and the recent appointment of a new head of department looks set to

generate improvement. Already, with the implementation of schemes of work for Key Stage 3 literacy in Year 7, progress has been made. Urgent attention needs to be given to the organisation of the syllabus for Years 8 and 9 to ensure that all pupils have full access to the relevant National Curriculum programme of study. Schemes of work need to include the full range of speaking and listening, reading and writing tasks prescribed, and suitable resources need to be provided. There is also the need to ensure systematic provision for ICT, and the use of the library, both for independent reading and the development of research skills. Currently, there is insufficient focus on preparing Year 9 pupils for national tests. There is no policy for teaching pupils how to plan and structure swift responses to precise questions under timed conditions. Nor is there a clear focus on the specific skills being tested at the end of Year 9. This is a matter of urgency if standards are to be raised. To effect these changes in a systematic way there is the need to formulate a new departmental development plan, setting out priorities, criteria for success and monitoring procedures.

89. There has been unsatisfactory progress since the last inspection. Nevertheless, the new head of department has the ability and determination to lead the department forward, and the team of teachers has the strengths needed to implement change successfully. The department has been assured of the full support of the senior management team for future development. With the provision of time, finance, specialist support and the direct line management of the headteacher, significant progress should be made. There is an evident will to work together towards improvement.

## **MATHEMATICS**

90. The quality of provision for mathematics is good.

Strengths:

- results in tests at the end of Key Stage 3 are rising and the most recent results (2001) are just above the national average;
- the quality of teaching is good overall;
- pupils have good attitudes to mathematics and are invariably well behaved.

Areas for improvement:

- the mathematics scheme of work is insufficiently detailed;
- the assessment of pupils' work needs to be better so that pupils know what to do to improve;
- the monitoring of the work of the department needs to be tighter and more rigorous.

91. Standards in mathematics have risen in the past three years. The percentage of pupils attaining the expected standard (Level 5 and above) in the national tests for pupils aged 14 has risen ten percentage points in recent years and is now just above the national average. The latest national data (2000) show that the results for mathematics are above average when compared with schools in similar contexts. Pupils make good progress from a below average starting point. The inspection findings confirm the upward trend. By the end of the key stage, pupils' attainment is around that expected nationally. Girls and boys attain equally.

92. Pupils are arranged in teaching groups according to prior attainment, which allows them to work at their own pace and to develop confidence in their own abilities. The exception to these arrangements is in Year 7 where pupils are taught in mixed ability

groups until the end of October. Year 7 pupils show developing understanding in pattern spotting and most can describe how to calculate the next term in a sequence. Some pupils can articulate the general formula in an investigation. Pupils in higher sets in Year 9 are able to calculate the mean of a set of grouped data. They understand why the middle value of each group is used and can explain this to others. They can show good, critical analysis of whether the data should be believed. By Year 9, higher-attaining pupils make proficient use of Pythagoras' theorem. They have very good recall of number, being able to mentally calculate the sum of the squares of two numbers. Lower-attaining pupils are able to explore and produce the range of possibilities of coins which make up a certain sum of money. Numeracy standards are satisfactory overall, although pupils in some lower sets do need further support. Middle-attaining and higher-attaining pupils are able to recall number facts accurately and to use aspects of mathematics in other areas of the curriculum. Lower-attaining pupils have less secure numeracy skills. Some of these pupils, for example in Year 8, have difficulty in recalling multiplication facts such as  $4 \times 8$  and resort to using their fingers, or strategies such as counting on.

93. Teaching was at least satisfactory throughout, with good and very good teaching seen. On balance, teaching is good. Teachers have high expectations. Individual lessons are well planned. Lessons have clear objectives but these are not always shared with pupils. The scheme of work for mathematics gives insufficient guidance to teachers to ensure that the National Curriculum programme of study is covered and that pace is engendered. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They manage pupils well and standards of behaviour are high. The mathematics taught engages pupils; learning is good as a result. The very good relationships between pupils, and between pupils and teachers, enhance the learning in mathematics lessons. These are characterised by a real warmth between teachers and pupils.
94. Some good examples were seen where investigations enabled pupils to deepen their understanding of mathematics. In one good example, pupils quickly discovered the connection between the number of triangles which can be drawn within a given polygon and the sum of the interior angles. In another, pupils once again quickly determined the connections between the squares of the sides in a right-angled triangle. On some occasions, opportunities are missed to allow pupils to explore their mathematical understanding by, for example, working in pairs or groups to, for example, argue cases or to debate hypotheses.
95. Some good examples were seen of the technical language of the subject being shared with pupils. One lesson, on spotting patterns, included such words as 'term', 'expression' and 'symbol'. The teacher took time to explain the mathematical meanings of these words, to display these words and to ensure that pupils understood them in the context of the mathematical problem. There is, however, a need for greater attention to be given to the literacy demands made of pupils in mathematics lessons: to use writing frames, to write words down as well as speaking them, to correct spellings and to improve pupils' ability to decode text and read for meaning. Marking does not always indicate to pupils what they have to do to improve. Marking is inconsistent across the department.
96. There has been good leadership in raising standards in mathematics. Management, overall, is satisfactory. There are weaknesses in schemes of work which provide insufficient detail of what should be taught, the assessment of pupils' work - they need to know what needs to be done to improve, and the overall monitoring of the work of the department.

97. Standards in mathematics have risen since the last inspection. End of Key Stage 3 results have improved. There is now better challenge for the higher-attaining pupils. There has been some improvement for special educational needs pupils: the previous inspection commented upon the poor progress made by pupils in the withdrawal groups. This is now better but continues to require attention. On some occasions, pupils are unnecessarily withdrawn from lessons. There is still need to concentrate on basic number work, particularly for lower attaining pupils. The use of modular studies is commendable as a place where extra support may be given. These sessions, using nationally produced 'catch up' materials, merit attention to ensure that they become lively interactive sessions which build upon the best National Numeracy Strategy practice evident in primary schools. Overall, progress has been good since the previous inspection.

## SCIENCE

98. The quality of provision for science is satisfactory.

### Strengths:

- pupils enter the school with standards of attainment which are significantly below the national average but, by the end of Year 9, their achievements match national expectations;
- pupils' attitudes to science are generally positive;
- all teachers are committed and some have very good classroom skills;
- leadership and management are good.

### Areas for improvement:

- some teaching, whilst satisfactory, fails to inspire. Even the best often fails to develop pupils' thinking skills;
- marking is uninformative, giving pupils little idea of how to improve their work;
- teachers do not learn from one another about pedagogical issues;
- pupils have too little experience of ICT as a medium for teaching and learning in science.

99. Year 7 is taught in mixed-ability groups. Their range of attainment fits the expectations from the below-average intake scores on the National Curriculum tests taken earlier in the year. Thus, in a lesson about energy storage and release, all pupils succeeded in constructing a simple vehicle powered by an elastic band, but few could demonstrate understanding of fair tests, and only one individual perceived the link between energy stored and distance travelled. In Year 8, the work of pupils in a bottom set in planning, constructing and testing a bridge made from glue and rolled-up sugar paper indicated substantial progress since Year 7. This was paralleled by the pupils in a top set, all of whom demonstrated a good understanding of friction. One girl put forward her own theory about how surfaces interlock and thereby cause resistance to motion. This she had worked out for herself, from ideas of jigsaw puzzles previously encountered in design and technology. However, her science teacher's questioning and lesson materials were not designed to elicit this level of response. Similar failure to stimulate gifted pupils' high-level thinking skills is evident generally: for example, another Year 8 top set, studying the conditions needed for iron to rust, were not able to speculate sufficiently, and a middle-ability Year 8 lesson on photosynthesis incorporated copious information but no thought-provoking questions.

100. In Year 9, students as a whole are achieving national standards, indicating that the upward trend in National Curriculum test results should continue. For example, almost all in a top set were achieving at least Level 5 in planning an investigation based on electrical cells using different fruits to provide the electrolyte; a bottom set carefully investigated the reaction between magnesium and dilute sulphuric acid. Throughout the key stage, there are no significant gender differences. Pupils with special educational needs are making satisfactory progress compared with their prior attainment. Basic skills of literacy are highlighted by use of key words. Numeracy is being developed well by the use of mathematics in measurements and calculations and by the use of tables, charts and graphs to process information. Only one lesson during the inspection period involved significant use of ICT, when a mixed-ability Year 7 group used a CD Rom about woodland habitats. The material was successful for the whole pupil range who found it both enthralling and challenging.
101. In the most recent National Curriculum tests for 14 year olds, teacher assessments and test results correlated. Well. The rising trend of the past three years continued: the proportion of pupils achieving Level 5 or above was around the national average, whereas at the beginning of the key stage the pupils' results had been well below average. Standards are above average compared with similar schools.
102. On balance, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. A third of the lessons observed were good or very good, all being taught by the same teachers. Lessons taught by the remaining teachers were satisfactory except for one lesson, which was poor. In the best lessons, teachers are openly enthusiastic. Their objectives are clear so pupils know what is expected of them. Questioning goes beyond simple, factual recall and the teachers use pupils' answers, weaving them into the fabric of the lesson so that there is a strong sense of working together. Minor misbehaviour is dealt with good-humouredly, without interrupting the lesson flow. Some teachers are too concerned to get through as much material as possible in each lesson. Some demonstration experiments neither engage pupils' interest nor provide the best illustrations of the concept concerned. The marking of books by all staff is conscientious and conveys warm praise, and, when appropriate, advice on layout. However, diagnostic comments are rare. Pupils are not told how they can improve their knowledge and understanding of science or recognise the next step in making progress.
103. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils are generally good. When teaching is good, pupils show keen interest, respond enthusiastically to questions and engage in their tasks with concentration. They work well together and are trustworthy and responsible with practical work, showing awareness of health and safety issues. In some lessons, pupils are slow to do what the teacher wants, and a few talk about something unconnected with the topic.
104. Leadership of the department is good. The head of science has clear aims and maintains an effective organisation. Schemes of work are well planned and provide evidence of the staff working together. However, departmental guidance does not extend to advice on pedagogical issues. There is little formal sharing of good practice.
105. Standards have risen since the last inspection. Attitudes and behaviour remain generally good and teachers work together effectively. However, the development of a scheme for monitoring marking and tracking each pupil's progress, to which the former report alludes, is needed urgently if standards of attainment are to continue to rise.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

106. The quality of provision for art is satisfactory.

Strengths:

- pupils' developing understanding and use, by the end of Year 9, of a range of technical skills using two dimensional and three dimensional media;
- good control of tools and equipment by pupils;
- pupils' increasing confidence in manipulating the visual vocabulary of art and design to make effective compositions;
- teachers' classroom management, and relationships with pupils.

Areas for improvement:

- the setting of less prescriptive and more open ended tasks for pupils, in order to provide the maximum opportunity for personal interpretation and the development of an individual line of artistic inquiry;
- greater concentration on first-hand sources for starting points and stimulus, and the discouragement of copying;
- raising standards in observing and recording from first-hand sources.

107. Standards of achievement are satisfactory. By the end of Year 9 pupils have developed good control of a range of technical skills using two dimensional and three dimensional media, and choose appropriate tools and equipment for the task, using them effectively. They understand the properties of clay, and use it confidently for construction purpose. Their understanding of the visual elements of art and design processes is good, and they are able to make effective and lively, coloured designs and compositions having developed a satisfactory visual vocabulary.

108. Standards are less satisfactory in observational work, with which many pupils find difficulty in recording from first-hand sources in two dimensional media, and by the end of Year 9 show little progress or confidence. It was noted in the previous inspection report that the majority of pupils was not attaining national expectations in observational drawing: this issue remains to be addressed. Pupils' abilities are limited in organising and presenting research information in different ways, sketchbooks are used mainly for tasks set by the teachers.

109. Standards of teaching in all lessons seen were at least satisfactory and in some cases good. In all lessons, careful preparation and presentation of resource material was evident. Lessons were always introduced with confidence, questioning techniques were utilised and a range of teaching styles deployed appropriately. Relationships between teachers and pupils were consistently very good. Teachers' expectations of pupils were low, however, when tasks were set which were too prescriptive, limiting opportunities for personal interpretation and the development of an individual line of artistic inquiry. As a result, pupils' capacity to use artistic initiative and make imaginative responses remain underdeveloped, as noted in the last inspection.

110. Behaviour and attitudes of pupils are at least good. Pupils were responsive to the teacher, related well to each other, were motivated and enjoyed their art activities.

111. Pupils are experiencing a broad range of artistic studies. They work with graphic media, paint, collage, papier-mâché and clay, and do good work in the process of crayon etching and wax resist. Sketchbooks are used, but pupils are not encouraged to use them for experimentation or personal research adequately. In the best critical studies activities, pupils are encouraged to establish relationships between their own

still life work and that of key artists such as a Leger, or use the work of Renoir as a reference point in their direct observational studies of fruit. Art history tasks were unchallenging when pupils were set tasks that included copying of text from art history worksheets for homework, or sections from art reproductions. A particular strength of the department is the links being made between art and literacy, both through the display of key words in art and design throughout the department, and teachers challenge to pupils to develop verbal as well as visual vocabularies during practical activities.

112. Assessment procedures have been revised as a result of the recommendations in the previous inspection report. Pupils are now involved in evaluating their own progress, work is marked regularly with helpful comments, and assessment procedures are effective. Schemes of work and documentation are comprehensive.

113. Following comments in the previous inspection report, the amount of time for the subject has been increased and is now within the acceptable minimum for the subject to deliver the National Curriculum programme of study. However, the timetable continues to operate a system that generates a lack of continuity of experience for some pupils. Accommodation for the subject is generally satisfactory, with a good ceramics area, which could be employed more effectively to ensure that all pupils experience clay in each year. One art room is an unstimulating environment for art and design teaching. Funding for the subject has been reduced and is below the national average, constraining opportunities for artistic learning.

114. Issues that were highlighted in the previous report, including improvements in relation to time allocation, the development of assessment and recording systems, monitoring procedures, and planning across the key stage have been successfully addressed.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

115. The quality of provision for design and technology is good.

### **Strengths:**

- teachers in the department have very good subject knowledge and most have considerable expertise in the delivery of the subject;
- the department is well resourced, with well maintained machinery and equipment. A wide range of exemplar material is displayed to aid learning;
- teachers are enthusiastic and set high standards;
- carefully designed booklets provide good information to help pupils of all abilities;
- pupils' work is collated into a single portfolio to show progression across the key stage;
- pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons are very good, sometimes excellent.

### **Areas for improvement:**

- diagnostic comments are not always used in marking;
- targets and next-step comments are not communicated to pupils;
- pupils' marks are not collated onto a whole year system to aid tracking of pupils' progress;
- there is a lack of ICT usage to improve quality of work.

116. In lessons, all pupils make at least satisfactory progress, and some make good progress. They experience a wide range of processes, materials and skills. In a Year 8



lesson, pupils used acrylic to make a key fob. Their own designs had been made carefully and a good standard of finish obtained. Through the use of carefully-written, evaluation task-sheets pupils were able to reflect on their designs and consider areas for improvement. The printed booklets produced by the department contained well-structured information, including key words, and enhanced pupils' literacy skills. In a Year 9 clock project, pupils learned the importance of design planning. The difference between decoration of sketches and important, annotated information was clearly stressed. Pupils also understood the need for, and use of, jigs to help them perform difficult practical work. Their practical work was of very good quality. They obviously took a pride in it and were able to talk confidently about it. All pupils were supported well and encouraged to succeed. Design folios were of good quality and there is clear evidence of good progress made by special needs pupils as they move up the school. Pupils of all abilities show successful achievement in this subject.

117. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 indicate variation in standards which are consistently below the national average. The department has carried out moderation exercises with two other schools and considers the school's judgements to be secure. Liaison with the Community College has revealed that there is a positive correlation between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 results. In 2000, girls achieved significantly higher levels than boys although they were below national averages. Further consideration should be given to judgements awarded to middle and lower ability pupils as folder and practical work show evidence of higher levels.
118. The quality of teaching and learning in this subject is good. Pupils listen well and are keen to learn. A variety of teaching and learning methods is used, with many clear demonstrations given. In food, when pupils were designing decorations for novelty cakes, high quality examples of pupils' work were used to show the standards required. Explanation of the detail required in folios in order to achieve the higher levels of attainment was clearly described. Special needs pupils were given help and encouragement to achieve success when soldering small, delicate components into a circuit in an electronics lesson. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and plan their lessons well. Individual education plans are used to aid planning and allow for differentiation of project outcomes. Visual aids and good wall displays were used effectively in all subject areas. Health and safety procedures and high standards of pupil behaviour are insisted upon.
119. Good working relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils were very evident. Pupils were polite and well mannered. They were able to work independently and had the confidence to choose and use the correct equipment and materials. Their mature attitudes were evident in food when it came to clear up after cooking. These very positive responses enabled work of good quality to be produced in calm orderly situations.
120. All pupils have access to a generous time allocation. Pupils experience various aspects of the subject, including resistant materials, food, graphics and electronics. The art and design department supports and develops some graphical skills. Textiles are no longer available and only minimal product analysis is being taught. Limited use is made of ICT, but good use is made of a digital camera to record pupils' practical work. Staff have undergone New Opportunities Fund training for ICT, but more departmental ICT facilities are needed. More consideration needs to be given to open-ended work, especially for the more able.

121. Pupils learn good social skills within the subject. A highly skilled technician maintains the resources well and assists pupils during lessons. This helps pupils to achieve success. Since the previous inspection the following key issues have been addressed:

- a coherent scheme of work, developing progression is now in place, as is the delivery of key skills;
- food technology is included in all years, although one cohort in Year 8 is excluded. Health and safety issues have been addressed;
- higher standards of attainment are evident.

122. The department works well as a team. A new member is being soundly inducted including good assistance from the technician. The department has spent some time considering literacy during the development stages of support materials. Departmental documentation is well organised. The collation of pupils' work is very good. The department is soundly managed with elements of very good practice. However, line-management is not taking place, and recording and tracking of pupil progress over a whole year is not in place.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

123. The quality of provision for geography is satisfactory.

Strengths:

- pupils like geography and work well. They take a pride in their work and presentation;
- the subject is taught well by a committed team of teachers;
- progress made by low-attaining pupils is good. The gap between boys' and girls' achievement has narrowed;
- pupils have a good grasp of basic geographical skills.

Areas for improvement:

- expanding target-setting, assessment and marking to help pupils learn;
- fieldwork in Years 8 and 9;
- continuing to develop independent learning through geographical enquiry for gifted and talented pupils;
- continuing to monitor and develop teaching and learning strategies.

124. The standards achieved in geography at age 14 are in line with national expectations. Pupils in all years make satisfactory or good progress in lessons. Their use of geographical skills is a strength. In Year 7, they can draw useful sketch maps of the local area. They can locate places on an Ordnance Survey map using grid references. They are given the opportunity to develop enquiry skills in their local village project. This is done with enthusiasm and many pupils produce well-presented work with good detail. In Year 9, pupils can explain how maps are used to show information in different ways and can locate areas of the world where earthquakes and volcanoes are frequent. Oral skills are satisfactory. Pupils can talk about and account for the differences between maps and photographs of a local village; in Year 9 they can describe what is meant by the "Ring of Fire". Written work is well presented, with maps and diagrams of good quality. Higher-attaining pupils sometimes have the opportunity to progress well through the use of assessed projects, as in the India project in Year 9.

125. Teaching is at least satisfactory and often good or very good. Teachers are well qualified and have a depth of knowledge and expertise which is passed on well to

pupils. Oral work is helped by the good use of questioning techniques to elicit from pupils what they already know. In particular, teachers are patient in encouraging participation by more reticent pupils. Lessons are planned and managed well; in the most effective lessons, a strong structure and teacher enthusiasm stimulates interest. Lessons are taught to whole classes with some elements of individual work. However, the teaching styles are limited, and opportunities for group work and independent learning in class need to be explored. To this end, the library and ICT resources are not used to their fullest potential. Pupils of different abilities are managed well, and appropriate work is made available for the less able. This is good for these pupils, but extension work for the more able needs to be targeted more rigorously. Work is always marked and pupils are beginning to be informed of their National Curriculum levels at major assessments. Target-setting is starting to be used to motivate and inform pupils; this needs to be enhanced. Fieldwork is well organised in Year 7 but needs to be developed in other years. Opportunities need to be sought in all years for pupils to gather and process data. ICT is an under-used resource in fieldwork.

126. Pupils are punctual, settle down quickly into lessons and are interested in their work. They are responsible and respond well to their teachers. Pupils are always courteous, helpful and show respect. They work hard and co-operate well with each other. Levels of concentration are good. Classroom assistants support pupils with special educational needs well. The pupils learn to write clearly and accurately and listen well. Key words are displayed in classrooms to help pupils to understand and use subject-specific words

127. The head of department provides sound leadership and is making good progress in developing the subject; the curriculum meets statutory requirements. Planning is effective and the members of the department work well together. The geography 'Bridging Project', developed with primary schools, ensures pupils get off to a good start in Year 7 with common basic knowledge. Formal monitoring of teaching and learning has recently begun and the department recognises the need for further development. Assessment procedures need to be developed further to accurately track individual pupils' progress. Schemes of work show logical progression and are regularly monitored. Departmental resources and accommodation are good. ICT is present throughout the curriculum and is sometimes seen in pupils' work. However, it is mainly confined to word processing and there is limited use of spreadsheets or data handling.

128. Since the previous inspection good progress been made; there are now more opportunities for pupils to develop enquiry skills, the imbalance between boys and girls is better, and the learning needs of the less able have been improved. However, fieldwork and opportunities for the gifted and talented need to be developed further.

## **HISTORY**

129. The quality of provision for history is satisfactory.

### **Strengths:**

- teachers are knowledgeable, committed, diligent and experienced;
- teaching is consistently at least satisfactory and good in some lessons;
- relationships with pupils are good;
- the management of pupils in lessons is very good;
- provision for low attaining pupils and those with special educational needs is good;
- pupils respond well in lessons showing interest and behaving well.

Areas for improvement:

- the attainment of boys is significantly below that of girls;
- there are few examples of pupils producing sustained, analytical writing typical of higher levels of attainment;
- current assessment approaches do not provide pupils with sufficient guidance as to how they might raise their attainment in the future;
- support to improve literacy standards is effective for some low-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs but less effective in developing the writing skills of some more able pupils;
- there are too few opportunities for local history within the planned curriculum.

130. Pupils' achievement in history is satisfactory. Standards of attainment are below national expectations but pupils achieve in line with their capabilities apart from some boys who under-achieve. Recent teacher assessment results against National Curriculum levels show that by the end of Year 9, pupils' attainment is below the national expectation and the attainment of boys is significantly below that of girls. Progress made by pupils, both in individual lessons and as they move from Year 7 to Year 9, is steady. However, some boys do not progress as well as they should and boys and girls often find it difficult to produce written work to appropriately demonstrate their knowledge and understanding. Knowledge of the past is satisfactory and many pupils have effective research skills. However, understanding of causation, change and interpretations is less secure.

131. Teaching is consistently at least satisfactory and students respond well in lessons. Teachers manage their lessons well and have developed very good relationships with their pupils. This ensures a purposeful ethos and often brings a positive response from pupils. Some extended enquiry tasks, for example, 'Home Front' and 'Transport', are used well to give many students a good knowledge of the past and to develop some effective research skills. Low-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported and all pupils benefit from access to a good range of resources including ICT. Some lesson tasks are not structured to challenge the more able pupils to think more about, for example, how causes of past events can be classified and linked. Also, questioning by teachers is not always used effectively to bring thoughtful responses from pupils. In lessons, teachers do seek to make pupils aware of the demands of higher levels of attainment, but their marking often offers general comments rather than specific guidance and targets for future improvement.

132. The satisfactory progress made by pupils owes much to their prompt arrival to lessons and quick response when set tasks. Most are interested in the subject and this means they listen carefully and sustain concentration well. Some show a lack of confidence in their ability to talk about the past using appropriate terminology and experience difficulties in managing their folders well. The progress of some boys is restricted by their occasionally, inappropriate behaviour.

133. The department benefits from sound leadership and management. This has given the teachers a clear view of the effectiveness of some areas of their work and identified appropriate areas for development. Schemes of work provide a sound framework for lesson planning but opportunities to develop appropriate links with other humanities subjects have not been exploited.

134. Progress since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. Support for lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs is now good. The allocation

of time for history has been increased and is now satisfactory. A number of extended opportunities for enquiry-based studies have been incorporated in to the programme of study for each year group. The use of ICT within the curriculum has been enhanced. The department has the capacity to raise pupils' attainment in the future

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

135. Overall, the quality of provision for ICT is unsatisfactory.

Strengths:

- the teacher responsible for the delivery of the discrete modules in Years 7 and 8 has very good subject knowledge and considerable expertise in the delivery of the subject;
- two computer rooms with networked facilities have up-to-date hardware sufficient for large classes of pupils to work individually;
- good records are kept when pupils are taught the discrete modules.

Areas for improvement:

- the quality of ICT provision in subjects other than ICT itself is unsatisfactory;
- there is no central system for recording pupils' work across the curriculum;
- there is no central system for monitoring coverage of the programme of study;
- one cohort of staff has still to be trained under the New Opportunities Fund scheme;
- funding for the department is low.

136. All pupils observed make at least steady progress; some make good progress. Within the discrete modules, pupils experience elements of Finding Things Out, Developing Ideas, and Exchanging and Sharing Information. Little work was seen where pupils were reviewing, modifying and evaluating work as it progressed. Pupils were able to enter, save and retrieve work, and generate and present work. In Year 7, pupils were given an awareness of databases. By comparing paper dictionaries with modern electronic forms pupils related to the real world. They were introduced to their Martian database task, which entailed adding information to the database, by clearly-worded task sheets. Literacy skills were also reinforced here. Pupils used the database to search for information to enable them to write landing cards for specific destinations. Pupils with special needs applied themselves well and achieved success. Extension work, which required pupils to search a world atlas, was challenging.

137. In a Year 8 lesson, when using Superlogo, pupils were able to create sequences of instructions to draw a train and other objects. They gained an understanding of the need for precision when framing commands. The need for testing and editing became apparent to pupils. By the end of the lesson, pupils had made good progress and many good drawings had been saved. Within the modular studies rotation some impressive work was observed by Year 9 pupils using PowerPoint to make a presentation about the school. They had chosen their audience well and were adding sound to their presentation. From their previous lesson, they were using design templates, selecting backgrounds and importing graphics. By the end of the lesson, many professional presentations were working well, with boys and girls achieving equally high standards, and special needs pupils achieving success. Behaviour and attitudes at all times were very good.

138. Key Stage 3 teacher assessments for the last three years are variable. Analysis of results in 2000 compared to national data shows that boys equal national average whilst girls are two points below. However, girls were ahead of boys at the higher levels.
139. The quality of teaching in all lessons observed, including cross-curricular ones, was satisfactory or better. Some was very good. Very good use was made of the new projector to aid teaching and learning. Pupils were able to see clearly how programs were manipulated. Lessons were carried out at a good pace, with extension work being provided for higher ability pupils and those who used computers at home. In a history lesson observed, pupils were using the Internet to gather relevant information in order to gain an understanding of events and results of the Holocaust in preparation for a visit to the Imperial War Museum Holocaust exhibition. This was an imaginative use of the resources and directly enhanced pupils' knowledge, which would not otherwise have been quickly gained from books. In mathematics, the teacher had written his own program to improve pupils' understanding of number. The program worked well. There is a need for this good practice to be spread across all subjects in order that all teachers gain the confidence necessary to be able to use the ICT resources available. Year 9 gifted and talented pupils attended the Community College for lessons on Java script last term; it is intended that these will continue later this year. A lunchtime computer club operates and computers are available in the library for pupils to use at lunchtime.
140. Pupils enjoyed using the ICT facilities. They were given a range of tasks which required care and thought in order to achieve success. They were engrossed in their work in the majority of cases. No behavioural problems were observed. In some lessons behaviour was excellent. The majority of pupils made good progress in lessons, and were challenged by the tasks.
141. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 have access to a three per cent allocation of curricular time. Pupils in Year 9 access ICT within modular studies on a rotational basis. Some limited use of ICT is made within history, mathematics, science, English, geography and modern foreign languages. The student support centre has two network linked computers. Other subjects make little or no use of the resources.
142. Pupils are taught to react well with each other in ICT. Pupils share expertise and help each other. Teachers relate their teaching to the real world. There are good relationships between staff and pupils.
143. Unsatisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection. Full coverage of the ICT programme of study is still not taking place. All pupils still do not have adequate time to develop their ICT capability. An assessment, recording, and reporting system is still not in place. Plans to introduce control skills are slowly moving ahead.
144. A new co-ordinator has only just been appointed. Departmental documentation is good. A good development plan is in use. Plans are being made to incorporate Broadband telecommunications. The network is very well managed by the network manager, who is also currently the technician. The department has the necessary knowledge and skills to develop the subject across the curriculum.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

145. Overall the quality of provision for modern foreign languages is satisfactory.

Strengths:

- some excellent teaching;
- progress in Year 7;
- departmental management;
- positive relationships.

Areas for improvement:

- standards of attainment in Years 8 and 9;
- systematic monitoring, reviewing and evaluation;
- assessment, marking and homework;
- use of reading schemes.

146. By the age of 14, attainment is below national standards in French and German. Pupils make good progress in Year 7, particularly in German, but this is not maintained in Years 8 and 9. Most pupils can understand simple dialogues, pick out details from short passages spoken by native speakers and can write short sentences using familiar language. However, many pupils' skills in speaking and reading the languages are underdeveloped as insufficient opportunities are given to practise at length. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well in relation to their capabilities when they are given extra support. Higher-attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged in most lessons and therefore make insufficient progress.

147. The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in the majority of lessons observed. In two lessons it was good, in one lesson very good and in two lessons it was excellent. Unsatisfactory teaching was seen in three lessons.

148. The best lessons observed were planned and prepared well, had high expectations of the pupils, moved at a brisk pace, showed evidence of effective classroom management, made use of a variety of activities and resources and were well organised. Teachers gave clear explanations, had good linguistic proficiency, paid due attention to using structures correctly and displayed evidence of positive relationships with the pupils, giving encouragement and praise. In these lessons, teachers made skilful use of the target language and showed awareness of the need to support less competent learners and also to challenge higher attaining pupils sufficiently. They allowed pupils sufficient opportunities to use the language actively and for real purposes and to practise the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing at a level which challenged each of them appropriately.

149. In the lessons where teaching was unsatisfactory, the pupils were occupied but the level of challenge and the teachers' expectations were too low. These factors, along with insufficient use of the target language and inadequate linguistic skills, contributed to the pupils making too little progress and not achieving well enough. The pace was slow and little, if any, attention was paid to the differing needs of pupils, whether high or low attainers. A lack of coherent planning and practice, and reinforcement of new work presented impeded pupils' progress as did inadequate marking of pupils' work. There was evidence of some overestimation of National Curriculum levels for some pupils. In the majority of classes, insufficient homework was set to raise the levels of achievement, marking was inadequate and assessment does not inform curriculum planning sufficiently.

150. Pupils' attitudes to their language lessons are positive and relationships are consistently good. Pupils are attentive, sustain concentration, work hard and apply themselves to their work. Behaviour is very good. They co-operate with the teacher

and, on the rare occasions when pair work is allowed, work co-operatively and constructively together. The majority participate willingly in class and many show interest and enthusiasm. Languages are a popular subject in school.

151. The department is well led, well organised and hard working. The head of department leads the teaching with enthusiasm, commitment and vision. There is a comprehensive departmental handbook and schemes of work for each language, which provide a basis on which to build. Although these provide significant guidance to teachers on various policies such as how to meet the differing needs of pupils, how to use resources such as video, ICT or authentic materials to support low attainers or extend and challenge high attainers, and a target language and marking policy, these are not always borne out in practice. There is some monitoring but strategies are not always in place to ensure policies are consistently implemented and that good practice is shared and extended.

152. Despite the fact that pupils do not have a textbook to take home, the department is well resourced with books, worksheets and audio-visual equipment, cassettes and videos. There are plentiful reading books but the reading schemes are considerably underused. Pupils have more contact with native speakers of French than German.

153. The department has improved considerably since the previous inspection in terms of teaching and progress and to some extent in terms of attainment. Well over half Year 9 pupils are now attaining the national standards expected of 14 year olds compared to most not doing so at the time of the previous inspection.

## **MUSIC**

154. The quality of provision for music is satisfactory. At the time of the inspection the head of department had been in post for three weeks and the second music teacher was absent.

### **Strengths:**

- the management of pupils;
- effective classroom organisation;
- the curriculum covers almost all national curriculum requirements;
- hardly any pupils are working at very low levels of attainment.

### **Areas for improvement:**

- the development of pupils' skills and understanding between Year 7 and Year 9 so that the majority reach the expected level for their age group;
- activities which allow higher-attaining pupils to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding sufficiently;
- the effective use of ICT to improve learning;
- improved resources and accommodation.

155. The attainment of pupils in Year 9 is below the expectation for this age group. Most pupils are working at Level 4 in aspects of performing skills. The expected level for this age group is Level 5, or above, by the end of Year 9. Pupils lack performing skills. In lessons they often make good progress in technical control of keyboards and glockenspiels but not across year groups. They also show a good understanding of some of the ways that a tune such as 'Frère Jacques' can be turned into a set of variations (different movements which develop the melody). Very few show higher-performing skills such as use of dynamics (how loud or quiet the music is), or phrasing



(playing groups of notes with sensitivity to the shape of the music). None show real fluency in playing chords or in playing keyboards with two hands. Despite this lack of skill, most pupils have good listening skills and are able to fit their part effectively into an ensemble (more than one instrument playing together). Very few pupils are working at a very low level of skill and this is a strength. Singing is below average but in the lessons observed it improved quite quickly. During the inspection, no composition work was observed and none was available. Consequently, no judgement has been reached about this aspect of pupils' work.

156. Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They are punctual to lessons and settle quickly. They listen well to instructions and try diligently to carry out what has been asked of them. They work well in pairs and small groups, show good sensitivity to each other's views and can take turns effectively. They maintain their concentration well during extended periods of time and hardly ever stray from the task set.

157. Teaching is sound. The teacher has good subject knowledge and good skills, for example, accompanying a piece effectively on the piano. Activities are clearly defined and pupils understand what they have to do. Some activities have tasks at different levels to suit the different experiences and capabilities of students. However, this area could be developed further. The teacher gives effective, individual support to students, for example, when Year 8 pupils were trying to work out the melody part to a song from the 'Sound of Music'. Many pupils made quite rapid progress in this task. In one Year 7 lesson, a support teacher was very effective in helping a group of pupils with special educational needs to improve their work. The teaching of pupils in Year 7 was not as successful as in Years 8 and 9. Pupils were given a task which did not always allow them to hear music effectively, since they wrote down notes on a page with no overall idea of what they would sound like, and because the task was not challenging enough for some pupils. The learning in this lesson was not sufficiently rapid. In the follow-up lesson, in this case part of a modular studies course, pupils did make much better progress because they were listening more effectively to musical sounds and were able to work in smaller groups around the music room. In one Year 8 lesson, a group of boys were disruptive and, although they were successfully challenged about this, too much of the lesson was lost and insufficient learning took place. In all other lessons the management of pupils is a strength and effective use is made of the schools' assertive discipline policy.

158. Accommodation for music is limited. When pupils work in the main teaching room, noise levels are too high for quality work and pupils are not able to make sufficient progress. Other spaces are used effectively but are not consistently available, especially when two lessons are being taught at once, or instrumental teachers are in the department. Resources are limited. There are too few keyboards, and the range of percussion instruments means that the quality of the sounds pupils have to work with are poor. ICT resources, such as computers and software, are available but are not being used. The scheme of work requires further development with respect to music from non-European cultures.

159. Since the previous report insufficient progress has been made. The school has addressed health and safety issues but ICT is still a weakness, higher-attaining pupils are not making sufficient progress and attainment is still below average.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

160. The quality of provision for physical education is good. The department makes a very good contribution to the life of the school, both within and beyond the formal timetable. It provides a variety of activities, with a strong games bias and pupils enjoy the opportunities to participate in these activities. Since the previous inspection much has been done to allow pupils to take responsibility for their own learning.

Strengths:

- the department is well led and there is a shared commitment to constant improvement in standards of attainment through careful monitoring and evaluation;
- teaching is generally good or better; lessons are well structured, with a range of activities which stimulate pupils and build up their knowledge and understanding;
- pupils show an eagerness to learn and are keen to improve their physical skills. They work well together singly and in mixed or single sex groups;
- pupils of all abilities are able to enjoy the activities on offer. Those with physical difficulties are well-supported in activities such as swimming.

Areas for improvement:

- the curriculum lacks activities to interest pupils who do not enjoy games;
- extra-curricular provision needs to reflect the changing character of the school intake;
- few opportunities exist for pupils to experience leadership skills;
- current staffing arrangements mean pupils are, on occasion, left to change unsupervised.

161. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory or better progress in all lessons observed. In a Year 7 swimming class, very good progress was made as pupils developed their competence in the front crawl leg kick and body position. Girls in a Year 8 gymnastics lesson on balance were able to plan a sequence of interesting body positions and linking movements. Almost all the boys in a Year 9 basketball lesson began to use the correct footwork for the lay-up shot.

162. When pupils enter the school at Year 7 their standards in physical education are below average; steady progress is made. Standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 9, as judged by teachers' assessments are below the national average. The work of current pupils indicates that, by the age of fourteen, more will achieve the standards expected nationally than has previously been the case.

163. Teaching is never less than satisfactory. It is often good and was excellent on occasions. Teachers are well qualified to teach a range of activities. They show excellent knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject. With lessons continuing at a good pace and in well-considered stages, there is plenty of opportunity for pupils to acquire competent skills. Good use of questioning to ensure understanding helps to create a learning situation in which pupil' contributions are valued. The continuous process of assessment helps staff to plan effectively for the needs of all their pupils.

164. The quality of learning in the majority of lessons seen was good. Pupils respond positively and are eager to participate. They are prompt to lessons and have appropriate kit for the activity. Most show an interest in their work and apply themselves to the given tasks. The majority of pupils understand the need to practise in order to develop and improve skills. They are able to evaluate what is needed to improve their own and others' performances. Occasionally, boys are over-eager to perform and fail to understand the need to develop skills gradually. Good relationships

are a strong feature, particularly of the lessons in which boys and girls are taught together, with pupils showing good social and co-operative skills.

165. The department has made very good progress since the previous inspection. The positive attitudes of both staff and pupils contribute significantly to the degree of progress now being made and the levels of attainment that are being reached. Good subject management has led to the development of thorough schemes of work and assessment criteria. Good equipment and both indoor and outdoor facilities assist the delivery of the range of activities.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

166. The quality of provision for religious education is satisfactory.

Strengths:

- some very good teaching;
- good management of pupils;
- effective support for lower ability pupils.

Areas for improvement:

- ensuring that clear, relevant and challenging learning objectives are built into the scheme of work and shared with pupils, and that tasks in the scheme of work are reviewed to reflect this higher challenge;
- continuing to improve the balance of time given to religious education, particularly in Year 8;
- improving the marking of pupils' work so that pupils are clear about the standards they have attained and what they need to do to improve.

167. The time allocation for religious education has improved since the previous inspection and pupils' attitudes are satisfactory in most lessons. Attainment in Year 8 is generally below average. During the inspection it was not possible to see any Year 7 or Year 9 lessons, or to see any significant amounts of work from Year 9, as the humanities rotation meant that religious education had not yet been taught to Year 9. It is therefore impossible to make judgements about the attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 3.

168. In Year 8 lessons, pupils displayed some knowledge and understanding about the nature of miracles and knew the stories of some of the miracles of Jesus. Some could express their own views and opinions and talk about 'significant experiences' which they considered miraculous, such as the experiences of the survivors of the New York disaster which had recently occurred. However, overall standards in Year 8 are below expectations, since many of the written tasks they are required to complete are too simple. Pupils with special educational needs attain satisfactory standards in Year 8.

169. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good; overall it is satisfactory. The strengths of the teaching include good management of pupils whereby they know what they should be doing within a clear structured framework; effective support for low-ability pupils through alternative work or work sheets and individual support; effective encouragement of some basic literacy skills with key words and reminders; and a range of teaching strategies being employed to motivate and enthuse the pupils. Weaknesses in teaching include: a lack of clear and challenging learning objectives which are shared with pupils; insufficient use of the beginnings and ends of lessons to set the context or provide a mechanism for recap and review; and insufficient

attention to the marking of pupils' work as a means of providing effective and targeted feedback to pupils.

170. The attitude of pupils to religious education ranges from very good to unsatisfactory; overall it is satisfactory. Pupils enjoyed the lessons and contributed quite enthusiastically to the opportunities for discussion and talk. Pupils support one another well with their work but, at times, need to be encouraged to take greater independence especially in deciding what resources to use and how to present information gained.

171. The subject is soundly led by the head of humanities; however there is no teacher on the team with this subject as a first specialism, therefore development has not been as easy as in the other areas of the humanities curriculum. Some progress has been made since the last inspection in increasing the time for religious education, in widening teaching and learning strategies and in broadening the curriculum to include more opportunities for pupils to reflect on their knowledge learned.