

## **INSPECTION REPORT**

### **HENLEY IN ARDEN HIGH SCHOOL**

Henley in Arden, Warwickshire

LEA area: Warwickshire

Unique reference number: 125733

Headteacher: Mr John West

Reporting inspector: Mr Michael Newton  
2494

Dates of inspection: 1 - 5 October 2001

Inspection number: 189675

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

© Crown copyright 2001

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Modern (non-selective)
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 to 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Stratford Road Henley in Arden Warwickshire
Postcode:	B95 6AF
Telephone number:	01564 792364
Fax number:	01564 702411
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Mark Edwards
Date of previous inspection:	September 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2494	M Newton	<i>Registered inspector</i>		The school's results and achievements; How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9115	T Clarke	<i>Lay inspector</i>		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
19499	B Baughan	<i>Team inspector</i>	English; Drama.	
12885	J Hunt	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics.	
20243	D Benstock	<i>Team Inspector</i>	Science.	
15051	L Kauffman	<i>Team Inspector</i>	Design and technology; Special Educational Needs.	
24887	Y Salmons	<i>Team Inspector</i>	Modern Foreign Languages.	
25744	T Osgerby	<i>Team Inspector</i>	History.	
1723	M Milton	<i>Team Inspector</i>	Geography; Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
31685	V Girling	<i>Team Inspector</i>	Art.	
20767	J Royle	<i>Team Inspector</i>	Music; Information and communication technology.	
7926	J Bowden	<i>Team Inspector</i>	Physical education; Dance; Equal Opportunities.	

The inspection contractor was:

*Westminster Education Consultants*  
*Old Garden House*  
*The Lanterns*  
*Bridge Lane*  
*LONDON*  
*SW11 3AD*

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager  
Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	<b>Page</b>
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>1</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved?	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>6</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>25</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The School is a relatively small non-selective secondary school with 587 boys and girls aged 11 to 16. There is a slight gender imbalance in favour of boys, which is particularly evident in Year 10. It draws its pupils from a mainly rural area, which is also served by three grammar schools. A majority of pupils come from homes that are socially advantaged and the number of pupils entitled to free school meals (5.8 per cent) is well below the national average (17.8 per cent). There is, however, a small group of significantly disadvantaged pupils. The number of pupils with special educational needs and those with statements, both mainly because of specific learning difficulties, is broadly in line with the national averages (2.8 per cent). There are very few pupils from ethnic minorities and no pupils for whom English is an additional language. The generally favoured nature of the catchment area contributes to the fact that pupils enter the school having achieved levels in National Curriculum tests in Year 6 that are above the national average in English and about the national average in mathematics and science. Pupils with higher levels of attainment are not so well represented in a school of this type.

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

This is an effective school. Pupils enter with overall levels of attainment in line with national averages. In national tests at 14 and in GCSE examinations at 16 they achieve results above the national average. This achievement has resulted from a clear focus in school development planning over recent years on improving the quality of teaching. In over three quarters of lessons teaching is good and in one in four very good or excellent. Leadership and management are satisfactory with good features. The school has also successfully maintained its strengths at the time of the last inspection in 1996 and pupils continue to have a very positive attitude to learning and benefit from excellent relationships with teachers. Taking account of the nature and context of the school, as well as its results, it provides good value for money.

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

- Pupils make good progress and achieve results that are above the national average
- Has very committed staff, and teachers who provide much good quality teaching;
- Has developed excellent relationships between pupils and teachers, a very good work ethic, and very positive attitudes, all of which contribute to good learning;
- Uses its school development plan effectively to bring about improvement and target financial resources well;
- Provides very good opportunities for pupils' overall personal development through, for example, residential opportunities, competitive sport and other extra curricular activities;
- Maintains high quality provision for pupils with special educational needs.

## WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- The consistency and rigour by which the quality of teaching is monitored by senior and middle managers;
- The provision for ICT and its use in all subjects to improve learning and to meet statutory requirements;
- The consistent use of assessment data by teachers, to inform curriculum planning and delivery, and to help set individual and group targets;
- Meeting statutory requirements in respect of religious education at Key Stage 4, thereby strengthening provision for both spiritual development and understanding the richness and diversity of other cultures.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The School was last inspected in September 1996 just after the appointment of the present headteacher. The governors published an action plan that thoroughly addressed all the key points for action and has formed the basis for subsequent school development plans. As a result, the shape of the school day has been changed and there is now an appropriate allocation of time to each subject. The current timetable and grouping structure does, however, create some inequalities in opportunity for a small proportion of pupils in, for example, ICT. The school development plan is now effective in planning improvement and targeting resources. The role of governors in monitoring its implementation is now successfully carried out through its finance and curriculum committees. There has been some improvement in monitoring and evaluating provision by senior staff but more needs to be done to firmly establish it within the culture of the school generally. Assessment data is now being used to better effect, particularly at whole school level and in some subjects such as mathematics and modern foreign languages. However, overall developments in assessment across the school have not moved as fast as they might and this remains a key point for action.

## STANDARDS

The table below shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 11 based on average point scores in GCSE examinations.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
GCSE examinations	D	C	C	C

Key	
<i>well above average</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>above average</i>	<i>B</i>
<i>average</i>	<i>C</i>
<i>below average</i>	<i>D</i>
<i>well below average</i>	<i>E</i>

By the age of 14, pupils' attainment is overall above the national average, as reflected in the National curriculum tests taken in English, mathematics and science and in the statutory teacher assessments in other subjects. With the exception of art, design and technology, and music, these assessments are reflected in the standards seen during inspection. In ICT assessments were slightly below national expectation but are now at the expected level. A lack of resources and teacher training, limits pupils' attainment in this subject. Achievement remains good through Years 10 and 11 so that attainment at 16 in GCSE examinations is also above the national average. In 2000 the school exceeded its

target and 56 per cent of pupils gained five or more grade A\*-C. In 2001 examinations 56 per cent of pupils also achieved five or more A\*-C grades and all pupils gained at least five A\*-G grades. The picture, therefore, is one of continuing improvement since the last inspection. In comparison with all secondary schools nationally, the school is above average at the end of Year 9 and average at the end of Year 11. The trend in the school's average National Curriculum point score is broadly in line with the national trend at both key stages. In comparison with other secondary modern schools, the school is in the top five per cent nationally for pupils at the end of Year 9 and at the average for pupils at the end of Year 11 based on average point scores. Over recent Years there has been a strong focus on improving pupils' literacy skills and this has had a positive effect on improving standards. The success in GCSE examinations in recent Years requires the school to adjust its targets as all of them have now been exceeded.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have a very positive attitude. They enjoy coming to school, are enthusiastic and are justly proud of their school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in the classroom and around the school is, overall, good. There is, however, a small minority who occasionally cause disruption when not managed appropriately.
Personal development and relationships	The excellent relationships which teachers have with pupils coupled with the positive attitudes to learning which this creates, has a beneficial effect on the quality of learning and the achievement of pupils. Pastoral staff and teachers generally know pupils well and as a result can successfully provide for their personal development.
Attendance	Has been consistently just above average. Unauthorised absence is well below the average. Transport permitting, pupils arrive on time.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11
Quality of teaching	Good	Good

*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.*

Teaching is good overall with no unsatisfactory teaching. In a quarter of lessons teaching is very good and sometimes excellent and there are examples of this in nearly all subjects across all Years. A key feature of teaching is the good command teachers have of their subject which enables them to motivate pupils. This is particularly commendable in a school where two-thirds of staff teach more than one subject. A further strength is the way teachers share the objectives of the lessons with pupils and then review progress at the end of the session. The deficiency in teaching is that good features are not seen consistently across lessons. Pupils learn well, including those with special educational needs, and are helped to do so by the clear focus in most subjects which teachers give to the acquisition of literacy skills. The teaching of numeracy skills is satisfactory. Homework is well integrated into the learning process and helps to reinforce previous learning and prepare for new learning. The lack of use of ICT as a teaching aid limits learning in many subjects. The teaching of English is good overall and very good in Years 10 and 11. The department is successfully introducing the New Framework for English and each lesson

begins with a short starter activity and ends with a review of the objectives for the lessons. In mathematics, teaching has improved since the last inspection. It is now good, and sometimes very good. The pace of lessons is well matched to the needs of pupils in different groups. Teaching is also good in science, where very good support and encouragement is given that helps learning.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a mainly broad and balanced curriculum at all stages. It meets statutory requirements except that there is insufficient time for religious education in Years 10 and 11, and insufficient use is made of ICT in subjects. Careers and PSHE education are very good as, too, is the contribution from the community.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Pupils with SEN, and their parents, are well provided for through the learning support department. In class support is well organised and effective.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall this is good. There is a very good personal and social education programme. Provision for moral and social development is good. Opportunities for cultural and spiritual development are satisfactory. Multi-cultural provision is less evident.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare are very good. The school has a caring and supportive ethos that is valued by both parents and pupils. Educational and personal support is good.

The school keeps parents informed about activities through a fortnightly newsletter. It is generally successful in involving them in their child's education through, for example, the pupils' homework diary.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and senior staff work hard to maintain the ethos and smooth running of the school. They give clear educational direction. The senior staff ensures that there is a strong focus on the aims and values of the school. In some areas however, there is a need for a stronger focus to realise aspirations.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors work effectively and fulfil nearly all their responsibilities. The two main committees make a significant contribution to monitoring the school's work. They play a good and appropriate role in monitoring the school and helping to shape its future.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Overall this is satisfactory with some elements, such as the annual analysis of examination results and departmental review, being good.
The strategic use of resources	The aims of the school and the school development plan provide a very clear focus for the work of the school and together they successfully drive the use of resources. The principles of best value are applied well.

There are adequate and suitably qualified staff who are highly committed to the success of the school. Aspects of the accommodation are poor; in particular the design and technology area, physical education changing facilities, the library and some science accommodation. These deficiencies impact negatively on standards. The key learning resource that is inadequate is in ICT; otherwise resources are generally adequate. Very good use is made of community resources in a variety of ways, including visits and visiting speakers.

## **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 fact that their child is made to work hard;</li> <li>• they feel comfortable approaching the school;</li> <li>• their child is making progress;</li> <li>• the teaching is good.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the range of activities outside lessons;</li> <li>• to be better informed about how their child is getting on;</li> <li>• to see a closer working relationship with parents;</li> <li>• for their child to get the right amount of work at home.</li> </ul>

The inspection team wholeheartedly supports the views of parents in respect of those features which they feel are positive. Inspectors also feel that the school is doing as much as can be expected in those areas where approximately a fifth of parents would like to see improvement. The range of clubs and extra curricular activities is limited by the size of school and by pupils' dependence on school transport. However, inspectors consider the commitment of teachers to be very high and are impressed by the support they give pupils outside of school time and the visits and residential programme they organise. Inspectors feel that through the fortnightly newsletter parents receive, through the PTA, and with the facility to communicate through the pupils' diaries, parents have ample opportunity to become involved in their child's education and to work with the school. Also, homework is well established as part of the learning in the school and through the homework diary and teachers' marking, parents are able to see how their child is getting on. Inspectors do recognise however, that marking is inconsistent in quality and frequency and the school needs to address this issue.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Most pupils' level of attainment on entry to the school is at or above that expected nationally, as judged by National Curriculum tests taken in Year 6. This is further confirmed by the school's own standardised testing. However, the relatively small intake means that there are fluctuations from year to year. Also, as the school is in a selective system, pupils of higher attainment are not so well represented. Further, there is a significant minority of pupils with special educational needs and others who need support with reading. This latter group is identified by the school through testing on arrival and given appropriate help.

2. In National Curriculum tests in the core subjects at the end of Year 9 in 2000, the proportion of pupils reaching level 5, or greater, was above the national average in mathematics and science and well above in English. The proportion reaching higher levels in English was well above the national average, above in mathematics, and close to the average in science. When pupils' levels are converted to points for comparative purposes, their average National Curriculum score was well above the national average overall. When compared with schools with a similar number of pupils eligible for free school meals, performance was above average and when compared to other secondary modern schools it is achieving in the top five percent of those schools nationally. The trend in improvement over the last 3 years in the school's average National Curriculum points score is broadly in line with the national trend. Based on those same average points scores over a three year period both, boys and girls achieve above the national average; girls by a greater margin than boys but there are variations each year.

3. The provisional results in the 2001 national tests for 14 year olds show further improvement in mathematics and science, but a drop in English for those achieving level 5 and above. All core subjects achieved above the 2000 national average. There was also an improvement in the percentage of pupils achieving level 6 or above in mathematics. The school's own analysis of individual pupil improvement from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 indicates that the greatest gains for this cohort was in mathematics. This reflects the good teaching and careful monitoring of pupil progress reported in this subject.

4. Based on teacher assessments made this year and confirmed during inspection, standards in geography and modern foreign languages are also well above what is expected of pupils aged 14 and in many others subjects they are above average. In music and art, standards are at the expected level. Only in Information and communication technology (ICT) are assessments slightly below expectation and this is due to a lack of provision. In most subjects over Years 7 to 9 pupils achieve well as a result of good teaching.

5. Pupils with special education needs make good progress across all years. The reading tests administered twice each year successfully keep progress under scrutiny. The battery of efficient assessments, used when pupils enter the school, identifies learning and personal deficiencies and individual educational plans are drawn up to help meet those needs. This detailed, sensitive record keeping and subsequent action, develop targets that ensure pupils make appropriate progress. Pupils with special needs are well integrated into the main school and only withdrawn from class at times when individual support is the best course of action for that pupil. Teachers use their informed knowledge of pupils' needs, work closely with their learning support assistant, and use well constructed individual education action plans, so that time given to in-class support is used effectively. Standards achieved by these pupils are in line with pupils' individual education plans. Pupils with

statements of special need have carefully matched and regularly monitored attainment reviews to help ensure progress.

6. Pupils' standards of attainment by the age of 16 are above the national average. The proportion of pupils obtaining five or more grades A\*-C has risen since the last inspection, with the exception of 1998 when there was a dip. In 2000 and again in 2001, 56 per cent of pupils gained five or more higher grades. This is above the national average and exceeded the school's target. The proportion of pupils obtaining five or more grades at A\*-G has been consistently above the national average since the last inspection. In 2001 it reached 100 per cent for the first time. The total average point score per pupil has been below the national average over recent years. This figure is influenced in part by the number of subjects pupils are entered for and in this school it is lower than in many comprehensive schools. However, in 2001 the fact that all pupils achieved at least five A\*-G grades and more pupils studied an additional subject, has taken the total average point score above the 2000 national average. Boys achieve less well in relation to boys nationally than girls do in relation to their peers. Both are close to the national average.

7. When the school's results at age 16 are compared with all schools nationally, pupils are achieving better than most in respect of those who gain five or more A\*-C grades. They are broadly in line in respect of five or more A\*-G grades and average point scores. The improvement trend in the school's average National Curriculum point score is broadly in line with the national trend. When compared with schools in a similar context, based on either free school meals or the performance of pupils in tests at 14, the school is average in respect of five or more A\*-C grades but well below on the other two indicators. However, when compared with other secondary modern schools it achieves well above average on the higher grade indicator and above average in respect of A\*-G grades and average point scores.

8. Pupils achieve well, over Years 10 and 11, in most subjects. Progress is reflected in the examination results in 2000, where the percentage of pupils gaining grades A\*-C in the core subjects was above the national average in English, mathematics and science. They were also above average in art, dance, design and technology, English literature, French and history. The French, science and mathematics results are particularly good. Results were slightly below average in geography, drama, music and Spanish. In 2001 there were significant improvement in drama, geography and Spanish. The percentage achieving grades A\*-G was above the national average in the core subjects and in art, design and technology and geography. Within design and technology subjects, pupils achieve well in food and resistant materials but graphics is below average. Pupils' best results in 2000, compared to their achievements in other subjects, were in French and science. The weakest were in English literature and graphics where pupils achieve approximately one grade less than in other subjects.

9. The school has for the last few years had a strong focus on improving literacy skills in all subjects and this has had a positive effect on standards. All departments have taken responsibility for vocabulary work in their subjects; subject-specific words and phrases are prominently displayed and referred to in many lessons. Several subjects, notably design and technology, geography, religious education and modern languages, have developed structured prompt sheets to support essay writing. In addition to the daily time spent reading in tutor groups, there is, from time to time throughout the year, a whole school focus on reading. The most recent emphasis has been on structures for oral work and already this has made an impact on work in science. As a result of these efforts literacy skills are generally good across the school.

10. The focus on numeracy is at a more developmental stage. Many lessons in mathematics include activities designed to increase pupils' confidence when handling

number. Appropriate use of number is made in a number of subjects such as, science, geography and design and technology. In ICT lessons pupils can confidently handle number when using spreadsheets and databases. In many other subjects there is little evidence of the use of numeracy and in some cases opportunities for its use are missed. However, there is no evidence from inspection of poor numeracy skills impeding the progress of pupils in any subject. Nevertheless the school recognises that further work is required if numeracy is to be fully integrated and utilised across all subjects.

11. In English pupils make good progress through the first three years at the school. By the age of 14 they have improved from being at the national average on entry to being well above. There is a strong focus in all lessons on the learning and appropriate use of new vocabulary which improves reading levels and writing skills. The course places strong emphasis on critical analysis of the texts read and on how the pupils themselves write, with the result that pupils' written work is not only correctly expressed but also has clear shape and structure. Progress continues through Years 10 and 11. Written coursework shows a growing control of language. Folders of pupils in Year 11 are well organised, with work of substantial length, and they show very clearly the progress made since the start of Key Stage 4. This standard is reflected in improved English language GCSE results, which have risen over the last five years. The attainment of girls continues to be well above national averages, but that of the boys is lower, with a far wider distance between girls and boys than that nationally. Results in English literature are also well above national averages. In drama, results are above average and work seen during the inspection was good.

12. Standards of work in mathematics are above the average. Standards improve from being at the expected level in Year 7 to being above expectation by the end of Year 9. Although there is wide variation in the standards of work produced by pupils in many groups, the majority has a good understanding of aspects across the requirements. Most pupils show an increasing confidence when handling number in a variety of contexts. They also show a good understanding of shape, space and measures and when using and applying mathematics. Throughout Years 10 and 11 standards of work seen in classes are well above the national average. The majority of pupils show increasing confidence in working towards the GCSE examination.

13. In the work seen in science lessons, the quality again reflects the most recent results in tests and examinations. In the work of pupils aged 13 and 14, most are fully aware of the meaning of fair tests, prediction requirements are clear, and pupils are competent in handling equipment safely. Pupils have an equally clear knowledge of the three areas; living processes, materials and physical processes, and this has a good impact on overall understanding. The work of pupils in Years 10 and 11 indicates knowledge and understanding that is above the national average equally in all attainment targets of the science curriculum. Most pupils are clear about the abstract concepts used in chemical structure and reactions. The good level of numerical analysis has a strong impact on achievement in scientific enquiry. Work continues to be clearly presented and set out with increasing sophistication.

14. The overall picture is one of steady improvement in standards year on year. This is as a result of a focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning and of improved subject management. The school's analysis of its data, supplemented by the analysis provided through a commercial data system, indicates that it is adding value to pupils' achievement as they move through the school. Where standards are weaker, as for example, in ICT and graphics, the reasons are related to inadequate resources. Improvement in monitoring and the better use of data at departmental level has the potential to raise standards further.

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

15. The quality of relationships across the school is excellent and pupils' attitudes to the school and their personal development are very good. Their behaviour and the level of attendance are good. These factors all contribute positively to the good standards and achievements attained by the pupils.

16. Pupils' attitudes are very good. They are keen to come to school and on arrival settle down quickly in the classroom to await registration. Pupils show interest in school life and become involved in the activities that the school provides. Although a small but significant number of parents, in their answers to the parent questionnaires, indicated that their child did not like coming to school, this was not evident on observation in the classroom and around the school. Pupils interviewed were positive about the school and justly proud of it.

17. Behaviour, in the classroom and outside it, is good overall. Classroom observations indicated that behaviour varied between good and very good with very few instances where it was unsatisfactory. Behaviour around the school, in the corridors, in the lunch hall and outside was also good. Pupils are polite, holding doors open for each other and for adults. They also use phrases like "thank you" and "excuse me". A group of parents interviewed said that the school is often complemented on the good behaviour of pupils during outside visits. Although, overall, behaviour is good, there are a small number of disaffected pupils, who, unless managed appropriately, can cause disruption in the classroom and interfere with the learning of the majority. The number of exclusions, both permanent and fixed term, has been greatly reduced since the last inspection, the school preferring to use its own internal strategies. No bullying or oppressive behaviour was observed and pupils say that it is not a problem and if it does occur the school deals with it promptly. Parents confirm this view.

18. Pupils' personal development is very good. They have a very good understanding of the impact of their actions on others and learn to respect each other's values and beliefs. This was seen in assemblies, tutor time and in personal and social education lessons across the school. Observation of a school council meeting showed that pupils of all ages get a chance to have their say, while others listen with respect. A senior pupil, acting as chairman, ensured that this meeting was carried out in an orderly manner, exercising his authority and aided by an appropriate use of humour. Relationships across the school between pupils and between pupils and adults are excellent. In lessons, pupils work well together in pairs and small groups. Examples of this were observed in many lessons where they support one another and respect each other's capabilities, helping to promote a positive learning atmosphere as well as enabling all to progress. In lessons and other contexts pupils speak warmly of the ease with which they can approach teachers for help and support.

19. Pupils take responsibility very well and are prepared to take initiative. This increases as pupils get older, but pupils are given responsibility from the start of their time at the school. In Year 7, for example, they take messages, have classroom monitors, who collect books and record those collected and help with other administrative tasks. All pupils are now involved in setting their own targets with the help of their form teacher and their parents. The school has an effective prefect system but it is a little disappointing that prefects are selected solely by the staff, with no pupil input. In lessons, when pupils are given responsibility, as for example in dance, where they are involved in planning, choreography and performance, they enhance their personal development as learners.

20. The level of pupils' attendance at the school is good. Over the last few years it has been consistently about or just above the national average with a very low level of unauthorised absence. Pupils arrive at school on time with a very low incidence of

lateness, except when there is a “breakdown” in the transport system, such as trains and buses arriving late. The good level of attendance and the prompt arrival of pupils at school and to lessons have a positive impact on pupils’ attainment and progress.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

21. The quality of teaching and learning is good in all years and it has significantly improved since the last inspection. This improvement has come about as a result of a focus, reflected in the school development plan and in the in-service training programme, on improving teaching and learning. Teaching now is good or better in over three quarters of lessons. In a quarter it is very good or excellent, which is a higher proportion than in many schools. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. Teaching is slightly better at Key Stage 3 than at Key Stage 4 although there are proportionately more very good and excellent lessons at Key Stage 4, where there is a higher incidence of very good and excellent teaching. Examples of very good or excellent lessons were seen in nearly every subject area in the school.

22. In Years 7 to 9, the quality of teaching and learning is very good in geography. It is good in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, history, modern languages, physical education and religious education, and satisfactory in all other subjects. In Years 10 and 11 teaching and learning remains very good in geography but also in English, history and modern foreign languages. It is good in all other subjects except art and music, where it is satisfactory. The overall effect of improving quality has been to raise the achievement of pupils over their time in the school.

23. Teachers have a good command of their subjects and as a result are able to convey their enthusiasm and motivate pupils. This is particularly commendable in a school where nearly two thirds of teachers are teaching more than one subject. At Key Stage 4 teachers' thorough knowledge and understanding of their subject is particularly strong in geography, history and modern foreign languages, where it has a direct effect on the very good learning in those subjects.

24. The management of pupils, and of their learning, is strength in many lessons. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and there is a great deal of trust between them. Teachers spend a considerable amount of time supporting and encouraging pupils to do well, which helps to raise their confidence. This is particularly true of those pupils with special educational needs. These pupils are well supported either by learning support assistants who work closely with the teacher or as a result of the teacher's own awareness of their needs. Behaviour is generally good in all lessons; even in classes with pupils with particular behavioural problems. Where there is no support available for these pupils, behaviour problems are not diffused as quickly, as seen in Year 9 graphics lessons.

25. Teachers' planning to ensure effective learning has improved since the last inspection. At its best it results in lessons where pupils know exactly what they are expected to learn during the lesson and the structured activities are appropriate to their needs and enables them to make progress. In these situations the pace of learning is good and pupils gain in knowledge and understanding. At the end of these lessons both pupils and teachers are aware of what has been achieved. Lessons of this quality were seen in English, geography, history and modern foreign languages. For example, in a Year 9 Spanish lesson, the teacher discussed lesson objectives with pupils and at the end of the lesson pupils enthusiastically demonstrated the Spanish they had learned.

26. Another strength of teaching and learning in many subjects is the way that homework is integrated into the whole learning process. This is particularly strong in English, mathematics, modern foreign languages and religious education. In most other subjects it is good but more inconsistent in science and design technology. Homework tasks are used to help pupils develop independence in learning, to reinforce the work covered and to

prepare for further learning. Although there are some inconsistencies, parents should be reassured that overall homework is making a good contribution to learning.

27. The quality and frequency of marking and on-going assessment vary across and within subjects. Overall it is satisfactory. There is very good practice in mathematics and modern foreign languages where pupils' progress is carefully tracked and the pupils themselves know how to improve through, for example, the regular and high quality marking of their work. It is, however, unsatisfactory in art and not as strong as it could be in subjects such as, English at Key Stage 3, science, geography, music and ICT.

28. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good for those withdrawn for specialist help. Both learning support teachers and assistants know the pupils well and plan their sessions to ensure that they are fully engaged in learning. The needs of pupils, as identified on their individual education plans, are fully addressed and records are kept on their progress towards their targets. In ordinary lessons teachers are generally aware of these very comprehensive plans and most use them to inform their teaching. Learning support assistants work well with teachers to support pupils and are often fully integrated into the lesson, which enables these pupils to progress well. The level of dialogue between teacher and assistant is generally good, although no specific time for joint planning is scheduled.

29. The school has been developing a strategy for improving literacy across the curriculum for the last two years. In a majority of subjects this is making a significant contribution to raising standards. In English, design and technology, modern foreign languages and religious education the impact of good practice is very strong. In these subjects pupils are encouraged, for example, to use and spell specialist terminology accurately, are provided with clear frameworks for different writing forms and are helped to express themselves clearly orally. A policy is developing so that at present practice is inconsistent but there is no subject where the teaching of literacy skills can be judged unsatisfactory. Teaching to develop skills with number is not so well developed but plans are in place to make this a focus in the near future. Subjects such as, science, art and ICT need to provide a stronger focus on the development of one or both of these skills.

30. The one serious deficiency in the teaching and learning is in the use of ICT where, due in part to a lack of resources and to a lack of teacher expertise, it is not being used as it should be.

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

31. The school's curriculum overall, provides pupils with a good range of learning opportunities. However, at present there is insufficient use of ICT in National Curriculum subjects and insufficient time for religious education in Key Stage 4 so that it does not meet statutory requirements.

32. The National Curriculum subjects and personal, social and health education are taught at both key stages. The Agreed Syllabus for religious education is taught at Key Stage 3, but for the majority of Key Stage 4 pupils there is insufficient teaching time for its requirements to be met. Although there are lessons to teach the knowledge and skills of ICT in each year, pupils do not have enough opportunity to make enough use of these skills to improve their learning in other subjects. In Key Stage 4, there are vocational courses for a small number of carefully selected pupils who would find it difficult to sustain the workload of a full GCSE course. A priority in the school development plan is to

investigate the possibility of introducing vocational courses that will be of relevance to a larger number of pupils.

33. The curriculum meets the interests, aptitudes and needs of all pupils. There is good provision for those with special educational needs. These pupils are well integrated into the main school and only withdrawn from class at times when one-to-one help is the best course of action. In lessons they are well supported by learning support assistants. Lunchtime clubs encourage pupils with special need to take up extra spelling and literacy in positive paired work using commercially developed worksheets. There is, however, limited use for these pupils of ICT and no introduction of independent learning systems to further promote their basic skills. A few Year 11 pupils do have additional useful basic and study skills support to prepare them for examinations.

34. The school has worked hard to develop a good strategy for teaching literacy skills in all subjects. The highly committed literacy co-ordinator has organised training for the whole staff and has set in motion a number of practical approaches. Subject-specific words and phrases are prominently displayed and referred to in many lessons. Several departments, such as, design and technology and geography, have developed structured prompt sheets to support pupils' essay writing. There is a strong focus on reading, including a weekly reading time spent in tutor groups. The most recent emphasis has been on structures for oral work and already this has made an impact on work in science. One of the strands to be developed this year is the use of marking and response to pupils' work which is inconsistent at present.

35. The school also has a good plan for teaching numeracy skills through subjects other than mathematics, but its implementation is at an early stage. Many lessons, particularly in the early years, include activities designed to increase pupils' confidence when handling number. A numeracy working party has recently been formed and a development plan agreed. The mathematics department has undertaken an audit of numeracy use and the requirements for number skills in subjects. Appropriate use of number is evident in a number of subjects, such as, science, geography, design and technology, and ICT. In many other subjects, however, there is little evidence of use of numeracy and in some cases missed opportunities for its use. But there is no evidence of poor numeracy skills impeding the progress of pupils in any subject.

36. The pupils' learning opportunities are effectively enriched by extra-curricular activities. The concerns of some parents about the breadth of extra curricular activities are not shared by inspectors. Study support is provided for GCSE revision in several subjects and through the learning support department. The library is staffed each lunchtime and there are plans to extend this to one hour after school. There is a large-scale musical production every two years which involves English, music, drama and dance. Pupils have excellent opportunities for residential experience in Britain and other parts of Europe. About three quarters of pupils from Years 7 to 10 are involved in this each year. There is a good range of competitive matches in a variety of sports and more than one-third of pupils represent the school in competitive matches.

37. There is a very good comprehensive programme for personal, social and health education that includes sex education, education about the misuse of drugs, health education and citizenship. A particular strength of this well taught course is the major contribution made by outside agencies and speakers. There is a very good programme of careers education that runs from Years 9 to 11. In Key Stage 4, there is effective specialist teaching. The teaching of careers education is supported by very good learning resources including ICT. Each pupil in Year 10 has a well-planned fortnight of work experience.

38. The school has worked hard to form good relationships with partner schools and colleges, which contribute to pupils' learning. For example, there is a curriculum project with three of the primary schools that send pupils to the school. This project is in its third year and the work involves teachers from several subjects collaborating with primary

colleagues. This contributes to pupils' progression in learning from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3. Pupils are well informed about their choices when they leave the school. There are particularly effective links with the three Post 16 institutions that most pupils transfer to one of these. Other links with the local community also make important contributions to pupils' learning. Many organisations and individuals contribute to a range of courses including the vocational courses and religious education.

39. The school has made a good start to the introduction of the National Strategy to raise standards at Key Stage 3. The strategies for improving English and mathematics are being taught in Year 7. The progress units to help lower-attaining pupils improve their English will be taught to targeted pupils after half term, and those to improve mathematics are already being taught to the lower attaining pupils. Steps have already been taken to improve pupils' thinking skills.

40. Since the last inspection, the school has made satisfactory improvements to its curriculum. The weekly teaching time has been increased and now meets the minimum recommended time at Key Stage 4. Detailed schemes of work have been written for each subject. The work set for the top two sets is now sufficiently challenging, although the highest-attaining pupils in these sets for science and art are not always challenged enough. The management of homework continues to be a strength. The timetabling of personal, social and health education no longer limit its potential. However, there is still insufficient teaching time for the religious education course for all pupils in Key Stage 4. There are also some anomalies in the timetable that are not helpful, such as classes taught by two teachers in the same subject.

41. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. The ethos of the school contributes significantly to moral development. Good classroom practice and behaviour management gives clear signals to pupils about right and wrong. Many subjects, such as English, mathematics, history and religious education, take opportunities to involve pupils in discussing topics that raise moral issues. For example, in a very good Year 11 history lesson issues surrounding the Northern Ireland conflict were clearly understood.

42. Provision for social development is also good. In the classroom, teachers encourage the pupils to learn from and help each other when they participate in collaborative work. Teachers provide very good role models in developing excellent relationships with pupils. Pupils have opportunity to influence the quality of provision through an effective school council. Charity events, organised through the year system, develop a sense of social responsibility. Older pupils support younger ones in, for example, the support offered for anyone concerned about bullying.

43. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory overall. There is provision in subjects such as art, music, geography, religious education, and modern foreign languages, each making a very significant contribution. The programme of extra curricular activities also makes a good contribution. The school has recently been awarded an Arts Mark by the Arts Council of England, and this recognises the school's commitment to that area and this too contributes to this aspect. However, there is still a need for further development, particularly in providing greater opportunity for pupils to appreciate the richness of non western cultures.

44. Provision for spiritual development, whilst satisfactory, remains less well developed. Most subjects have no planned provision and hence opportunities for reflection on ultimate questions are missed. Assemblies are well planned around a theme for the week and are worthwhile occasions but they do not always constitute an act of worship nor do they

always contribute to spiritual provision. There are, however, some good opportunities provided in religious education and English literature.

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

45. The school's procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare are very good. The monitoring of pupils' academic performance and personal development, and the educational and personal support and guidance provided for pupils, are good. Pupils receive their education in a secure and caring environment.

46. The school has proper child protection procedures in place with a policy in line with that of the local authority's Social Services department. The staff is aware of the proper procedures and designated staff appropriately trained. There is good liaison across the school's pastoral staff, with the heads of year usually attending review meetings for pupils on the at risk register. The school has a good relationship with the County Council's Social Services department but difficulties are sometimes experienced for pupils who are out of County. In these instances relationships are usually good once a pupil's designated social worker has been identified.

47. There are very good arrangements for ensuring pupils' welfare. There is a senior member of staff responsible for health and safety and conscientious monitoring at governor level. An appropriate number of members of staff have first-aid qualifications. Accidents are recorded meticulously and the accident files are scrutinised by the governing body. Risk assessment is carried out across departments and for school visits. Before a school visit takes place, the member of staff responsible carries out a visit and assesses potential risks. Two incidents occurred during the inspection, which highlighted the school's efficiency in handling matters of health and safety. The first took place when the caretaker identified an area of concern within the accommodation. The deputy headteacher was informed and the health and safety department of the local authority was notified immediately. The second involved a potential medical emergency. Proper procedures were followed and an ambulance was called.

48. The school has very good procedures for monitoring and improving attendance. The registers are computerised and registration takes place promptly in both the mornings and afternoons. Teachers also call the register at the start of each lesson. Non-attendance is quickly followed up and lateness is also effectively dealt with.

49. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and for eliminating oppressive behaviour are very good. The school's behaviour policy is based on a very good system of rewards and sanctions, which the pupils fully understand. This was seen in use during lesson observations and around the school. The school's policy on bullying is incorporated in the behaviour policy and is supported by the pupils. There is also a bullying clinic for pupils, who need it. While there is a small number of pupils with behavioural problems, these are usually dealt with appropriately and effectively so that very few lessons are disrupted.

50. There is a good pastoral system in place, based on the form tutors and heads of year, all of whom now move up through the school with the same class and year groups, consequently they get to know their pupils very well. The system is effectively managed by two heads of school. Careful records are kept on all aspects of a pupil's progress. Pupils are well supported through a very good personal and social education programme, which includes sex and drugs education as well as issues such as road safety. For example in one lesson observed, Year 11 pupils were shown a video on dangerous driving, followed by a discussion on the appropriate punishment for motorists convicted of reckless driving. Pupils at the start of Year 7 undergo a very supportive and much appreciated induction programme.

51. Although basic procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are good, there is a lack of consistency in the use of assessment data across departments. Its use in informing curriculum planning and teaching, and in helping to set individual and group targets, requires improvement in many departments. However, a range of assessment data, including national tests, is now beginning to be used effectively to monitor the progress of individuals and groups of pupils in some subjects. Progress days have been introduced and these provide good opportunities for parents and pupils to meet with form tutors to review progress and to set future targets. The use of value added data, the identification of under-achieving pupils, and target setting, are in their infancy in a number of departments. The school recognises that the consistent use of assessment data across all departments continues to be a key point for action.

52. Annual reports are of good quality and record pupils' attainment according to National Curriculum levels for all subjects. The school is planning to make increasing use of National Curriculum levels in the recording and reporting of attainment levels.

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

53. The parents' views of the school are good. The effectiveness of the school's links with parents and the impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school are both satisfactory.

54. Overall parents' views of the school, as expressed in the answers to the questionnaires and at the parents' meeting, are positive. Ninety per cent or more thought that their child made good progress at the school, that the teaching is good, that the school expects pupils to work hard and that they would have no difficulty approaching the school with problems. However, a significant minority of parents did not feel well enough informed about their child's progress, felt that the school did not work closely enough with parents and that it did not provide a wide enough range of outside activities. At the parents' meeting, however, parents said that the extra-curricular activities were a strength of the school and praised the staff's commitment: a view with which inspectors would concur. Also at the meeting five parents, who had children at the school at the time of the last inspection, said that the school had improved and inspection evidence confirms this.

55. The school provides a wide range of good quality information for a parent that includes information required by statute. It sends out regular fortnightly newsletters, which are well presented and keep parents informed about what is going on at the school. Pupils' annual reports are detailed, fulfil statutory requirements as well as informing parents about pupils' academic progress, the National Curriculum levels reached, and future targets for improvement. There are good termly opportunities for parents to see individual subject teachers as well as form tutors and heads of year. The school does the best it can to involve parents in the school and its activities.

56. Parents make a good contribution to the work of pupils at school and at home. Some parents come into the school to support pupils' activities. For example a father, whose work has international links, comes to talk to Year 11 pupils on interview techniques. Some persuade their employers to provide resources for the school, such as paper. There is a small but active parent teacher association which raises funds for the school - on average about £4000-5000 a year. Parents make a good contribution to pupils' work by their good attendance at open evenings as well as the support they provide in seeing that pupils' complete their homework. They see pupils' diaries as an effective way of seeing how pupils are progressing both from an academic and pastoral point of view.

57. Parents and carers of pupils with special educational needs are actively encouraged to be involved in their child's education. They respond well and most attend the Annual Review meetings and make contact at other times. Their positive contributions about development outside school further enhance the schools provision. The SENCO works very hard with heads of year to support pupils without immediate family networks and ensure their needs are addressed.

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

58. Overall, the leadership and management of the school are satisfactory with much that is good. There is a clear focus on meeting the aims of the school and maintaining the strong caring ethos which is one of its strengths. There is a clear commitment to improvement and much evidence of success since the last inspection. However, where it is less successful is in respect of monitoring and evaluating its own performance. Progress on two of the issues identified in the last report has been slow and this has had an effect on the overall quality and standards being achieved.

59. The headteacher provides clear, positive leadership. Since his appointment in 1996, he has worked successfully, in a measured way, to raise the quality of provision and standards of achievement. There are clear strategies for bringing together the school improvement plan and for ensuring its successful implementation and review. Until a year ago, the focus on improving the quality of teaching was particularly successful. With the extended management team, which he established after his appointment, he ensures that the school retains a focus on its core values and aims. The team work hard as individuals to ensure the smooth running of the school but the time given to strategic issues is more limited and issues from the last inspection have not yet been fully resolved. The regular and systematic monitoring of the quality of teaching is no longer happening even though it has been a key contributor to improvement in the past. The effective use of data to assist the management of learning is also still at a developmental stage.

60. The quality of leadership and management at subject, pastoral, and administrative levels is good overall and has a positive effect on the quality of provision and standards achieved. For example, changes in the leadership of a number of subject departments, is having a significant impact on raising standards. However, expectations about induction of new teachers, the level of support to effect change, and provision to develop professionally have not yet been realised.

61. The governors are highly committed to the school and they now have a clear view of their role. They share a clear understanding of the school's values and aims, and play a full part in school development planning. They have established small but very effective committees that enable them to work in partnership with the staff and these provide them with a good level of awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses. One committee monitors the finances of the school and another focuses on curriculum related matters. Individual governors take responsibility for aspects of the school development plan. They have a high degree of trust in the headteacher and senior staff, with whom they have good working relationships. They fulfil most of their statutory responsibilities, except that there is insufficient time to meet the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus for religious education in Key Stage 4, nor is there a daily act of collective worship for all pupils. Also, there is, at present, insufficient provision for ICT in all subjects.

62. Management of special educational needs is very good. The aims of the department are well supported by the line manager plus the very active special needs governor. The recent reorganisation of the department is working well. The shared management responsibility between the special needs co-ordinator and her two teacher managers gives

clarity to the management. The division of the learning support assistants into discrete teams, with specific responsibility is improving the service. Information sharing is effective and provides a most responsive service to pupils, teachers and parents or carers. There is, however, limited time for the special needs co-ordinator to gain an overview of the department and strategically monitor and manage change because she has a range of other responsibilities.

63. The school's income per pupil is broadly average compared with other schools nationally. Through careful financial planning, the school successfully manages its budget to provide a good quality education. The school's educational priorities are very well supported through its financial planning, which is closely linked to the school's development plan. When drawing up the estimate for each new financial year, the school bears in mind the priorities agreed with the Finance and General Purposes committee of the governing body. Specific grants, such as that for special educational needs, are always used for their designated purposes. Direct grants are used for those areas, which the school has identified as priorities for development, although last year a part of it had to be used to balance the budget.

64. The governors and senior managers practice the principles of best value. They consult, make decisions in the light of evidence, and seek competitive tenders where appropriate. For example, a new school cleaning contract has improved standards in that area and an arrangement with a local coach company for the provision of a school mini-bus is proving cost effective. The finance officer provides very good support on a day-to-day basis and works closely with both the deputy headteacher and the governors. The school makes effective use of new technology for administrative purposes. Overall the financial control is very secure.

65. In general, there are a sufficient number of appropriately qualified and experienced teachers to meet the needs of the curriculum. The provision of learning support staff is generally adequate and certainly effective. In design and technology, the technical support assistant provides valuable help to the department both in the classroom and as a contact for suppliers. By contrast, there is insufficient support in ICT and in the development and running of the library.

66. Newly qualified teachers are well supported with a programme of personal and professional guidance, including frequent meetings with a senior member of staff. By contrast, there is no formal monitoring of the welfare and professional development of teachers new to the school, and support is uneven throughout the school. Continuing professional development opportunities are limited at present in some areas by inadequate provision of funds: for example in art, history and religious education. The day-to-day running of the school is enhanced by an effective team of administrative support staff who, like all the staff in the school, are highly committed to its success.

67. The quality of the accommodation in curriculum areas is variable and in some there are serious deficiencies. The external fabric of the building is attractive and the entrance hall welcoming. The school benefits from a large pleasant site, which includes a conservation area that is shared with local primary schools. Rooms used for history, geography and religious education, for example, are light and open, well furnished and recently decorated. In design and technology, the facilities are cramped, old fashioned and unsuitable for modern technology. The graphics area is particularly poor and leads to depressed standards. Some areas have insufficient appropriate space. In music, for example, there is only one practice room and that is in a noisy area. There are insufficient science laboratories with one in particular being in need of urgent refurbishment. Conditions in the physical education changing rooms are poor, with no proper arrangements for privacy. Outdoor facilities for physical education are good. Maintaining

cleanliness in some areas is a problem. For example, the floor surfaces in the gym still have old chewing gum in

evidence. Litter is often seen across an otherwise pleasant site. The library is small and in a noisy location. Currently there is only one ICT room and this limits access for many groups. The school has attempted to improve some of these facilities but most require capital expenditure and requires major works commissioned by the Local Authority.

68. In some areas there are significant deficiencies in learning resources. The library, for example, is currently under resourced and under used. The book stock is below recommendations, there are no facilities for accessing information through information technology and magazines to stimulate interest are limited. Currently there is a limited amount of unqualified library assistance and the overall management is in the hands of a busy head of department. In spite of the best efforts of the staff concerned, it does not play the part it should in pupils' learning. Planned improvements will go some way to address these issues. The level of computing resources is too low to ensure delivery of ICT in subjects or give appropriate levels of access to classes or individual pupils in a central resource. Again, there are plans to improve provision. In most other respects resources are adequate to meet the requirements of the curriculum.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

69. In order to further improve the quality of education and the standards achieved, the governors and senior staff should focus on, and take action to:

- Establish a consistent and rigorous system for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning by senior and middle managers by:
  - \* Making a clear distinction in policy documents between performance management that focuses on the professional development of the individual and monitoring that focuses on school and departmental development.
  - \* Resume implementing the policy and procedures for classroom observation that operated up to 2000 which clearly helped improve quality.
  - \* Setting targets for middle and senior manager that will ensure regular monitoring of quality.
  - \* Scheduling in opportunities for middle managers to observe all their teachers over time.
- Make adequate provision for ICT to be used effectively in all subjects according to statutory requirements and for pupils to have easy access to resources by:
  - \* Completing the current target in the school development plan to ensure all staff have appropriate training and gain confidence in the use of ICT.
  - \* Planning to ensure adequate provision of hardware and access for all pupils to suitable software including the library.
  - \* Monitoring and evaluate developments to ensure compliance with new requirements and advice.
- Ensure the consistent use of assessment data by teachers, to inform curriculum planning and delivery, and to help set individual and group targets by:
  - \* Training all staff to interpret data appropriately.
  - \* Providing ICT to enable teachers to track pupils' progress easily.
  - \* Ensuring heads of department know and understand national benchmarks and judge their subject's performance in the light of these.
  - \* Monitoring the use and application of data in respect of curriculum and lesson planning and target setting.
- Take appropriate action in respect of religious education in Key Stage 4 for all pupils, to comply with statutory requirements and strengthen provision for both spiritual development and pupils' understanding of the richness and diversity of other cultures.

70. In addition the governors and senior managers should also consider what action to take to address the following matters raised in the report:

- \* The consistency of marking.
- \* Provision for spiritual and multi-cultural development.
- \* Monitoring and support for new teachers.
- \* Improving opportunities for the professional development of staff.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	130
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	46

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	6	26	67	31	0	0	0
Percentage	5	20	51	24	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	<b>Y7– Y11</b>
Number of pupils on the school's roll	587
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	34

<b>Special educational needs</b>	<b>Y7– Y11</b>
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	16
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	140

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

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school Year</b>	<b>No of pupils</b>
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.8
National comparative data	7.7

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
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 (Year 9)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year:	<b>Year</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Total</b>
	2000	59	55	114

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 5 and above	Boys	49	44	42
	Girls	53	39	38
	Total	102	83	80
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	School	89 (80)	73 (70)	76 (67)
	National	64 (64)	66 (63)	60 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 6 or above	School	60 (42)	46 (39)	31 (24)
	National	24 (23)	38 (35)	26 (20)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 5 and above	Boys	42	45	43
	Girls	48	43	45
	Total	90	88	88
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	School	79 (81)	77 (70)	77 (65)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 6 or above	School	34 (42)	40 (39)	25 (23)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (28)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 (Year 11)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year:	<b>Year</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Total</b>
	2000	59	53	112

GCSE results		5 or more grades A*-C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	31	53	56
	Girls	33	51	52
	Total	64	104	108
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	56 (49)	93 (94)	96 (94)
	National	47 (47)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	36.7 (35.9)
	National	38.4 (37.8)

*Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.*

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications	School	N/A	N/A

or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	National		N/A
---	----------	--	-----

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	<b>No of pupils</b>
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	5
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	4
White	572
Any other minority ethnic group	0

### ***Exclusions in the last school Year***

	<b>Fixed period</b>	<b>Permanent</b>
Black – Caribbean heritage	1	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	30	1
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–Y11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	34.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17:1

#### **Education support staff:**

##### **Y7–Y11**

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	174

#### **Deployment of teachers:**

##### **Y7–Y11**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	77.8
---	------

#### **Average teaching group size:**

##### **Y7–Y11**

Key Stage 3	24.8
Key Stage 4	20.4

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial Year	<b>2000</b>
----------------	-------------

	<b>£</b>
Total income	1435483.00
Total expenditure	1417316.00
Expenditure per pupil	2423.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	22445.00
Balance carried forward to next year	40612.00

**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7.8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	7.7

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out  
Number of questionnaires returned

587
261

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	26	62	8	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	28	62	5	1	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	25	63	6	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	16	66	13	2	2
The teaching is good.	23	67	4	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	24	51	19	4	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	50	43	5	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	45	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	26	52	17	4	2
The school is well led and managed.	34	52	6	2	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	36	52	8	1	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	18	53	15	3	11

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

### **ENGLISH**

71. Overall, the quality of provision in English is good.

#### **Strengths:**

- lessons are sharply focused and productive;
- relationships are strong;
- the curriculum is well planned.

#### **Areas for improvement:**

- the attainment of boys;
- the effectiveness of day-to-day assessment of written work.

72. When pupils join the school in Year 7 the majority of them are reaching levels in all aspects of English that are at least average for their age. They have a good range of vocabulary and are comfortable in their use of formal English. They speak confidently and listen well. Their reading is competent and fluent and their writing is well presented. Their grasp of spelling, punctuation and grammatical usage is secure. There is also a small but significant minority of pupils for whom reading and writing present moderate to severe difficulties.

73. The school's results in the English tests for 14-year olds are very high – well above the national average and even more favourable when compared with those of similar schools. In the most recent validated results in 2000, a very small number of pupils failed to reach the national expectation of Level 5, whereas the proportion gaining Level 6 and above was more than twice the national average. All pupils attain well above the national average. However, girls perform better when compared to girls nationally than boys do when compared to boys nationally.

74. Pupils make good progress through the first three years at the school. They are grouped for their lessons in sets based on their prior attainment and, although all sets follow the same course, the approach taken is matched to individual needs. At all levels pupils, including those with special educational needs, respond well to the challenges of the work they are given. There is a strong focus in all lessons on the learning and appropriate use of new vocabulary, and this improves reading levels and writing skills for all pupils. Reading test results show notable advances – often making twice the improvement that might be expected. The course places strong emphasis on critical analysis of the texts read and on how the pupils themselves write, with the result that pupils' written work is not only correctly expressed but also has clear shape and structure.

75. Progress continues through Years 10 and 11, again building on the foundation set during Key Stages 2 and 3. During the inspection, lesson observation and examination of written coursework showed excellent examples of a growing control of language. Pupils in a middle attaining set in Year 10 were exceptionally perceptive in comparing broadsheet and tabloid newspapers for language and presentation. A lower set in the same year, containing several pupils with special educational needs, showed good understanding of the short story they were studying and of how they should set about writing to show that understanding. Folders of pupils now in Year 11 were well organised, with work of substantial length, and they showed very clearly the progress made since the start of Key Stage 4.

76. Results in GCSE English language have risen generally over the last five years. They are inline with national averages. The attainment of girls continues to be well above national averages, but that of the boys is lower, with a far wider difference between the attainment of girls and boys than that nationally. It is significant that this disparity between the attainment of girls and boys does not appear in other subjects in the school. Results in English literature are well above national averages, but these must be seen in the light of a comparatively low rate of entry for the examination which is confined to those in the higher sets.

77. The teaching of English is good overall – and very good at Key Stage 4. Relationships are generally warm and positive: teachers are ambitious for their pupils' success, setting realistic objectives that are shared with the pupils in all lessons. Pupils respond well to this approach. Teaching rooms in the department area are bright and stimulating with useful posters to support writing and displays of pupils' work. There is very little unsatisfactory behaviour. The department has welcomed the structure advised in the New Framework for English: each lesson begins with a short starter activity which is followed by substantial time spent on the main task. Objectives are reviewed at the end of a lesson and both teachers and pupils leave clearly aware of what has been learned. The work is challenging at all levels and expectations are high. Homework is set regularly and systematically and pupils take it seriously since it is an integral part of the course. Although the teaching pattern is well established across all members of the teaching team, there is inconsistency in some areas of practice – notably the response to and the marking of pupils' written work. At its best, the marking is positive and helpful, giving a clear indication of what it is in the work that makes it strong and what should be improved; some teachers set targets in their written comments. However, some of the marking in Years 7 to 9 is hurried and casual, giving a poor model for writing.

78. Since the last inspection the course has been extensively revised. There is now a clear scheme of work that deals effectively with all aspects of English. Because of the setting arrangements work can be adapted for pupils at different stages and levels. The pattern that all teachers follow in their planning ensures that the full range of activities is available for all pupils. In Year 9 in particular there are very good opportunities for the use of ICT but this is less so in other years. This is a deficiency that needs to be addressed. Another area of concern is the lower attainment of boys, particularly in GCSE. The department is considering extending entry for English literature beyond the higher sets, and this would give wider opportunities for boys.

79. The English teaching team is large and most are highly experienced. It is, however, somewhat unwieldy in that more than half of its members have important responsibilities in other areas of the curriculum. Only the head of department is solely committed to the teaching of English. In spite of these difficulties, the head of department gives strong leadership and manages the department well. She has been particularly successful in introducing the principles of the new framework and in passing on to her colleagues the training she has received herself. Most of the team is able to make a strong contribution to the teaching of the subject, particularly in the areas of ICT and special educational needs. What is needed now is systematic and structured monitoring, both of classroom practice and of pupils' work, in order to establish a more consistent approach.

## **Drama**

80. Drama is taught as part of the expressive arts programme. As well as the strong links it has with music and dance, it collaborates closely with the English department working on structured speaking and listening elements of the National Curriculum, to which it makes a

good contribution. It has a strong clear scheme of work through which it gives many opportunities for exploration of spiritual and moral issues.

81. Attainment of pupils in Key Stage 3 is in line with national expectations. The course covers two years, starting in Year 8, and in this time pupils learn skills of mime, movement and grouping on stage and dramatic depiction of character. Through activities such as “hotseating” – in which one person takes on a role and answers questions from members of the class in the voice of the personality – they learn how to develop character; they also have to empathise with their character and this extends their imagination.

82. At Key Stage 4 drama becomes a GCSE subject and is part of the option programme. Relatively small numbers make this choice, but results are above national averages. Work seen during the inspection was good. Pupils enjoy the lessons and they work well. A Year 11 class preparing their examination assessment pieces were approaching the task in an organised and purposeful way, with very good collaborative work in their groups. Much of the presentation work in the same lesson was impressive and even the weaker pupils made very good progress during the time.

83. Teaching and management of drama are good. Lessons are carefully planned, with a balance of activities, and the overall scheme systematically covers all elements of the subject. Management of behaviour is firm and clear, and relationships between teacher and class, and among the pupils, are good.

84. The subject makes a good contribution to the school’s extra-curricular programme. With the music, dance and English departments there are major productions every two years. At other times there are presentations of work on a smaller scale. There is a weekly drama club.

## **MATHEMATICS**

85. Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is good.

### **Strengths:**

- good progress and above average levels of attainment by pupils at 14 and 16;
- good quality teaching;
- very good attitudes and behaviour of pupils;
- a well managed department.

### **Areas for improvement:**

- procedures relating to the monitoring and evaluation of the work of the department;
- use of ICT to support teaching and learning.

86. Attainment on entry varies from year to year, but overall the majority of pupils enter the school with attainment levels at the national average. By the age of 14 the majority of pupils in the school have levels of attainment that are above the national average. Percentages of pupils in the school achieving the expected and higher levels at the end of Year 9 in national tests have risen in recent years. Three-quarters of all pupils achieved the expected level in 2001. This is above the national average based on 2000 data for all schools and well above the national average for secondary modern schools. In 2001 boys’ results in the end of Year 9 tests were better than the girls’. Progress of pupils throughout Years 7 to 9 is therefore good. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is particularly good. Levels of attainment in mathematics at this stage are similar to those in science but below those in English.

87. By the age of 16 the majority of pupils have levels of attainment that are well above the national average. The percentages of pupils gaining grades in the range A\*-C up to

2000 had been rising but were slightly lower in 2001 although still above the national average for the year 2000. All candidates who were entered obtained a grade in the range A\*-G and the proportion of pupils gaining the highest grades of A\* and A also rose. In 2001 the results obtained by the girls were slightly better than those for the boys though the difference was not significant. Progress throughout Years 10 and 11 is again good. Levels of attainment in mathematics at this stage are similar to those in science but higher than those in English.

88. Standards of work seen in classes were above the average for Years 7, 8 and 9. From being at the expected level in Year 7 standards improve and by Year 9 they are above expectation. For example, a high attaining Year 9 class confidently solved linear algebraic equations both as a group and individually. Pupils showed a good understanding of the basic principles involved when they were required to explain to the rest of the group the steps involved in solving the equations. Several pupils were able to correctly develop the solution of an equation on the white-board for the rest of the group. Although standard of work produced by pupils in many groups varies, the majority has a good understanding of the different aspects of mathematics. In particular in the early years emphasis is placed on the development of pupils' numerical skills. Most pupils show an increasing confidence when handling number in a variety of contexts. They also show a good understanding of shape, space and measures and when using and applying mathematics. Throughout Years 10 and 11 standards of work seen in classes are well above the average. The majority of pupils show increasing confidence in working towards the GCSE examination. For example, a middle attaining Year 11 group showed a good understanding of the properties of indices both during group and individual work. Many in the group were attending revision classes after school to prepare them for the GCSE examination. The majority of pupils were projected to achieve a grade C or better in this examination.

89. Teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now good and sometimes very good. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. All lessons are planned in detail and learning objectives are shared with the pupils. Lessons contain an appropriate range of learning approaches with good use of group and individual work in each of the lessons. In a number of lessons pupils are expected to work collaboratively in small groups and do so successfully. Good use is made of questioning during the group work and pupils are expected to explain their suggested solutions to the rest of the group. The pace in lessons is well matched to the *needs of* pupils in the group. However, there is a need in some lessons to ensure that individual pupils are not too closely directed and are given more responsibility for their own progress and learning. In many lessons good use of duplicated worksheets is made. Where appropriate and to more closely meet the needs of individual pupils differentiated work is undertaken with extension tasks set for the more able. In the lower attaining groups teaching assistants provide effective additional support for those pupils who require it. In these lessons activities are jointly planned between the staff involved.

90. Homework is regularly set, marked and returned to the pupils. Most teachers ensure that the pupils understand how the work may be improved. Individual teachers keep good records of pupils' progress. Attitudes and behaviour of almost all pupils are very good. They particularly enjoy the mental arithmetic work undertaken at the start of lessons. Pupils respond well to all aspects of the work and this contributes to the good progress they make and the above average standards they achieve. Particularly good relationships are developed both between pupils and with the teacher.

91. The mathematics curriculum is appropriate and ensures continuity and progression for the pupils. Appropriately a much greater emphasis is being placed on the development of pupils' numeracy skills including those relating to mental arithmetic. Apart from the specific provision made by the department during Year 8, the use of ICT is limited. There is

a need for the department to identify opportunities for making further use of ICT to support and enhance the teaching and learning. Pupils in the department are encouraged to enter for the nationally based Mathematics Challenge. After school revision classes are also held for pupils preparing for the GCSE examination. The academic progress of pupils is closely tracked. Good use is now being made of a range of data including those from national tests to track the progress of individual pupils and to target those who are underachieving. The department has recently introduced a system of target setting for individual pupils. There is an agreed departmental marking policy and this follows the overall school guidelines that have recently been agreed.

92. The mathematics department is well managed. Teachers in the department are working well as a team. They meet on a regular basis and teaching resources are shared across the team. However, monitoring and evaluation procedures in the department require strengthening. Those that exist tend to be undertaken on an informal basis and are not carried out as part of an agreed school-wide policy. Teachers are well qualified and all have a secure grasp of the subject. There is some evidence of a shortage of resources to adequately support aspects of the work of the department. Poor access to ICT resources restricts its use and there is a lack of teaching materials for supporting other work including that relating to numeracy.

## SCIENCE

93. Overall, the quality of provision in science is good.

### Strengths:

- pupils achieve consistently well and reach standards above the national average;
- expectations of pupils are good overall;
- relationships between pupils and teachers are very good;
- management and support for pupils are very good.

### Areas for Improvement:

- the range of task to match the capabilities of individuals;
- the involvement of pupils in class discussion;
- the use of ICT.

94. Attainment in science is above average for pupils aged 14 and well above average at age 16. Pupils make good progress from the age of 11, when they enter the school with knowledge, understanding and skills, broadly in line with expectation nationally. This progress is due to the good teaching and the positive attitudes of pupils. In the national tests of 2000, the proportion of pupils gaining Level 5, or greater, was above average, but the proportion gaining Level 6 was close to average. The overall performance, in terms of the average point score, was above average. Girls achieved higher than boys. In 2001 the results improved maintaining the upward trend of the past three years.

95. At the age of 16, the GCSE results are now well above the national average. The percentage of A\*-C grades and the average grade, in double award combined science, were both well above national average. In 2001 results improved further. The higher performance of girls than boys is not significantly greater than the national picture. There is a slight upward trend over recent years. Achievement each year is good.

96. In the work seen in lessons, the quality reflects the most recent results in tests and examinations. In the work of pupils in Year 9, approaching the end of Key Stage 3, experimental skills are refined, most pupils are fully aware of fair tests, prediction requirements are clear, and pupils are competent in handling equipment safely. For

example, pupils investigating different inks with chromatography, efficiently carry out the tests and make sensible conclusions. Pupils have an equally clear knowledge of the three areas of living processes, materials, and physical processes, and this has a good impact on

overall understanding. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress alongside others because the level of support is good. The quality and detail of writing, using correct terms, helps pupils consolidate their work at home.

97. The work of pupils in Year 11 shows a well above average standard of knowledge; again equally in all three areas of the science curriculum. For example, a significant number of pupils are clear about the abstract concepts in chemical structure and reactions at a depth that will secure grades A or B at GCSE. The good level of numerical analysis has a strong impact on achievement in scientific enquiry. Work continues to be clearly presented and set out with increasing sophistication. This also reflects the positive attitudes that pupils have towards science.

98. The quality of teaching in science is good, and impacts directly on the progress of the pupils. During inspection nearly two thirds of lessons seen were good and the remainder satisfactory. A common feature of the good teaching was the good management of pupils so that behaviour was good and good uninterrupted progress could be made. Although expectations are high overall, the planning does not sufficiently match the level of challenge of the task to the capability of individuals within a set. Very good support and encouragement is given and this enables difficulties in pupils' understanding to be readily resolved. Discussion and questions in class, whilst often well directed and pursued, does not involve the pupils often enough. They do not all participate, and as a result teachers remain unsure of the real extent of learning. The pace and variety of work in class stems from effective planning in revised schemes of work. However, insufficient use is made of ICT to enhance the learning, although opportunities are taken to use the network to maximise the quality of coursework.

99. Leadership and management are good. A clear commitment to raising standards, supported through the detailed development plan, is held by all staff. Schemes of work have been actively revised and provide good support to colleagues. Good use is made of the available resources and practical work is frequent. All pupils are issued with a textbook that makes independent learning effective. The work of teachers has been monitored by lesson observation and analysis of their work, but the approach is not sufficiently frequent or rigorous to ensure strengths and weaknesses are clearly identified. Assessment procedures are routine but the use of the data in the department is not yet sufficiently developed to build on the information analysed centrally in the school, to help set targets, identify underachievement, or aid curriculum planning.

100. Since the last inspection attainment has risen, and progress over both key stages has been good. Attitudes continue to be positive. Teaching quality has improved. Questioning techniques, where previously participation by pupils was low, continues to be an area for improvement. Similarly the lack of real match of task to pupils' capability has not been resolved. Leadership of the department now reflects a commitment to increasingly high standards and achievement.

## ART AND DESIGN

101. Overall, the quality of provision in art and design is satisfactory.

### Strengths:

- exam results have risen steadily since the last inspection;
- strong subject knowledge enables pupils to establish a context in which to create their own work;
- effective use of visual aids and practical demonstrations enable pupils to learn new techniques and improve skills.

### Areas for Improvement:

- formalise planning to include more challenges for higher attaining pupils;
- clarify learning objectives in order to improve pace and productivity;
- improve the marking system to make it more diagnostic;
- make the use of subject specific language more prominent;
- improve provision for the use of ICT through appropriate training for teachers in the department.

102. Standards in art are in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2000 were above the level of expectation and higher than the standards observed during the inspection. The GCSE results in 2000 at grades A\*-C were above the national average. These results, however, are not reflected in the standard of work observed during the inspection in current Years 10 and 11.

103. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory at both key stages given their prior attainment. The majority of pupils can draw competently from observation and are able to interpret these drawings into three-dimensions. Pupils in Year 8 make pebble pot sculptures in clay based on drawings of shells; those in Year 9 are developing their mask designs using papier mache. Pupils in Year 11 demonstrate how they can build up areas of their work on natural forms using both papier mache and ModRoc. They refer to the work of established artists such as Georgia O'Keeffe, Max Ernst and Salvador Dali, but tend to copy from these rather than use them to inspire original works. Although the majority of pupils work with interest, progress is affected by a lack of pace in lessons. Where timed tasks are set productivity is improved. Marking generally lacks rigour but where weaknesses in pupils' work are pinpointed and precise advice given for improvement, progress is evident.

104. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory with good features at both key stages. Subject knowledge of teachers is good and when linked with the good use of visual aids and an ability to demonstrate, technical skills is effective and encourages learning, with pupils being clear about techniques and tasks. One of the weaker points of teaching is where lesson objectives are not clear enough. This makes progress during lessons, particularly long double periods, slow, and reduces learning and productivity. Planned activities are not always well matched to the needs of pupils particularly higher attaining pupils. More support is given to lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs enabling them to make satisfactory progress.

105. Pupils in both key stages behave well. They listen intently to the teacher but can be rather passive if required to listen for too long. Pupils in Years 7-9 participate more willingly in class discussions than those in Years 10 and 11. Strategies such as quick-fire question and answer sessions, and group presentations, encourage pupils to express themselves verbally and to become confident in the use of technical vocabulary.

106. The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The head of department supports colleagues within the art department and the expressive arts area. The school's arrangements for the provision of in-service training are insufficient to meet training needs for this department. The department development plan has appropriate priorities but lacks the necessary detail to ensure success.

107. Progress since the last inspection is good with an improvement in GCSE exam results year on year. The curriculum is more balanced and schemes of work more detailed. Sketchbooks still vary in quality and many do not contain sufficient experimental work and documentation of work as it progresses. There is now a personal computer, scanner and printer in the department, but because training in the use of ICT has yet to take place minimal use can be made of the equipment thus limiting the learning opportunities of pupils in both key stages.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

108. Provision for design and technology is good, despite the poor accommodation, which is increasingly impacting on results.

### **Strengths:**

- the positive use of prior knowledge from primary school and home;
- the revised modules of work that are modified on the basis of evaluation;
- the contribution from industry of materials and time that inspires learning;
- the consistently good food technology GCSE results.

### **Areas for improvement:**

- review and act on improving accommodation and resources;
- introduction of rigorous standardisation especially in Year 9 and 11;
- the improvement of access to ICT and accelerated training for staff.

109. The wide range of materials available has a positive influence on standards. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2000 were well above the national average. However, direct observation of these pupils' attainment now they are in Year 11, does not reflect the high levels recorded two years ago. Investigation of the 2000 Year 9 records shows one group consistently at the level above the national expectation while the remaining groups reflect a range of attainment. The lack of standardisation of levels across the department is causing these anomalies.

110. In 2000 accumulated GCSE results, taking all aspects of the subject into account, were in line with national averages. Results in 2001 show an improvement. Food technology continues to produce better results than resistant materials, with graphics results below national expectation. Girls generally perform at a higher level than boys because they give attention to presentation and research in their portfolios. Pupils' design and technology results are below the results they achieve in other areas of the curriculum, but the schools percentage entry level for GCSE design and technology is higher than the national figures, an indication of the high level of inclusion promoted by the department. Pupils with special educational needs exceed expectation. Their results cover the full range of grades from A to G. They achieve well because of the support they receive from the learning support assistants and technician, which pupils respond positively to.

111. Pupils' progress is good from Years 7 – 9. A questionnaire on entry to the school establishes pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding gained from the primary school and home. The results help teachers to modify planning where necessary. Skill tasks and product analysis develop pupil's skills and understanding, while capability is tested through

more open tasks. Pupils develop their decision making, and choice of tools and materials, through challenging modules that trigger imaginative problem solving. A Year 8 whole class response to watching a video clip on sandwich making, provided a very exciting contribution to the work on food processes for their imaginary company. This activity consolidated learning on market research, hazard analysis and control, packaging and evaluation. All modules of work have an emphasis on literacy through word banks to aid descriptions and writing structures to support report writing and presentation. In a similar style, but not as detailed, numeracy skills are practised to ensure accuracy. Practical skills are taught well. Pupils can cut, shape, join or combine and finish a range of materials to a high quality. Information communication technology is not yet at a level where it is having an appropriate impact on learning.

112. In Year 10 and 11 lack of ICT is preventing some pupils from reaching the higher grades in GCSE. This, combined with weak basic drawing skills, and difficulties with deadlines for many pupils, reduces the marks pupils gain for designing.

113. Lively discussions, active learning and the requirement to make purposeful contributions to lessons ensure pupils enjoy design and technology. They extend their personal success to its full potential. This approach is stronger in food technology but informal monitoring does not always highlight and share the good practice. Pupils show perseverance in their designing and making, some reflecting their parents' work in particular areas, such as engineering. Behaviour is generally good. A minority of Year 9 pupils whose behaviour is immature does not disrupt the learning of others because teachers deal with problems very swiftly.

114. The quality of teaching in design and technology is good overall with a percentage of very good and excellent teaching. Teachers and technical support staff have very diverse backgrounds that complement the teamwork. Some have industrial experience in manufacturing and in the service industry which has a positive influence on learning. Well-planned modules of work, with clear expectations and targets, filter through to learning effectively. However the lack of time targets in a minority of lessons allows pace to slip and enthusiasm and drive to wane. Teachers value and build on pupils' past experience, which strengthens relationships and promotes self-esteem. Basic skills are woven discretely into all modules and help to underpin communication within group work and accuracy in weighing and measuring. This has an important effect on the quality of the final product. Assessment is good and tracks progress through each module but it does not yet integrate use of whole school data available. Teachers are good role models. Demonstrations, group work, teacher feedback and evaluation all contribute to raising standards. Homework is set to extend learning. It often contributes information for the next lesson and therefore gets a good response.

115. Improvement has been good since the previous inspection. Management of design and technology encourages staff participation. All staff feel they make a major contribution to developments. For example, the idea for a course work booklet for parents at options evening was taken forward. As a result a useful booklet that sets out the expectations for the courses and requires a commitment from pupils and parents is now in place. The development plan is prioritised and rightly identifies ICT as its major priority for 2002. The plan lacks estimated costs and performance criterion columns, leaving an information vacuum. Generally resources in resistant materials, electronics and graphics are poor. In graphics the poor drawing equipment and the limited workspace to produce independent drawings, limits progress. This is reflected in examination results. Often equipment must be borrowed to meet the needs of the lesson, as seen in the borrowing of electronic scales from science for a product analysis lesson on a breakfast cereal. Governors have recently identified accommodation as an area of concern. Over many years the department has

been held together by self-help schemes that are very laudable but has delayed the major refurbishment needed.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

116. Overall, the quality of provision in geography is very good.

### **Strengths:**

- the hard-working, committed teachers;
- very good teaching with interesting and challenging lessons.
- good development of pupils' literacy skills.

### **Areas for improvement:**

- insufficient use of ICT.
- there are no opportunities for the monitoring and evaluation of teaching.

117. Standards have risen since previous inspection because the quality of teaching has improved. The results of national teacher assessments for 14 year olds in 2001 were above national averages and boys and girls achieved similar results. In the assessment for 2000, boys had achieved significantly better results than girls. A relatively large number of pupils took GCSE in 2001 and their results were well above the national average. The results of boys and girls were similar. The pupils achieved better results than those of similar ability in other schools. Results have improved significantly each year since 1998. Pupils make very good progress.

118. The standards achieved by the current Year 9 pupils are above average, and boys and girls achieve similar standards. For example, average- and higher-attaining pupils substantiate their decisions in reports about the Kobe earthquake and show a good understanding of settlement and shopping hierarchies. Lower-attaining pupils are able to explain the advantages and disadvantages of shopping malls.

119. At GCSE, the standards achieved by the current Year 11 pupils are well above average, with boys and girls achieving similar standards. For example, pupils have a very good understanding of the structure of a rain forest and the associated geographical vocabulary. Pupils complete coursework based in a rural park, and the best studies included a clear link between the data collected and the hypotheses or questions that were investigated. Pupils used their initiative when deciding what data to collect, and their interpretation of data and analysis of findings focused on seeking answers to their hypotheses or questions. In the small number of less successful studies, pupils did not make clear links between the data they collected and the hypotheses or questions they wished to answer, and their analyses were often brief and descriptive.

120. At both key stages, teaching and learning are very good, and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. Teaching and learning were satisfactory or better in all lessons, good in half, and very good or excellent in a significant proportion. Common strengths of teaching include clear learning objectives, effective classroom management and planning, excellent subject knowledge, support for pupils' literacy skills, challenging work for the full range of pupils' attainment and effective use of homework. Because of the very good teaching pupils from the full range of attainment achieve very well, including those with special educational needs.

121. Teachers share each lesson's learning objectives with the pupils and these are usually written on the whiteboard. These provide a sharp focus for pupils' learning. Teachers return to them at the end of the lesson when in discussions and assess the progress pupils have made. Lessons are relaxed, friendly and good humoured with a

strong sense of purpose and this helps to secure very good behaviour and to motivate and interest the pupils in their learning. Consequently, pupils are keen to contribute to lessons. Lessons are planned to include a variety of learning activities which are often time limited so that there is a brisk pace of learning. For example, brief clips of videos are used for a specific learning focus. The teachers' excellent subject knowledge results in challenging work, clear explanations and effective questioning. For example, Year 11 pupils were helped to accurately interpret and explain complex diagrams showing nutrient stores and flows in a rain forest. Following some fieldwork, questioning helped Year 7 pupils suggest a wide variety of possible improvements to the school's conservation area.

122. The geography department is implementing the school's literacy strategy well. In each lesson, there is a focus on the key geographical vocabulary used, and these words are often written on the whiteboard. All pupils have glossaries at the back of their exercise books. Pupils are given outline frameworks to help them learn how to write reports and essays. For example, lower-attaining pupils in Year 9 used a framework as they started to write an essay about changes to shopping during the last 30 years. After the marking of a GCSE examination question completed for homework by Year 10 pupils, the teacher provided a model answer and there was a whole-class discussion about key aspects of vocabulary in examination answers.

123. Challenging tasks are set for the full range of attainment. For example, pupils in a lower-attaining Year 9 set used their knowledge of the structure of a town to decide and explain where six photographs of urban landscapes had been taken. Average-attaining Year 8 pupils classified many brief pieces of information relevant to migration from the south to the north of Italy. Homework tasks build on and extend what pupils have already learnt. Marking is regularly completed and gives pupils information about how to improve their work although, on many occasions, pupils do not respond to this guidance. There were a few occasional weaknesses in teaching but none were significant.

124. Teaching is guided by new, detailed schemes of work although the matching of work to pupils' differing levels of attainment is not always made clear. There are instances of effectively using ICT to enhance learning but not all the required aspects of ICT are used because of the very limited access to the computer suite. Assessment is a developing aspect and there are sound procedures although several of these are not yet fully established. For example, a start has been made to compiling a portfolio of pupils' work to demonstrate standards at different National Curriculum Levels, and plans are being implemented to record the results of formal assessments made each term. The subject is effectively managed and good improvements have been made since the previous inspection. The head of geography monitors pupils' standards in different ways but it is a weakness that she does not have the opportunity to monitor teaching within the department. There are a few shortages of resources including aerial photographs of the school's locality and fieldwork equipment.

## **HISTORY**

125. Overall, the quality of provision in history is good.

### **Strengths:**

- the standards are good;
- the quality of teaching and learning is good;
- the attitudes of pupils towards the subject are very good;
- the assessment of the academic progress of pupils is good.

### **Areas for improvement:**

- there is restricted use of ICT;
- there are no opportunities for the monitoring and evaluation of teaching;
- the split teaching arrangement in Year 8 is unsatisfactory.

126. Standards of work in history are good. This is despite the fact that there have been breaks in the continuity of teaching in the last twelve months. Assessments at Key Stage 3 in 2000 were above national averages, with boys outperforming girls. At Key Stage 4, the GCSE results have been variable since the last report. In 2000, they were just above the national averages, with girls outperforming boys. Nearly all pupils gained A\* to G grades. Provisional figures for 2001, show a decline in performance, although there were two A\* grades.

127. In work seen, pupils achieve well. At Key Stage 3, pupils have a secure grasp of chronology. In Year 7, higher attaining pupils can accurately describe the order of events leading to the contest for the throne in 1066. Lower attaining pupils struggle with basic literacy skills, but, nevertheless, their progress is good. At Key Stage 4, the pupils can evaluate historical sources well, as shown by the Year 11 class, which has a clear understanding of the causes of the current troubles in Northern Ireland, as a result of their study of documents from the 1960's.

128. The improvement by the department since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Overall performance by pupils in Year 7 has improved, but that of lower attainers at Key Stage 3 remains below national averages, constrained by low literacy skills. An effective scheme of self-evaluation has been introduced in Year 9 and opportunities for extended writing have been increased across both key stages. Source work has been extended and improved at Key Stage 4. There is still restricted use of ICT although resources are in place for when facilities become available. There is also limited use of fieldwork. The assessment of progress of pupils has improved, but the monitoring of teaching has not been carried out.

129. The quality of teaching and learning is good at Key Stage 3 and very good at Key Stage 4. Lessons are well planned and securely based on good subject knowledge. Expectations are high and lesson aims are well explained to the pupils, so they are clear what they have to do. At the end of lessons, there is an effective summary session, which shows the progress made. The management of pupils is very good, and they remain on task throughout the lessons, which are well organised with a variety of activities. For example, a Year 9 lesson on the revolution in farming not only contained research on England in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, but also appropriate work linking cause and consequence. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, with tasks matched well to attainment, including foundation texts, which enable them to share the same experience of learning as the rest of the class. Teachers and classroom assistants provide good support for these pupils. Literacy is well taught, with good examples seen of pupils competently reading aloud and the effective use of structures to help them with writing. Books are marked up to date and constructive comment is added, so pupils are aware of the standard of their work. Appropriate amounts of homework are set, often involving research on the Internet. The overall good quality of teaching ensures a good standard of learning.

130. The attitudes of pupils towards history are very good. They work with interest and they have a genuine enthusiasm for the subject. This was well demonstrated in a Year 7 lesson, where pupils not only effectively showed good previous knowledge of the events of 1066, but also made lively contributions on the background to the claims to the English throne. Pupils are very well behaved in lessons and levels of concentration are good. They work well together and are mutually supportive, as was shown in a Year 10 lesson, where pairs prepared for a role-play session on the development of early Greek medicine. The good display work in the classroom reflects the levels of interest in the subject. There

are also very impressive models of motte and bailey castles by Year 7, some of which are on show in the school's entrance foyer, for visitors to see.

131. The curricular opportunities are satisfactory overall. The National Curriculum is fully in place and the GCSE courses are appropriate. Both are well taught. At Key Stage 3, three teaching sets of the lower attaining pupils are split between two teachers, which is unsatisfactory, especially in the case of the lowest set, which is taught by two non-specialists. At Key Stage 4, numbers of pupils choosing history have declined, mostly due to the unsettled nature of staffing before January 2001, but the commitment of the new head of department should see numbers rise in future. The teaching of moral and cultural issues is good, with Year 8 learning well about the native peoples of North America and Year 11 considering effectively the problems of Northern Ireland. Extra-curricular activities are limited to sessions of interactive role-play and a scheduled visit for Year 11 had to be cancelled, due to the foot and mouth outbreak, but there are plans to increase the amount of fieldwork.

132. The leadership and management of the subject are good. Although only in post since January 2001, the head of department has already had a good impact on standards. There is clear direction for the department and good support for non-specialist teachers. The schemes of work have been effectively revised and there is very thorough documentation. The monitoring and evaluation of the performance of pupils is good. A detailed scheme of assessment has been developed, with individual portfolios recording progress and setting targets, of which pupils are aware. Prior attainment and predicted grades are carefully recorded and pupils are effectively monitored, so that their performance can improve. There is, however, no monitoring of teaching in the department, due to timetable arrangements. There has also been little professional development, as finances limit attendance at relevant courses. The accommodation is good, with lessons being mostly taught in the bright, welcoming history room. However, large teaching groups are a little cramped. Resources are only just satisfactory. Although new books have recently been issued for Key Stage 3, there is no suitable textbook available for Year 9 and there are not enough books for the GCSE course. The head of department has put a large amount of work onto the school's computer network to assist pupils in their research, but they have little access to it in school time.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

133. Overall, the quality of provision in ICT is satisfactory as a discrete delivery but unsatisfactory use is made of it as an aid to learning in subjects.

### **Strengths:**

- Teachers good management of pupils;
- The updated hard and software;
- A weekly skills lesson for pupils in Year 7 by the specialist teacher.

### **Areas for improvement:**

- To develop the use of ICT across the curriculum;
- To implement teacher training;
- Develop the use of control technology;
- Provision of adequate resources and access to them.

134. Teachers' assessment of 14-year-olds in 2001 showed that standards were slightly below the national average. Boys' attainment was better than girls were. No GCSE group was in place for the 2001 examination.

135. Pupils enter the school with a varied experience but they make good progress and by the time they reach age 14 their attainment is at the expected standard due to the discrete skills teaching that they receive. They have good understanding of word processing and use this confidently. They enter the text, use the appropriate procedures to correct and edit their work, and have a clear grasp of producing a publication to suit a particular audience. This was most noticeable in Year 9 presentations of magazines as part of their English studies. Here they present text in columns, use different styles of lettering, place art graphics, scan digital photographs and adjust them appropriately to fit the publication. Pupils have a good understanding of a media presentation using the Power Point program to present a series of slides, incorporating art graphics and moving text.

136. Pupils are developing an understanding of a spreadsheet, using the formulas for easy mathematical calculations. Some pupils are able to display their findings as a graph but their knowledge is limited. Pupils are establishing database skills. They know how to enter the data but their understanding of how to select information using the 'query' facility is limited. Their understanding of its use in a wider sense is too narrow, few pupils being able to give examples of where it might be used.

137. Although pupils are developing a basic understanding of control technology using a simple control program, development is in its early stages and there are too few opportunities to experience more sophisticated programs. Therefore this element is unsatisfactory.

138. The overall attainment of pupils aged 16 is at the level expected. Pupils' knowledge and skills in the GCSE groups is sound. Pupils are using a range of different applications with confidence. An example of this was with the Year 11 individual projects. Here, in a sports topic pupils use spreadsheets with understanding, entering the data, using the formulas to calculate times and positions. Pupils have a clear understanding of, and use successfully, the hyperlink facility - a technique used to link pages to select further information. Pupils are developing a good understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of using different applications and present clear conclusions about the benefits.

139. Pupils at both key stages use the facilities of the Internet with confidence. They understand the benefits when researching information for topics and projects. However, the use of e-mail is underdeveloped. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into lessons and achieve appropriate targets. In the work seen there is no significant difference in the attainment between boys and girls. The attainment of pupils studying the key skills course at Key Stage 4 is satisfactory. The overall standard of pupils' attainment has been maintained since the previous inspection. Attitudes to learning are good. Pupils behave well in lessons and show a respect for the equipment. They co-operate sensibly and on the occasions when they have to share a computer they work well together and are encouraged by teachers to help one another.

140. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, with a small proportion good. No lessons are unsatisfactory. Where teachers have good subject knowledge their expertise is used well to demonstrate procedures, resulting in pupils quickly on task with a clear understanding of the assignment. A particular quality of the teaching is the good relationships that teachers have with their pupils. The outcome of these good relationships is that pupils feel confident to ask for help when in difficulty, contributing to improved progress. Learning is better in lessons when the interactive whiteboard is used to demonstrate procedures. On these occasions pupils have a clear understanding of the task, showing a high level of interest and enthusiasm. When this facility is not used the

pace of learning is slower. Good lessons are underpinned with well focused questioning to make sure that pupils have a clear understanding of the task. Pupils respond well to this approach and are eager to contribute, which leads to good learning. Teachers have good discipline, insisting on quiet when explaining a skill. On the occasions when teaching was less effective the organisation of the lesson was inappropriate with a lengthy explanation of the task at the beginning of the session. The outcome of this was that pupils became restless, were reluctant to respond to questioning and slow to settle to work which hindered learning and progress. The quality of teaching has been maintained since the previous inspection.

141. Although some subjects are successfully using information technology to support learning the situation overall is unsatisfactory. However, good work was seen in English using word processing for best copies, and good examples of desktop publishing, producing magazine type documents in a range of styles to suit different audiences. Data logging is evident in science and the use of CD ROM's for individual coursework. Design and technology are in the early stages of development, using a control program but progress is impeded by hardware that is old and unable to support the more sophisticated programs. Training is needed for teachers to become more conversant with the programs. Apart from word processing and use of the Internet little use was observed in art, geography, history, religious education, music and modern languages. The mathematics department has access to the computer suite on a weekly basis and pupils have the opportunity to experience the use of a spreadsheet and a simple control program but there is limited reference to the use of ICT in the schemes of work. There are no computers in the mathematics area itself. Teachers' lack of confidence and competence is the main reason for insufficient use of information communication technology. Training of teachers is in its early stages. Where teachers do have confidence information communication technology is contributing positively to pupils' skills and learning.

142. Access to the computer suite for general use is restricted. At the moment there is only one computer suite that is mainly used for the discrete delivery of the subject. The school is aware of this problem and an additional suite is planned for the near future.

143. The management of the department is good. The head of department has a clear vision about the future development of the subject and provides good support for colleagues. Technical support for the subject is inadequate and effecting the overall development of the subject.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

144. Overall, the quality of provision in modern languages is very good.

### **Strengths:**

- teachers' very good planning and clear learning objectives;
- the achievement of boys;
- pupils' achievement in writing skills and in language awareness;
- the quality of assessment procedures.

### **Areas for improvement:**

- consistent use of the foreign language in the classroom;
- departmental monitoring of teaching and the professional development of staff;
- promotion of the French and Hispanic cultures through display.

145. French is the main foreign language taught in the school. In 2001, pupils' attainment in French at the end of Key Stage 3, based on teacher assessments, was well

above national expectations. GCSE results in French in 2001 were above the national average. Standards of work seen in Year 11 suggest that the trend of the last two years of above average performance in French is continuing. The performance of the boys in French is a strength of the department and against the national trend. The results of the boys in 2001 were well above the national average in this subject. The departmental policy of teaching French to the boys and the girls in separate groups in Years 10 and 11 has contributed significantly to the improvement in the boys' results over the last two years. In 2001, all pupils performed better in French than in their other subjects. All pupils now begin Spanish

as a second foreign language in Year 9 and a small number continue with Spanish in lessons after school in Years 10 and 11. In GCSE Spanish in 2001, all seven pupils gained A\*, A or B grades continuing the trend of improvement in this subject over the last three years.

146. Current standards in modern languages are well above average overall. Most pupils begin French and Spanish with little or no prior knowledge, but their achievement by the end of Year 9 and Year 11 is very good. Language learning makes a very good contribution to developing literacy skills because teachers encourage pupils to write accurately with good punctuation and to be aware of how grammar works in language. Standards of written work are above average in French at Key Stage 3 but below average in Spanish as pupils are at the early stages in learning the language. At Key Stage 4, in both languages standards are well above average. By Year 9, most able and middle attaining pupils can use main tenses confidently in structured exercises, write familiar language accurately, and most have a sound topic-based vocabulary; lower attaining pupils at Key Stage 3 can write accurately with guidance but in simpler language and shorter sentences. By Year 11, the GCSE course work in French and Spanish of able and middle attaining pupils is well above average standards, with more complex sentences written on a wider variety of topics, for example on health and home town. Most pupils, including lower attaining pupils are confident in writing in Years 10 and 11.

147. In reading, pupils attain good standards. Most pupils can read and understand a range of texts in French appropriate to their ability, for example, letters and short passages. Pupils gain average standards overall in listening and in speaking, with variations between classes in the standards of pupils' spoken language. This is mainly because teachers do not use the foreign language in lessons consistently across the department and consequently all pupils do not have equal access to well modelled spoken language as a sound basis for developing listening and speaking skills in the early years of language learning. This was seen in three Year 7 French lessons. In one very good lesson, the teacher used her fluent French throughout the lesson and pupils experienced maximum exposure to the spoken French. In two other Year 7 lessons, the teachers delivered much of their lessons in English, and these pupils heard French used for only basic classroom language. In both key stages, the teachers often refer in lessons to future tests and examinations, and the strong departmental assessment policy and feedback mechanism gives pupils awareness of their progress in listening, speaking, reading and writing.

148. Teaching is good overall. All teaching is at least satisfactory, with almost half of lessons being very good and a few excellent. The pupils are well supported in their learning by the teachers' very good planning and clear learning objectives. This gives them good direction in their language learning and full awareness of their progress. For example, in a Year 9 Spanish lesson about classroom items, the teacher discussed lesson objectives with pupils and at the end of the lesson pupils enthusiastically acknowledged the Spanish they had learned. The teachers include homework tasks as an integral feature of lessons, which enables pupils to fully consolidate the foreign language and to gain confidence in their own learning. For example, in a Year 7 French lesson the pupils carefully marked words they had learned for homework, corrected them under teacher guidance and then were encouraged by being able to recognise the same words quickly within a listening task.

149. The boys respond positively to the good planning and clear learning routines, especially in Years 10 and 11. In a very successful Year 10 lower set French lesson, the boys were motivated and productive in speaking and writing as a result of the teacher's brisk pace of lesson delivery and clear instructions for tasks, enabling all pupils to be conscious of their progress. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in low attaining language sets, as a result of the teachers' awareness of their language needs and

learning support assistants who ensure that the pupils are well integrated into lessons. For example, in a Year 7 French lower set lesson, a small group of pupils with special needs statements all successfully completed a listening and writing task with the help of the learning support assistant. Pupils' attitudes to modern language learning are very good. Pupils are attentive in lessons and co-operate well with teachers and with each other. They take a pride in their work and behave well. There is little use of ICT in the subjects other than in a few examples of its use in course work, which often include very good use of graphics. Although many pupils participate in departmental visits to France and Spain, the French and Hispanic cultures are insufficiently promoted through teaching resources, and through classroom and corridor displays.

150. Management of the department is good overall. There is strong leadership and a departmental commitment to raising the achievement of all pupils. However, the policy on monitoring the teaching and the professional development of staff is not fully implemented. Overall, there has been good improvement since the last inspection. The performance of boys, results at age 14 and 16, and teaching quality, have all substantially improved.

## MUSIC

151. Overall, the quality of provision in music is satisfactory.

### Strengths:

- the quality of composition and improvisation at Key Stage 3;
- teachers' specialist knowledge;
- the good opportunities for pupils to experience a range of different styles of music.

### Areas for improvement:

- to develop the use of ICT to support the development of composition in particular at Key Stage 3;
- to ensure schemes of work build on pupil's knowledge;
- to develop and encourage the use of the appropriate technical language.

152. Teachers' assessment of 14-year-olds in 2001 showed that standards were above the national average. However, this is not reflected in work seen during the inspection where attainment is in line with national expectation. GCSE results are below average when compared with similar schools although pupils achieving A\*-G was above the national average. Girls' achievement was better than boys. Results have remained below average over the three previous years.

153. On entry to the school, pupils' previous musical experience is limited. Few have had opportunity to compose music or develop their creative skills. However pupils make good progress through the key stage and by the time they reach age 14 their attainment is at the level expected. They have good rhythmic qualities, sing tunefully and maintain good pitch. They have sound knowledge of all the primary chords and use these accurately in creative work. Pupils are composing music in a range of styles. They have a sound grasp of many different composing techniques. This was noticeable in a Year 7 Pavanne composition. Here pupils use a drone figure with effect and, using a five-note melody, create a pleasing composition that has structure and development. These techniques are further developed and by the time they reach Year 9 their creative work is of a good level, using a variety of techniques and improvisation skills to compose music in different styles. For example, music for a film using chord sequences with accuracy to create the appropriate atmosphere, and music from other cultures. Although pupils have listened to a variety of different styles of music their use and knowledge of the correct vocabulary when describing

the music is limited. ICT is underused as an aid to learning. Pupils who play musical instruments achieve well.

154. The attainment of 16-year-old pupils is at the level expected. Pupils in the GCSE group have produced several compositions in a range of styles. These compositions show development and the beginnings of a structure, together with some good examples of improvisation. Pupils have sound knowledge of the main historical developments, naming the different periods of music with understanding. They recognise the changes of instruments and the main composers who contributed. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into lessons and achieve appropriate targets. Although some pupils in the GCSE groups use information technology to support development of composition, it is generally underused. The standard of attainment has been maintained since the previous inspection.

155. During the inspection the head of department, who teaches the majority of pupils at both key stages, was absent from school and therefore lessons were taught by a temporary teacher. The school has been fortunate in acquiring the services of a music specialist and the quality of teaching seen during the inspection was overall satisfactory with some good and very good teaching. Teachers have good subject expertise and this is used to develop skills and demonstrate styles of music. This was very noticeable during a listening session in a Year 11 class. Here the teacher effectively used his keyboard skills to emphasise the difference in contrasting styles of music. Pupils responded well to this approach, were eager to contribute to the discussion and therefore developed a better understanding of how to identify elements of the music.

156. Learning is better when teachers have high expectations of pupils. This was evident during a singing session. Here the teacher rehearsed the song on several occasions, suggesting techniques to improve the overall quality. The outcome of this was that the final performance showed considerable improvement and pupils were justifiably pleased. On the occasions when teaching was less effective, too long was spent at the beginning of the lessons distributing keyboards, resulting in pupils having insufficient time to practise their skills. This slowed the pace of learning. Learning was also slowed when the content of a lesson did not take into account pupils' previous knowledge and did not build on existing knowledge. Although pupils generally responded positively to a different teacher, the behaviour of pupils on occasions was unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching has been maintained since the previous inspection.

157. There has been improvement since the last inspection in, for example, the quality of schemes of work. Many pupils have good opportunities to develop their skills through peripatetic music teaching and the range of extra curricular opportunities provided.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

158. Overall, the quality of provision in physical education is good.

### **Strengths:**

- the overall quality of teaching is good and results in effective learning for all pupils;
- pupils are enthusiastic and are making good progress in lessons;
- through extra-curricular provision individual pupils and teams have achieved representative honours and been successful in a range of activities at district level;
- good quality leadership and management providing a clear focus on raising the standard of teaching and learning further.

### **Areas for improvement:**

- schemes of work do not yet fully meet the requirements of National Curriculum 2000;
- pupils' evaluative skills need development and they need to take more

159. Teachers' assessments in 2000 indicate that the majority of pupils in Years 7 to 9 are working at or beyond national expectations. In lessons, the majority of pupils are working as expected for their age and are on line to achieve appropriate levels at the end of Year 9. In Years 10 to 11, in the course that all pupils take, standards are also as expected. Across Years 7 to 11, standards are more consistent than at the time of the last inspection. There are no significant differences between the standards of boys and girls.

160. At the end of Year 9, achievement is good for all groups of pupils in relation to their physical capabilities. For example, in rugby union lessons, boys are improving their all-round skills and techniques and, in their netball lessons, girls are developing their tactical awareness by devising set team moves. By the end of Year 11 pupils have continued to refine and improve their skills and techniques in games. In basketball lessons, both boys and girls are successfully improving their team play skills, for example, through working on one-to-one defensive tactics.

161. Across all years pupils have a secure grasp of the principles and procedures of warm-up. They could, though, be more involved by leading, for example, their own stretches. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported, integrated well in lessons, and make good progress. Teachers organise their classes well so that pupils of all ability are able to make good progress in lessons.

162. The quality of teaching overall is good. This results in effective learning and is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement. There are no significant differences between the key stages and the quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Teachers have very high expectations in terms of discipline and behaviour, and in the ability of pupils to work to their best. Pupils' respond well, which helps to promote a positive learning atmosphere in lessons. For example, they work well in pairs and small groups and show clear respect for the capabilities of one another. In all lessons, clear introductions, together with effective breakdown and demonstration of skills, ensures pupils are aware of what is expected of them and what they have to do to make progress. A good variety of structured activities in lessons help ensure pupils stay motivated. In a Year 9 netball lesson, for example, girls were involved in planning attacking tactics and in a Year 10 rugby union lesson, boys were consolidating their handling skills as well as learning how to improve 'ruck' techniques. Pupils are made aware of their capabilities because teachers circulate well and offer praise and constructive criticism. In some lessons though, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to be involved in the evaluation of one another. This means they are not always adapting and improving their skills and techniques as effectively as they should be. In a Year 10 association football lesson, for example, opportunities for observation of each others' marking techniques would have enabled them to refine and improve their own practice. Similarly, at the end of lessons there is a tendency for the teacher to provide all the evaluation rather than to ask pupils for their responses as to what they feel they have achieved.

163. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and has been extended at Key Stage 4 with the introduction this year of GCSE physical education. Although it is very early in the course, all pupils are already making good progress in both their theory and practical lessons. Pupils' learning experience is enriched by a range of extra-curricular activities which includes inter-school and inter-form competitive fixtures. Schemes of work have been modified to ensure learning objectives are clear and to address the full ability range of pupils. Further refinement is needed, however, to ensure they reflect fully the demands of the National Curriculum. Changing facilities are poor and shower arrangements do not

provide the privacy expected by boys and girls because there are no cubicles. There are some opportunities for pupils to use ICT in physical education. Since his appointment in

January, the head of department has provided good quality leadership and management and has focused the development of the subject, on improving the quality of teaching and learning through, for example, a programme of lesson observations. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been good.

## **Dance**

164. The provision of dance enhances the overall breadth of the school curriculum particularly the expressive arts programme in Year 7 and the physical education curriculum through Years 10 and 11. A successful GCSE option course is also available. Between 1996 and 2000, the proportion of pupils achieving A\*-C grade passes at GCSE was high – well above the national average. High standards are evident in lessons. For example, in a Year 11 lesson pupils successfully choreographed both solo and paired routines

165. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Lessons are well structured with a very good balance between teacher input and pupil involvement that enables all pupils to make progress. Extra-curricular provision throughout the year further enhances pupils' learning experiences and for some older pupils provides opportunities to develop their leadership skills as they support younger pupils. Because of the limited changing facilities in the physical education department girls have to change behind the stage curtain in the school hall. This does little for their self-esteem.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

166. Overall, the quality of provision in religious education is good.

### **Strengths:**

- teaching is good with some outstanding features;
- the marking of pupils' work is usually excellent;
- literacy is taught very well through the subject;
- the subject is made relevant to pupils' own experiences.

### **Areas for improvement:**

- pupils at Key Stage 4 study the subject for less than the time required by the Agreed Syllabus;
- insufficient use is made of ICT in lessons.

167. Standards have risen since the previous inspection because the quality of teaching has improved. At the end of Key Stage 3, standards are above national expectations. At Key Stage 4, some pupils opt to take religious education as a GCSE subject while most pupils follow a core course that consists of eight or twelve lessons per year. GCSE standards are above national averages. No candidates took GCSE in 2001, but the results for 2000 were excellent for the small number of candidates involved. Almost all achieved A\* and A grades. In the GCSE results from 1996 to 2000, the school's pupils did better than pupils of similar attainment nationally. However, the standards achieved by those following the core course are below expectations because the teaching time is less than required by the Agreed Syllabus and they do not cover the expected areas of knowledge and understanding.

168. At the end of Key Stage 3, some higher-attaining pupils produce work of a very high standard with, for example, detailed analysis of the causes and consequences of suffering, including religious viewpoints. Pupils cover a wide range of work including their description of their own experiences of meditation and the religious views on family life and marriage. Average-attaining pupils produce a wide range of work of the expected standard but their writing tends to be relatively brief. There are some instances of extended writing, such as a letter to a friend about a Jewish wedding and an account of the life of Martin Luther King.

169. At GCSE, pupils know the key features of Islam and are aware of their contemporary relevance. They have a good knowledge and understanding of Christianity and interpret short passages from the Bible. They explore different viewpoints about moral issues. The written work of lower-attaining pupils often provides only brief explanations that are not as good as their oral contributions during lessons. In the core course at Key Stage 4, there is a relatively small amount of written work because of the limited teaching time and the emphasis on discussion. Pupils investigate moral issues, recording some simple arguments for and against different viewpoints. They consider some fundamental questions such as factors that influence the behaviour of individual people.

170. At both key stages, teaching and learning are good with some outstanding features. Teaching and learning were satisfactory or better in all lessons: good in half, and very good or excellent in a significant proportion. Common strengths of much of the teaching include excellent marking, very good lesson planning, effective promotion of pupils' personal development, excellent subject knowledge, good support for pupils' literacy skills, challenging work for all pupils and effective integration of homework with classwork. Because of the good teaching, pupils from the full range of attainment achieve very well, including those with special educational needs.

171. Usually, each piece of work a pupil completes is carefully marked with a personal written comment that gives encouragement as well as making clear suggestions about how to improve standards. However, on many occasions, pupils do not respond to this guidance. Lessons are very well planned and clearly structured with a variety of interesting tasks that enable pupils to achieve the set learning objectives by building up their knowledge and understanding step by step. There is a brisk pace of learning with time-limited tasks so that much is achieved. For example, in one lesson as Bibles were given out, pupils were expected to add two more ultimate questions to their lists. Teaching reinforces good behaviour, positive attitudes, and high levels of self-esteem throughout lessons and, during individual or group work, the pupils are prompted and encouraged to extend their learning. This contributes to pupils' very good attitudes to learning. Excellent subject knowledge results in effective links being forged between religious concepts and aspects of the pupils' own lives. For example, between the social aspects of eating and Ramadan, and pupils' experiences of leadership and the Sikh Gurus.

172. The school's literacy policy is effectively implemented through the teaching of reading and research skills. Pupils also experience a good range of different types of writing. In one lesson, pupils made their own notes about the advantages of parables. These notes formed the basis of a class discussion when pupils shared a wide range of interesting ideas. Following this, the pupils evaluated what they had written already and then added to their notes. This resulted in excellent learning. Tasks usually challenge the full range of pupils' attainment. Homework is used effectively to promote pupils' learning. For example, in one lesson on suffering and the teaching of Buddhism, pupils had prepared with a homework on natural and man-made suffering and followed the lesson with a further homework to summarise and interpret 'the four noble truths'. Occasional instances of weaknesses in teaching were insufficient challenge, whole-class teaching that was too long so that the pupils' attention began to flag, and the use of questions that do not stimulate pupils' thinking.

173. The curriculum enables pupils to learn about and benefit from religions. Good use is made of visits to, for example, churches and a mosque, and each class has a visiting speaker each year. However, statutory requirements are not met for providing religious education for all Key Stage 4 pupils according to the Agreed Syllabus. ICT is not used sufficiently to enhance pupils' learning. Good assessment data is kept for the GCSE course. Although there is an excellent record of progress for most pupils in the teachers' comments on each piece of work, the assessment records kept need to be reviewed. The subject is effectively managed, and the head of subject's monitoring of exercise books is excellent. Good improvements have been made since the previous inspection.