

INSPECTION REPORT

ELLIS GUILFORD COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

Basford, Nottingham

LEA area: City of Nottingham

Unique reference number: 122828

Headteacher: Peter Plummer

Reporting inspector: Mel Croft
003668

Dates of inspection: 8th October 2001 – 12th October 2001

Inspection number: 189848

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 to 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Bar Lane Old Basford Nottingham
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Michael Archer
Date of previous inspection:	23 rd September 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3668	Mel Croft	Registered inspector		<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>How high are standards? – The school’s results and pupils’ achievements</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
9748	Cliff Hayes	Lay inspector		<p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
2398	Terry Cook	Team inspector	Religious Education	How high are standards? - Pupils’ attitudes, values and personal development
10792	Tony Payne	Team inspector	Equal Opportunities English	
15050	Robin Ings	Team inspector	Mathematics	
2467	Paul Mitchell	Team inspector	Science	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
6483	Kevin Cowan	Team inspector	Design & Technology	

15929	David Sheppard	Team inspector	Art Music English as another language	
11526	Mike Hodkinson	Team inspector	Physical Education	
18395	Alan Jones	Team inspector	Special Educational Needs	
13054	Michael Pennington	Team inspector	Modern Foreign Languages	
15977	Maggie Holling	Team inspector	History	
8918	Yvonne Barclay	Team inspector	Information and Communication Technology	How well are pupils' taught?
23576	Michael Walker	Team inspector	Geography	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Ellis Guilford is the largest mixed 11-16 comprehensive school in the city of Nottingham. The school is over-subscribed and currently has 1180 pupils on roll which makes it bigger than most other secondary schools nationally. The boys attending the school outnumber the girls by 115. Within the catchment area the percentage of children from high social class households, or from homes where adults have higher educational qualifications, is much lower than that found on average nationally. Just over 22 per cent of pupils claim free school meals. Twenty percent of pupils in the school are from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. Just over 31 per cent of pupils are on the special educational needs register. The range of special educational needs is fairly wide and includes pupils with physical disabilities. The school identifies 4.5 per cent of pupils having English as an additional language. Pupils' attainment on entry is well below average overall.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Ellis Guilford School provides a sound education for its pupils within circumstances that are relatively challenging. Although standards in relation to schools nationally are below average, the majority of pupils make at least satisfactory progress and progress for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school is led and managed effectively by the headteacher, governors and senior management team. Overall, the quality of teaching is improving. It is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and in Years 10 and 11 it is good. The school successfully ensures that all pupils, whatever their gender, racial background, ability or disabilities have full access to all curricular and other activities. Overall the school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The school ensures that all pupils, including those from ethnic minority groups, have the chance to be involved in the educational opportunities provided.
- The staff manage the behaviour of pupils well.
- The teaching in Years 10 and 11.
- Good provision is made for the personal and social development of pupils.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs in the Learning Centre ensures they make good progress.
- The range of curriculum opportunities throughout the school, including vocational education in Years 10 and 11 and the provision of extra-curricular activities.
- The links with partner schools and colleges.

What could be improved

- The standards of literacy and numeracy.
- The provision for information and communication technology as a subject across the curriculum and religious education for all in Years 10 and 11.
- The attendance of pupils and punctuality to lessons.
- The quality of pupils' written work and level of participation in lessons.
- Information provided by teachers to pupils on how well the pupils are performing, and how they can improve the standard of their work.
- The consistency of provision and the checking of homework across all subjects.
- The monitoring and evaluation of the quality of education and standards by heads of department.

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. The improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory in some areas but there are still some issues that need to be addressed. There has been an overall improvement in the quality of teaching, particularly in Years 10 and 11. Sound progress has been made in the development of pupils' independent learning skills and responsibility for learning. Improvements have been made in the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning through the introduction of a programme of departmental review. The assessment policy has been refined but the school recognises further work is needed on using assessment to help pupils plan the next steps in their learning and in the setting of targets. The accommodation has improved and information and communication technology (ICT) facilities are now better. There has been improvement in the provision and teaching of ICT in Years 7 to 9, but in Years 10 to 11 the provision does not meet statutory requirements for all pupils. The school is successfully involved in a number of externally funded initiatives aimed at improving the inclusiveness of education and at raising attainment. Ensuring that all pupils have access to the range of learning opportunities is a feature that has developed well since the last inspection. Attendance and punctuality to lessons, identified as issues in the last inspection, still remain unsatisfactory. The school has systems in place to sustain the improvements made and, with the strong leadership and management and the high commitment of the staff, has the capacity to improve further.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
GCSE examinations	D	E	E	D	well above average A above average B C below average D well below average E

In comparison with schools in similar contexts, measured by the number of pupils receiving free school meals, standards in 2000 GCSE examinations were below average. In comparison with schools whose pupils reached similar standards in Year 9, however, GCSE results are at least as good. In the year 2000 GCSE examination boys performed less well than girls with a wider gap than found nationally.

In the 2000 National Curriculum tests for Year 9, results show that, when compared with schools in similar contexts, standards in English were above average and mathematics and science were well below average. Between 1996 and 2000 the school's performance ran parallel to the upward national trend but remained well below average.

In the 2001 national tests, an increased proportion of the year group attained the national expectation in mathematics and science but in English the proportion fell from that in 2000, when it was close to the national average. In Years 7 to 9 pupils make satisfactory progress. However, potentially higher-attaining pupils do not reach the higher levels.

The lower than average results in national tests, when compared with the national average, are a reflection of the low prior attainment of pupils when they enter the school and the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Levels of literacy and numeracy are well below average on entry. These weaknesses continue to be a significant obstacle to learning through the school and limit the standards attained in Year 11.

The school sets challenging targets for achievement. In the 2001 tests in Year 9, standards in mathematics were in line with the targets set, in science the target set

for level five and above was exceeded and in English results achieved were below the target set. In the GCSE examination in 2001 results achieved overall were just below the targets set.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The attitudes of pupils are mainly positive towards school. However, there is a significant minority of pupils who do not share this positive attitude towards school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is generally satisfactory or good but a minority are disaffected. This results in poor behaviour and leads to disruption of others and their own learning.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is very good overall but aspects of pupils' personal development are not so well advanced, ie taking on personal responsibility in relation to attendance, punctuality and homework.
Attendance	Attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Overall teaching in English, mathematics and science is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. Teachers plan effectively, manage pupils and resources well and provide good support for pupils with special educational needs. In many lessons, learning objectives are made clear to pupils and are referred to consistently so that pupils are able to measure their own progress against the aims of the lesson. However, although the quality and range of teaching methods has improved, the full impact of the school's efforts has not yet been matched by improvements in the attitudes of pupils to their learning. Too often pupils are reluctant to take the initiative or to engage actively in lessons, preferring to rely on teacher direction, wait for teacher assistance or to disengage from the lesson. Excellent or very good teaching overcomes this reluctance on the part of pupils by their teachers' enthusiasm, subject knowledge and skilful questioning which draw pupils into lessons, overcoming reticence and igniting a willingness to learn.

Most teachers' expectations of the standards of written work produced by pupils are too low. Work is marked but, overall, the quality and use of assessment to improve pupils' learning is unsatisfactory. When homework is set it is used well to reinforce or consolidate and extend what is learnt in school. However, the expectations of the amount pupils will achieve through their homework is too low and homework is not set regularly in some subjects.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school's curriculum has many strengths, particularly in the provision of work-related learning and vocational education. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 does not meet statutory requirements.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision made for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils who are at risk of disaffection and underachievement are well supported by the Support Centre.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Pupils whose first language is not English are given good support which enables them to take full part in learning activities.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for the pupils social, moral and cultural education are good but provision for spiritual development is poor and the school does not meet the requirement for a daily act of worship.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school makes sound provision for the health and safety and general welfare of its pupils.

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum for pupils up to the age of 14, which meets both the needs of pupils and statutory requirements. In Years 10 and 11 the curriculum does not meet statutory requirements for religious education and information and communications technology. Staff provide a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities. Partnership with parents is satisfactory. The transition arrangements from primary school are good, particularly for pupils with special education needs. Procedures for monitoring and promoting behaviour are good. There is good support for pupils' personal development. Insufficient information is given to pupils on how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Monitoring and promoting attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and	The headteacher and senior management team provides

management by the headteacher and other key staff	strong leadership and management that are clearly focused upon improving the quality of education and raising standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors take a keen and informed interest in the school's work and play a full part in forward planning. They have ensured that most statutory requirements are met with the exception of some aspects of the curriculum and the act of collective worship.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school makes very good use of performance data, undertaking detailed analysis to identify issues to be addressed and to set targets for improvement. There is an effective system of departmental review by senior managers. However, monitoring and evaluation by middle managers needs to be improved.
The strategic use of resources	The overall strategic management of resources is very good.

There is a clear line management structure in the school for the delegation of responsibility for school improvement activities to middle managers. Development planning at a whole school level and at a department level is good. Governors know well the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are appropriately involved in making strategic and financial decisions. They are aware of the principles of best value and their application to strategic decisions. The school has sufficient teaching staff to meet the needs of the curriculum and is well supported by a strong team of non-teaching staff. The induction of teachers new to the school is very good. Resources to support the curriculum are satisfactory overall in range and quality. The school manages well the available accommodation. There are few places for the social interaction of pupils. Some refurbishment has been undertaken recently, for example, in science, ICT and the Learning Resource Centre. This has improved the quality of provision.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their child's liking for school • the school's approachability • the school's high expectations of pupils • the progress their child makes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the closeness with which the school works with parents • the information parents receive about their child's progress • the amount of homework set

Inspection evidence supports the positive opinions of parents, with the exceptions that expectations of pupils' punctuality and of what can be achieved through homework are not high enough. Evidence confirms parents' views that homework is not set regularly in all subjects. More information is needed, in reports to parents, to

clearly show how well their child is performing and what they need to do to improve. Although the school makes extensive efforts to involve parents in their children's education these opportunities are not taken up sufficiently by parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Overall, in the GCSE examinations in 2000, comparisons indicate that pupils are performing at least as well as in other schools with pupils of similar prior attainment at the end of Years 7 to 9. In the GCSE examinations the percentage of pupils achieving five or more A* to C grades was well below average when compared with schools nationally and below average when compared with schools in similar contexts. However, these results were above average when compared with those in schools which attained similar National Curriculum tests results as this when these pupils were in Year 9.
2. There is a more favourable pattern for pupils achieving five or more A* to G grades. This was below average when compared with schools nationally, average when compared with schools in a similar context but well above average when comparisons are made based upon the pupils' prior attainment. For one or more A* to G grades, standards are close to the average when compared both with schools nationally and similar schools.
3. In the year 2000 GCSE examinations boys performed less well than girls, with a wider difference than that found nationally.
4. After the last inspection the proportion of pupils achieving the higher grades in the GCSE examination improved. In 1998, 33 per cent of the year group achieved five or more A* to C grades. Since then, in the last four years, the overall trend in the proportion of the year group achieving five or more A* to C grades has been downward. In the 2001 GCSE examination 24 per cent of the cohort achieved five or more A* to C grades. However, when performance of all pupils is taken into account the results are rising faster than the national trend. This year's results are similar to the results achieved at the time of the last inspection. A significant proportion – 12 per cent of the year group - did not achieve a grade in the 2001 GCSE examination. This is because some pupils follow courses which lead to alternative certification, whilst others do not have a good record of attendance at school. These factors depress the school's results in the GCSE examination. The results achieved in the GCSE examination also reflect the changing nature of the intake of pupils to the school over recent years. Although the results at GCSE

have fallen pupils at Ellis Guilford overall are making at least satisfactory progress in the last two years of school.

5. In Years 10 and 11 in English pupils make good progress but standards of attainment are consistently below the national average in both English Language and English Literature. Overall, pupils do better in English GCSE than in other subjects.
6. Pupils' results in GCSE examinations in mathematics and science are well below average. However, overall pupils make satisfactory progress in mathematics and science in the school relative to their prior attainment. The results achieved by boys are significantly lower than those achieved by girls.
7. Recently the school has focussed upon raising standards in Years 7 to 9. In the 2001 national tests standards in mathematics and science showed a rising trend. However, pupils did not achieve as highly in English as they did in the 2000 tests when they were in line with the national average, and in 2001 they fell back to a low level. The progress made by pupils currently in the school is similar to that expected nationally, except for those potentially higher-attaining pupils who have not kept pace. The depressed results when compared with national average are a reflection of the low attainment of pupils when they enter the school and the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs.
8. In the year 2000 National Curriculum tests for Year 9, using average point score per pupil, results show that when compared with schools in similar contexts standards in English were above average and mathematics and science were well below average. Overall, taking all three subjects into account, results were below average. For the period 1996 to 2000 the trend in the school's average National Curriculum points for all core subjects was similar to the national trend.
9. In the year 2000 Year 9 National Curriculum tests the average point score in all three core subjects showed an improvement on the 1999 results. This was very marked in English. When compared with all schools nationally standards in English improved from well below average during the period 1997 to 1999 to close to average in 2000. Standards in mathematics and science remained well below average.
10. In the year 2000 tests results achieved at level 6 and above shows that, when compared with schools in similar contexts, standards in English are close to average, in mathematics they are very low, and in science they are below average. This supports the school's own analysis and inspection evidence that there is significant underachievement by potentially higher-attaining pupils in all core subjects. The schools own evaluation has identified significant underachievement of boys in all three core subjects in comparison to girls, which continues to be an issue.

11. Levels of literacy are well below average on entry. These weaknesses continue to be a significant obstacle to learning through the school and limits the standards attained in Year 11. Pupils generally read with understanding. They read widely in English in Years 7 to 9 (especially as a result of a good Reading Awards System), but this is not a feature of work in other subjects. Pupils in the accelerated learning groups in Year 7 make good progress in their reading. Pupils' writing skills are, overall, weak in Years 7 to 9 but they are better in Years 10 to 11, where the range of writing and its fluency and accuracy improve. In Years 10 to 11 they develop more independence as writers. Pupils listen well and respond appropriately in all years. They generally speak clearly and adapt their talk to circumstances. The pupils are able to explain, describe, hypothesise, analyse, compare, question, deduce, ask questions and provide answers. They are more skilled in these areas in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 to 11. However, pupils' ability and opportunity to engage in extended discussion, as a class or in a group, is limited.
12. Standards of numeracy in the school are low. Many pupils use calculators when they are available, rather than perform relatively simple calculations mentally. Estimating skills are weak. Where graphs and charts are used, pupils often poorly present them making them difficult to use. There are some opportunities for pupils to use and apply mathematics in other subjects. However, the approach to numeracy across the curriculum has been uncoordinated and few subjects have identified, in their planning, the mathematical skills required for learning.
13. Overall, most pupils arrive at the school with low capability in the use of computers. In Years 7 to 9 all pupils, including those who have special educational needs, make satisfactory or better progress. However, by the age of 16, the standards achieved by the majority of pupils in ICT lessons are below the level expected nationally because there is insufficient use of application of these skills in other subjects.
14. Standards in Year 9 are good in physical education, average in art and design and religious education, below average in design and technology, geography, history, music and well below average in modern foreign languages.
15. By Year 11 GCSE standards are good in design and technology and physical education, average in religious education, art and design and history, below average in geography and music and well below average in modern foreign languages.
16. The progress that pupils make in design and technology, GCSE religious education and physical education (Years 10 and 11) is good and in art and design, history and physical education (Years 7 to 9) pupils make satisfactory progress. The progress made by pupils in geography, music and in French is unsatisfactory. In Spanish many pupils achieve their potential and are making good progress.

17. All pupils with special educational needs are taught within the setting arrangements in subject areas. The support that they receive, by being in smaller groups and with learning support assistants (LSAs) who are linked to specific subject areas, enables them to make good, and often very good, progress throughout the school. A small group of pupils in Year 7 follow an intensive Accelerated Learning Programme, which focuses on the development of specific reading skills. Progress here is good because of the intensity and tight focus of the work. The Support Centre, supported by funding from the Excellence in Cities initiative, is effective in tackling the specific skill development of individual pupils with complex behavioural and learning needs. This is done through one to one contact and small group work. Pupils with disabilities make good progress because precise targets are set and these challenge the pupils. Many teachers and learning support assistants have taken courses to improve their skills in teaching pupils with disabilities. Overall, the progress of pupils with special educational needs is good.
18. Pupils from ethnic minorities make progress similar to that of other groups in the school.
19. The school sets challenging targets for achievement in the GCSE examination and national curriculum tests in Year 9. In the 2001 tests in Year 9 standards in mathematics were in line with the targets set, in science the target for level 5 and above was exceeded and in English results achieved were below those set. In the GCSE examination in 2001, results achieved were below the targets set by three per cent for five or more A* to C grades, one per cent for one or more A* to G grades and one point for the average point score per candidate.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

20. The attitudes of pupils are mainly positive towards school. Behaviour is generally satisfactory or good and pupils' personal development is good. Attendance and punctuality is unsatisfactory.
21. The majority of pupils have positive attitudes towards their school and their learning. For example, a representative group of Year 7 pupils reported that they liked their school, generally enjoy lessons and recognise that most pupils concentrate on their studies. The pupils and parents acknowledge that the school's successful programme of induction for new Year 7 pupils was a key factor in giving them both confidence and a good start to their secondary school career. However, attitudes to school and to learning tend to be better amongst the pupils in Years 10 and 11 than Years 7 to 9. Examples of good attitudes on the part of pupils where teaching is good are seen in religious education, physical education, mathematics in Years 10 and 11, ICT, history and amongst pupils with special education needs in the Learning Centre.

22. Pupils are courteous and receptive to visitors, for example, in PHSE when they respond positively to a range of guest speakers by actively listening and discussing a range of social and moral issues. Many pupils enthusiastically join in with the good variety of extra-curricular activities offered to them and readily take part in sporting events and school productions.
23. The pupils respond well to positive comments and praise. In the main pupils have respect for school property. For example, there is little evidence of graffiti, computer equipment is well cared for and respected, as are materials in art. To help support further the development of positive attitudes the school is actively embarking on a number of initiatives. For example, to generate a sense of responsibility and to provide pupils with a genuine voice in their school, a school's council has been established, but this is still in an embryonic stage of development. The school also has reviewed its rewards system in Years 10 and 11 and has developed a scheme, which is now in operation, of issuing certificates to recognise success. This has had some positive impact on pupils' attitudes but needs to be improved upon by using the rewards system more extensively and with more consistency. The school expects that the new schools council will assist with this process and in the review of the Years 7 to 9 rewards system.
24. There is, however, a minority of disaffected pupils who do not share this positive attitude towards school and a small minority of pupils has poor regard for school property. For example, some stairwells are badly damaged, fire notices are defaced, and there is litter within school buildings and around the site. Disaffected behaviour is also evident in some lessons, for example, in modern foreign languages, where the attitudes and behaviour of a minority of pupils have been adversely affected by staff absence, in design and technology and history where some boys are poorly motivated, and in some English, maths and science lessons. At times this disaffection results in poor behaviour and leads to disruption of others' learning and their own. For example, a representative group of pupils in Year 11 recognise that some pupils are disruptive, but whilst most teachers deal with them well, a lot of lesson time is spent sorting out problems. However, for other pupils lack of motivation and poor concentration on their tasks is an issue. This results in some pupils not completing work and not catching up on work missed as a result of being late to lessons or through absence. Also, homework is not consistently completed and homework diaries are not used diligently by all pupils to help them organise their work and time. Initiative and responsibility in learning are not well developed in a significant number of pupils.
25. Parental views of standards of behaviour and of the implementation of school policy differ. However, the evidence from the inspection shows that the school has a well-constructed behaviour management policy, which provides a good framework upon which to achieve its principles. The implementation of this policy is now becoming effective and it is providing good support for pupils with challenging behaviour. Strategies to prevent bullying are given a high priority throughout all aspects of school life. The school has a clear,

succinct and effective anti-bullying policy which is being applied consistently. Pupils report there is little bullying and, if it arises, they state it is dealt with quickly and sensitively and they are confident the school will continue to do so.

26. During the last academic year, there were no permanent exclusions and 67 fixed term exclusions. The school uses fixed-term exclusion as part of its school strategy to improve standards of behaviour. Analysis of the school exclusion data and of the data, provided by the local education authority, shows that the strategy is working.
27. There are no social areas within the school buildings for the pupils to meet at break and lunchtimes. However, the school provides a high level of staff supervision at these times, which helps ensure that behaviour is mainly good. The vast majority of pupils are tolerant and make the most of open spaces to meet in relaxed and orderly social gatherings. However, a significant minority do exploit the situation, go against the school aims and ethos and are boisterous in behaviour, drop litter and smoke in the toilet areas. Movement on corridors between lessons is very robust with much pushing and shoving.
28. The school's dining facilities are not large enough for the number of pupils using them. This creates a number of problems for the school. Pupils often have a very long wait, both to enter the dining room and while queuing inside. The situation is further exacerbated when the weather is inclement. Also, conditions inside the dining area are not conducive to communal dining in a relaxed social atmosphere. In addition, the pressure of numbers needing to be served means that some pupils have very little time in which to eat their lunch before afternoon school starts. Taking into account these cramped conditions both the pupils and staff are very tolerant and display much good will.
29. The majority of pupils form constructive relationships with one another, teachers and adults in lessons. The quality of the relationships between teachers and pupils is a strength of the school. Pupils are valued both as individuals and for their contribution to the daily life of the school. There is no evidence that pupils work in an oppressive atmosphere and from discussion with pupils they do not feel the atmosphere is oppressive. The work of the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant team helps to ensure that racial tension is rare. However, the required procedures for recording and reporting racist incidents are not fully in place, and this should be addressed.
30. The commitment of staff and the genuine interest they show for each pupil is well supported by school policy to try to build and raise pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Pupils' personal development is very good overall and the well designed and delivered personal, health and social education programme caters very well for their social and moral values, and their awareness of the lifestyles of others. When presented with the opportunity to exercise responsibility they respond well, for example, within the new school

council and in extra-curricular activities. However, across the school opportunity to take on responsibility is limited. Pupils respond well to the careers education guidance, including the work experience programme that introduces pupils to a wider community outside school. Pupils, particularly in Year 11, feel well supported by projects in the school, for example, learning mentors, girls' and boys' achievement groups and the Prince's Trust.

31. Some aspects of pupils' personal development are not as well advanced, for example, taking on of personal responsibility in terms of not dropping litter, being punctual for school and lessons and recognising the needs and benefits of regular attendance at school.
32. Pupils with special educational needs respond well to the support they get within the school. Support given in the Learning Centre is seen as positive by pupils. Both adults and pupils are positive in their approaches to the wide range of ethnic groups and disabilities found in the school. Work seen in the school reflects a positive attitude to minority groups and this is reflected in the way they work and play together.
33. Generally, pupils show respect for others' feelings, values and beliefs. In assemblies and some lessons, pupils reflect on what they do and its impact on others, for example in link lessons with tutors, personal, health and social education and religious education. Pupils recognise that their tutors help their personal development and state most are doing a good job. For example, pupils from all year groups agreed that they could talk to and take problems to their form tutors.
34. Attendance was raised as a key issue at the last inspection and it is still poor. This is despite the school having as a key issue in its development plan to raise attendance to over 90 per cent and taking a number of steps to bring about improvement. The annual attendance rate is consistently below the national average. This is due to a proportion of pupils who fail persistently to attend, the remainder being sporadic non-attenders. In both instances it has a direct impact on the standards that these pupils achieve. The best efforts of the school so far have not improved matters enough since the last inspection and procedures for encouraging good attendance and punctuality are not tight enough. As a result not all the success indicators in the last Ofsted Action Plan have been met and there has only been a marginal improvement in the 2000/2001 attendance figures on the 1995/1996 data at the time of the last inspection. In an effort to address poor pupil attitude towards attendance and punctuality, the school is now incorporating this as a priority into a number of its initiatives, for example, the newly formed schools council and learning mentors.

HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS OR PUPILS TAUGHT?

35. Overall, teaching is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9, and good in Years 10 and 11. In all lessons in Years 10 and 11, teaching is satisfactory or better, in one in

four lessons it is very good and in one in ten lessons teaching is excellent. In Years 7 to 9 teaching in one in twenty lessons it is excellent and very good in one in eight lessons. However, in one in 12 lessons in Years 7 to 9, teaching is unsatisfactory. These lessons are mostly taught by teachers new to the school.

36. The school has made significant efforts to improve the quality of teaching and this is reflected in the reduced proportion of unsatisfactory teaching since the last inspection. The proportion of excellent and very good teaching has increased substantially since the previous inspection, when no teaching was judged to be of those qualities. Teachers plan effectively, manage pupils and resources well and provide good support for pupils with special educational needs. In many lessons, learning objectives are made clear to pupils and are referred to consistently so that pupils are able to measure their own progress against the aims of the lesson. However, although the quality and range of teaching methods has improved, the full impact of the school's efforts has not yet been matched by improvements in the attitudes of pupils to their learning. Too often pupils are reluctant to take the initiative or to engage actively in lessons, preferring to rely on teacher direction, wait for teacher assistance or to disengage from the lesson. The excellent or very good teaching overcomes this reluctance on the part of pupils by the teachers' own enthusiasm, subject knowledge and skilful questioning which draws pupils into lessons, overcoming reticence and igniting a willingness to learn.
37. The excellent teachers combine enthusiasm, their good subject knowledge and their understanding of how pupils learn to make teaching effective. They break the lesson down into appropriate steps. The teachers use high quality oral questioning very effectively and maintain a good pace of learning throughout the lesson. They require pupils to think for themselves and to explain what they are learning. In art, for example, good pace and rapid questioning effectively required contributions from pupils who spoke sensitively about the 'spirit of cubism'. They set themselves personal targets to improve their ceramic work in cubist style and one girl used the computer well to produce an 'all-round' cubist effect whilst another researched cubism using the Internet. High expectations were shown by the teacher asking the pupils to grade GCSE exhibition work completed last year by Year 11 pupils, and because of this all the pupils were able to reflect well on the standard of their own work.
38. Overall, teachers have a good understanding of the requirements of the National Curriculum and of their subject knowledge, which they use well to ensure that the majority of pupils make at least satisfactory progress in most subjects. However, teachers do not always set sufficiently high expectations of what pupils, particularly potentially higher-attaining pupils, should achieve by the end of the lesson. In the best lessons where pupils made good progress, for example, in a Year 11 mathematics lesson, objectives were made clear to pupils at the start of the lesson. Targets were set for each section of the lesson and the last five minutes was used well to enable pupils

to understand the progress they had made in consolidating their skills in solving simple equations. When learning objectives are too narrowly focused, for example, on the completion of exercises in English, learning is unnecessarily slow.

39. Teachers show a good awareness of pupils with special educational needs, especially those who have physical disabilities. Support staff are used well in the majority of lessons, for example, in enabling individual pupils with fine motor difficulties to complete written activities successfully and ensuring that pupils engaged in group work maintain their concentration. In a food technology lesson, a physically impaired pupil was given good support in choosing suitable materials for packaging and drawing a template with the result that a more successful product was created. In another lesson, a support assistant was effective in helping a class containing several pupils with behaviour difficulties to maintain good attitudes and behaviour and remain on task. In the most effective class teaching, work is well matched to targets identified on individual educational plans and makes clear the expected learning. A good example was seen in science where the individual education plans were used to direct teaching and then updated following assessments by the learning support assistant. However, individual education plans are not regularly used to inform planning for those with special educational needs other than for pupils with physical disabilities.
40. Teaching within the learning support department is always good or better. The teaching of pupils withdrawn from lessons to address learning and behaviour difficulties is very good. Assessment is very well used to inform planning, with lessons planned to address any difficulties encountered during previous lessons. There is an emphasis on building pupils' confidence, with very thorough preparation for writing tasks and, as a result, pupils are equipped with the ideas and vocabulary to enable them to participate fully.
41. Teachers identify well barriers to learning for pupils from different ethnic groups. For example, a group of boys have been identified as underachievers in science and responses from the school include mentoring interviews and discussion with the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant workers to set suitable targets for achievement. Pupils whose first language is not English are given good support from a bilingual support teacher. This help enables them to take full part in learning activities.
42. Overall teachers are generally effective in the management of pupils behaviour in lessons. At times, although teaching is satisfactory or better, it does not promote an enthusiasm for learning by the pupils. Teachers effectively ensure that pupils stay on task throughout the lesson but pupils lack a sense of urgency in the completion of their work. Because of this the amount of learning that takes place is less than it could be. In a few lessons the amount that pupils learn is severely reduced by poor behaviour. In the best lessons the teachers deal successfully with pupils' negative attitudes to their learning. For example, in a science lesson the teacher set clear

standards for behaviour and for what he expected pupils to have completed by the end of the lesson: all pupils were to have ten readings from their experiment. Pupils completed the task and the lesson ended with a good plenary during which effective questioning reinforced the main points from the experiment.

43. The less successful teaching is not sufficiently robust in requiring pupils to be engaged with the lesson. Teachers do not always gain the full attention of pupils when speaking to the whole class. In these lessons there is an overuse of worksheets and pupils are required to complete low level tasks which do not motivate them. When the teacher-directed part of the lesson ends, the pupils work at a rate that they determine for themselves, rather than at a pace required by the teacher.
44. A substantial amount of time for learning is lost because pupils are frequently late to lessons.
45. Overall, most teachers' expectations of the standards of written work produced by pupils are too low. Pupils too often do not catch up on work missed through absence or because of lateness. The work in pupils' notebooks is frequently incomplete nor organised appropriately which makes it inadequate for revision purposes.
46. Work is marked regularly. All pupils have up to date assessments in all subjects with the standards of their work measured against National Curriculum or GCSE criteria. There are some good examples where teachers use their assessments of the progress of pupils in class well, for example, in art, English, design and technology and for pupils with special educational needs. However, overall, the quality and use of day to day assessment is unsatisfactory and because of this pupils, particularly those in Years 7 to 9, do not know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.
47. When homework is set it is used well to reinforce or consolidate and extend what is learnt in school. However, the expectations of the amount pupils will achieve through their homework is too low and homework is not set regularly in some subjects. This confirms the views of parents. The school is correct in identifying the improvement of homework as a priority.
48. The previous inspection identified the need to improve the development of pupils' independent learning skills and for them to take on more responsibility for the learning they make. Sound progress has been made in addressing this issue. In art some Year 10 pupils are becoming enthusiastic, independent artists. Clear instructions and demonstration in design and technology enable pupils to know what they have to do and to get on independently. In geography both the fieldwork and the increased use of ICT have helped to address the issue of limited opportunities for independent learning. In physical education, a Junior Sports Leader lesson was delivered by a team of

Year 10 girls, demonstrating leadership, independent learning and responsibility. Pupils' use of the Internet as a research tool is good. The carefully planned worksheets for vocational pupils structure and support their independent learning well and enables boys and girls quickly to access a number of websites to research information for assignments. The development of independent learning remains a priority for the school.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?

49. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum which meets the needs of pupils, including those with disabilities and/or special learning needs, very well. The inclusive nature of the curriculum, which allows all pupils to participate fully, is a strength of the school.
50. Up to, and including Year 9, the school's curriculum meets statutory requirements fully. However, although the curriculum provided for Years 10 and 11 has a number of strengths it does not meet statutory requirements for religious education and ICT. Very good progress has been made since the last inspection in providing a range of high quality opportunities for vocational education and work related learning for pupils in Years 10 and 11. The school has invested heavily in ICT equipment and, where this has arrived and is in use, pupils have access to a wide range of opportunities to use ICT to enhance their learning. However, some subjects that have not yet reached this position, such as science, do not provide sufficient opportunities for the use of ICT. The school provides a range of high quality opportunities for vocational education and work-related learning for pupils in Years 10 and 11.
51. The personal, social and health education programme covers the requirements for education about health, sex and the dangers of misuse of drugs. The programme also includes other elements relating to personal and social development, citizenship and careers education. The programme is being revised appropriately to place the focus of the programme on the development of pupils' own belief in their self-worth and in improving their self-esteem. A small number of experienced teachers deal with the sensitive issues in a professional way. In a lesson on the International Code of Human Rights and Associated Responsibilities, the teacher read a letter from the Muslim leader aloud to the class, which enabled pupils to think deeply and reflect on the current situation in Afghanistan. Good links with out-of-school agencies and groups brings in other contributors to increase the relevance of the programme, for example, the 'Pint Size' theatre group dealing with teenage parenthood.
52. Pupils receive a good programme of careers education and guidance. In addition to work in school they have the opportunity to visit colleges and employers, receive support from external careers advisers and have talks from outside speakers.

53. Many staff give their time at lunchtimes and outside the school day to provide a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities, including sport, study support and the opportunity to study for additional GCSE qualifications in information and communication technology and religious education. These activities are supported well by the pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are involved in a wide range of extra-curricular activities.
54. Good links with local schools and colleges help pupils to make a smooth transition into the school and to plan carefully their next steps when they leave the school. The local 14 -19 network group, established by the school, which has membership by all agencies involved with pupils in this age group, helps to ensure that staff and pupils are well informed about the opportunities and support available. Links with the health services, social services and voluntary organisations are well planned and focus on improving provision for individual and groups of pupils. For example, an occupational therapist advises the school's special needs coordinator on resources and materials to enable disabled pupils to be included in the school. The therapist also visits individual departments to advise on equipment, furniture and resources. The impact of this can be seen in proposed changes to the food technology areas. The school participates fully in initial training of teachers in conjunction with a local university.
55. Information from contributory primary schools enables the school to set appropriate targets for pupils with special educational needs from the beginning of their time in school. The school also uses standardised tests to plan appropriate provision.
56. The provision for pupils' social development is very good. There are many opportunities for group and individual initiatives, which help pupils understand their part in the wider community and enable them to take positions of responsibility as young adults. There is a developing schools council. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 mentor younger pupils in the primary schools and a group of Year 11 girls recently represented the country at a conference in Strasbourg. In the summer of 2001 there was a Citizenship Challenge in Year 9. A group of Year 10 pupils interviewed said they wished to return to their former primary schools for their work experience. A strong belief in equality and social inclusion underpins a harmonious environment. Disabled pupils are very well integrated in the school community and relationships are good.
57. The provision for both moral and cultural development is good. Adults in the school uphold the behaviour code well and pupils are taught effectively to respect each other's different values and beliefs, as, for example, in a Year 10 English lesson in which pupils examined the feelings of characters following a racist incident in Steinbeck's "Of Mice and Men". The strong moral message of an upper school assembly, following the terrorist atrocities in America, was that the values of peace, love and care are common to world faiths. The sex and drugs education awareness programmes are good. The

school has improved provision for pupils' cultural development since the last inspection. There are more planned opportunities to broaden pupils' experiences through the celebration of the diversity of their cultural backgrounds. There are good links with black cultural organisations: one of which, for example, promotes the contribution of black cultures to scientific and technological advance. The focus on the history of black races in 'Black History Month' was very successful and highlighted the contribution of black cultures to human endeavour. Pupils study of the influence of ethnic music and art and drama is strongly represented through workshops, productions and visits to theatres.

58. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is poor apart from in aspects of art and religious education. This weakness, which was identified in the last inspection, has still not been properly addressed. In some lessons, such as two observed in Year 11, teachers used a topic as an opportunity to reflect on deeper meaning. In science, for example, on the plight of victims of a liner disaster, and, in art, on the spiritual essence of cubism. Such moments, however, are incidental. As at the time of the last inspection, planning of the curriculum neglects this dimension of pupils' personal development. The school still does not meet statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship. Only one assembly a week is provided for each pupil.
59. The provision made for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school is often successful in helping pupils with statements of special educational need to achieve passes in accredited courses. The deployment of support staff in lessons gives appropriate priority to pupils with statements to ensure compliance with statement requirements. Pupils with less significant needs are given valuable additional support to develop basic skills through ICT such as the 'Successmaker' program. Pupils are supported through withdrawal groups, accelerated learning groups for Year 7, in-class support, team teaching and attendance at the Learning Centre. The variety of provision and its quality make a significant positive impact on the progress of pupils with special educational needs. For example, provision for pupils with disabilities is excellent, mainly because all staff have shown commitment to making their inclusion possible by finding out about their learning, physical and medical needs. The staff have justly received praise from outside agencies and parents for this commitment, which is often not in directed time. This provision has seen great advances in the achievements by various pupils.
60. The work of the Centre is very good. Pupils in danger of exclusion, disaffection or with particular learning needs are given planned, structured programmes to help them reintegrate fully into mainstream classes. Links between Centre staff and departments enable the full curriculum to be followed by Centre pupils.
61. The school is developing programmes for gifted and talented pupils within the Excellence in Cities and Excellence Challenge Initiatives. The school has identified a group of gifted and talented pupils and has appointed an

Extension and Achievement Coordinator and is nominating team members in all major curriculum areas. The developments are at an early stage and the plans for challenging this group are ambitious and relate well to other areas for improvement. The school has identified improved attendance as a key element in the success of this group. Extra-curricular activities such as the Girls' Achievement project and the Boys' Advanced Reading Club are having a positive impact on standards, with nine girls in the project achieving higher GCSE grades than predicted.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

62. The school makes sound provision for the health, safety and general welfare of its pupils. It has satisfactory arrangements for child protection. The principles of good health are promoted well in personal, social and health education lessons, particularly for younger pupils. The school is a safe place in which to learn.
63. Procedures for monitoring and promoting behaviour are good. The pastoral system is effective, with good liaison between pastoral staff, members of support and guidance teams and those from external agencies. The school successfully ensures that all pupils, whatever their gender, racial background, ability or disability have full access to curricular and other activities. There were no permanent exclusions in the previous year. Teachers deal well with isolated instances of bullying when they occur. The facilities for disabled pupils are good, with lifts and ramps enabling them full access to classrooms and other areas. These pupils receive effective support from their learning support assistants.
64. The academic support given to pupils is sound and personal support given to pupils is good. There is very detailed monitoring of the performance data for all pupils. Prior attainment data is used effectively to predict the performance both in Years 7 to 9 and for GCSE groups. Progress towards targets is analysed each year at the time of both Interim Reports and Record of Achievement Reports for individuals and groups, including, for example, those identified as gifted (top seven per cent) and talented (top three per cent). The good use of test data to monitor pupils' academic performance leads to accurate identification of individual pupil need. This has led to the school initiating a wide range of activities aimed at supporting all pupils including, for example, the more able and the less able, as well those who are disaffected or at risk of permanent exclusion. The Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant team carefully identifies pupils from minority groups who may be likely to underachieve, and provides good quality support to help them do well. Effective programmes which support pupils well are those for the 'gifted and talented', the learning mentors, after-school study groups and programmes of work-related learning in which individual learning needs are well met. Good support for pupils' personal development is through, for example, individual mentoring, community-based activities and mentoring of younger pupils by older ones, some of which is funded by additional monies

eg from the single regeneration budget. Taken together, these make a good contribution to the inclusiveness of the school, which offers “something for everyone”.

65. The school has a comprehensive and well-devised policy on assessment. This policy stresses the importance of assessment activities that help pupils to move forward in their learning. In some subjects, for example, in art, English, design and technology and in the special educational needs department there is good use of assessment activities to help pupils understand how to improve their work. However, generally this is not the case. In some subjects marking usually consists of an effort grade and an achievement grade and when comments are made they do not tell pupils clearly what they should do to achieve higher standards. Although the policy clearly states that assessment should be used to evaluate teaching programmes and methods, there is little evidence that this is as yet common practice.
66. The procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory. Progress since the previous inspection, when both attendance and punctuality were identified as requiring improvement, has been unsatisfactory. However, an automated registration system, which provides rapid data analysis, has been introduced. A considerable amount of staff time is committed to data collection using this system. Nevertheless, the use of this attendance data to identify causes, patterns and trends is not yet taking place. Daily monitoring of punctuality in registration periods, during lesson changeovers and at the school gates is unsatisfactory. Poor attendance and punctuality remain key priorities for the school to improve.
67. Arrangements for health and safety are satisfactory overall. However, the condition of pupils’ toilets is poor.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

68. Links with parents are sound. Parents are closely involved in the transfer of their child from primary schools. Pastoral and subject staff keep regular contact with parents through letters about their child’s achievements or concerns, consultation evenings, other evening meetings and twice-yearly progress reports. The Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant team makes regular and effective contact with parents of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds. Interim reports contain useful information on achievement and effort. This is built on successfully through the end-of-year Record of Achievement (RoA) which provides the same data in more detail, with predictions of future levels of achievement. However, while the RoA includes considerable teacher comment with some diagnosis of pupil weaknesses, it lacks comments on how improvement might be achieved and targets in the RoA are insufficiently specific.

69. The school makes extensive efforts to involve parents in their child's education but frequently there is an unsatisfactory response from too many parents. A small number of parents have a high involvement with their child's education, for example, parents of pupils with special educational needs. The opportunities the school provides for parental involvement are very good, for example, through the Family Literacy Project, in requesting parents to check and sign homework and progress diaries, and in inviting attendance at consultation evenings. There are regular contacts with learning mentors, the Educational Welfare Officer and the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant staff. Additionally, the school aims to involve parents more through an increased number of community activities, for example, through the bid for Sports College status. Parents are also consulted on, and asked to consent to, individually designed programmes of study, for example, the Growth Enterprise Project and the Girls' Achievement group.
70. Parents are positive about their child's liking for the school, the school's approachability, its high expectations of pupils and the progress which they make at the school. Inspection evidence supports these opinions of parents although it shows that the school's expectations of pupil punctuality are not high enough.
71. A significant number of parents hold less positive views with respect to the closeness with which the school works with parents and the information they receive about their child's progress. Inspection evidence supports both the views of parents with regard to the regularity that homework is set and that quality of information on the progress of pupils in reports can be improved. The school makes extensive efforts to involve parents in their children's education but large numbers of parents do not respond to these opportunities.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

72. The headteacher and senior management team provides strong leadership and management that are clearly focused upon improving the quality of education and raising standards. The school's aims focus on achievement, the inclusion of all pupils in the education offered by the school and on the pupils' personal development. Development planning at a whole school level and at a department level is good. Priorities are carefully identified and appropriate to the needs of the school. They are clearly linked to raising standards and improving the educational experiences of pupils. The school makes very good use of performance data undertaking detailed analysis to identify issues to be addressed and to set targets for improvement.
73. The development planning process in the school is extensive, involving middle managers in the preparation of action plans and in ensuring their implementation. Senior managers have a line management responsibility for a group of heads of department. This is an improvement since the last inspection when links between senior managers and heads of department

were less well defined. Senior managers meet with heads of department regularly to review the performance data for the department and the progress that has been made in implementing the departmental action plans. These reviews identify the progress made in undertaking the tasks identified in the action plan and set new targets to be addressed by the head of department. However, the reviews do not focus sufficiently on the impact that the actions taken have had on improving the quality of education or in raising standards.

74. Since the last inspection the school has undertaken a rolling programme of departmental reviews led by senior managers. These reviews are a strength of the school management and have led to improvements in the quality of teaching in the school. Teaching is observed and teachers receive feedback on the quality of their teaching and are set development targets. In the last inspection there was insufficient monitoring of teaching and learning. The review process has gone some way to address this issue. However, the monitoring and evaluation aspects of the role of head of department are not well developed. The senior managers have not established quality criteria against which heads of department must evaluate the work of the department. As a result there is insufficient attention within departments, both to the monitoring of the implementation of school policy and the quality of work produced by pupils. A new initiative introduced in September is the allocation of one period each week, to all teachers, to be used for professional development. All staff are expected during this time to be involved in a planned departmental classroom observation programme. This arrangement has the potential for further improving the quality of teaching.
75. Governors take a keen and informed interest in the school's work and play a full part in forward planning. The chair of governors visits the school regularly and is in frequent communication with the headteacher. Governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well and are appropriately involved in making strategic and financial decisions. The governors are well informed by written reports, presentations and the attendance at governors meetings by the headteacher and deputies. The termly reports provided by the headteacher are comprehensive and include a detailed evaluation of standards. The departmental reviews provide governors with information on the quality of provision. Overall, statutory requirements are met except in some aspects of the curriculum and in the act of collective worship. The governors have three main committees: strategic development, pupils and personnel, and finance and general purposes. It is not clear from this arrangement where responsibility for oversight of the curriculum rests. Currently the school does not meet the statutory requirements for ICT and religious education in Years 10 and 11.
76. Staffing is satisfactory overall. The school has sufficient teaching staff and is well supported by a strong team of non-teaching staff. There has been a high staff turnover during the last two years which has been well managed. The programme for the induction of newly qualified teachers and new teachers to the school is very good. The appointment of newly qualified teachers to the

school in June has been particularly effective as this has enabled them to become familiar with policies and procedures before starting at the school in September. There has been some difficulty in finding appropriate staff to appoint to the key positions of coordinators for literacy and numeracy. This has delayed the start of the cross-curricular aspects of these important initiatives.

77. The school has established systems to meet the requirements of performance management. This links well with the process of departmental review and school development planning, ensuring that targets set through performance management are those which will move the school improvement agenda forward. Teachers' professional development is well managed and focused upon raising standards across the school. Teachers have to identify the potential impact of training for the school when applying for courses.
78. Financial planning and the designated use of funding and grants are very good. The school manages its budget very efficiently. Financial priorities are clearly related to the school's aims and objectives. The headteacher has taken advantage of a range of funding sources in order to improve the quality of provision, for example, the development of the Learning Resource Centre and recent refurbishment of the science department. There is a good match of spending to priorities and the school is able track the use of additional funds. The governors play a full role in financial planning and management of the school. They are aware of the principles of best value and their application to strategic decisions.
79. Resources to support the curriculum are satisfactory overall in range and quality. The provision and access to computers has improved significantly since the last inspection. There are insufficient practical resources for mathematics and artefacts for religious education. The school manages the use of the available accommodation well for the delivery of the curriculum. The accommodation was not planned for the movement of large numbers of pupils and social areas for pupils are limited. Some refurbishment has been undertaken recently, for example, in science, information communication technology and the learning resource centre. This had a positive impact on the quality of provision. Improvements are still required to the facilities for the teaching of physical education and of resistant materials in design and technology. The school has plans for improving the facilities in physical education. The school successfully utilises the space available and has created small spaces for mentoring, music tuition and special educational needs pupils. There is a considerable amount of external maintenance work that has not been undertaken, for example, some of the wooden window frames are rotten. There is a regular need for the replacement of windows, broken out of school hours, which has a cost implication for the budget.
80. The leadership and management of special educational needs are very effective. There is a very strong team of teachers and support assistants.

The team meet regularly with other teachers, learning support assistants and outside agencies to talk about the progress of individuals and to review individual education plans. The creation of a special educational needs governor in January 2001 has strengthened links between the governors and the special educational needs department, which meets with the governor regularly to discuss progress and provision. Monitoring within the special educational needs department is effective.

81. The use of Excellence in Cities funding to enhance the Support Centre has had a positive impact on the experience of pupils who might otherwise become disaffected or be excluded. Pupils' subject teachers and the Centre staff liaise to create effective programmes, which ensure access to the whole curriculum. All special educational needs departmental staff make a significant contribution to the whole school understanding of special needs through advice and support, in-service training, the provision of materials and emergency response to incidents. Local education authority funding is used well to support pupils with exceptional needs to be included in the whole school. The support given through this grant is very good. The commitment of the senior management team to inclusion is a significant factor in its success. Indeed, all staff in the school have made some contribution to the success the school enjoys with its policy inclusion.

Equal Opportunities

82. Equality of opportunity is an issue which is effectively interwoven through all of the school's documentation. It has a high profile in the school and in communication with parents. The school does well in ensuring that pupils experience both equality of opportunity and of regard in a safe environment. The school caters well for a wide range of learning needs, including those of pupils who have physical disabilities. Senior managers show enthusiasm and effective leadership of the support for pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds. Access to both curriculum and facilities within the school is assured for all pupils.
83. The school has a very good policy on equal opportunities and good policies covering behaviour, anti-bullying, sexual harassment and racism. The school undertakes an effective analysis of performance data, both by gender and ethnicity. It recognises some differences between pupils from ethnic minorities and white pupils in Years 7 to 9 tests in science. Strategies are being developed to address this. The school is aware that there is a gender issue regarding achievement; girls outperform boys in most aspects of the curriculum. At present, there is no coherent strategy to address this. The school has made special provision in terms of a Girls' Achievement group and a Boys' Reading group. While there is a general ethos of racial harmony in the school, there are incidents of racist behaviour between pupils. There has been a considerable staff turn-over, but training in anti-racism has not kept pace. There are good procedures for recording incidents but these are not always adhered to by staff. The school is not currently complying with the

requirements of The Race Relations Act in that it does not report racist incidents to either the governors or the local education authority.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

84. In order to raise standards further, and to promote an increasingly positive approach to school and learning by pupils, the school should take the following actions.
- (i) Ensure that all pupils make the most of the learning opportunities provided by:
 - achieving high levels of attendance;
 - being punctual to lessons;
 - taking care to complete sufficient written work to a good standard; and
 - taking an interest in learning and participating fully in lessons.
 - (ii) Raise standards in literacy and numeracy by fully implementing the national strategy as a matter of urgency including:
 - developing pupils' skills across all subjects;
 - taking appropriate action to improve pupils' identified weaknesses;
 - monitoring and evaluating the impact of the strategy on pupils' attainment.
 - (iii) Ensure that all teachers monitor and evaluate, at frequent intervals, the progress that pupils are making and provide them with guidance on how well they are doing and how they can improve the standard of their work.
 - (iv) Ensure that homework, which prepares, consolidates and extends pupils' learning, is set regularly and that teachers check and insist upon its completion by pupils.
 - (v) Build upon the good work already undertaken on school review, by ensuring that heads of department monitor and evaluate the work and standards achieved by their departments and take appropriate action to bring about improvement.
 - (vi) Meet the statutory requirements for ICT and religious education in Years 10 and 11.
 - (vii) Meet the statutory requirements for the daily act of worship and ensure that pupils have a good range of opportunities to develop their spiritual awareness.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	162
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	87

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	11	29	61	52	6	0	0
Percentage	7	18	38	32	4	0	0

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1180
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	265

Special educational needs

	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	12.5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	369

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	52

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	40

Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	60
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Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	9.92
National comparative data	7.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.76
National comparative data	1.1

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 (Year 9)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2000	113	74	187

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	56	48	34
	Girls	56	31	24
	Total	112	79	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	60 (40)	42 (32)	31 (21)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	19 (7)	12 (16)	7 (6)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	28	53	38
	Girls	37	40	24
	Total	65	93	62
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	35 (29)	50 (36)	33 (30)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils	School	2 (8)	18 (13)	4 (12)

at NC level 6 or above	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (28)
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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	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	96	101	197

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	18	79	87
	Girls	38	96	97
	Total	56	175	184
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	28 (32)	89 (80)	93 (87)
	National	47.4 (46.6)	90.6 (90.9)	95.6 (95.8)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	29.7 (27.9)
	National	38.4 (38)

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	180	60
	National	N/a	N/a

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	56
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	51
Indian	37
Pakistani	16
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	2
White	979
Any other minority ethnic group	36

Teachers and classes

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	72.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16

Education support staff: Y7– Y11

Total number of education support staff	24
Total aggregate hours worked per week	725

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	8	
Black – African heritage	3	
Black – other	9	
Indian		
Pakistani	1	
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	33	
Other minority ethnic groups	3	

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000
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£

Total income	3526950
Total expenditure	3434548
Expenditure per pupil	2949
Balance brought forward from previous year	92402

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	74.3
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Balance carried forward to next year	92402
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	22.7
Key Stage 4	20

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	21
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	32

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	1173
Number of questionnaires returned	149

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	29%	56%	5%	6%	2%
My child is making good progress in school.	32%	51%	7%	3%	3%
Behaviour in the school is good.	21%	49%	9%	7%	9%
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	19%	43%	16%	11%	5%
The teaching is good.	26%	50%	6%	2%	11%
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	29%	41%	13%	6%	6%
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	44%	42%	3%	5%	3%
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52%	36%	5%	1%	3%
The school works closely with parents.	26%	40%	18%	6%	7%
The school is well led and managed.	36%	37%	7%	5%	11%
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	28%	50%	7%	5%	5%
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	23%	41%	10%	5%	17%

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

85. Approximately 13 per cent of parents completed the parents' questionnaire, 29 parents attended the parents evening and a large number wrote to the inspection team.
86. Parents are positive about their child's liking for the school, the school's approachability, its high expectations of pupils and the progress which they make at the school. Inspection evidence supports these opinions of parents although inspection evidence shows that the school's expectations of pupil punctuality are not high enough.
87. A significant number of parents hold less positive views with respect to the closeness with which the school works with parents and the information they receive about their child's progress. Inspection evidence supports both the views of parents with regard to the regularity that homework is and the set and that some aspects of reports can be improved. The school makes extensive efforts to involve parents in their children's education but large numbers of parents do not respond to these opportunities.

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

ENGLISH

88. Overall, the quality of provision in English is satisfactory.

Strengths

- Teaching in Years 10 and 11.
- Curriculum in Years 10 and 11.

Areas for improvement

- Teaching in Years 7 to 9.
- Differentiation.
- Speaking and listening; discussion in all years.
- Implementation of the Literacy Strategy in Years 7 to 9.

89. Standards of literacy on entry to the school are well below average. This is reflected in the national test results for Year 6 pupils currently in Year 7. This has a restricting impact on learning across the whole curriculum in all years. Although pupils make satisfactory progress in relation to their ability on entry, standards of literacy have not improved sufficiently by the end of Year 9 to provide pupils with a good basis for learning in Years 10 and 11.
90. In Years 10 and 11 pupils study English Language, English Literature and Media Studies. These courses make up the school's English programme in

Years 10 and 11. The subjects are well used to complement one another. With the addition of the extra-curricular activities, pupils have access to a particularly broad and imaginative curriculum in Years 10 and 11. A few pupils are entered for an English Certificate Course instead of GCSE. The curriculum is well matched to the needs and interests of pupils.

91. Standards of attainment are consistently well below the national average in national tests in Year 9. In 2000 they rose to be close to the national average, but fell back to a low level in 2001. These low, comparative standards do, however, mask the fact that there has been a steady improvement in attainment since 1997. The progress made by pupils in the school is similar to that experienced nationally, except for potentially higher-attaining pupils who make less progress than expected.
92. In Years 10 and 11, pupils make good progress but standards of attainment are consistently below the national average in both English Language and English Literature. Pupils' achievement is higher in English Literature than in English Language. Overall, pupils do better in English at GCSE than in other subjects. The achievement of girls is higher than that of boys in all years, but the difference between them in English Literature GCSE is less marked than in other aspects of English. This is due to the quality of teaching, which exhibits many of the characteristics which help boys to make progress. The introduction of Media Studies GCSE has had a very positive effect on the participation of boys.
93. The standards of work seen during the inspection matched the attainment in past national tests and public examinations.
94. Pupils from ethnic minority groups make satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in lessons and very good progress when they are withdrawn from lessons for individual or small group support.
95. Pupils speak clearly in all years. In Years 7 to 9, pupils speak mostly in short answers to teachers' questions. Standards in speaking and listening, however, are below national expectations for the age of pupils. In Years 10 and 11, pupils answer questions more confidently and use talk as an important part of their learning. They are analytical and provide explanations and evidence for their views. Discussion, however, is generally underdeveloped. This was identified as a weakness in the English curriculum in all years in the previous inspection. Higher-attainers in Years 10 and 11 respond well to more formal opportunities for talk. They use talk well to take part in an activity called 'hot-seating', e.g. where members of the class adopted the roles of characters in the novel 'Of mice And Men' and are questioned by other pupils. Pupils of average or middle ability, however, are unskilled when speaking and listening in a formal situation. When undertaking a role-play which required them to act out a courtroom scene they experienced considerable difficulty, partly because they had not taken

responsibility for their own learning and used homework time effectively for preparation.

96. Pupils' understanding of texts in Years 7 to 9 is sound. However, the emphasis is often on recalling the plot, and standards are generally below expectations. They are higher, and match expectations, when pupils have the opportunity to engage in close analysis of a text; for example, when they identify and comment on Roald Dahl's use of humour in the book 'Boy'. The Reading Certificate Scheme in Years 7 to 9 makes a good contribution to the development of pupils' literacy. As a result of the scheme pupils read widely and regularly. They enjoy their reading and are motivated by the fact that they can measure their own progress. Lower-attaining pupils talk about their strategies for reading and understanding. They make good use of pictures to aid understanding and can read difficult words by 'sounding them out'. Lower-attainers and pupils with special educational needs are well supported by their teachers and learning support assistants in these reading lessons and they make good progress.
97. The understanding of texts by pupils in Years 10 and 11 is good. When supported by good and excellent teaching, middle and lower-attaining pupils can analyse text well. Pupils identify the personal qualities clearly of, for example, Lennie in 'Of Mice and Men'. They can explain how atmosphere is created in films such as 'Psycho' and 'The Woman In Black' through use of character, setting, imagery, sound and editing.
98. By Year 9 attainment in writing ranges from well below national expectations to above expectations. Higher-attainers produce a good range of writing which holds the reader's attention. Some pupils are able to use language very precisely and to good effect; for example, when creating a winter atmosphere in a school playground scene. Pupils make satisfactory progress in writing in relation to ability on entry. Pupils in Year 7, who at the start of the school year are writing very little, produce extended, coherent writing by the end of the year. Redrafting tends to focus on 'copying up' neatly or spelling, rather than on making qualitative improvements. Pupils generally write legibly and spelling is generally sound. However, some pupils are printing instead of using joined up writing well beyond the age when a joined up writing should be firmly established.
99. At the beginning of Year 11, higher-attaining pupils write with a good sense of audience and use a wide vocabulary. Their work is technically very sound. They are able to write for a good range of audiences, and with authority. They are able to adopt a journalistic style; for example, when producing a newspaper about the play 'Romeo and Juliet'. They can analyse and explain well, but they are less good at evaluation. Lower-attaining pupils can produce sound word-processed work, but free handwriting shows that basic literacy skills are weak. Lower-attainers show a limited capacity for extended writing.

100. Pupils' learning is generally satisfactory in Years 7 to 9. It is unsatisfactory when teaching is unsatisfactory or there are weaknesses in pupil management. The teaching in these years is satisfactory. It is currently not strong enough to have a significant impact on the low standards of pupils' literacy on entry to the school. The National Literacy Framework For Key Stage 3 has been used to construct a good scheme of work but it is not being implemented with rigour. The planned 'starter' sessions are either not undertaken or are not secure and the quality of plenary sessions varies from good to weak. There is insufficient modelling of writing and in-depth analysis of text to inform writing. Lessons sometimes focus on what pupils will do, rather than what they are expected to learn. Learning is sometimes out of context; for example, when pupils complete random sentences with similes. Sometimes, essential building blocks are missed out and it is assumed that pupils can do things, which in fact they need to learn. For example, pupils are expected to produce a storyboard for a video before understanding how they are constructed.
101. In Years 10 and 11, the quality of learning is never less than satisfactory, and is mostly good or better; teaching is very good. Teachers break lessons down into well-measured, short steps and ensure that pupils have the necessary knowledge and understanding to complete tasks. In Media Studies lessons, teachers lead pupils through a process of deconstructing a short piece of video by watching it several times. They pause, comment, share ideas (the pupils make their own notes), and then the video is viewed again with a different focus. This process is particularly effective in securing the understanding and participation of boys. A similar process of 'small steps' is adopted when developing characterisation in the study of 'Of Mice And Men'. Teachers' questioning is good. They use it both to extend understanding and to check understanding. Pupils have to think hard and provide evidence to support their ideas. The teachers make sure that the pace of lessons is crisp so that pupils' attention does not wander. They are constantly exercising good subject knowledge with the pupils; they understand what they have to teach and the particular teaching demands of the subject. The purpose of lessons and the learning that is expected is very clear to pupils. Above all, teachers are lively and enthusiastic about their subject; this communicates itself to pupils with good effect.
102. Work is regularly marked in all years. The use of comments which help pupils to make progress is very good when teachers' comments make it very clear what the pupils need to do to improve their work. Too often comments give brief encouragement or advice which is too general.
103. The English department is well resourced. The resources used in Media Studies are particularly stimulating and have a positive impact on pupil learning and motivation. There is, however, an absence of media technology in the department (digital cameras, video cameras and video editing). This is a limitation, especially for very able pupils. The use of computers has improved since the previous inspection and they are used widely by pupils to

produce good word-processed examination course work. Up until that point, however, the use of computers is patchy.

104. The curriculum has been improved since the last inspection by the introduction of Media Studies in Years 10 and 11 and by the adoption of the National Literacy Framework for Key Stage 3. Teaching has improved in Years 10 and 11 from satisfactory to good. The quality of group discussion is still an issue in all years. Progress in writing for specific purposes and audiences has improved. The three subjects which the English department offers contributes significantly to the school's overall profile of achievement in Years 10 and 11.

Drama:

105. Drama is taught in Years 7 and 8, and as a GCSE subject in Years 10 and 11. Standards of attainment at GCSE have improved considerably in the last two years. In 2000, attainment was close to the national average. Overall standards were maintained in 2001, since the proportion of pupils achieving an A* to C grade was broadly the same as in 2000. The attainment of girls in examinations is higher than that of boys, and this is reflected in lessons. Attainment in lessons is in line with national expectations in Years 7 and 11. In Year 7 pupils suggest ideas and develop points proposed by others. Some work comfortably both within and out of role, and adjust speech to context and audience. In Year 11 higher-attainers prepare a rehearsed improvisation to a high standard and then develop it further. They work with a good sense of audience. Indeed, the best pupils engage the whole audience, making them a part of the improvisation; the performance of one girl was awe-inspiring. Pupils use a freeze-frame technique very well as an improvisation tool for passing responsibility for the continuation of the improvisation to other members of the group. Middle and lower-attaining pupils plan a piece but lack the confidence to show their work or to execute it with style.
106. The teaching is good in Year 7 and excellent in Years 10 and 11. Teaching in Year 7 is based upon well-structured lessons which have appropriate learning objectives. The teacher uses good questioning techniques to draw out pupils' ideas and maintains a fast pace. Pupils are well managed and the teacher overcomes the effects of poor behaviour by a small minority of pupils. Teaching in Year 11 is based upon a very good relationship with the pupils; they are treated as mature young adults and respond accordingly. Objectives are sound and explained well to the pupils. These are returned to during the lesson and pupils are encouraged to reflect upon and evaluate their own work. The teacher revisits the assessment criteria more than once and uses it as a basis for a very good commentary on each group's progress. Pupils are made to feel valued and due regard is paid to different levels of confidence. The teacher is very aware of the different needs of the groups and appropriate developmental processes. Pupils are well supported as they plan and rehearse and the teacher makes sure that the least able make satisfactory progress.

107. Learning is satisfactory in Year 7 and very good in Year 11. In Year 7 two boys took no part at all, but at the other extreme some volunteered to work with the teacher in a role-play while others watched. The majority of pupils get to work fairly promptly. Completed pieces are presented thoughtfully and with expression by most groups. Pupils make satisfactory progress in developing the skill of using 'freeze-frame', role-play and role reversal. Year 11 pupils create characters and situations from a set of objects. They learn how to synthesise the ideas of members of the group and to take up and act upon the ideas of others as the improvisation unfolds. When encouraged to use a variety of dramatic conventions in their development of a piece the higher-attaining pupils, girls, consult a wall chart which has been provided by the teacher and incorporate these ideas in their improvisation to very good effect.
108. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils is generally satisfactory in Year 7 and very good in Year 11. Through good pupil management and teaching in Year 7, the teacher overcomes the poor behaviour to ensure that the majority make satisfactory progress. In Year 11 pupils participate at a level which matches their expertise and confidence. They are focused during planning and watch and respond well to pupils who show their work. They listen well to the teacher and respond to his questions appropriately; some pupils provoke discussion. The lower-attaining pupils respond well to the advice from the teacher and eventually gain the confidence to show a short, but well-crafted, piece to the other pupils.

Literacy:

109. Levels of literacy are well below average on entry. This weakness represents a significant obstacle to learning and progress across the curriculum and, in particular, contributes to low standards in Years 10 and 11.
110. Pupils generally read with understanding. They read widely in English in Years 7 to 9 (especially as a result of a good Reading Awards System), but this is not a feature of work in other subjects. They respond well to the Awards System. They enjoy the range of texts and are motivated by the system.
111. There is an embryonic Information Handling Skills Unit in personal, social and health education in Year 7 and pupils are taught to research in design and technology and religious education. Overall, the formal teaching of research skills is not well developed, but pupils do have the opportunity to research in a wide range of subjects in all years. These activities make a sound contribution to their learning.
112. Pupils' writing skills are, overall, weak in Years 7 to 9 but they are better in Years 10 and 11, where the range of writing, fluency and accuracy improve. In Years 10 and 11 they develop more independence as writers.

113. Many teachers support the development of pupils' literacy by emphasising the subject's vocabulary and by providing word lists and prompts. However, there is no significant modelling of writing, except in English in Years 10 and 11. Teachers' attention to aspects of literacy in marking is more evident in Years 10 and 11.
114. Pupils listen well and respond appropriately in all years. In some lessons, where the content is stimulating and teachers' subject knowledge is very good, pupils listen with eager attention.
115. In the last inspection, attention was drawn to limited opportunities to engage in talk for a wide range of purposes. Good progress has been made. Pupils generally speak clearly and adapt their talk to circumstances. They are able to explain, describe, hypothesise, analyse, compare, question, deduce, ask questions and provide answers. They are more skilled in these areas in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11. However, pupils' ability and opportunity to engage in extended discussion as a class or in a group is limited.
116. The school has begun to implement, in Years 7 to 9, the literacy strategy. The English department is developing schemes of work based upon the literacy framework. They are doing this to a manageable time-scale. However, the schemes of work are not being implemented with rigour and there is no monitoring of the implementation. The school has appointed a literacy co-ordinator who leads a team, which includes a senior manager, the special educational needs coordinator and the school's librarian. There are plans to develop a literacy programme across the curriculum.
117. The school has not adopted the approach recommended by the literacy strategy for helping pupils who enter the school with low levels of literacy. The school has accelerated learning groups in Year 7. It is part of the school philosophy that these pupils will receive support with the development of literacy skills within a subject context. This works well. Pupils' use the computer software 'SuccessMaker', a computerised support system for developing literacy. Pupils make at least satisfactory progress in their reading, as measured by the software. However, by the end of Year 9 standards in literacy are still too low.

MATHEMATICS

118. Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is satisfactory.

Strengths

- Good quality of teaching in Years 10 and 11.
- Pupil's good response to good teaching in Years 10 and 11.

Areas for improvement

- Schemes of work for mathematics that help teachers to choose clear and specific objectives for learning and plan a greater range of challenging learning activities.
 - Strategic planning for improvement and setting of targets based on more effective monitoring and evaluating of all aspects of the provision for mathematics and on information about pupils' achievements.
 - Standards of basic numeracy and a coordinated approach to raising standards of numeracy needed to support raised achievement in the other subjects of the curriculum.
119. Standards of attainment in National Curriculum tests, at the end of Year 9 and in GCSE examinations at the end of Year 11, are well below the national average and well below the average for similar schools.
120. At the end of Year 9 in the 2001 national tests the proportion of pupils achieving level five increased but remained well below that expected for the age of the pupils. There was also an increase in the proportion achieving level six. The proportion of pupils achieving A* to C grades in the 2001 GCSE examination increased slightly. However, a smaller proportion of the year group gained at least a grade G than in the GCSE examination in 2000. In the 2001 GCSE examination results a significant number of pupils, many of them boys, failed to achieve a grade. In 2000, in the national tests at the end of Year 9, the achievement of girls was significantly higher than that of boys. In both 2000 and 2001 girls achieved significantly better GCSE results than the boys did.
121. Many pupils enter the school in Year 7 with levels of attainment in mathematics that are well below the national average and are taught in sets according to their prior attainment. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress in mathematics through the school relative to their prior attainment. By the end of Year 9 most pupils recall a range of basic number facts, continue simple number sequences and recognise symmetry in two-dimensional shapes. Higher-attaining pupils distinguish between, and calculate, different types of average from numerical information. The highest-attaining pupils understand and use 'Pythagorous' Theorem and calculate a value for Pi from the measurements of a circle. By the end of Year 11 most pupils know the equivalents of key fractions, decimals and percentages. Many solve linear equations and some have a good understanding of sampling and bias in surveys where data is collected and analysed. The highest-attaining pupils in Year 11 understand direct and inverse proportion and solve quadratic equations by factors or using a formula. However, in the majority of mathematics lessons, throughout the school, standards of attainment are below average for pupils of similar ages. In lessons for higher-attaining pupils standards of attainment are usually above and sometimes well above average for pupils of similar ages. Attainment in using and applying mathematics is generally weak, as this aspect of mathematics is not well integrated into the curriculum.

122. The teaching of mathematics is generally good and sometimes very good, particularly for pupils in Years 10 and 11. There are some weaknesses in teaching through Years 7 to 9. Good lessons are characterised by teachers' good knowledge of mathematics that enables them to question effectively and to engage and motivate pupils by providing clear explanations and demonstrations of mathematical techniques and ideas. In the best lessons teachers use the time well and provide pupils with a varied sequence of teaching and learning activities that help them to maintain good levels of concentration and a good pace to their learning. However, the planning of lesson objectives generally lacks clarity and sometimes refers to the exercises to be done in the lesson rather than what pupils will learn. The pupils make the best progress when set high expectations and teachers' classroom management is based on positive relationships with their pupils. The positive attitudes, good behaviour and willingness of many pupils, particularly in Years 10 and 11, to respond to good teaching are a strength.
123. The weaker lessons lack pace and variety and well-timed and purposeful activities. In some lessons pupils are expected to work for long periods on worksheet or textbook exercises and are unable to sustain interest and concentration. In some lessons teachers do not expect enough work from pupils, the work is insufficiently challenging and the pupils' work is untidily presented. Where the management of pupils is unsatisfactory some pupils misbehave. The quality of marking and feedback given to pupils is inconsistent, and the setting of short term learning targets for mathematics to help pupils improve their skills and understanding in the subject is generally a weakness.
124. Improvement in the provision for mathematics since the last inspection has not been sustained. There are still weaknesses in teaching through Years 7 to 9. Schemes of work have not been extended to incorporate the various strands of using and applying mathematics. Planning for improvement is still not focused and the raising of standards in mathematics and in numeracy across the curriculum has not remained a high priority. The department is now well equipped with computer hardware and software but the use of these resources has yet to have a significant impact on the pupils learning.
125. Although individual lessons are often well taught, leadership and management have not ensured consistency in implementation of policy across the department. This has had a negative impact on the standards that pupils achieve. Teaching has not been supported by schemes of work to provide a clear curriculum structure and purpose to teaching. Teachers have had little guidance to help them effectively focus teaching on raising standards. The unsatisfactory provision of resources for learning has also been a significant factor. A textbook scheme has recently been purchased to improve the quality of the basic printed resources for learning and to provide the units of work, but the provision of supplementary resources to enrich teaching and learning, particularly practical equipment, is poor. Systematic

monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of the mathematics curriculum and the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' attainments has not been done. Strategic planning for improvement is not in place. Overall the leadership and management has been unsatisfactory. However, the very recently appointed head of department has begun to make a difference and the morale of the teachers of mathematics is generally high.

Numeracy:

126. Overall, standards of numeracy in the school are low. There are examples of the use of mathematical skills within subjects. Many pupils use calculators, when they are available, rather than perform relatively simple calculations mentally, and estimating skills are weak. Where graphs and charts are used, for example, in science and geography, pupils often poorly present them. There are some opportunities for pupils to use and apply mathematics in other subjects. For example, in history the use of time-lines to order events; in art repeating patterns and scaling; in geography coordinates; in ICT, design and technology and physical education using computers to present and analyse information; in design and technology the use of ratio when looking at nutritional values and a variety of measures. However, the approach to numeracy across the curriculum has been uncoordinated and few subjects have identified, in their planning, the mathematical skills required for learning. The school has only recently seen this as a high priority. The school has yet to take sufficient account of the mathematics strand of the National Strategy for Key Stage 3, or to build effectively upon pupil's experience of the National Numeracy Strategy in their primary schools.

SCIENCE

127. Overall the provision for science is sound and improving.

Strengths

- The department has appropriately qualified staff who know their subject well and have good relationships with pupils.
- Teaching is never less than satisfactory and, particularly for older pupils, it is often good.
- Pupils have good opportunities to develop their practical and investigative skills.
- Support for newly qualified teachers is good.
- Recently refurbished laboratories provide good accommodation for pupils to study science.

Areas for improvement

- A small number of teachers are not sufficiently insistent that pupils pay attention and produce enough work in the time given.

- Many pupils' written work is too untidy, has too much incomplete work and does not provide a sufficient basis for revision for tests and examinations.
 - Schemes of work do not ensure good progression in pupils' learning.
 - Although in every aspect of the department's work there are examples of good practice, this is not monitored sufficiently to ensure consistent quality.
128. By the end of Year 9 pupils achieve standards in national tests that are below national averages. However, during their first three years in the school pupils make good progress in science from a low starting point. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected level for their age has doubled over the past three years and is higher than in the previous inspection. In 2001, these results are likely to compare favourably with schools in similar social contexts.
129. Pupils' results in GCSE examinations are also well below national averages. Following a rise in 2000 they fell in 2001. Boys' results were significantly lower than girls, as they were in the previous inspection. However, when the standards that the pupils achieved at GCSE are compared with the results that they attained at the end of Year 9 they have made satisfactory progress.
130. Since obtaining these results in summer 2001 the science department has undergone significant changes in teaching staff and considerable refurbishment. The quality of teaching by the current staff is never less than satisfactory and often good or better.
131. In the very good and excellent lessons a number of features contribute positively to the pupils' learning. Teachers capture the pupils' attention quickly through interesting demonstrations, lively introductions or by discussion of how science can help solve problems. For example, in a lesson on pressure pupils showed a keen interest as the teacher used balloons placed on single and groups of drawing pins to demonstrate the relationship between force and area. Pupils are told at the start of the lesson what they will be learning and they are encouraged to take an active part in the lesson. Where pupils are reluctant to work, teachers make their expectations of quantity and quality of work clear and pupils' work is checked frequently during the lesson. At the end of the lesson teachers use the last few minutes to check pupils learning through questions or discussion and pupils are reminded of what they have learned. In one excellent Year 9 lesson, which included these points and many other good features, pupils only had a vague understanding of pressure at the start of the lesson but by the end they could use the mathematical formula to calculate pressure in the correct units.
132. In too many lessons pupils' learning is reduced by a lack of commitment or, on a few occasions, the poor behaviour of a minority. Most teachers tackle this attitude rigorously, insisting on attention and a reasonable rate of work.

This contributes to improved standards. This approach is not, however, consistent and in some lessons teachers accept too much inattention and a slow pace of work, which reduces pupils' learning.

133. The department has placed an appropriately strong emphasis on pupils conducting scientific investigations. Higher-attaining pupils throughout the school understand how to design and carry out an investigation but, as in the last inspection, many pupils continue to be insecure in carrying out investigations and are very dependent on the teacher for guidance. One reason for this is that their knowledge of the work that they have covered is not as good as it should be. By the age of 14 pupils in the top sets demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of science, a keen interest and a wish to do well. This attitude to study is not, however, found consistently and many pupils seem to make little effort to learn the work outside lesson time.

134. The department provides a range of useful handouts and worksheets but has not checked on their effect. Many pupils fail to fix these in their books so that they often have written answers but no questions. This problem, combined with a poor standard of written work, produced in a careless way, and significant amounts of work missed through absence leads to pupils not having notes that provide a firm basis for reference or revision. These are some of the reasons for many pupils' lack of detailed knowledge of scientific ideas and facts.

135. Management of the subject has some strong features. There is an emphasis on making the subject interesting and enjoyable. Relationships between staff are good and the new members of staff are supported well. Appropriate resources have been purchased to support teaching in the smart, newly refurbished laboratories.

136. The department has rightly decided to rewrite the schemes of work in response to recent curriculum changes and some progress has been made with Year 7. The challenges faced by the head of department last year, in terms of managing staff changes, slowed the pace of this process. This now needs urgent attention to ensure that pupils do not repeat work unnecessarily but build on what they have learnt.

137. Formal lesson observations by the head of department are planned but have not yet started; neither have other means of checking teachers' coverage of the National Curriculum, the quality of their pupils' work and the progress that pupils make across the department. This monitoring, the evaluation of the findings and action to improve where shortcomings are found are essential to ensure that all aspects of the work of the department is of consistently high quality and that standards continue to rise.

ART AND DESIGN

138. Overall, the quality of provision in art and design is good.

Strengths

- There is good teaching which makes excellent use of assessment in lessons to help pupils understand how to improve their work.
- A good range of art activities is made available, including helping pupils to understand art movements and traditions.

Areas for improvement

- Increase the planned use of new technology.
- Continue to share the strengths of different teachers within the art department.

139. When pupils join the school their previous experience of art varies considerably. For instance, some Year 7 pupils can describe painting, drawing and printmaking activities which they enjoyed in their previous schools. Other Year 7 pupils are learning how to use paint for the first time. During Years 7, 8 and 9 pupils gradually increase their ability to express their ideas through painting, drawing and making clay objects. Some use computers and digital cameras to explore ways to vary their finished work. In Year 9 most pupils, and certainly the most talented ones, are producing work which compares well with national standards.

140. Many pupils choose to follow GCSE courses in Years 10 and 11. The percentage of candidates achieving the higher grades has been low in recent years, compared to the school's achievements five years ago, and consistently well below the national average. However, the most recent results show a promising increase. This has been achieved by carefully analysing previous results, identifying pupils at risk of underachieving, and providing extra support and catch-up opportunities to help them gain better results.

141. Most pupils behave responsibly in art lessons, and are ready to take responsibility for distributing materials and distributing and collecting work. In Year 10 some pupils are becoming enthusiastic independent artists. Others, particularly in Year 11, are still very dependent on teachers' instructions, which focus closely on overcoming factors which have resulted in underachievement in previous years.

142. In the year 2000 examinations, girls tended to do better than boys. However, the most significant factor in underachievement is that some pupils, even very talented ones, leave work unfinished and do not demonstrate sufficient background study to final pieces of work. Some pupils do not fully understand the distinction between preparatory sketches, which may be unfinished and should be regarded as background support work, and finished pieces which should be completed to the highest possible quality.

143. Most teaching is good and there is some excellent teaching. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection. Teaching is effective because the lessons are well planned. There is a good balance between learning about art and pupils making their own art objects. Teachers make learning objectives clear and refer back to them when they ask pupils to evaluate their own progress. Teachers make very deliberate and very effective efforts to help pupils understand how their work is assessed, and how these assessments can be used to guide improvement. This is a major strength of the department's work. In some lessons there is a powerful spirituality in the way that art is described which encourages pupils to think of themselves as artists, and to want to be involved in discussion and debate.
144. In the less effective teaching the pace of the lessons is usually slow. Sometimes, too much time is taken up with distributing work from the previous lesson. This results in pupils beginning practical work late in the lesson. The situation is made worse on some occasions if the start is delayed because some pupils are late arriving, or if unsatisfactory behaviour distracts the teacher.
145. Following a period during which teachers have concentrated on short-term solutions, there is now a clear plan for the development of the department. A very effective department review has resulted in some carefully planned strategies for improving GCSE results. Monitoring and evaluation of the department's work has resulted in strong, shared procedures for the use of assessment in lessons to help pupils understand how to improve their work. This is good practice and the same approach should be used to share other strengths.
146. Since the last inspection assessment procedures have been developed to integrate practical work with spiritual, moral, social and cultural dimensions, and there is a greater proportion of good and very good teaching. This represents good progress. Although there is less success at GCSE than at the time of the previous inspection there are signs that this is being redressed.
147. The rooms available to the department are distant from each other and careful thought is required to overcome this barrier to the sharing of ideas. Some good examples of pupils' artwork brighten the school environment, and future planning should include ideas on how to extend this further.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

148. Overall the provision of design and technology is satisfactory and improving at a good pace.

Strengths

- Overall quality of teaching and learning.
- Curriculum planning through the scheme of work.
- Assessment process.
- Departmental management, leading to good team working, a clear focus on raising standards and an ethos of continuous improvement.
- Overall improvement since the last inspection.

Areas for improvement

- Continue with the planned development of ICT in the design and technology curriculum.
- Take steps to refurbish and upgrade the accommodation, particularly in the resistant materials areas.

149. Pupils enter the school with levels of attainment considerably below that expected of pupils of a similar age. Throughout Years 7 to 9 they develop a reasonable understanding of design processes and build successfully on the limited range of practical skills with which they arrived.
150. The results of teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 have risen significantly from a low base in 1998, but remained below the national average in 2000. However, a significant proportion of pupils achieved the higher level six. Overall, pupils make good progress in Years 7 to 9. In Year 7 pupils can use basic tools to mark out on wood with reasonable accuracy, though some need considerable support from the teacher.
151. By Year 9 pupils can select from a range of equipment, materials and techniques to produce designs in textiles or to construct an electrical circuit. Most pupils produce a reasonable range of alternative design ideas, explained through annotated drawings. Higher-attaining pupils can successfully develop their ideas and make modifications as the work progresses.
152. Whilst the results of individual design and technology subjects show some variation from year to year, the overall GCSE results have risen significantly from 1997 to 2000, when the percentage of pupils gaining A* to C grades in 'home economics' subjects was well above the national average. Girls' results in "design and technology" subjects were also above the national figure, but boys' results were well below the national average. Whilst a bigger proportion of children in this school, compared to nationally, are entered for examinations, a much higher proportion of them (mostly boys) achieve grades E to G and more than twice the national figure do not get a grade. During the inspection the work seen reflected the range of pupil abilities and attitudes, resulting in standards overall being similar to the national average. In Year 11 there is a significant number of pupils producing work of the highest standard, particularly in food and textiles, where the high quality practical work is developed from well-researched project folders that are presented to a very high standard. Coursework folders show that pupils generally have a good

understanding of designing and making processes. Many produce detailed plans to guide their work. In food technology pupils make appropriate modifications to products as they are developed. In textiles pupils use a very good range of sources of information and sources of creative stimulus. In resistant materials pupils prepare materials with care and are competent in a satisfactory range of construction techniques, though the quality of some drawing is barely satisfactory and some ideas are not well developed. Poor attendance by some pupils has an adverse effect on standards at the end of Year 11 as coursework is either not completed or of unsatisfactory quality due to lack of time spent on it.

153. Pupils' attitudes to their work are generally good and pupils respond well to the positive working atmosphere created by teachers. Behaviour in lessons is generally good. However, some boys in Years 10 and 11, for instance in resistant materials and graphics, are too easily satisfied with mediocre work, show little sense of urgency in completing coursework and are happy to do the minimum to get by, despite the best efforts of teachers to explain examination requirements and to provide additional workshop time after school and in the holidays. The presentation of their design work is often scrappy and disorganised.
154. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and more than half is good, with some very good teaching. Clear instructions and demonstration enable pupils to know what they have to do and to get on independently, for example, when producing a fruit crumble to develop practical skills in food technology or when marking out wood accurately to construct a charity collection box in Year 9. Sound methodology leads to purposeful practical work, with pupils encouraged to think about what they are doing when constructing alarm devices and wall hangings in Year 9. Very good support is given to individuals, particularly to those pupil who have special needs, by teachers and other adults. For example, a Year 8 pupil in a wheelchair was supported by an adult and ICT in a way that enabled her to participate fully in a textiles lesson and to make good progress.
155. Teachers have developed a good range of assessment processes that are understood by pupils. As a result teachers have a good understanding of how well pupils do things. Some teachers make very effective use of this information to plan the next steps of pupils' learning. For example, in a Year 9 textiles lower-ability group the teacher knew the pupils' individual needs well. Each pupil had recorded the level that they were currently working at and knew what they had to do to reach the next level. Each pupil had a meaningful individual target. The teacher planned the lesson effectively to meet pupils' needs and as a result pupils' folders show that they have made good progress over time, making significant gains in knowledge and understanding of textile materials and processes. Some classrooms have good quality display that supports learning by reminding pupils of technical vocabulary, giving information about materials or techniques, by celebrating pupils' successes and providing exemplars of quality work. The satisfactory

lessons do not always sufficiently challenge the most able pupils and some extension activities require pupils to do more of the same type of work rather than extending their learning.

156. Teachers use their knowledge of examination requirements well in Years 10 and 11 to keep both parents and pupils informed about tasks, time scales and the quality of work. The use of clear and precise interim deadlines for completion of aspects of coursework, particularly in food technology and textiles, helps pupils to produce personal action plans and to maintain the pace of work over an extended period of time. The good individual support given to pupils in lessons encourages good presentation, helps pupils to think through problems and develop ideas. Teachers' high expectation encourages good quality finished products. In satisfactory lessons, teachers need to inject more pace and challenge into the lesson and to develop a wider range of strategies to motivate boys. Classes in all years are managed well, leading to purposeful work and generally good behaviour. In some lessons pupil attitudes to learning and behaviour are very good indeed.
157. The department has the benefit of a capable and committed head of department. A good team spirit has been created and all teachers make a positive contribution to the work and development of the department. There is a clear focus on raising standards and on continuous improvement. Issues from the last inspection have been systematically dealt with through a well-prepared action plan. The overall result has been that standards have risen significantly in all years. The new scheme of work has resulted in pupils systematically building on their experience of a wide range of materials, increasing their knowledge of their properties and uses and developing the associated practical skills year on year. The development of making skills is still stronger than designing skills due to the time table arrangements that make it harder to maintain consistent progress in designing skills. Teachers are aware of this and have introduced a number of initiatives such as project booklets, level descriptions in language that pupils can understand and self review sheets that successfully help pupils to understand what level they are working at and what they need to do to improve. Development of designing skills is well supported where teachers give pupils a clear structure to work in.
158. The provision for ICT in the department has been improved significantly and pupils do get limited opportunity to use ICT, for example, to present work, to analyse survey results, to develop graphic images and to carry out nutritional analysis. However, ICT is yet to be fully integrated in the scheme of work, particularly the control element, and is yet to impact significantly on pupils' attainment.
159. Teachers have worked hard to improve the accommodation, particularly with good quality display, but the resistant materials rooms are in a poor condition with plaster missing from walls and ceilings. Provision for designing is unsatisfactory and the rooms do not convey a stimulating, exciting and creative design ethos to pupils. Neither do they give any support to teachers' efforts to

promote high quality finished products. Limited technician support in the department means that teachers are spending too much time preparing materials and undertaking regular maintenance rather than giving their full attention to things that would raise pupil attainment further.

GEOGRAPHY

160. Overall, the quality of provision in geography is satisfactory.

Strengths

- The management of classes.
- Carefully constructed schemes of work.
- Well-prepared lessons with clearly stated aims and objectives.

Areas for improvement

- Marking so that pupils know how well they have done and what they need to improve.
- The quality and standard of the presentation of written work.

161. In the GCSE examinations standards, since the last inspection, have been well below national averages, especially at the higher levels, and in 1999 and 2000 the percentage of pupils gaining higher grades was below the modest target of 35 per cent set by the school. However, in 2001 this target was exceeded, with some 38 per cent of the pupils gaining higher grades, in a year when the overall school results fell to 24 per cent with five or more A* to C grades. There was little difference between the boys' and girls' achievements at the higher level but most of those pupils who did not achieve a pass grade were boys. Analysis of work and observations in lessons indicates that many pupils are working below GCSE grade C. The pattern at the end of Year 9 is similar with far fewer pupils reaching the standards expected nationally. Only 49 per cent were at or above level five, based on teacher assessments, in 2001.

162. The standard of teaching is mostly satisfactory and at times good or very good. Generally, it is better in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 to 9. Teachers have good subject knowledge and class management is, for the most part, a strength of the department. Lessons are very well planned with key learning points made clear to the pupils at the start of each lesson. The best lessons include interesting explanations of new topics which often use pupils' local knowledge to good effect, good questioning, which encourages wide participation and positively acknowledges pupils' contributions, and exercises which are planned to cater for the different levels of pupil ability and so hold the pupils' interest. In a Year 9 lesson there were good opportunities for pupils to consider the causes of migration by looking at a case study of one particular Indian family moving to Calcutta. A Year 10 lesson, in which pupils used the Internet to find information for a project on the 1952 Lynmouth flood, was particularly successful in developing both their geographical knowledge and their ICT skills. In less successful lessons

teachers' exposition is too lengthy and as a result pupils lose attention by being insufficiently involved in the lesson. In a minority of lessons the poor behaviour of a few pupils is allowed to affect the learning of others.

163. Some of the higher-attaining pupils are able to use information from previous lessons and make good progress on new topics. Lower-attaining pupils are not always able to answer questions about the meaning of words in the glossary at the back of their books or recall information from earlier lessons. Most pupils work well and complete the tasks set for them but this is not always the case. For example, in the Year 9 lesson referred to above a significant number did not complete the tasks set. In another Year 9 lesson on the same topic skilful questioning by the teacher produced very good responses from a large number of pupils, who supplied a long list of pull and push factors affecting migration. Other good question and answer sessions, in a Year 10 lesson on traffic in towns, encouraged pupils to think about firstly the problems and later the solutions. In a lesson on physical geography Year 11 pupils were able to explain the relationship between factors such as type of drainage basin and the patterns of stream discharge. Some accurate and neatly presented hydrographs were produced. However, the presentation of maps and diagrams was often below this standard.
164. As at the time of the last inspection, standards are still well below national expectations in all years. However, some improvements have occurred on a number of issues raised. There is now a systematic programme of fieldwork in Years 7 to 11 and some particularly good work is produced at the end of Year 10 on coastal features near Scarborough. There is also a programme of work using ICT. For example, in Year 9 pupils search for information on equatorial forests on the Internet and some produce a 'Powerpoint' presentation of their findings; in Year 11 pupils use different websites to find out about the Lynmouth flood in 1952, as part of their work on rivers. Both the fieldwork and the increased use of ICT have helped to address the issue of limited opportunities for independent learning mentioned in the last inspection. Many of the exercises set for pupils encourage them to describe and suggest reasons for patterns on maps and diagrams, addressing another criticism in the last report. In a Year 8 lesson on tourism, for example, pupils were asked to complete a graph showing changes in unemployment month by month in Skegness and Leicester. The higher-attaining pupils were able to explain correctly the dip in unemployment in the summer months in Skegness.
165. A strength of the department is class management. Behaviour is good in the majority of lessons and pupils quickly settle down to the work set. The teachers are all experienced and, for the most part, establish very good relationships with the pupils, who are actively encouraged to participate in oral work and to complete written tasks. Pupils readily volunteer to read aloud or to answer questions. Another strength lies in good lesson planning based on well-structured schemes of work, including lists of resources and homework devised for each unit. However, the homework is not always

sufficiently differentiated. Other weaknesses include the low standard of presentation of some of the written work, graphs, maps and tables at all levels of ability and in all year groups. Many written tasks involve answering questions from textbooks; pupils' answers often do not make clear what the question was or its context and so do not provide a good basis for revision. Although work is regularly marked, with a grade for achievement and another for effort; there are often few comments on what pupils' need to do to improve the standard of their work.

HISTORY

166. Overall, the quality of provision in history is satisfactory with several strong features.

Strengths

- Teaching has a number of strengths. Most notably all teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils' attitudes and behaviour.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and offers the opportunity for pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding through the acquisition of a range of skills.
- History lessons contribute well to pupils' personal development.
- The assessment and monitoring of pupils' attainment and progress is good but needs to be developed further to be fully effective.

Areas for improvement

- In the marking of work and the setting of individual targets for pupils it is not always made clear to them what they need to do to improve.
- The monitoring and evaluation of teaching does not happen frequently enough.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop personal initiative and responsibility in lessons.

167. By the age of 14 standards of attainment are well below national expectations as reported in the statutory teacher assessment results. However, results for the past three years show a steady improvement. In lessons standards of attainment reflect these below average results. Standards of attainment are slightly better in lessons in Years 10 and 11. The upward trend in GCSE results since the last inspection has not been maintained and standards fell to well below average in the 2000 examinations. Standards were similar in the 2001 examinations. Girls do far better than boys at the higher *A to C grades.

168. Achievement in lessons in all years is satisfactory. Many pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language,

make satisfactory progress when this is measured against their relatively low levels of attainment when they join the school. Gifted and talented pupils also make satisfactory progress in Years 7 to 9 and some do better than this in Years 10 and 11. In most lessons seen there was no discernible difference between the attainment and progress of boys and girls.

169. In lessons in Years 7 to 9, pupils are gaining a satisfactory grounding in knowledge and understanding of history, underpinned by frequent opportunities to investigate and analyse evidence. For example, in a lesson about Elizabeth I, pupils in a Year 8 class gained information about her by investigating several different portraits. Higher-attaining pupils used the information gained to answer questions about the image that Elizabeth wanted to project at different stages in her reign. The lower than average literacy skills of a significant number of pupils sometimes impedes their progress and a number of initiatives have been introduced to help them to make improvements through their study of history. These include the keeping of glossaries of key words related to each topic and the careful marking of common spelling and punctuation errors. Pupils are also helped to develop information and communication technology skills. For example, in a lesson about the Atlantic slave trade they used the Internet to research conditions on the slave ships and in the plantations and then employed 'Powerpoint' to produce informative presentations using sound, pictures and text to illustrate their findings.
170. In Years 10 and 11 lessons build effectively on previous learning. Most pupils are gaining a satisfactory level of knowledge and understanding and average and higher-attainers investigate evidence at a more sophisticated level. For example, in a lesson where Year 10 pupils reached conclusions about developments in medicine in Ancient Rome through the analysis of both primary and secondary sources, including an extract from a historical novel. At this level some pupils are still held back by literacy difficulties though many of them write lengthy and well constructed narrative as a result of their class work and reading and research completed for homework. Occasionally pupils are required to use and interpret information from graphs and charts, particularly in Years 10 and 11, but the development of numeracy skills within history lessons is currently unplanned.
171. All the teaching was at least satisfactory and in almost a half of lessons seen it was good or very good. Good features of all lessons were the consistently high expectations that all teachers have of pupils' attitudes and behaviour. Teachers constantly hold pupils to account by the use of good class management strategies and as a consequence instances of unsatisfactory behaviour or lapses in concentration are usually promptly and effectively dealt with. The consistent use of such methods establishes a suitable climate for learning and allows pupils to make progress. Brisk pace, careful planning with clearly identified learning outcomes for different groups of pupils, and well-matched activities designed to enable pupils to achieve these are a notable features of the good lessons. At the close of most lessons teachers

review with pupils what they have learned thus providing opportunities for them to reflect on and consolidate their learning. The use of this methodology enables teachers to assess the extent of learning before proceeding to the next stage. Though they use a selection of strategies for ensuring that activities are well matched to the abilities of different groups of pupils, teachers do not always use whole class questioning to probe and challenge pupils' thinking as effectively as they might.

172. Many pupils maintain good attitudes to learning because of the climate established by the teacher. They concentrate and usually try their best. They listen well to the teacher and each other and can work productively on their own in lessons. They also achieve good work when working with each other as demonstrated by the lesson on the Atlantic slave trade. However, some lessons are very closely directed by the teacher and do not allow pupils enough opportunity to take an active role or develop initiative and responsibility. Occasionally, another outcome of such lessons is that they afford pupils little chance to reflect on or consolidate their learning. Though they respond well to the demands of the teacher in lessons, the lack of responsibility in learning amongst some pupils is demonstrated by a less diligent approach to homework, attendance and punctuality. This has an impact on the progress that these pupils make. Teachers are not rigorous enough in monitoring homework and ensuring missed work is followed up and completed.
173. Pupils are usually well behaved in lessons and are polite and respectful to each other and to adults. Topics within the National Curriculum and the GCSE course are carefully selected so as to make a valuable contribution to their personal development. Teachers monitor pupils' progress carefully through the regular marking of work and the assessment of learning at the close of lessons. As a result the pupils are set targets for improvement. Some of these are helpful but they are often not detailed enough to enable significant improvements to be made. Useful written feedback is sometimes given to pupils when work is marked but overall they are not given enough information about what they need to do to improve their work.
174. The department analyses performance data and has put in place some strategies to raise attainment in Years 10 and 11. Recently a list of measures to address the lower-attainment of boys at GCSE has been produced but has yet to be discussed and implemented. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning has been undertaken by senior management as part of a rolling programme, but though there are some systems for monitoring learning in the department, teaching is not monitored frequently enough. The broad and balanced curriculum is enhanced by a programme of visits to historical sites such as Lincoln cathedral and castle and Arkwright's Mill at Cromford.
175. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory overall. Though standards of attainment at GCSE have declined, sensible strategies are

being implemented to address this and more are planned. The teacher assessment results indicate that attainment is improving in Years 7 to 9. Teaching has improved and the use and development of information and communication technology has been improved significantly. Though there are some lessons which enable pupils to take a more active role, exercise initiative and take responsibility for their own learning, these opportunities still do not happen consistently enough and in some lessons pupils are still too dependent on the teacher.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

176. Overall, the quality of the provision in information and communication technology is satisfactory.

Strengths

- Pupils are enthusiastic about using computers and treat them with respect.
- The number of modern computers available for pupils to use is very good.

Areas for improvement

- Develop a whole school curriculum plan for information and communication technology particularly to meet statutory requirements in Years 10 and 11.
- Improve formative assessment and target setting.
- Further develop schemes of work, improve lesson planning and homework.

177. Overall most pupils arrive at the school with low capability in the use of computers. The results of teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 are the same as those found nationally. In 2000 pupils did less well in information and communication technology at GCSE than in their other subjects. The results in 2001 indicate a similar situation. During the inspection pupils in Years 10 and 11 were working at the same level as those in Year 9.

178. All pupils demonstrate the ability to access software, remember basic procedures, enter and edit information and are beginning to show increasing confidence when using computers in closely supervised exercises.

179. When Year 7 pupils search a database for the first time, using icons and basic functions, their poor literacy skills limits the progress they make. Year 8 pupils carry out a variety of sort operations on the data entered on a database. Year 9 pupils use their computer skills to present information in different forms and in a way which shows understanding of the intended audience. A good introduction to a presentation package by the teacher resulted in Year 9 pupils setting up templates for a presentation and accessing music and using other presentation techniques with help. In history they were confident and had the technical skill to use this well to

present their research on life aboard a slave ship and in the plantations. All pupils, including those who have special educational needs, make satisfactory or better progress because they receive good individual teaching in lessons. In the Learning Resource Centre a mathematics program is used well to develop prediction skills. The pupil explained why he predicted his result and said that it helps his mathematics because "I get better at making guesses". Boys' and girls' knowledge and skill levels vary with ability, but the more able pupils work through set tasks more quickly and therefore have more opportunity to take their learning further, for example, by modelling a more complex design of a room.

180. By the age of 16 the standards achieved by the majority of pupils in ICT lessons are below the level expected nationally because there is insufficient use of application of these skills in other subjects. When computers are used they are used well. Pupils in Year 11 in geography use their technical competence of research using the Internet to access a number of websites, and their presentation techniques to cut and paste information, re-scale and annotate maps to show their physical features and thus present their work to a high standard. Year 11 pupils in art have appropriately used a digital camera, a scanner and paint packages to transform their crayon drawings into the best pictures of their choice for display in the school.
181. In vocational subjects pupils' use of the Internet as a research tool is good. The carefully planned worksheets for these pupils structure and support their independent learning well and enables them quickly to access a number of websites to research information for assignments. Because of the effective assessment information given to them all pupils are clear about what they need to do to move from a merit to a distinction.
182. Teaching is always satisfactory and often good. Teachers demonstrate good technical knowledge, which enables them to provide appropriate technical support to pupils during lessons. The teaching in the good lessons is well planned, with pupils being made aware of the specific aims and expected outcomes of their work; all pupils are encouraged to share what they learn and cooperate with each other. They respond well and because of this make good progress. Good planning and understanding of the individual special learning needs of pupils led to a Year 8 class working through the functions of a database, gradually developing data handling skills at low level. In this lesson careful planning with the learning support assistant required a wheelchair bound pupil to get up and move to his peers to gain information for the database, which meant that he completed the same research task as his classmates and made the same progress. A feature of the good lessons was that the teacher maintained the pace of the lesson throughout ensuring that pupils sustained concentration. In Year 7 the teacher effectively encouraged gifted and talented pupils to share their work with the class. Throughout the lesson he constantly reminded them to produce complex designs and because of this many changed and improved their work, thinking again about what they thought they had finished. At the end of the lesson as

a plenary he required a boy to present his modelling work to the class. Other pupils evaluated the model sensitively and suggested improvements which helped the whole class to understand how they could improve their designs.

183. In the less successful teaching the lesson plan is insufficiently focused upon the actual learning to take place during the lesson in terms of skill acquisition, knowledge and understanding or consolidation of previous skills. Too often the teacher takes the whole class through an exercise or shows pupils how to solve the problem rather than allowing them to work through it for themselves and although pupils have completed a worksheet their learning is not secure. Too little time is given to talking with the pupils to check what they have learnt, in setting targets for them to improve work and in checking at the end of the lesson what they have learnt, how they have overcome a problem and if they are confident now.
184. Pupils are enthusiastic about using computers and treat them with respect. The very good relationships and behaviour promote a very effective ethos for learning.
185. There has been satisfactory progress since the last inspection. The number of computers, including radio laptops and ICT equipment, has increased considerably. The curriculum for Years 7, 8 and 9 now meets national curriculum requirements, but it does not for Years 10 and 11. The training programme has enabled some departments to integrate ICT into their teaching, and this is continuing. A whole school curriculum plan for information communication technology to address the non-compliance and to ensure a progressive programme of learning with the focus upon improving standards, is a priority. Systematic and rigorous monitoring of information and communication technology across the school needs to be part of the plan, with well developed schemes of work and formative assessment strategies, including the effective use of homework.
186. A very good technician supports information and communication technology across the school. The school is correct in identifying the need to appoint an E-learning Manager, to support the further development of information and communication technology and to ensure the maintenance of high quality resources for learning.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

187. The quality of provision is satisfactory in Spanish but unsatisfactory in French.

Strengths

- Much teaching is good and is helping pupils to improve their learning.
- Good teaching in Spanish in Years 7 to 9 is a major factor in the improving standards and achievement in these years.

- Assessment procedures and the provision of books are better than at the last inspection.

Areas for improvement

- The marking of pupils' written work is inconsistent and has often been poor.
 - The presentation of work of many pupils in all years is poor and has a detrimental effect on their progress.
 - Information from assessment is not used systematically in planning for pupils' different needs.
 - The school does not have links with France or Spain.
188. To date, the only language assessed in Year 9 has been French. Nationally reported standards in the teacher assessments have consistently been below average, with just below half of the year group at or above the expected National Curriculum level. The samples of these pupils' subsequent work indicate that their actual standards were, in fact, a little below the level at which they were assessed in Year 9.
189. In Year 11 GCSE standards are low. Since 1996 the grades A* to C success rate has fluctuated, approaching the national average in 2000 because girls did well, but declining again in 2001 to well below average levels. Over this period results across the full A* to G range improved to the national average, but grades above C were comparatively rare. In recent years the school has entered fewer of the year group for the full GCSE course than in other schools. Results in the subject are usually amongst the weakest in the school, with boys doing poorly in relation both to girls in the school and to boys elsewhere. Since 1999 most pupils have followed the short GCSE course, but with minimal success at grade C. The course is no longer offered in Year 10. A significant number of pupils following a Certificate of Achievement course in recent years did not receive an award.
190. Spanish was introduced in Year 7 in 1999 as a parallel first foreign language with French. Two-thirds of the current Year 9 take French, and one third Spanish. In French, standards in class and in the samples of work are well below average. Most top set pupils in Year 9 are on course for achieving average standards by the end of the year, and a few above. These pupils achieve as expected. Typically, they can understand detail in tape extracts and deduce gist from unfamiliar text. They write accurate short passages of personal description in the present tense, but their writing lacks the expected range of structure. They apply new grammar rules which they have just learnt, for example, the imperfect tense, but they do not seek to extend and enrich their writing by adding this knowledge systematically in subsequent tasks. Standards in the lower sets are below to well below average and vary with the quality of teaching. In some classes pupils hear the language used routinely and recall some vocabulary and phrases. In other classes some say and write sentences with support, but on their own most recognise only words and short phrases, relying too much on the teacher and guesswork.

191. Standards are higher in Spanish and there is significant evidence of improvement towards average levels in Years 7 and 8. Pupils hear and use the spoken language more than in many French lessons and have greater self-confidence. In Year 9 top set pupils give a range of personal information about themselves and articulate clearly with good accents. In the lesson observed they could ask each other how much pocket money they receive and reply accurately, using compound numbers well. Year 7 pupils showed very good early progress in asking and answering questions about name, age and where they live, in one lesson changing second person endings to third person as they performed confidently in groups of three.
192. In the current Year 11 standards are well below average. A few more able pupils are in the C/D range of GCSE, one or two above this, but apart from the exceptional successful use of perfect and future tenses, their writing is unadventurous and they do not use the language spontaneously. In general pupils have not built upon prior learning and are unsure of the most basic grammar rules. They know and recognise vocabulary in practised topics, but have little ability to construct the language by themselves. Written work is generally of a very low standard, although, where pupils still take an interest, they take the opportunity to write more accurately in redrafted coursework. ICT is sometimes used to present coursework assignments, as in last year's sample where, in both full and short courses, there were some good publicity pamphlets about Nottingham. Receptive skills are generally better, so that most pupils can cope with short dialogue or passages about family, simple number, travel and interests.
193. Progress and achievement are unsatisfactory overall in Years 9 and 11, even allowing for the pupils' low levels of literacy when they enter the school in Year 7. In Spanish many pupils achieve to their potential and are making good progress because they are well taught. In French, however, skills are undeveloped because many pupils do not learn effectively how to learn a language. The most significant factor in underachievement in French is repeated long-term staff absence. For most of last year, and again this term, many pupils have not had a specialist teacher. Their learning has been interrupted, and in some cases attitudes and behaviour have been seriously adversely affected. The second important factor is the pupils' continuing literacy problems. Many in Years 8 and 9 still do not understand the importance of writing, both as a skill in itself and as a necessary aid to speaking from memory. Confidence, even in top sets that are well taught, is unusually low. Few pupils, even the best, speak or write confidently from memory. Boys' underachievement is particularly marked, and the behaviour of a small minority is unacceptable. Some less able pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well with support. They take part in dialogues with the support of specially prepared sheets. There is little difference in achievement between pupils from different ethnic backgrounds.

194. Teaching is satisfactory and is overall better than at the last inspection. In the context of pupils' low self-confidence and often negative attitudes, it needs to be consistently good, and much of it is. It was good or very good in over half the lessons observed, with a significantly higher proportion in Spanish. It was more variable in French; some were good but one lesson was unsatisfactory. In three otherwise satisfactory French lessons the learning was unsatisfactory. In the good teaching activities were designed to ensure that pupils spoke to each other, and the teacher conducted most of the lesson in the language. This raised expectations and encouraged pupils to practise thoroughly and try new patterns. This teaching successfully challenged negative attitudes and helped to raise self-esteem. Consistently strong features are clear objectives, positive relationships, the management of behaviour and accomplished use of video and the overhead projector. As a result of this teaching pupils work at a satisfactory rate, and are learning to follow basic rules of language-learning.
195. Where there are weaknesses in otherwise satisfactory lessons pupils are not learning well enough to make up lost ground. Some temporary teaching lacks the necessary expertise. Sometimes tasks do not meet the class's learning needs. In some lessons they do not help pupils to consolidate effectively and remember what they have forgotten; often written tasks lack urgency and focus, and the work rate drops. In the top sets in both languages the planning of work does not challenge pupils enough to extend their writing either in richness of content or in length and does not require them to reapply in new situations patterns and structures they have learnt previously. In such situations pupils have very little self-reliance.
196. Overall improvement since the last inspection is no better than satisfactory because results in Years 9 and 11 have not yet improved. Teachers in the department work effectively as a team, for example, they are determined to minimise the effects of colleagues' absence. Provided that staffing problems are resolved and weaknesses in French teaching addressed through more stringent and regular checks on performance, the department has the capacity to regain momentum. Department reviews have sharpened the staff's awareness of how assessment data can help them raise standards. This information now needs to be used to set realistically high expectations for all pupils and to amend the curriculum appropriately. Curriculum plans need to identify the methods and activities by which different groups of pupils are to achieve their potential, and be more specific about how teachers and pupils will recognise the progress made year on year. For example, pupils need to be trained to work from memory, building on the promising start made in Spanish in Years 7 and 8. Teachers need to ensure through more rigorous and detailed marking that written work has its proper status as a learning tool and revision aid. They need to give pupils both a more realistic picture of their standards and a clearer idea of what they need to do to improve. The forging of links with France and Spain, for example through e-mail, is now urgent.

MUSIC

197. The provision for music is sound overall, but some areas require more attention.

Strengths

- Lesson planning includes a good range of musical activities, drawing on a popular published scheme.
- The use of assessment in lessons is developing, helping pupils to understand what they need to do to make progress.

Areas for improvement

- Homework is regularly set but too often pupils leave work unfinished, and this limits their progress.
- Many pupils have underdeveloped musical skills and basic knowledge of music which inhibits their enjoyment of more complicated work.

198. The inspection of music was limited by the absence, through illness, of the head of department.

199. When pupils first join the school many of them have limited experience of music. They often do not know the names of notes or understand how notes can be of different lengths. Few have well-developed skills in playing instruments. They soon begin to make progress and, in Year 7, are starting to understand terms such as syncopation. Year 8 pupils continue to make some progress and those who have regular access to instruments play with awareness of phrasing and dynamics. In Year 9 many pupils play simple melodies on keyboards and the more able ones add harmonies, but too many have difficulty in understanding the different notes that make up chords and when chords need to be changed in order to accompany the melody. Many pupils are reluctant to sing in class which makes it harder for them to understand musical phrasing and dynamics. At the time of the last inspection, standards in Years 7, 8 and 9 were well below the national expectation. Some progress has been made and there is less difference now, but the majority of the pupils are still not achieving as well as they should.

200. Around 30 per cent of pupils entered for GCSE gain A* to C grades, considerably below national averages, and this has been the picture for the last few years. Pupils who take music in Years 10 and 11 cope well with practical composing tasks. For example, a Year 10 group produced melodies for children's songs containing answering phrases, and showed good understanding of musical conventions. The more able members of the class accompanied their melodies in different musical styles. However, even GCSE pupils are still struggling to overcome the gaps in their basic musical knowledge and this makes it difficult for them to do well in the listening paper which constitutes 30 per cent of the examination. For example, some Year 11 pupils were unable to identify the sign for a bass clef, and some very closely targeted catch-up work is needed to help them overcome such

obstacles to progress. In 2000 girls did slightly better than boys in the GCSE examination, but where pupils did not do so well as expected it was often as a result of absence or not completing coursework.

201. In the lessons seen teaching was mostly sound and showed several good qualities. Clear objectives are set and the teachers took trouble to ensure that pupils had a clear idea of what was required. Explanations were given in small steps.
202. The teaching was less effective when the teacher was obliged to spend too much time managing behaviour or mending keyboard connections. In some lessons, pupils whose musical understanding is more developed are not given enough opportunity to get on with their learning while the teacher explains tasks to those with less secure musical ideas. Pupils are sometimes disheartened by equipment not working properly, or when poor behaviour by a few pupils disrupts the lesson.
203. Accommodation for the subject is cramped, and this was a feature at the time of the last inspection. The arrangement of keyboards limits opportunities for group playing. The time lost through giving out headphones has been considerably reduced. The two music teachers have developed a shared understanding of how to improve standards in the subject and the head of department has begun a good analysis of pupils' performance at GCSE, and adopting catch up strategies to improve results.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching to all age groups.
- Leadership and management of the department.
- Good relationships with pupils.
- Good range of extra-curricular activities.
- Good inclusion practice.
- Integration with the School sports coordinator programme.

Areas for improvement

- Facilities available.
- Financial management and control.

205. The attainment of pupils in physical education by the ages of 14 and 16 meets national expectations. Pupils' progress, including those with special educational needs, is satisfactory in all years, with good levels of individual skill shown by boys in Year 8 badminton and Year 11 football, and by girls in Year 10 basketball as part of the Junior Sports Leader award.

206. Pupils continue, however, to perform below the national average at GCSE. In the GCSE examination results in 2000, the percentage of pupils who achieved the higher-grade passes was significantly lower than those nationally, whilst those achieving overall passes was also below national results. Results for 2001 were significantly below those achieved in the GCSE examination in year 2000.
207. The department are addressing these low standards. They have produced a detailed and comprehensive GCSE Action Plan, identified a number of strategies, including a clear focus on teaching and learning, improved moderation and a syllabus review to take into account both the theory and practical elements of the course. This work will be led by the GCSE course coordinator and supported by the rest of the department.
208. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good and in some lessons very good. Teachers are well qualified, for the most part experienced, have broad subject knowledge and use time and resources effectively. Lessons are well planned, usually challenging and have good pace, with an example of this in a Junior Sports Leader lesson where, although supervised by the teacher, the lesson was delivered by a team of Year 10 girls demonstrating leadership, independent learning and responsibility.
209. Teachers have high expectations and a positive caring relationship with pupils. This is best illustrated by the effective inclusion of pupils with special needs into both practical and theory lessons at Year 8 in Outdoor Education, and Year 10 with a GCSE group were two good examples. This close working relationship between the department and learning support assistants is a real strength.
210. Pupils are generally enthusiastic, well behaved and cooperative at all ages in their approach to physical education. They enjoy the subject. They have a clear understanding of what is expected of them in both indoor and outdoor activities and respond positively. The programme of extra-curricular activities is good, with a broad and inclusive programme, including opportunities for GCSE pupils to consolidate their learning using ICT. Overall the department has made a significant contribution to building a good reputation for the school in the wider community. The involvement of the school in a broad sports programme has a positive effect on the pupils, and the programme has been particularly successful in extending the skills of gifted and talented pupils. Consequently, individual pupils and teams have been successful in competitions in the area.
211. Leadership of the department is very good. The department is well organised and all activities run smoothly. The head of department has a clear vision and understanding of the longer term developments needed for the school, and the teachers work well together in a shared appreciation of both the department's and the school's aims. The Curriculum Development group is

already having an impact on issues such as improving communication, motivation and changing room management. Documentation is satisfactory, the handbook is being updated, schemes of work are being revised and together with the new Assessment Planner which brings together individual targets, expectations of all pupils linked to learning outcomes, will provide important information on pupil progress and attainment. However, financial management and control requires a more systematic approach.

212. Outdoor facilities have improved since the last inspection with the fields in better condition and improvements made on the hard court areas. Indoor facilities are still inadequate and shabby. A number of improvements have been made to floors and windows, even so the facilities are not conducive to high quality teaching and learning, or for motivating pupils to participate fully. Equipment seen appeared to be satisfactory and ample for all activities.
213. The school sports coordinator has worked hard in an exciting partnership to produce the plan for the implementation of the Nottingham Partnership. The plan demonstrates a clear vision of how the programme will meet its key objectives and expected outcomes. Taken together with the school's recent bid for Specialist Sports College status these initiatives could have a major impact on the future development of physical education and sport, both at the school and in the wider community.
214. The department has made significant progress since the last inspection, and although standards at GCSE still need addressing, it is very well placed to take the most of the opportunities that may emerge over the next few years if Specialist Sports College status is confirmed.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

215. Overall, the quality of provision in religious education in Years 7 to 9 and at GCSE in Years 10 and 11 is good but the school does not comply with statutory requirements in relation to all pupils in Years 10 and 11.

Strengths

- The department has appropriately qualified specialist teachers who know their subject well and have good relationships with pupils.
- Teaching is mainly good and at times very good. This leads to pupils achieving well in Years 7 to 9 and in GCSE.
- Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development and relationships are mainly satisfactory and often good.

Areas for improvement

- Teachers do not always sufficiently challenge pupils who are late to lessons or absent to catch up on work they have missed.

- Ensure that the non-compliance with the regulations for religious education in Years 10 and 11 is addressed.
 - Teachers to ensure in their planning they make pupils aware of the sequence of activities to be covered each term i.e. they know the work plan for the term and how topics link together.
 - Teachers make sure that good quality homework and extension activities are set consistently and carried out by pupils.
216. Standards of work in religious education seen during the inspection show that by the time the pupils are 14 they reach standards that overall meet the expectations of the local syllabus for religious education. The standards for those pupils who are following the GCSE course meet the standards expected in Year 11. Standards for those pupils who are following the statutory non-GCSE course, as part of the PHSE programme, are below the standard expected. The good standards of work are achieved because the teaching is mainly good or very good, whilst the below average standards in the statutory course for pupils in Years 10 and 11 are explained entirely by the fact that not enough time is allocated to allow the local syllabus requirements to be met.
217. Year 9 pupils have sound knowledge and understanding of the characteristics of the six major religions and how beliefs relate to traditions and practices. For example, pupils are aware of and know the similarities and differences between the different Christian denominations' places of worship and have an insight into Christian ceremonies. This was demonstrated in a lesson when a christening ceremony was accurately acted out as a role-play. In the GCSE examination in 2001 the results achieved were not too dissimilar to the results achieved by pupils in their other GCSE subjects in the school. In the previous year no pupils at the school took religious education at GCSE and so no national comparisons can be made. Pupils preparing for GCSE religious studies have a sound understanding of and an ability to relate religious beliefs and teachings to their historical and cultural context. They also use and understand the technical vocabulary of religious education and identify and link individuals from the past with the ideas and issues they are discussing. In all year groups pupils with special educational needs achieve well. Although extension tasks for the more able pupils are an integral part of the teachers' lesson planning they are not always used consistently or followed up to ensure pupils achieve as well as they can. Similarly, homework is always planned but is of variable quality, not always completed by pupils and as result is not sufficiently extending learning.
218. Scrutiny of pupils' work and the observation of lessons shows that from the age of eleven years to the age of 14 the standard of the pupils' work progresses well. However, the rate of progress is not the same in each year. For example, it is good in Years 7 and 8 and satisfactory in Year 9. Whilst the teaching remains mainly good or very good across each year group, insufficient time allocation in Year 9 does not allow the subject to be covered in sufficient depth. Timetabling arrangements mean that pupils do not have a

religious education lesson each week. This leads to a lack of continuity in pupils' learning. By the age of 16 pupils who follow the GCSE course make satisfactory progress and the pupils in the current Year 10 are making good progress.

219. Teaching is mainly good or very good. All teachers of religious education are specialists in the subject and have very good subject knowledge. This has a major positive impact on the progress pupils' make. Careful lesson planning is becoming a strength of the department and one of the main reasons why pupils learn so well. The purpose of each lesson is shared with the pupils and at the end the teacher and pupils summarise their success in meeting the purpose of the individual lesson. Pupils as a result are clear about what they need to do and most link this with what they have learnt recently. However, pupils are not clear about the purpose of the lesson in terms of where the work is leading and as a result are not fully aware of why they are undertaking the work.
220. The teaching lively and interesting and a range of teaching methods are used to engage the pupils. For example, in Year 9 increasing use is being made of ICT and this is having a beneficial effect on the attitudes of pupils to the subject. Teachers' expectations of the pupils are high and lessons are taught in a friendly way and conducted in an atmosphere where praise and celebration of success motivates most of the pupils. Very good use of questioning provides pupils of all abilities the opportunity to participate in lessons. For example, in a Year 8 lesson, pupils, whilst studying Buddhism, were discussing the suffering and pain associated with good and evil. The level of oral discussion was good and debate moved on to "what makes evil so hard to bear?" However, not all take this opportunity and teachers need to develop strategies to ensure all pupils are active participants.
221. Teachers' marking is becoming better and the resulting information is being used to develop plans for teaching. However, marking does not always indicate clearly to pupils what they need to do to improve further. Also, teachers do not systematically follow-up the outcomes of corrective marking to ensure that all pupils complete fully any missed or incomplete work and undertake corrections. This is particularly relevant for pupils who have been absent from or late to lessons.
222. As a result of the good and very good teaching they receive, pupils' attitudes to the study of religious education are mainly positive and behaviour is usually good. This is supported by the teachers' good class management skills and leads to the relationships between the teachers and the pupils being good and are often good between the pupils. Teachers are quick to use the richness and diversity of pupils' backgrounds to enhance the discussion being undertaken in the classroom. This enhances the pupils' confidence, self-esteem and feeling of being valued.

223. Leadership and management of the department are hampered by complicated internal school arrangements. The full coverage of religious education in all years is not the responsibility of one person and as result it is difficult to achieve consistency, continuity and a clear vision for the subject. However, religious education is functioning well in Years 7 to 9 and within the GCSE groups. The religious education curriculum meets statutory requirements in Years 7 to 9, although lack of time and timetabling arrangements restricts the progress pupils can make in Year 9. In Years 10 and 11 the religious education curriculum does not meet statutory requirements for those pupils not undertaking the GCSE course as it fails to cover learning about religions. Timetabling arrangements also mean that the GCSE course in Year 10 is not offered as part of the school curriculum but is offered as an extra-curricular activity. Through the enthusiasm of both the teacher and Year 10 pupils who attend the post school classes this arrangement is proving most successful.
224. Because of the good experience pupils continuously receive in their religious education lessons up to the age of 14, and for pupils taking GCSE religious education, the subject makes a good contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. From the age of 14 to 16 years the contribution for all pupils following the non-GCSE course is good in respect of moral, social and cultural development.
225. Improvement since the last inspection has been mainly good. The department has fully addressed the issues raised in relation to Years 7 to 9. Specialists now staff religious education, the teaching is mainly good or very good, pupils have the opportunity to discuss opinions and make judgements, their progress is at least satisfactory and often good and assessment arrangements are improving. However, some issues still remain and these include some inadequacies in resources i.e. in relation to provision of artefacts and aspects of the continuity of leadership and management of the subject in Years 10 and 11.

VOCATIONAL COURSES

226. Overall, the quality of provision in work related and vocational courses is good.

Strengths

- General National Vocational Qualification courses are open to all pupils and pupils choose them because they want to do well.
- The school provides a range of high quality opportunities for vocational education and work related learning for pupils in Years 10 and 11.

Areas for improvement

- Continue to develop the work-related curriculum.

227. Pupils do well on General National Vocational Qualification courses, achieving passes, merits and distinctions. In lessons Year 10 pupils make sound progress and, for example, explain the main tasks relating to recruitment well. Several pupils have chosen the Intermediate General National Vocational Qualification course because they want high grades and they are clear the course equates to two GCSE's. By Year 11 pupils use of the Internet as a research tool is good. The carefully planned worksheets for vocational pupils structure and support their independent learning well and enables boys and girls to quickly access a number of websites to research information for assignments and to make good progress.
228. In 2000 a large number of the pupils entered for the General National Vocational Qualification unit, 'Investigating Working in Business' achieved a pass. This unit is appropriately an "entitlement" for all pupils as part of their work-related learning programme. The small number who attend college achieve the same as those pupils following similar courses nationally.
229. Very good progress has been made since the last inspection in providing a range of high quality opportunities for vocational education and work-related learning for pupils in Years 10 and 11. The work-related curriculum is carefully planned and meets the needs of individual pupils well. Pupils who are interested in painting and decorating and information and communication technology as a career attend college for part of the week. The behaviour and attendance of these pupils has improved as has their interest in their school work. All pupils in Years 10 and 11 appropriately complete the 'Employability Module' which, with the two weeks work experience they organise for themselves, is a good preparation for employment. In recognition of the innovative quality of the work-related curriculum, the school achieved the 'Gold Award for Excellence in Work-related Learning' from the Centre for Education & Industry in 2001. Nevertheless, the school is right to strive for the Platinum Award by developing work-related learning across the school more robustly and systematically, using an increased number of links with business.
230. All pupils are able to choose to study the Intermediate General National Vocational Qualification in Business, equivalent to two GCSE's. Lessons are taught well and pupils concentrate throughout their lessons. All pupils have a good understanding of the vocational course assessment criteria and use this effectively to target what they have to do to gain a merit or distinction. For example, a Year 11 boy from an ethnic minority group, explained his commitment to achieving a distinction by gaining more information through more focussed independent research to produce better quality work. Two higher-attaining girls in Year 10 showed that they had a good understanding of the requirements of a job specification for a fast food outlet to include a food handling qualification.

