

INSPECTION REPORT

SACRED HEART SCHOOL

Camberwell, London

LEA area: 210 Southwark

Unique reference number: 100860

Headteacher: Mr. C. Garvey

Reporting inspector: Mr. J. Russell Sherman
7583

Dates of inspection: 28 – 31 January 2002

Inspection number: 190021

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:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	11 – 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Camberwell New Road Camberwell London
Postcode:	SE5 0RP
Telephone number:	020 7274 6844
Fax number:	020 7737 1713
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Reverend Michael Gould
Date of previous inspection:	7 October 1996

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9980	Jo Adams	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
31548	Grahame Smith	Team inspector	English	How well are pupils taught?
1254	Marguerite Presman	Team inspector	Mathematics	
22370	Peter Harwood	Team inspector	Science	
31685	Valerie Girling	Team inspector	Art	
7084	Jack Haslam	Team inspector	Design and technology	
18447	Ronald Cohen	Team inspector	History	
2686	Brian Oppenheim	Team inspector	Information technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
7728	Bernardette Holmes	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
15926	Janet Dyson	Team inspector	Music	
14446	Barry Simmons	Team inspector	Physical education	How well does the school care for its pupils?

2731	Penny Holden	Team inspector	Equal opportunities Special educational needs English as an additional language	
12603	Tusha Chakraborti	Team inspector		
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Sacred Heart is a voluntary aided 11-16 Roman Catholic school. It has 635 pupils which makes it smaller than the average 11-16 school. It is increasingly popular with parents and there are more pupils applying than there are places. Over 50 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals: this is very high. The proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language is well above other schools. Thirty pupils are given extra support for English but only five are at an early stage of learning the language. The main first languages other than English are Yoruba, Portuguese and Spanish.

Pupils come from a range of ethnic backgrounds. The largest groups are: Black African; White UK and Black Caribbean heritage in that order. Just under 10 per cent of pupils are White European. Twenty eight per cent of pupils are on the special educational needs register, which is above average and the proportion with statements is broadly average. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school has traditionally been below average. However, evidence shows that attainment of the current Year 7 is much closer to the average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Sacred Heart is a highly effective school. Provision is very good with a number of excellent features. Pupils make very good progress due to consistently good teaching, strong leadership and management, very good parental support and links, and very positive pupil attitudes. Attainment is below average on entry and above average by the time pupils leave the school at 16. The school makes good use of its above average funding. As a result, the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Consistently good and very good teaching enable pupils to make very good progress and leads to high standards at GCSE
- Leadership is strong, focused, coherent and committed
- Staff and pupils have consistently high expectations, work very hard and benefit from a shared sense of purpose
- Relationships are outstanding and respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others is excellent
- The school effectively develops its pupils' confidence and self-belief, creates excellent attitudes to school and gives pupils the desire to succeed

What could be improved

- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) and art are not high enough
- The independence and autonomy of pupils, which need to be addressed by a broader range of teaching methods
- Accommodation is limited and not always fit for purpose

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 November 1996. Improvement on most major issues has been excellent over the past five years. Achievement has risen very significantly as have attendance rates. Exclusions are now low. Management has improved and is now good. Pupil autonomy and responsibility for their own learning remains an issue. Other issues have been dealt with satisfactorily.

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			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
GCSE examinations	C	C	C	A*

Key	
Well above average	A
Above average	B
Average	C
Below average	D
Well below average	E

Sacred Heart achieves high standards. Standards on entry to the school have been below average. By the end of Year 9 pupils' standards are broadly in line with national averages for the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. By the end of Year 11 standards are broadly average but more pupils get at least five higher grade GCSEs than in other schools. Compared to schools with a similar percentage of free school meals, attainment is in the top five per cent of schools nationally at the end of Year 9 and Year 11. GCSE results for 2001 were particularly high in English literature and French but lower than average in art and design and in physical education.

Over the past four years the overall rate of improvement in standards at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 has been above the national trend. Boys' and girls' performance are closer than is normally the case. Evidence during the inspection showed standards in ICT and art to be below average and standards in English, mathematics, science, history and modern foreign languages to be above average. Standards in other subjects are broadly in line with national averages. After the last inspection the school reflected on the fact that standards were well below national averages. The school set itself challenging targets to improve standards and has exceeded them. It continues to set challenging but realistic targets. All groups of pupils achieve very well and make consistently good progress during their time in the school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. A very important factor in achieving high standards.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Not automatic – all staff work hard to achieve this. The incidence of exclusions is now low. Very good improvement.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships are excellent. Personal development in relation to the school community is very good, personal responsibility for their own learning is underdeveloped.
Attendance	Good. Above average. Significant improvement since last inspection. Important factor in promoting high achievement.

Pupils show an immense enthusiasm for school and learning; for belonging to the community and for achieving good examination results. This was clearly demonstrated by the high attendance at after school revision lessons and the great excitement and anticipation shown when test results are announced. Pupils enjoy taking on a range of responsibilities around the school; as prefects, form captains, mediators and "reading buddies". The excellent relationships in the school stem from the very strong focus on respect for all. The good rates of attendance have been achieved by developing a strong partnership with parents. Everyone, including staff, pupils and parents, appreciates the close link between attendance, good behaviour, attitudes to learning and achievement. This has a positive impact on standards achieved.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection. Excellent management of pupils and use of time, high expectations and good subject knowledge, linked to very positive pupil attitudes and very good relationships, all lead to high achievement and progress for pupils. Teaching meets the needs of all pupils well. A key to the impact of teaching in the school is the consistency of experience and expectation in the classroom and around school.

Teaching in English is good, and it is frequently very good or excellent. Expectations in the department are almost always very high and teachers assume that all pupils can and will achieve to the best of their ability. Mathematics teaching is very good. Teachers have high expectations and are committed to the objective that all pupils can and should succeed. Science teaching is good. Although questioning sometimes lacks rigour, very clear targets, high expectations, good use of time and positive relationships ensure good progress. Teaching in ICT and art lacked these strengths and needs to be improved. Teaching in modern foreign languages is very good overall and teaching in other subjects is good.

Literacy skills are reasonably well integrated and taught across the curriculum and effective use is made of targeted literacy support. Numeracy is not yet effectively planned for across the curriculum, although there are plans to address this issue. The school meets the needs of all its pupils very effectively. This includes both pupils with special educational needs and gifted and talented pupils. Provision for both groups is very good. Despite this, there is a need to give pupils more opportunities to reflect on their learning and to discuss issues in order to challenge ideas, deepen understanding and develop greater independence. Pupils are exceptionally well motivated. This is seen in class and in the high attendance at revision sessions outside the normal timetable.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The different combinations of subjects depending on their prior attainment meet pupils' needs appropriately. Statutory requirements are not fully met in relation to design and technology and ICT.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Courses are organised very well to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs. SEN assessment is very good.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. Only a small number of pupils are at an early stage of language acquisition. In class progress is good. Progress in withdrawal sessions is unsatisfactory.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very Good. Provision for moral and social development is consistently very good. Provision for cultural and spiritual development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for child protection, ensuring pupils' welfare and for monitoring and improving attendance are excellent. The use of assessment data to inform lesson planning and teaching varies by subject but it is generally good.

The school works very effectively with parents and carers to promote achievement. Some 30 pupils are not following a design and technology course in Years 10 and 11 and the school cannot be sure that all pupils experience ICT provision or all the required aspects of personal, social and health education. Nevertheless, the school's arrangements ensure that all pupils leave with something positive to show for their five years of study. Extra-curricular opportunities relating to academic achievement and study support are very strong, those relating to other aspects of experience are below average. The school provides very effective support and guidance services for its pupils including a very effective counselling service.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership is excellent. It is strong, focused, coherent and committed and has a very positive impact on teaching, learning and standards. Management is good. It is efficient and effective.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Overall, governors fulfil their responsibilities well. They have set very challenging targets and led the drive for higher standards. Their grasp of strengths and weaknesses is satisfactory. They ensure most statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school monitors standards and teaching quality effectively and uses the outcomes effectively to set challenging but realistic targets for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The very significant extra funding received by the school has been thoughtfully, creatively and effectively used to improve attainment and inclusion.

Overall, staffing, accommodation and learning resources are adequate. Staffing is good whilst learning resources are satisfactory. Accommodation limits progress in some areas, in particular in physical education, design and technology and where non-science lessons are taught in laboratories. Leadership has established high expectations of achievement and standards in the school. It has managed to establish a climate of "no excuses" whilst maintaining a very positive, supportive and committed atmosphere. Some requirements relating to the curriculum and prospectus are not met. The school applies the main principles of best value well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The high expectations of the school • Effective leadership and management • Good quality of teaching • Good quality of information to parents including targets • Effective communications between school and parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited space • A small number of parents queried the application of the admissions criteria.

The team agrees with all the positive points raised by parents and with the issue over space. The application of admissions criteria is largely beyond the scope of this inspection. Procedures appear to be appropriate but parents should take issues to the appropriate authority and if necessary to the Ombudsman. Parents are provided with good quality information about pupils' progress and strong parental links make a very effective contribution to attainment and progress in terms of good attendance rates and support for sanctions when necessary.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. In recent years, attainment on entry to the school has been below average, although current Year 7 pupils are closer to average. By the end of Year 9 pupils' standards are broadly in line with national averages for the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. By the end of Year 11 standards are in line with national averages when looking at average points score, and well above national averages for 5+ A-C passes at GCSE. Compared to schools with a similar percentage of free school meals, attainment is in the top 5 per cent of schools nationally at Key Stage 3 (Year 9) and at Key Stage 4 (Year 11). GCSE results for 2001 were lower than would be expected in art & design and in physical education. They were particularly high in English literature and French.

2. Over the past 4 years the overall rate of improvement in standards at Key Stage 3 and at Key Stage 4 has been above the national trend. Boys' performance is closer to girls' performance than is normally the case. This is the result of boys performing better than might be expected rather than girls underachieving. Evidence during the inspection showed standards in ICT and art to be below average at the end of Years 9 and 11. By the end of Year 9, standards are broadly in line with expectations for all other subjects except for history where attainment is above average. Standards in English, mathematics, science, history and modern foreign language are above average by the time pupils leave the school. Standards in other subjects are broadly in line with national averages with the exception of art and ICT where they are below average and where progress is insufficient. All groups of pupils achieve very well overall and make consistently good progress during their time in the school.

3. After the last inspection the school reflected on the fact that standards were well below national averages. The school set itself challenging but realistic targets and has exceeded them. It continues to set challenging but realistic targets. Work seen during the inspection shows that pupils now make very good progress overall during their time in the school. All pupils know their starting points, are clear about key targets and what they need to do to make progress.

4. Writing and listening skills are effectively developed. The major contribution comes from the English department, but many departments do make a valuable contribution in this area. However, whole-school provision is still developing and there is room for greater consistency. There are generally too few opportunities for pupils to learn through extended talk and discussion and standards of speaking are lower than other aspects of literacy. Standards of numeracy are generally good but their use and application outside mathematics requires further development. This is planned for.

5. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in improving their skills in reading and writing. This progress is due to the very well targeted catch-up courses and the good support they receive from either a learning support assistant or teacher in lessons. The catch-up courses last for a few weeks where pupils who will benefit from this help are taken out of a few subject lessons in small groups to practise reading, spelling, comprehension and writing. They are very effective. They help pupils acquire the skills needed to work alongside their classmates in subject lessons. Support in lessons by learning support assistants and teachers is skilful and effective. They encourage pupils to try for themselves in a variety of ways, for example, by asking questions to direct thinking or by guiding pupils' focus. The good teaching all pupils receive in many subjects contributes to the very good progress that pupils with special educational needs make. They make better progress than might be expected considering their starting position in the school. For example, Year 11 pupils who started at the school in Year 7 with special educational needs have achieved well and are predicted to leave school with good GCSE results and the prospect of a achieving a much-hoped for career.

6. Only a very small number of pupils are in the very early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language. The vast majority of pupils at the school who speak English as an additional language are fluent bilingual speakers. However, most pupils who are still developing their skill in speaking English as an additional language make good progress in lessons. This is because they are highly motivated to learn and to do well and because the teaching they receive in many subjects is very good. Teachers expect the most of pupils learning English and are prepared to give extra time and attention to them if they do not understand a particular topic. There are small group sessions where pupils learning English as an additional language are withdrawn from subject lessons. These sessions are not always as effective as they should be because the work pupils are given is too easy for them.

7. Pupils working in the St. Mary's Room (a unit designed to prevent the exclusion of pupils having problems in normal classes and to reintegrate pupils) also make good progress. Pupils sent to the room work on the tasks they would be doing in class. Time in the room and the effort of the teachers working there is focused on helping pupils achieve the objectives of the lesson they are missing.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Pupils' attitudes to school are excellent and a very important factor in the school's success in achieving high standards both academic and in terms of pupils' personal development. Pupils show an immense enthusiasm for school and learning; for belonging to the community and for achieving good examination results. This was clearly demonstrated by the high attendance at after-school revision lessons and the great excitement and anticipation shown when test results are announced. This enthusiasm is supported and appreciated by parents.

9. Pupils willingly and with enjoyment take on a range of responsibilities around the school; as prefects, form captains, mediators and buddy readers. They wear their badges of responsibility with pride. The commitment pupils show to these roles demonstrates their high levels of personal development; their understanding of the strength of the community and their responsibilities as members of the school. Pupils' personal development is very good in this aspect but they are not used to working together in groups taking responsibility for their own learning.

10. Relationships within the school are excellent and this stems from the very strong focus through the ethos of the school of respect for all. Pupils relate very well to each other and naturally help one another. This was very clear in the paired buddy reading sessions when pupils listen to each other read, offer support and contribute significantly to promoting a desire to read and to learn. Pupils also have very good relationships with their teachers whom they value and respect. They appreciate that the teachers are 'there for them', support them as individuals and help them to learn.

11. At the time of the last inspection one of the key issues was to reduce the number of exclusions and to ensure procedures are correctly followed. In addressing this the school has been very successful and the number of exclusions, both permanent and fixed term, have reduced dramatically. There were no permanent exclusions in the last year and 20 fixed period. This has been achieved by initiatives to improve behaviour and to look at the individual needs of those at risk of exclusion. Alternatives to exclusion, for example, withdrawing pupils from lessons to work in St. Mary's Room, have allowed pupils to overcome many problems associated with learning. The school strives to ensure all pupils are included in the school's provision.

12. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good and pupils clearly understand that in order to learn and achieve it is important to behave well. Pupils move around the school in an orderly way and follow the school's code of conduct. They have a very good understanding of the right way to behave towards others. Most pupils are polite and courteous to visitors and show a genuine desire to engage in conversation. There was no evidence of bullying or racial harassment during the week of the inspection and in discussion with pupils they said that any bullying was quickly and efficiently dealt with.

13. The school's ethos of respect for all is practised and promoted by nearly all pupils. Pupils appreciate that everybody has strengths and different opinions are to be tolerated and listened to. This was demonstrated through the excellent relationships. In activities such as mediator training pupils were able to give supportive but effective criticism to each other to develop skills needed to listen to different points of view.

14. The attendance rate is good and this has also significantly improved since the last inspection. This reflects the strong emphasis the school places on good attendance, the work they have undertaken to improve attendance and the partnership with parents who support the school in ensuring pupils attend and arrive mostly on time. All stakeholders: (school, pupils and parents) appreciate the close link between attendance, good behaviour, attitudes to learning and achievement. This has a positive impact on standards achieved.

15. Pupils with special educational needs have very positive attitudes to school and value the support they are offered. The school's drive for individual achievement is evident in the way individual pupils talk about their own targets for improvement. Pupils with special educational needs believe their own efforts and those of the adults who support them can make a difference. They are eager to take up the opportunities the school offers them to improve their skills. Sessions to develop reading, the reading buddies system, are extremely well attended. For example, there are usually at least 15 learners and 15 buddies in every voluntary lunchtime session. Working in the special needs room is not seen as a stigma, pupils come to these sessions eagerly. The school is streamed in every year group and thus forms a class of the 15 or so pupils who find learning the most difficult. The pupils in these classes are well aware of their position in their year group and all believe they can improve and do better. The attitudes of other pupils to those with learning needs are positive; pupils help one another and there is no shame in being in a lower class. The productive relationships between pupils with special educational needs and the special needs department encourage pupils to strive for improvement and to believe that they can improve. The school counsellor often helps pupils talk about their concerns and difficulties and she skilfully uses this knowledge, with the permission of pupils, to provide the most appropriate learning support.

16. Pupils speaking English as an additional language play a full part in school life; they have extremely positive attitudes to school and do not see the fact that they are developing their skill in English as a barrier to their achievement.

17. Attitudes of pupils in the St. Mary's Room are generally very positive and help them learn. Constructive relationships have a good effect on the attitudes of pupils in the St. Mary's room. Pupils often start in the room feeling angry, unhappy and disaffected but the skilled, calm and persistent teaching soon takes effect so that pupils make an effort to work and learn.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

18. Overall, the quality of teaching in the school is very good. It has many strengths and few weaknesses. Teaching was satisfactory or better in 95 per cent of lessons seen, and in only five per cent was it less than satisfactory. Teaching was good or better in almost three-quarters of the lessons seen and in nearly a third it was judged to be very good or excellent. This overall picture represents an important improvement since the last inspection. Consistent, high quality teaching is a major strength and has been a key factor in the school's recent success in raising standards.

19. At Key Stage 4, teaching is at least good in the majority of lessons; it is even more effective in Key Stage 3, where there is a higher proportion of very good and excellent teaching – over one third. The quality of learning in lessons matches the quality of teaching and overall is very good. Progress is usually at least good at both key stages, and at Key Stage 3, learning is often very good or excellent.

20. Examples of highly effective teaching are evident in almost all subject areas, and it is consistently strong. The quality of teaching is generally less consistent in art, ICT and PSHE.

21. One of the key factors in securing very good pupil progress and raised attainment is the consistently high expectations of the teaching staff. This is now so embedded that there is almost an assumption that all pupils can and will achieve to the best of their ability, irrespective of the stream they are in, or their gender or ethnicity. This ethos of inclusion and achievement for all has a positive impact on both teaching and learning - pupils believe they can be taught and teachers believe that pupils can learn. The majority of pupils have a clear understanding of the standards they are achieving and what they need to do to make further progress. This explicit knowledge of levels and grades motivates pupils and supports them in the work they produce.
22. Lessons begin promptly and most develop with pace that is swift and purposeful. The skilful and effective management of pupils and the excellent use of time in lessons ensure that the pace of learning is very good and that pupils sustain their interest and concentrate for long periods of time. These strengths contribute to the positive attitudes and behaviour found in lessons. Teachers' subject knowledge is also very secure and is evident in planning, marking and in class discussions. Consequently, teachers are able to evaluate pupils' responses, challenge imprecise thinking and guide pupils to a clearer understanding of their work.
23. Much of the very good and excellent teaching is also characterised by teaching methods which are well-suited to the focus and demands of the lesson: for example, the use of challenging questions to extend pupils' thinking; imaginative resources to stimulate interest; judicious use of group work to enable pupils to share their learning; the effective use of teacher demonstrations to scaffold pupils' learning as a stage towards independence. In such lessons, progress is very good or excellent.
24. In one very effective Year 8 English lesson, pupils were making comparisons between two ballads they had recently studied. The pupils were supported in their writing through very focused activities in which they investigated various suitable connectives. The teacher's skilful planning, and the alignment of word and sentence level skills with whole-text work, ensured greater cohesion in pupils' writing and a more effective structure to the final pieces of work.
25. In a Year 9 French lesson where pupils were working on the theme 'La Maison,' the teacher used highly effective questioning techniques to elicit increasingly sophisticated responses from pupils. The imaginative use of resources, including audio tape and speech bubbles, engaged pupils in interesting, practical activities which, crucially, enabled them to extrapolate and crystallise key grammatical knowledge and skills.
26. The carefully selected teaching methodologies chosen in both of these lessons helped to accelerate pupils' learning and extend their understanding.
27. On the very few occasions when teaching is unsatisfactory, weak planning, or not fully implementing planning, results in vague learning objectives, a lack of a clear structure, and prolonged, unfocused activities. As a result, pupils do not fully understand what they are supposed to be doing or why they are doing it. Sometimes the work provided is insufficiently challenging and therefore pupils do not learn as well as they should. In other cases the range of activities is too limited.
28. Overall, the consistency of the good or better teaching significantly outweighs any weaknesses. However, there is a general need in the school for teachers to give pupils more opportunities to discuss their work in groups and reflect on what they have learnt, so that they can share ideas, challenge hypotheses and deepen their understanding. This is necessary in order to encourage pupils to think for themselves and develop as independent learners. This issue was a key area for development at the last inspection but, despite a range of good initiatives to support independence outside of the classroom, there is still little evidence of independent learning being practised within lessons.
29. In most subjects, support for pupils' literacy and numeracy development is satisfactory.

30. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language, often unsatisfactory at the last inspection, is now very good and sometimes excellent. Most teachers have a good understanding of how to make learning interesting and accessible, and employ a range of strategies to ensure that all pupils are included. This gives rise to very good progress relative to pupils' prior attainment. The progress made by gifted and talented pupils is good.

31. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is generally very good. The school's system of putting pupils into classes according to their ability mean that those with special educational needs are often in the lowest class. In many subjects these classes receive very good teaching and where this happens they make very good progress. The characteristics of lessons that are very effective in teaching pupils with special educational needs include:

- An established lesson pattern with consistent classroom routines;
- Ensuring pupils have a very clear understanding of what they will learn during the lesson;
- A quiet, warm but totally consistent approach to behaviour;
- Developing the pupils' self-esteem by using lots of deserved praise and giving rewards such as bonus points and stickers;
- Working in pairs and in small groups so that pupils can talk about their work before they write it down;
- Teaching basic skills as part of the lesson;
- Making pupils believe what they are learning in this lesson will contribute to their overall improvement and ultimate success.

32. The link between good teaching and pupils learning well is very strong in the school for those pupils who do have special educational needs. They are prepared to try and to work hard as they believe it is very important to do well. Given the encouragement of working in well-planned lessons where their learning is structured by the teacher, step by step, they learn well.

33. On the few occasions where the teaching of special educational needs pupils is less successful it is where the work was too easy or the reasons for the lesson and what they are to learn are not clear enough for any pupils. Occasionally teachers do not use a wide enough variety of approaches to help every pupil learn. For example, some pupils learn well by writing something down, some learn best by reading and others by discussing in small groups and many learn best by using a mixture of strategies.

34. Pupils learning English as an additional language are taught well in subject lessons. Teachers expect the most of pupils learning English and take care to ensure they understand the vocabulary they need. Teachers readily give extra time to pupils if they do not understand a particular topic. The success of pupils with English as an additional language is accepted in the school as normal. Learning to speak English as an additional language or being bilingual is not seen as a barrier to learning.

35. There are small group sessions where pupils in the earlier stage of learning English as an additional language are withdrawn from subject lessons. These sessions are not always as effective as they should be because the work pupils are given is too easy for them.

36. Teaching in the St. Mary's room is very calm and assured. For example, a pupil feeling cross and victimised because he was missing a French lesson took a long time to settle. The teachers in the room consistently and quietly focused him on his work and refused to enter into a debate about the unfairness of his situation or to allow him to bait one of the other pupils in the room. By focusing on the French work he was to do, the teacher ensured the pupil became appropriately involved, indeed the pupil asked whether the work set would be relevant for his exam!

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

37. Pupils at Sacred Heart experience a set of courses that meet their needs appropriately. Courses are relevant and the way pupils study different combinations of subjects depending on their prior attainment means that pupils benefit hugely from what the school offers. This is one of the reasons why standards at the end of Year 11 are high compared with similar schools and all pupils leave school with a qualification.

38. Broadly, pupils study an appropriate range of courses and opportunities but there are some weaknesses. In Years 10 and 11, for example, about 30 pupils are not following a design and technology course and the school cannot be sure that all pupils experience ICT or all the required aspects of personal, social and health education. Nevertheless, pupils still gain a worthwhile experience: there is room for improvement in the way some courses are organised but a great plus is that the school's arrangements ensure that all pupils, regardless of race, religion, capability or disability leave with something to show for their five years of study.

39. The school has responded to most of the weaknesses identified in the last inspection report: there are teaching schemes for some, but not all, PSHE (personal, social and health education) classes in Years 7 and 8. There is no taught programme in other year groups but aspects of personal, social and health education are dealt with in assemblies and through visiting speakers and visits: however, it is not clear who will study what and when. This includes some classes in Years 7 and 8 and all in Years 9,10 and 11. As a result the school cannot be sure that all pupils experience all the aspects of personal, social and health education that they should. This is not to say that what is planned is unsatisfactory. Broadly the plans are satisfactory but they are not being put into practice evenly and this means that the experiences of pupils do not always match the school's intentions.

40. The curriculum for Years 7, 8 and 9, permits sufficient coverage of the national curriculum in all subjects. The organisation of teaching groups is determined by ability and is having a positive impact on learning and achievement: this is because teaching is matched to pupils' needs and differing levels of attainment.

41. The curriculum for Year 10 and 11 is appropriately broad and allows pupils to choose a programme that suits their needs and their interests. However, not all pupils study design and technology and information and communication technology. All pupils in Year 10 undertake a two-week work experience during which they have the opportunity to experience at first hand the world of work. Similarly, all pupils have career interviews with professional career officers and Year 11 pupils organise the careers library which they staff once a week. The school has appropriate links with local sixth form college and with the community. Links with local businesses, through the Cross River Project, give pupils opportunities to visit firms in the City and begin to understand how they work.

42. Provision for extra-curricular activities is sound. Activities are mostly linked with schoolwork and help increase pupils' achievements in their subjects. Teachers give their help willingly to pupils who need it, before and after school or during lunch breaks, with work that they find difficult to complete during school time or at home. A number of after-school clubs also provide additional support in many subjects. Pupils practise music regularly and there are a number of bands. These activities clearly extend pupils' achievements in subjects and the quality of study support, and the provision of sport, is satisfactory. Nevertheless, opportunities for pupils to broaden their experiences in the areas outside of their school studies are more limited: only a small proportion of pupils attend the music and ICT clubs, for example.

43. Courses are organised very well to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs. They have a good range of learning opportunities some in class and some out. Apart from good teaching that ensures those with special educational needs receive good learning opportunities in class, there are other experiences offered to pupils. In the youngest year groups in the school

pupils have a good programme of literacy skill teaching classes. Extra spelling, reading, writing and comprehension lessons are given in Years 7 and 8. Short catch-up courses to teach reading and spelling, for example, take place where pupils are taken out of a number of subject lessons to attend small group sessions. Care is taken that pupils do not miss too much of one subject when they are withdrawn. The effectiveness of the small group skill sessions justifies missing a few lessons, as when they return to subjects they are much better able to work alongside their peers.

44. Reading buddy sessions take place every lunch hour to help pupils improve their reading skills and homework classes are offered by the special educational needs department throughout the week. Pupils can book their own appointments with the school counsellor and she can often pick up a special educational need learning issue and provide appropriate learning opportunities.

45. In the St. Mary's room teachers take every care to see pupils are working within the subject they are missing and so they get access to the full curriculum.

46. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. The school has created an ethos within which all pupils can grow and flourish, showing respect for others and knowing that they will be respected. There is a strong sense in the school that every individual matters. Pupils show that they care about the needs of others and are active in raising money for charities. They are encouraged to be self-reflective, for example, in assembly when Year 11 pupils who had been on a retreat shared their feelings and experiences with lower school pupils. In some lessons there are opportunities for pupils to respond with a sense of awe, as in a science lesson on static electricity when pupils observed jets of water deflected with charged rods. In one science lesson a poem was used effectively to set the context for work on the refraction of light.

47. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good, and very strongly and consistently supported across the school. The school teaches values which underpin its ethos/life. These values are consistent and embedded. A clear moral code provides the basis for behaviour. In English lessons, teachers use the texts being studied to prompt discussions on social responsibility and moral issues. The school promotes racial and other forms of equality effectively. Pupils are confident that bullying or racism are not acceptable in the school and these issues are tackled very effectively through workshops and mediation. The adult/adult and adult /pupil relationships and interactions provide good models for pupils. The school celebrates individuality of culture and language and encourages respect for difference. This was demonstrated very well in a Year 7 assembly when pupils made presentations in their first language, sharing some of the traditions from their cultural backgrounds. Pupils are encouraged to take on roles of responsibility in the school. Pupils understand and can explain reasons for sanctions, using very mature, reasoned arguments. Behaviour out of school in the street and on buses was seen to be very good.

48. Provision for pupils' social development is also very good. Their social skills are very good indeed, they are warm and welcoming and often go out of their way to be helpful. They participate in activities linked to the community, organising tea dances for local retired people, for example. They work well together in groups, in music lessons for example, showing good co-operation.

49. Provision for cultural development is good. School is very strong on recognising and nurturing particular gifts and talents, through the provision for gifted and talented pupils, for example. They have shown that they face up to racism and value race equality.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

50. The school's procedures for ensuring pupils' support and welfare are very good, consistently followed by all staff and have a positive effect on the progress that pupils make. The teaching and support staff know the pupils very well and have their well-being uppermost in their minds at all times. Pupils' relationships with teachers are open and trusting. They are happy, feel safe and secure, and there is good evidence to show that most benefit from the education provided by the Sacred Heart School. There are two designated members of staff for child protection issues

and there are clear associated procedures that meet statutory requirements. The school is vigilant and sensitive in exercising its responsibilities. The pastoral support team of five heads of year, form tutors and support staff quickly identify those pupils experiencing difficulties and work effectively to agree and implement support programmes.

51. There are clear procedures to ensure pupils' health and safety and the school is conscientious in ensuring that health risks are quickly eliminated and that the buildings and site are safe for pupils. The member of staff with responsibility for health and safety has received appropriate training and has a good understanding of his responsibilities. He oversees the risk assessments that are carried out by other staff in all areas of the school, following up any action that may be needed. The teachers make pupils aware of health and safety during lessons such as science, physical education and personal and social education. There are regular evacuation practices and appropriate records are kept of independent fire prevention and electrical equipment inspections. First aid supplies are around the site and staff, approved to give first aid, hold up-to-date accreditation. In lessons observed during the inspection very good care was taken to ensure pupils' safety.

52. During the last two years the school has put in place highly effective procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance, which has resulted in a significant improvement in the school's attendance record being made. By 9.30 a.m. the school is aware of the pupils who are not in school, and their homes are contacted to ascertain the reason for the absence. Patterns of attendance are monitored and analysed by year group, by form group and by individual pupil. The school works hard to promote good attendance by constantly encouraging pupils to be in school, by discouraging holidays in term time and by the award of certificates and public displays of attendance records.

53. The pastoral database includes extensive and detailed information relating to individual pupils' behaviour. Comprehensive details of the reward schemes, which are highly valued by pupils, are maintained alongside details of all sanctions imposed. The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour are very good and highly effective.

54. The school has good systems for the frequent review, monitoring and support of pupils' personal development. Year teams remain constant throughout the pupils' time at the school and this continuity helps to ensure that members of staff get to know their pupils very well. Pupils readily take up the many opportunities there are for taking on responsibility positions. A good example of this is the peer mediators' scheme. In this scheme, pupils, after training by the school counsellor, are very effective in mediating between pupils and giving advice to fellow pupils on how problems can be overcome. The form tutor works very closely with the head of year and there are very good links with other members of staff including the highly effective school counsellor. Pupils are very sure about what sort of behaviour is, or is not, acceptable. Pupils and parents report that bullying in the school is rare, and if it does occur then it is dealt with very effectively. At the time of the inspection workshops relating to bullying were observed and they were judged to be very useful in helping pupils to discuss, openly, the problems which they may confront regarding bullying, and to consider strategies on how to deal with it.

55. Following comments in the last report the school has introduced a new system for assessing and monitoring pupils' academic performance. This has resulted in a wealth of high quality information that enables individual and group progress to be measured. National test results, end of unit tests and termly assessments linked with consistent marking enable subject teachers to know accurately the level of attainment and the rate of progress. Assessment data is used to move pupils between sets, and to provide valuable information that is shared with parents when they are invited to attend an individual interview with the pupils' tutor to discuss progress and to agree targets. The use of assessment data to inform lesson planning and teaching varies by subject but it is generally good.

56. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in learning opportunities. They are well known by teachers and by the team of special educational needs staff who inspire confidence

and urge them to succeed. The monitoring of academic performance and personal development of pupils with special educational needs is very good. Their progress is monitored closely through frequent testing, which shows clearly how pupils are thriving.

57. Since the last inspection very significant progress has been made in improving the quality of care that the school takes for its pupils, and there is little doubt that this has, in part, helped to bring about the improvement in pupils' attainment that has occurred.

58. Special educational needs pupils are supported well. Procedures are followed appropriately and reviews are up to date. Pupils with statements of special needs are receiving the education recommended in their statements with the exception of those requiring support from speech therapists. The shortage of speech therapists locally has, reportedly, meant that the local authority has been unable to provide this support. Whilst pupils with special needs are occasionally withdrawn from subject lessons for special literacy lessons this helps them get full benefit from the full range of curriculum opportunities they are offered. Support staff work effectively in classes. They are sometimes working with identified individuals with statements and sometimes working with others with learning needs.

59. Form tutors diligently monitor the progress of pupils with special educational needs and those who are learning to speak English. Attendance and behaviour are carefully monitored to check that pupils achieve their very best. If pupils with a special need are not making the progress they should they are quickly offered counselling and advice if appropriate.

Assessment of special educational needs

60. The assessment of pupils with special educational needs is very thorough. Teachers from the learning support department visit pupils identified with special educational needs in their primary schools where possible. During the first half of the autumn term the learning support department works with teachers to identify the learning needs of the new Year 7 pupils. Special needs teachers spend some of this time assessing pupils by observing how they work in class.

61. Individual education plans are written for pupils who are on Stages 2 to 5. These plans have three carefully chosen targets which pupils are well aware of, work towards and which are regularly updated. Formal assessment is regular and ongoing, for example, reading, spelling and comprehension tests are carried out twice a year to check on the progress of pupils with learning needs. The results of tests are looked at carefully and future support for pupils planned according to need. All members of the learning support department assess pupils carefully and work together and with parents and other teachers to find imaginative ways to help every individual make progress. They do not give up on an individual but try to find solutions.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

62. The school's partnership with parents is a significant feature of the school, particularly in terms of the standards achieved. A large percentage of parents responded to the questionnaire and this in itself is a reflection of the level of interest that parents take in the school and their child's education. The views expressed at the meeting for parents prior to the inspection and in response to the questionnaire were extremely supportive. Parents feel that the school is well led and managed, that teaching is good and that their children are well supported. They feel that the school has improved significantly with higher standards and improved standards of behaviour. Parents feel comfortable in approaching the school and appreciated that when they raised a concern they received a quick response. The partnership between school and home is felt to have developed. Two concerns were raised which related to the problem of space around the school and the range of after-school activities.

63. The school keeps parents informed about day-to-day activities at the school through its weekly newsletter. The focus of much of the information for parents is on keeping them informed about timings of examinations and important dates relating to coursework. Detailed information is

also provided about how to revise and prepare for exams. The school gives a very clear message that a child's success is dependent on the parents, pupils and school working together. Parents have responded well and are very supportive in the school's drive to raise standards; they are keen to support the school when necessary in disciplining their children and most regularly check and sign the homework diaries. The school keeps parents very well informed about their child's progress; reports are informative with details of levels of attainment, comparisons with class averages and targets for improvement. In addition to the written annual report, the target meetings provide a good forum for parents to keep aware of their child's progress and to support the school and child. These annual meetings are appreciated by parents. The statutory information the school provides is somewhat brief and the governors' annual report to parents does not contain all statutory information.

64. At the time of the last inspection the partnership with parents was good but there was a question over how strong it was. The partnership is now very strong and pupils are aware that parents have an important part to play. Indeed, in assembly one boy returning to school said that the reason he decided to change his attitude and start working harder was "the look on my parents' faces."

65. Whilst parents are not very involved in helping with their child's homework they are supportive of the drive for success that the school promotes. The school does not formally seek parents' views but there is a true 'open door policy'. Parents were observed being able and comfortable to come into school to discuss their child's behaviour and to seek agreement about the next steps forward.

66. Overall, the school works very well with parents to improve standards and to promote a caring and supportive environment in which each individual is valued and respected.

67. The special needs department values its strong partnership with parents and sees it as a vital element in helping pupils progress. Parents' meetings are held to welcome parents whose children will be receiving special support and to let them know the way the partnership with parents is to work.

68. The partnership with parents is equally important to the school for pupils with special educational needs, those using the St. Mary's room and those who are learning to speak English as an additional language. Pupils are also very keen to please their parents and know that they and their teachers discuss their progress. Parents are asked to come into school to discuss any significant issues that arise so that the teachers can learn from the parents and devise a common approach for improvement.

69. Parents attend annual reviews and their views are respected and taken into account when devising targets and support. Pupils with special educational needs are given many opportunities to do well and parents are regularly informed of their children's achievements in a variety of ways including commendations in their homework diaries.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

70. Leadership is excellent. It is strong, focused, coherent and committed to pupils and to pupil achievement and has a very positive impact on teaching, learning and standards. Management is good. It is efficient and effective and supports the drive for high standards in all aspects of school life.

71. The headteacher and influential deputy provide excellent leadership. They are very well supported by a dedicated and effective senior management team and heads of department. Very good teamwork, a shared commitment to success and a strong lead from the governing body have brought about excellent improvement since the last inspection. This excellent leadership has established high expectations of achievement and standards in the school. It has managed to establish a climate of "no excuses" whilst maintaining a very positive, supportive and committed

atmosphere. This has led to excellent relationships, outstanding pupil attitudes, where pupils give of their best and strive to do better, and high expectations from all staff.

72. Overall, governors fulfil their responsibilities well. They have set very challenging targets and led the drive for higher standards. They instituted the push for clear action planning related to closely monitored targets after the last inspection. Their grasp of strengths and weaknesses is satisfactory. They ensure most statutory requirements are met but there are some minor issues which need to be addressed in relation to all requirements for the prospectus and ensuring that curriculum provision meets all requirements.

73. Management responsibilities are now clear and individual skills have been very effectively deployed; senior staff have a strong presence in the school and are known and respected by pupils. Their presence and interactions with pupils serve as a constant reminder of the value the school places on harmonious, inclusive relationships. Parents think highly of the leadership and management of the school.

74. The school rigorously monitors and evaluates its performance and acts on its findings. Its initial focus, after the last inspection, was to raise the quality of provision in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. This it has successfully achieved. It is now working to raise the quality of provision in all other areas and has made significant progress in most areas. The quality of departmental management is generally good although it does not yet ensure consistency of provision in ICT and art. Improving the quality of teaching and learning has been a priority, and a comprehensive programme of classroom observations has been put in place to help bring this about.

75. The school development plan is in an unusual format, but it sets out clearly the aims, objectives and context of where the school needs to improve. This is supported by departmental development plans which generally benefit from clear targets. Progress is evaluated by line managers according to agreed systems, although there is still room to improve the consistency of practice. A developed tracking system enables teachers, tutors, and year heads to set appropriate targets for pupils, which are effectively shared with parents. This has a very positive impact on progress and attainment.

76. Financial planning and administration is very good. The employment of a bursar has led to efficient and effective financial systems which provide good quality information to the school and which has allowed other senior managers to make better use of their time by concentrating on other aspects of leadership and management. Administration is efficient and helpful, freeing up teacher time to concentrate on improving the quality of lessons. It is well organised and constructed and includes an effective data manager to provide information to staff. Systems for staff development are sound. The school receives significant extra funding from the Excellence in Cities initiative. It makes considered and effective use of this funding to promote inclusion and standards. Initiatives include very good provision for gifted and talented pupils, provision of a valued and effective counselling service, and the provision of an inclusion and reintegration unit, St. Mary's Room.

77. The school's provision for the pupils identified as gifted and talented is very good. The school has a clear and helpful policy. There is balance between increased challenge in the classroom and extra-curricular enrichment opportunities such as ICT classes. Every department has a policy which sets out clearly how pupils will be extended in each subject. There are agreed methods for identifying the most able pupils. All subjects have set targets for gifted and talented pupils from Years 7-11. There is good evidence of effective monitoring of classroom provision by the gifted and talented co ordinator. Performance data relating to the gifted and talented cohort is analysed and the information used to set targets. Pupils are expected to collate portfolios of excellence. Parents are involved in the identification process and are positive about the quality of support which the school provides.

78. The school is fully staffed with suitably qualified and experienced teachers in all subjects. Procedures for inducting newly qualified teachers and other teachers new to the school are clear and effective.

79. Accommodation is just adequate but there are clear weaknesses. The playing fields are situated at a considerable distance from the school which means that much time is spent in traveling rather than in productive activity. A number of lessons such as mathematics and geography have to be timetabled in science laboratories, which are not suitable for other subjects. This has a negative impact on learning. Accommodation in music is cramped with limited space for rehearsals, performances and group work. Space for instrumental teaching is also restricted. The size of design and technology rooms is very restrictive. Available outdoor space is very restricted. The premises are well maintained by dedicated school-keeping staff and pupils treat the accommodation with respect. However, a significant portion of the school would benefit from redecoration and refurbishment.

80. Resources for learning are satisfactory in quality and range, but there are some gaps in terms of newer equipment in design and technology and pupils would benefit from a broader range of resources and better access to ICT.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

1. Maintain the very considerable strengths described in this report;
2. Raise standards in ICT and art by:
 - raising the overall quality of teaching;
 - improving the monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning;
 - ensuring consistent implementation of schemes of work;
 - reviewing the impact of timetabling arrangements for both subjects.
(paragraphs 2; 38; 74; 127 – 134; 164 – 171)
3. Increase the independence and autonomy of pupils by:
 - providing greater opportunities for pupils to reflect on and deepen their understanding of issues;
 - considering an increase in the opportunities for extended group and paired work;
 - developing pupils' ability to investigate issues and test hypotheses against clear criteria, with others and individually.
(paragraphs 18 – 36; 81; 92; 93; 115; 121; 146; 148; 178)
4. Continue to explore ways of improving the match of accommodation to need.
(paragraphs 79; 103; 114)

Other issues which the school should consider

- Review current procedures in relation to statutory requirements for the curriculum and publication of information.
(paragraphs 38; 39; 41; 63; 72)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	148
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	31

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	8	34	59	38	9	0	0
Percentage	5	23	40	26	3	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	635
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	334

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	17
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	195

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	341

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	18

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	5.2
National comparative data	8.1

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.7
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)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	55	58	113

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	32	26	30
	Girls	45	39	41
	Total	77	65	71
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	68 (51)	58 (63)	63 (52)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	33 (21)	35 (38)	37 (21)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	34 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	36	29	28
	Girls	48	44	37
	Total	84	73	65
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	74 (65)	65 (62)	58 (69)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	35 (37)	35 (36)	30 (46)
	National	31 (31)	42 (39)	33 (29)

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
	2001	49	59	108

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	29	47	48
	Girls	37	57	57
	Total	66	104	105
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	63 (48)	96 (88)	97 (100)
	National	48 (47)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	39.7
	National	39.0

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	0	n/a
	National		n/a

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	143
Black – African heritage	205
Black – other	8
Indian	5
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	10
White	243
Any other minority ethnic group	0

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	5	0
Black – African heritage	3	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	2	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	38.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.6

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	199

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	73.2
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 2	
Key Stage 3	41.7
Key Stage 4	39.4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	2,306,665
Total expenditure	2,242,162
Expenditure per pupil	3,707
Balance brought forward from previous year	45,250
Balance carried forward to next year	109,753

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	9

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	635
Number of questionnaires returned	463

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	29	3	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	60	36	3	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	64	30	3	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	58	34	7	1	1
The teaching is good.	74	24	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	70	24	4	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	75	21	2	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	9	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	65	30	2	1	2
The school is well led and managed.	76	21	1	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	67	30	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	49	35	8	2	6

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

ENGLISH

81. Overall, the quality of provision in English is **very good**.

Strengths:

- the high quality teaching, which helps to motivate pupils and ensure that rapid progress is made;
- the positive response and attitudes of the pupils to English lessons, which are consistently good and often very good;
- the leadership and management of the department, which gives clear direction to the work of the team and promotes high standards.

Areas for improvement:

- provide more opportunities for pupils to discuss their work in groups and reflect on what they have learnt, so that they can share ideas, challenge hypotheses and articulate their understanding. This is necessary in order to encourage pupils to think for themselves and develop as independent learners;
- ensure that word and sentence level skills are taught more systematically in all classrooms and that they impact upon pupils' own extended writing;
- ensure that there is appropriate provision for pupils to develop their literacy through the use of ICT.

82. Standards in English are in line with the national average at Key Stage 3 and above average at Key Stage 4. Pupils make good progress during their time at school as a result of focused teaching and consistently high expectations. The progress of pupils for whom English is an additional language is also good, whilst pupils with special educational needs make very good progress.

83. In 2001, attainment in the Key Stage 3 national tests was in line with the national average but well above the performance of similar schools. Standards have improved significantly since the last inspection, with more than twice as many pupils now reaching the expected levels. There has also been a marked increase in the number of pupils reaching Level 6 or above, with a third of all pupils now attaining the higher levels, compared with just 1 per cent at the last inspection. At GCSE, the percentage of pupils achieving grades A*-C in English in 2001 was well above the national average and very high in comparison to similar schools. This again represents very good progress since the last inspection when standards were significantly below the national average. In English literature, results have also improved dramatically and are now well above average.

84. In speaking and listening most pupils are willing to share their opinions and show respect for the views of others. As pupils move through the school, they learn to vary their expression and vocabulary to suit different situations, audiences and purposes, and the use of standard spoken English generally develops well. Many pupils of all abilities are able to offer extended oral responses when given the opportunity to do so. Pupils listen very well to the teachers and to each other and whole-class discussion work is co-operative and orderly.

85. In reading at Key Stage 3, pupils are able to offer a personal response to what they have read and can recognise general features of texts such as plot, character and major themes. Pupils are introduced to a wide range of fiction and non-fiction, though written responses to texts tend to focus on summarising the content of their reading at the expense of critical analysis and evaluation. The department's Reading Award Scheme provides good encouragement for independent reading and the Reading Buddies scheme is effective in supporting the reading of less confident pupils. At Key Stage 4, the skills of inference and deduction develop more swiftly as a result of a rigorous

GCSE curriculum and regular opportunities for close textual analysis. Higher attaining pupils can identify authors' techniques and evaluate the impact on the reader, but this is not so evident in the work of middle and lower attaining pupils. The routine use of specialist literary terms to aid analysis is under-developed; consequently, many pupils lack the language to express fully their appreciation and understanding of texts.

86. Standards in writing have improved significantly since the last inspection. Most pupils at both key stages are able to write at length and they become more confident in structuring and sustaining extended pieces of writing as they progress through the school. Higher attaining pupils make effective use of wide and varied vocabulary, though spelling and punctuation errors persist at all levels of ability. Most pupils write with considerable commitment and show pride in their work. Presentation is generally good. A wide range of genres is practised, for various audiences and purposes. There is a significant proportion of middle and lower attaining pupils, however, who lack an explicit understanding of the features and conventions of different types of text, and this occasionally leads to writing which uses language in an inappropriate way. A recent focus on these skills is now beginning to have an impact.

87. Overall, the quality of teaching is good, and it is frequently very good or excellent. The teaching seen during the inspection was always at least satisfactory, with half of all lessons seen judged to be good and nearly a quarter very good or excellent. At Key Stage 4, almost all teaching was good and it was even more effective at Key Stage 3, with a third of all teaching judged to be very good or excellent.

88. English teachers are committed and hard-working. Subject knowledge is impressive and planning is thorough. Expectations within the department are almost always very high and there is a strong ethos that assumes that all pupils can and will achieve to the best of their ability - a clear example being the very good progress made by pupils with special educational needs. All teachers ensure that pupils understand exactly what standard of performance is required to achieve the various levels and this, aligned to the strong culture of achievement for all, has been a significant factor in the raising of standards.

89. The most effective marking in English is thorough, encouraging and sets targets to help pupils to understand how well they have achieved and what they need to do to improve further.

90. Homework is generally well used as a means of consolidating and extending learning.

91. The best teaching is characterised by a purposeful, lively pace, careful planning for a range of interactive tasks, and quiet but effective behavioural management. Good teacher modelling of writing, and teaching sequences that support and scaffold pupils' learning, are also features of many of the very good or excellent lessons. This was evident in a highly effective Year 7 lesson where the pupils learned the key features of script-writing and joined in as the teacher demonstrated composition, before finally writing independently. In a very good Year 8 lesson, pupils were making comparisons between two ballads they had recently studied. The pupils were supported in their writing through focused activities in which they investigated various suitable connectives. The teacher's skilful planning, and the alignment of word and sentence level skills with whole-text work, ensured greater cohesion in pupils' writing and a more effective structure to the final pieces of work. In both of these examples, the work of the pupils was enhanced considerably by the skilful teaching methods chosen.

92. In the very few cases where teaching is less effective, lessons are too teacher-dominated, resulting in pupils becoming over-dependent on the teacher and having too few opportunities to use speaking and listening as a vehicle for investigating, evaluating or testing hypotheses.

93. Overall, too much talk consists of brief responses to teacher-led questioning and there is a need to develop greater pupil interaction. There is also a general need to ensure greater rigour in the explicit teaching of word and sentence level skills.

94. Pupils' response to English is always at least good and frequently very good. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils in English are linked directly to the quality of the teaching and the general ethos of the school which encourages hard work, respect for others and achievement for all. Behaviour is very good and pupils respond positively to challenging work and high expectations.

95. Curriculum opportunities overall are good. A core curriculum is followed by all staff and this engenders a common sense of purpose and allows for the effective sharing of resources. The schemes of work at Key Stage 3 have recently been re-written to incorporate the objectives from the Key Stage 3 Strategy. This has sharpened the focus of the curriculum though there is a need to build in to the scheme's details of the expected outcomes for different groups of pupils. There are also insufficient opportunities for pupils to extend their literacy through the use of ICT, particularly at Key Stage 3. Overall, assessment runs smoothly and there is very good analysis of pupil data in order to focus on future progress.

96. The department has made very good progress since the last inspection. Attainment has improved dramatically and there is now a smaller difference between the performance of boys and girls than is found nationally. Schemes of work have clearer lines of progression and continuity, and the departmental handbook is now detailed and supportive. There is guaranteed access to a range of pre-twentieth century texts, though provision for ICT and opportunities for group talk and pupil autonomy are still areas for development.

97. The English department is very well led and managed by a head of department who leads by example and sets a clear direction for the work of the team. There has been an explicit focus on raising attainment for all groups of pupils, and this has had considerable impact in helping to improve examination and test results. Policies and procedures are detailed and promote high standards and the department is self-evaluating and reflective. New members of staff are well supported. Overall, because of consistently good teaching, positive pupil attitudes and clear, strong leadership, the department is well placed to make further progress.

98. The school's plans for developing literacy across the curriculum are sound. Most departments in the school plan for literacy in their schemes of work and training has taken place on supporting writing. Further training is also planned. The school has run successful Summer Literacy Schools for a number of years and the Reading Buddies scheme is well-established and effective in supporting lower attaining readers. Pupils transferring to the school who are below expectations are given an additional lesson per week in Year 7 with an explicit focus on developing literacy skills. The school has adopted a flexible approach to the Key Stage 3 Strategy catch-up units and it will be necessary to ensure that the effectiveness of the school's model is fully monitored and its impact on pupil progress evaluated.

99. Individual examples of helpful literacy support outside of English were found in the following subjects: modern foreign languages (good development of phoneme/grapheme skills); history (careful marking offering advice about planning, paragraphing and use of capital letters); geography (support for planning writing); PE (consistent use of specialist subject vocabulary); science (encouraging precision in oral and written expression); design technology (correcting spelling, class discussions and use of key words).

100. There are displays of key words in many classrooms and a number of teachers use planning frames to support writing. Despite this, provision is not consistent across the school nor even within departments, and there are generally too few opportunities for pupils to learn through talk. This is an area for further training and development.

DRAMA

101. Standards in drama are average at Key Stage 3 and above average by the end of Key Stage 4. GCSE results in 2001 were well above average. Teaching overall is satisfactory, though good teaching was seen in a Year 10 GCSE class. Here, good relationships, well-structured activities and energetic and committed teaching ensured that pupils stayed in role and felt confident

about experimenting with freeze-frames and multiple roles. In this lesson, progress was swift. At Key Stage 3, pupil management and classroom organisation are less secure and consequently some activities are less productive, with pupils unable to sustain a character or having difficulty achieving the intended effects.

102. The department is led by a newly qualified teacher who is energetic and passionate about drama. He has further developed schemes of work for the department and, with support, will be able to raise the profile of drama within the school.

MATHEMATICS

103. Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is **very good**.

- Strengths
- The very good teaching in the mathematics department leads to pupils' very good learning.
- The relationships between the teachers and the pupils are very good.
- Teachers are committed to their pupils and expect nothing but total commitment from them.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning mathematics are very positive and behaviour in most lessons is very good.
- Pupils clearly enjoy mathematics and make good progress.

- Areas for improvement
- Make greater use of mathematical apparatus, particularly for mental and oral mathematics.
- Ensure that the whole-school policy on mathematics across the curriculum gives pupils the opportunity to apply their mathematical skills in other areas of the curriculum.
- Ensure that all mathematics lessons are taught in suitable classrooms.

104. Standards in mathematics are good by the time pupils leave school at the end of Year 11. The 2001 GCSE results in mathematics are above national averages. All pupils were entered for GCSE last year and all gained a graded pass. The proportion of the year achieving the higher grades A*-C was well above national averages. A greater proportion of boys achieved the higher grades last year, although this is unusual. Progress from the end of Year 9 to GCSE was very good. Pupils who had achieved low levels in their national tests in Year 9 achieved well above expectations in their GCSEs in 2001.

105. In the national tests at the end of Year 9 pupils' achievements are well above average, when compared with similar schools, and broadly in line when compared to all schools. Results in the national tests and in GCSE are much improved since the last inspection.

106. Standards in lessons confirm the national test and examination results. Pupils make very good progress from the beginning of Year 7 to the end of Year 9. They also make very good progress from when they take the national tests at the end of Year 9 to their GCSE. In the many lessons where the teaching is very good, pupils make very good progress. Pupils present their work well in their exercise books and produce a great deal of work in the time available in lessons and for homework.

107. In a higher set Year 7, pupils are able to enlarge, reflect, translate and rotate shapes with clear understanding. In lower sets pupils are learning how to perform simple calculations using decimals, starting from learning how to calculate using money. Good use is made of plastic money and counters to help pupils with their counting. Pupils in top set Year 9 have made very good progress since they came into school two and a half years ago. Pupils understand and can manipulate trigonometrical ratios, and can even use the inverse of sine or cosine using their calculators, which is well above expectations at that age. Pupils in this lesson were very well motivated to succeed. Pupils in the lowest set in Year 9 are able to find the probability of an event occurring, such as the probability of picking a green ball from a bag of mixed coloured ball, when

given how many ball there are altogether. Pupils in the top set in Year 11 have a good understanding of algebra and how it can be used to find the generalised term in a sequence of numbers. Pupils' progress made in individual lessons and during the year is a tribute to their teachers, who show patience and understanding as well as rigour and high standards of commitment and behaviour.

108. The quality of teaching is very good overall. In all lessons the quality of teaching is at least satisfactory and teaching is very good or excellent in approximately two in every three lessons.

109. The great strength in teaching is the very good relationships that teachers form with the pupils and the respect shown by the teachers to the pupils and by the pupils to the teachers. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they present the work to the pupils very well, which supports pupils well in learning mathematics. Teachers plan their lessons well and are using the National Numeracy Strategy of the three-part lesson to keep pupils' interest and to ensure pupils are aware of the objectives of the lesson. At the end of the lesson, teachers recap with pupils what has been learnt. This helps pupils to retain what has been learnt and to clarify any misunderstanding before tackling their homework.

110. Teachers have high expectations for pupils' behaviour, and for all pupils' progress. Teachers are convinced that all pupils can learn and are committed to all of them learning. Pupils respond well to this and their confidence grows in their ability to succeed. Teachers pace their lessons very well, expecting pupils to start the lessons quickly and to work throughout the lesson. Good records of pupils' progress help pupils to know how well they are doing. Teachers give freely of their time to support pupils who need some extra help with a piece of work. Teachers set homework regularly and expect pupils to co-operate and return work to them on time. The homework is used well as an extension to their class work and consolidates and challenges pupils well. Teachers challenge pupils appropriately and pupils always respond positively. Teachers question pupils and expect them to think, and so insist that no one shouts out an answer. Pupils' interest and concentration in lessons is very good. However, there was insufficient evidence seen of pupils becoming independent learners.

111. The support staff, seen in some classes, enhance the quality of teaching. In some classrooms they contribute a great deal to the lesson, but this is not so in all classes. Insufficient use of apparatus was seen in a number of lessons, particularly apparatus associated with mental and oral mathematics, and no evidence of information technology work was seen, although it is carried out, as seen from the schemes of work.

112. Pupils' attitude to their work is very good in mathematics. Pupils enjoy their lessons and the challenging work they are set. Pupils concentrate well in lessons, usually willingly answer questions posed by the teacher, and sometimes, even groan when the bell goes too early for their liking. Pupils' very positive attitudes to their lessons support their learning well. Pupils who might begin to misbehave or do not hand in homework are threatened with having the privilege of extra lessons after school denied to them. Teachers model good behaviour and treat pupils with a great deal of respect. In turn, pupils copy this good behaviour.

113. The mathematics curriculum contributes to pupils' information and communication technology education in Years 8 and in Years 10 and 11. There is a successful summer school for pupils transferring to the school the following September, which is specifically for pupils who have not reached the national expectation of Level 4 by the end of Year 6. These pupils also receive "catch-up classes" in Year 7. Pupils who are gifted in mathematics receive extra opportunities to extend their learning. There are after-school revision classes for pupils who will be taking national tests at the end of the year, namely Year 9, and GCSE classes for Year 11.

114. The quality of leadership in the department is good. The head of department monitors pupils' progress and the quality of teaching regularly. The department is well staffed at present, and this has a very positive influence on the quality of pupils' learning. Accommodation for the four full-time teachers is good in four suited rooms. However, where five teachers are teaching

simultaneously, some of the rooms in which mathematics is taught are not suitable and affects pupils' learning adversely. There is a need for all mathematics lessons to be taught in suitable classrooms.

SCIENCE

115. Overall, the quality of provision in science is **good**.

Strengths

- Pupils have very good attitudes to their work.
- Good planning with clear objectives underpins work in the subject.
- Very thorough analysis of test data which is used to set pupils' targets.
- Teaching is good: science teachers have thorough knowledge and sound expertise.
- Sharing the school ethos of high standards in work, attitude and behaviour.

Areas for improvement

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to explore their own ideas through investigation.
- Improve marking strategies so that marking is more closely linked to achievement and more helpful in showing pupils how to improve.
- Develop strategies that will support pupils' ability to structure a scientific investigation.

116. The quality of provision for science is good because there is a clear vision of what standards the department is trying to attain. Performance in national tests at the age of 14 is broadly in line with national averages and there has been a varying but generally upward trend in the last four years. The performance at GCSE is even better. The school is achieving higher than the national average for all schools and standards are very high when compared to similar schools. The standard of work seen during the inspection and the test performance data, both internal and external, confirm that standards are at least being maintained and in some areas are improving. The department is analysing pupil performance in internally and externally set module examinations and is taking steps to address any under-performance. The results show that for the next two years attainment at GCSE should continue at this high level.

117. This is also confirmed by evidence from lessons: the pupils are continually set challenging work related to their differing abilities. The pupils are achieving satisfactorily and there is evidence that they develop their knowledge and understanding as they move through each year. This is mainly because the broadly good teaching is effective in helping pupils improve their science skills and knowledge. In a Year 7 lesson, for example, the teacher extended the pupil's knowledge of circuit symbols, in a Year 8 lesson the teacher used a range of strategies to develop children's thinking about sedimentation in rocks and soil formation and in Year 9 a low ability group were being challenged to give explanations for the effect of white and coloured light on coloured objects. The pupils were well motivated, and were clear about what was expected. A particularly strong aspect of each of these lessons, and pupils' learning, was the way pupils worked by themselves without having to ask for help. This allowed the teacher to develop the learning during the lesson and give support where it was needed.

118. Teaching in all the lessons observed was at least satisfactory, and very often good or better (86 per cent). All teachers have firm subject expertise and competence in teaching science. They have very clear targets for each lesson which showed strong elements of continuity and progression from the previous lesson. This meant that all pupils worked hard during the lesson, and thus achieved appropriately and made good progress.

119. Another significant aspect of the teaching is the relationship between teachers and pupils. The teachers expect high standards of behaviour but not at the expense of a considerable amount of humour and fun. In many lessons the teacher's good relationships and sensitivity helped to guide pupils effectively and maintain good behaviour. Praise is used judiciously. This was observed in a low ability Year 11 group investigating the resistance of wires. There was no disaffection shown by

any of the pupils; they worked steadily throughout the lesson according to their own ability and the teacher was able to deal with any difficulties in a calm assured manner. Although banded by ability the pupils are not disaffected and where the teaching is good there were no behavioural problems in the lower groups.

120. The teachers are very effective in getting the most out of their pupils. In a good Year 7 lesson the children used their knowledge from the previous lesson about indicators to develop their knowledge of the pH scale and strong and weak acids. This is also a strong feature of lessons in Years 10 and 11. In an excellent Year 11 lesson about genetics the teacher had a clear logical plan of how to develop the children's understanding, a range of appropriate strategies which would support this and a clear task within the lesson that was shared with the pupils. All the pupils knew exactly what they had to do and did it. Very high expectations of both behaviour and learning meant that pupils were stretched by the work. Good relationships, giving pupils a limited time to complete their work, challenging questions and a very good knowledge of each pupil's particular strengths and weaknesses all helped to push learning forward effectively. Pupils learnt and behaved well, applied lots of effort to their work and made good progress as a result. These features were found in many lessons.

121. The quality of questioning of pupils was variable. Questioning was less good where it relied solely on short factual recall answers. It was better where it was used to consolidate learning and focus the children on the current topic; then more open questioning allowed the pupils time to explore more deeply their own ideas. Progress could then be assessed by the teacher. Similarly, pupils are not always encouraged enough to develop the ability to structure scientific investigations for themselves. This would provide better opportunities to explore their own ideas through investigation.

122. There are high standards of behaviour because the department not only shares, but strongly supports through its actions, the school ethos of hard work and high standards of behaviour and attainment. The teachers explore every avenue to support pupil attainment. The comprehensive and rigorous use of test data supports each teacher in striving to set the highest standards for all pupils.

123. There is some evidence that information and communication technology is being used in science. Pupils were able to produce presentations using a slide show programme and there was evidence of data logging taking place. There are too few computers in the department and use of ICT is limited and this is restricting the pupils' understanding of the value of ICT in science. However, the department recognises the need to go further.

124. Marking of written work in most cases is not very thorough. It uses the school grading system but does not offer pupils advice on how they can improve their work and make progress. Generally teachers set appropriate homework. The best example was in a Year 8 lesson on soil types, where the homework involved further research that reinforced and developed the work activities from the lesson.

125. The department is well managed; the schemes of work and planned curriculum for all years supports the teachers in their planning and is under systematic review. Resources for the curriculum are in place, but there are some limitations both on accommodation and amounts of equipment. The lack of impact that this had on learning was mainly due to the positive attitudes of the teaching staff, a well organised and supportive technician and not least the attitudes of the pupils. The pupils worked well together and were very willing to share equipment.

126. A positive development within the science department is that pupils' work is now monitored carefully and individual targets set. All pupils are very aware of the levels at which they are working, and they are set challenging targets to improve their own standards.

ART AND DESIGN

127. Overall, the quality of provision in art and design is **unsatisfactory**.

Strengths

- Art makes a strong contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
- Art provides an opportunity to experience a wide range of media.
- Art teachers have good subject knowledge.

Areas for improvement

- Improve weaknesses in teaching.
- Ensure that pupils are taught the basic skills of drawing and painting and that schemes of work are consistently implemented.
- Develop and integrate extension work, including the use of information and communication technology, into all projects to challenge higher attaining pupils.

128. Teacher assessments showed attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 to be below national expectations in 2001. This was confirmed by work seen during the inspection for the current Year 9. This shows that progress during Years 7 and 9 is not enough. Many pupils in Year 9 draw well from observation but are less confident in the use of tone to show form. Higher attaining pupils produce exciting monoprints of themselves inspired by the work of the German Expressionists. Development in painting is insufficient and research tasks lack sufficient challenge, especially for higher attaining pupils. Written work frequently shows insufficient depth, perception and self-analysis. There is not enough discussion work to develop pupils' depth of understanding. Sketchbooks show little progression of ideas in Key Stage 3 where work is often based on worksheets that give little scope for being creative. There are appropriately planned schemes of work but these are not consistently implemented: this is one of the reasons why work can lack challenge.

129. The proportion of pupils gaining A*-C at GCSE in 2001 was below the national average for all pupils and for girls was well below the national figure. Three-quarters of those entered for art were girls and their relative achievement was lower than in many other subjects taught in the school. Work seen in Years 10 and 11 showed attainment to be below the national average, however, this represents satisfactory progress when prior attainment at the end of Year 9 is taken into account. By the end of Year 11 some higher attaining pupils do sensitive drawings of figures from life and use monochrome to develop them. Work being done in pottery is below expectations because pupils have had no previous experience of using clay. Most pupils show understanding of research processes but show little development in recording their ideas. Pupils who have computers at home sometimes use information and communication technology to improve presentation and use the Internet to collect information. Most pupils have positive attitudes, are keen to do well and enjoy working in art.

130. Teaching in the majority of lessons was satisfactory, but the weaknesses in a significant minority of lessons means that the overall quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory in Key Stage 3. The cumulative impact of time constraints, lack of continuity inherent in the carousel system and weaknesses in some teaching explain the unsatisfactory progress in Key 3. At Key Stage 4 teaching was satisfactory in the significant majority of lessons seen but there were still weaknesses in a minority. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have lessons every week and a generous time allocation on the timetable. This explains the better progress pupils make in Years 10 and 11.

131. The better teaching in Years 7-9 is characterised by effective class management and good working relationships with pupils ensuring that all pupils have the opportunity to learn. Where teaching is less effective at Key Stage 3, there is a lack of variety of teaching methods and inadequate planning, or implementation of planning, to suit the varying needs of individuals and different teaching groups and inadequate teaching of basic skills of drawing and painting. This results in insufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils.

132. Where learning is most effective in Years 10 and 11, lessons are planned better and teaching methods are varied to suit the needs of the group ensuring sound progress for all pupils including those with special educational needs. Pupils are aware of how to improve their work through constructive criticism given verbally in class and through diagnostic comments made in sketchbooks. Relationships are generally good. Where teaching is less effective learning objectives lack clarity and rigour or are insufficiently conveyed to pupils. This leads to inadequate progress being made especially by higher attaining pupils. Lack of opportunities for group discussion means the chance to raise self-esteem and to improve the use and understanding of subject specific language is missed.

133. Standards in Years 7 - 9 and in GCSE exams have not improved since the last inspection. The fundamental issue of improving the teaching of basic skills has not been effectively addressed. Monitoring has failed to address weaknesses in teaching and to ensure that sound schemes of work are consistently implemented. Therefore progress is unsatisfactory since the last inspection. In the context of current timetabling arrangements the department will need significant support to address these issues.

134. The low proportion of timetabled time for art in Key Stage 3 affects progress through Years 7-9 and in Years 10 and 11. Knowledge, understanding and the acquisition of skills lack continuity and in many cases this means that pupils may be unable to fulfil their potential when taking GCSE courses. Schemes of work, which are clearly set out need, to be implemented consistently and their development needs to be focused around the teaching of drawing and painting in Key Stage 3 and the development of information and communication technology throughout both key stages. Pupils have an opportunity to develop work in a variety of media including in three-dimensions using clay, wire, plaster, papier mache and card and textiles which is offered as an endorsed course at GCSE. The subject also makes a strong contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils through visits to museums and art galleries and study of other cultures and arts and crafts from other lands.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

135. Overall, the quality of provision in design and technology is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Pupils achieve well and make good progress, including those with special educational needs because the skills taught lead to more demanding tasks.
- Teaching is consistently good; lessons are planned well and proceed at a good pace.
- Leadership and management of the faculty is good.

Areas for improvement

- The use of computers to deliver the strands of ICT as outlined in the programmes of study for design technology.
- The use of assessment to inform planning.
- The recording of assessment using specific criteria linked to the schemes of work needs to be used effectively to improve standards by setting targets for individual pupils and giving effective feedback to pupils telling them what they need to improve and make progress.
- The development plan does not include sufficient strategies to improve standards or strategies to teach basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT.

136. In year 2001 GCSE examinations, results were below the national average. The results were better in graphic products. The results at A*- C show that there has been a decline over the previous year. At the end of Year 11 pupils achieve the results expected for their prior attainment. The teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2001 show that show that pupils are below the national average. This is a decline from the previous years.

137. However, the review of current pupils' work in Years 7 - 9 shows that standards are in line with those expected. Students are very enthusiastic and well motivated by the activities provided because learning is relevant and they are successful. They learn about a wide range of materials and they use a good range of small and large equipment competently and safely, for example, when making a wind chime in Year 7. They demonstrate good practical skills in Year 8 when cutting and shaping parts for a mechanical toy. They are proud of new products they have developed in food technology lessons. Higher achieving students plan their work and evaluate it objectively against specific criteria. Lower achieving students carefully evaluate how well they have worked. Similar levels of attainment are achieved by boys and girls.

138. By the end of Year 11, standards are in line with national expectations. Pupils have insufficient confidence, knowledge and understanding to experiment and explore materials and processes when they develop their designs and specifications. The higher achieving students work well independently and are very well motivated to succeed. Their work is thoughtfully and professionally presented. Pupils have few opportunities to use information and communication technology, particularly to present their work but also when they are designing. Pupils' design work and practical work shows progression in development and a satisfactory level of craftsmanship in their execution. The higher achieving students critically analyse their work well. All students, regardless of ability or gender, achieve well because teachers expect them to learn well. Standards are higher in the food technology and graphic design option. Pupils have opportunities to take part in projects with outside agencies in food technology and product design. This contributes significantly to their skills, knowledge and understanding of the subject.

139. Teaching in all aspects of the subject is good overall. In lessons, the teachers' enthusiasm and knowledge engage and inspire students. Their skilful handling of materials and equipment enables students to be successful. All staff work hard to develop productive relationships with classes and these are always good. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge. The teaching is well planned and leads to a coherent learning programme that is well supported with prepared lesson notes and work sheets which can then be retained to build up a good picture of individual progress. Students are rightly proud of what they achieve. The lessons are well structured and teachers' questioning is good. Key learning points are systematically reinforced and the good range of activities ensures that all students are actively involved in their learning. New knowledge is introduced as it is needed so that students can immediately use it to develop their understanding. In the best lessons there is a collaborative approach to the learning that encourages students to become curious and ask questions. The planning and purpose of the lesson is sufficiently focused and the objectives are shared sufficiently with the students. There are good introductions to lessons which link with previous work and teachers use technical vocabulary to help pupils understand and extend their vocabulary. The differing needs of students are well met and their designing and making skills are sufficiently developed. Teachers work well with pupils with special educational needs, and are aware of targets in individual education plans. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and the teachers provide extra support for learning. Teachers support literacy well and are careful to introduce new words and provide writing frames. There is an emphasis on health and safety during lessons. There is a good level of display of pupils' work in classrooms and the open areas around the school and this contributes considerably to pupil interest and the development of ideas but there is not always labelling of work by year group, pupils' name and class.

140. The lessons are characterised by the quality of teachers' focus on the progress and needs of individual pupils. The effective challenging, but supportive, relationships between the teacher and the pupils, coupled with on-going individual feedback and support, ensure that all pupils make good progress.

141. Overall, teachers have good knowledge of their subjects and this is effectively transmitted to pupils. Homework contributes markedly to pupils' learning. Key words are well reinforced in many lessons. Classes are competently managed and pupils are attentive, co-operative and eager to learn. Pupils make best progress in the lessons where activities are practical and challenging and they have opportunities to discuss their ideas with others. There is on-going marking and

assessment to ensure that all pupils make good progress. Teachers have a wide understanding of pupils' individual needs and provide appropriately challenging tasks for the more able pupils and alternative ways for pupils with particular learning needs to understand.

142. The leadership and management is good. The head of department has a clear view of how the department should be developed and is fully aware of the need to provide more support for pupils in both key stages in the form of monitoring and assessment of attainment and progress. A greater emphasis should be given to the use of information and communication technology, particularly better coverage of control technology and the use of computer aided design. The department has specific aims and values, including a commitment to good relationships and equality of opportunity for all which is reflected in the work of the department. There is a shared commitment to improvement and the capacity to succeed. There is good delegation to ensure the effective contribution of staff with curriculum responsibilities. The curriculum has been developed with the result that the activities are relevant to pupils. Schemes of work are in place giving detail of long term planning to show what knowledge, skills and understanding it is intended that students of differing abilities should achieve. The assessment system and the analysis of data is used to make predictions of grades at GCSE. The recording of assessment using specific criteria linked to the schemes of work needs to be used effectively to improve standards by setting targets for individual pupils and giving effective feedback to pupils telling them what they need to do to improve and make progress. The number of rooms available is adequate but the quality and size of accommodation to teach the subject needs improving. There are few resources and equipment to teach computer-aided design and control systems. Department meetings are used well to discuss issues to improve policy and standards in the subject. The technician provides a good level of support and makes an effective contribution to the smooth running of the department.

143. The development plan is not adequate as it does not include the necessary focus on raising standards, the introduction of ICT in schemes of work or strategies to teach basic skills of literacy and numeracy.

144. The management and organisation of the NVQ construction course needs to be improved; at present it is not clear whether pupils will be accredited through the course. There also needs to be a qualified teacher responsible for the course.

145. At present 30 pupils do not take a design and technology subject in Key Stage 4. They do not follow an alternative technology related course. The school is not fulfilling the requirements on the National Curriculum for design technology.

GEOGRAPHY

146. Overall, the quality of provision in geography is **good**.

Strengths

- All pupils, regardless of ability, have very positive attitudes to their work, concentrate very well and make at least sound and often good progress
- Both teachers and pupils have high expectations
- Teaching is consistently good and often very good

Areas for improvement

- The use of ICT to support learning
- The development of pupils' skills and abilities to test hypotheses, synthesise information and to use their knowledge independently in new contexts
- Improve the range of resources available to support learning including internet access

147. Attainment in GCSE at the end of Key Stage 4 has been consistently in line or just above national averages over the past three years. Inspection evidence broadly supported this judgement except for coursework, which showed considerable effort, but which did not normally reach the

highest levels. Attainment at the end of Year 9 is broadly in line with national expectations. Pupils develop a good knowledge base in terms of location and a reasonable grasp of the characteristics of particular regions and places. They have a good appreciation of the links between human and physical aspects of geography, but their understanding of how physical processes shape the land is uneven. Pupils' ability to interpret graphical and statistical data is underdeveloped.

148. There are currently insufficient opportunities for enquiry work at Year 7 - 9 to test hypotheses and proffer solutions. This has an impact on pupils' ability to differentiate between facts and judgements in larger scale investigations and their ability to make the most of their investigations for GCSE coursework where their ability to synthesise information and to draw reasoned conclusions is lower than other aspects of their work.

149. Pupils work hard to complete a good quantity of work of an appropriate standard. They work effectively in brisk well designed paired work. In a Year 9 lesson on the impact of tourism for example, pupils worked very well in pairs to present their view of particular issues to the rest of the class. Pupils listened closely to each other and the teacher and clearly made significant gains in understanding. They are aware of the demands of different groups and the resulting pressure on the environment.

150. When compared to their earlier attainment, pupils' achievement in geography is good overall at both Key Stages 3 and 4. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because teachers have a good understanding of their needs and match the activities to them. For example, when Year 7 pupils looked at settlement changes good scaffolding and support strategies were used to enable a lower band group to access and understand difficult concepts. This lesson also benefited from very good teamwork between the teacher and teaching assistants.

151. Teaching is consistently good. In Years 7 - 9 a significant proportion of teaching is very good. Teaching has a number of very clear strengths but there are also clear areas for improvement. Teachers maintain a brisk pace and give appropriate praise. They also have very clear objectives, which are effectively shared with pupils. Oral work is often demanding and questioning, which is probing and challenging, promotes understanding. The quality of teachers' explanation is often very good. Better use could be made of visual aids as in a Year 11 lesson on climates, which benefited from all of the above qualities, but which suffered from insufficient visual reinforcement. Teachers have very high expectations of pupils. In some cases teachers do a little too much of the work. Pupils are expected to use subject terms accurately, these are listed in books and rehearsed through questioning when opportunities arise. This is one way the department is striving to improve literacy skills. The promotion of numeracy skills through the teaching is underdeveloped. The variety of tasks given provides insufficient opportunities to practice interpreting statistical information. Teaching makes a significant contribution to the social, moral and cultural development of pupils. Tracking of pupil progress is generally good, but there is room to concentrate marking effort on fewer pieces of work to improve the information given to students as to how they can improve their work.

152. Pupils respond very positively to the challenging teaching and enthusiastic delivery of the teachers. Their attitudes and behaviour are never less than satisfactory and are often very good and excellent. Relationships are very positive. Use of ICT is currently weak and needs to be increased. The main teaching room would benefit significantly from internet access to extend research opportunities.

153. Schemes of work are developing well. Resources are limited and need to be further developed. The new head of department has worked hard to improve the quality of departmental documentation. They provide good leadership and effective management. The two main teachers form an effective team and are well placed to continue to improve and to raise standards.

HISTORY

154. Overall, the quality of provision in history is **good**.

Strengths

- Public examination results are above, and nearly well above, average.
- Good teaching that results in good learning. Lessons are well planned and well delivered.
- Pupils' response is very good. Very positive attitudes towards history.
- Good effective and efficient management and leadership of the department.
- Good vision and early planning by head of department for future development and growth of the department.
- Good achievement in Years 7 to 9 and Years 10 and 11.

Areas for improvement

- There is not enough emphasis on the skills which encourage more independent learning for all pupils.
- Target more rigorously the gifted and talented pupils.
- There is less use of artefacts and visits to local places of historical interest than is commonly found in similar schools.
- ICT activities need to be further developed.
- Increase the number of specialist staff teaching in the department.
- Rationalise the time allocation and distribution to the subject.

155. By the end of Year 9, pupils attain standards that are above national norms. Results in teacher assessments are above national expectations and a scrutiny of pupils' work indicates similar standards. In many classes observed during the inspection, pupils' attainment is often above national expectations. In these lessons, pupils handle historical facts to good effect and they increase their understanding of cause and effect. For example, Year 9 pupils, in their study of the black peoples of the USA, are able to ascribe, with effect, importance to the social, economic or political influences, which led to the abolition of slavery.

156. By the end of Year 11, the standards attained by pupils are above national expectations. Results in GCSE, at 65 per cent A*-C, are above national levels and a pleasing feature of the 2001 results is the performance of boys, which at 75 per cent A*-C was well above the national figures for boys. In their lessons, pupils make balanced judgements based on historical concepts about the different interpretations of historical events and developments. For example, Year 11 pupils, in their studies of the United States' foreign policy in the immediate post war period, 1945-1955 are aware of the fundamentally different interpretations by the USA and the USSR of the best way forward in Europe after the collapse of Hitler and how those differing views led to the advent of the Cold War.

157. Pupils' achievement in each year from Year 7 to Year 9 is very good. This is especially good, since many pupils enter the school with a very low baseline of skills and knowledge. By the end of this stage of their learning pupils have a good knowledge of the periods they are studying and they have increased their analytical skills. Pupils in years 10 and 11 build on the progress made in the first three years and they make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, and they are skilful at linking several facts together to make a comprehensive and cohesive historical picture. However, the achievement of gifted and talented pupils is not yet maximised because of the lack of a more rigorously focused and targeted provision.

158. Teaching is good overall throughout Years 7 to 11 and pupils learn well as a result. No lesson observed during the inspection was less than satisfactory and some lessons were very good. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject. Lessons are well-planned and well prepared and lead to pupils' learning. A characteristic of history teaching is that the teachers' belief in the value of the subject is reflected in their enthusiasm for it. This has a strong impact on pupils' learning. Teachers are particularly adept at establishing good relationships. In some lessons, teachers tend to be overly didactic and pupils are not sufficiently encouraged to become independent learners. In the best lessons, however, teachers are particularly adept at drawing out significant points from material which is both challenging and exciting and teachers successfully

exhort pupils to become more active participants in their own learning. For example, in a Year 7 class on Roman entertainment, pupils were encouraged by the teacher to study the contemporary writings of Seneca and other sources in order to fully comprehend the scale of the killing at the games. Stimulated by the challenge, the pupils applied their best intellectual and creative efforts to fulfil the tasks he set. Overall, the quality of teaching makes a significant impact on pupils' learning, attainment and progress.

159. The response of pupils is very good. With the exception of a small but significant group of pupils, mostly of very low ability, pupils generally show good application to their work. They respond diligently, settle quickly to task and sustain concentration. Their positive behaviour and response, which is often a direct result of good teaching and good classroom management, is an important factor in their increased learning.

160. The management and leadership of the department is good. The department is led effectively and efficiently by the head of department, who is an excellent role model for a department team committed to raising standards and to the encouragement of pupils to high achievement. In this she is well supported by her colleague in the department. Under her leadership, the department has produced informed and informative policies, together with good operational documents, such as schemes of work, which are being implemented with success and which impact effectively upon pupils' learning. Successful monitoring has been established to guarantee the maintenance of standards. However, and inevitably, the commitment of her colleagues to other areas of the school means that the developmental work of the department suffers from her being the only producer of innovative schemes. The teaching rooms have displays of pupils' work which act as an incentive and which create an atmosphere conducive to learning. These walls and the walls of the corridor of the history suite are used effectively to improve pupils' literacy by the addition of key words.

161. There are, however, some areas for improvement. The department now has clear policies for the use of ICT in the increasing school provision, but as yet, there is insufficient access to, use of and training in the use of ICT to support the subject. There is insufficient use of visits to nearby places of historical interest, which would add immeasurably to the pupils' experience of history. Timetabling of the subject often leads to examination classes being too often adversely affected by half-days and holidays.

162. The department has spent money prudently and effectively on a range of new text-books which contribute significantly to the achievement which pupils make by the time they reach the end of Year 9. However, there is a significant dearth of artefacts in the department and this has an adverse effect on the work of the department. In Years 7-9, targets are not yet predicted for pupils against National Curriculum criteria. Nor do these make sufficient effective and positive impact on the guidance of pupils' learning and attainment. Pupils are therefore not yet sufficiently involved in their own self-reviewing of their work. A common marking scheme is fully in place. However, the National Curriculum levels are not posted in pupils' notebooks or on walls of the rooms.

163. Since the last inspection, the department has made considerable improvements in several important areas. Progress in Years 7-9 is now good. All classes have clear learning objectives which are shared with the pupils. A particular strength is the year on year improvement in standards, particularly by boys. This is a good department with capacity and potential for even greater success.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

164. Overall, the quality of provision in information and communication technology is **unsatisfactory**.

Strengths

- Pupils' examination achievements improved considerably last year.
- The course for Years 7 to 9 includes a suitable experience for most pupils.
- The good use some subjects make of computers to support pupils' learning.
- Progress has been made in developing new courses in Years 10 and 11 and improving the computer network.

Areas for improvement

- Pupils' achievements are not as high as they should be and there are gaps in their experiences.
- Teaching is not always of a high enough standard to make the most of pupils' learning.
- The programme for teaching ICT is disjointed and does not meet statutory requirements fully in Years 9, 10 and 11.
- The quality of pupils' experiences is not monitored effectively: as a result, the school cannot be sure that all pupils get the same opportunities to use computers.
- There are not enough computers in classrooms to support the use of ICT in all subjects.

165. Overall, standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are below average. In the 2001 GCSE examinations, results were below average but better than at the time of the last inspection. Standards in lessons are similar: pupils in Year 11 who are taking GCSE are on track to do as well as last year. Pupils studying the GNVQ course are also achieving a little below the average: the majority are working at a level that is likely to result in at least a pass grade.

166. Pupils achieve a little below the average in Years 7 and 8: this is just about appropriate given their starting point. The standards reached by pupils in Year 9 are lower than this and they are not achieving as much as they should. Last year, when the school assessed pupils, standards were average but achievement is lower now because there is no planned teaching programme in Year 9: some subjects use computers but this is patchy.

167. There are three main reasons why standards are not as high as they should be and why provision is unsatisfactory:

- teaching is not of a consistently high enough quality;
- pupils do not have enough time for their ICT lessons in Years 7 - 9;
- although most pupils experience ICT in Years 10 and 11, and some subjects use computers well to support learning, monitoring procedures are not robust enough to guarantee that everyone studies ICT to a suitable standard.

168. Overall, teaching is just about satisfactory but there are some important weaknesses. This means that teaching is not having as much impact on pupils' learning as it should: nevertheless, some lessons are good and pupils learn well. A persuasive example of how good teaching helps pupils to learn well was in a very good Year 8 lesson where pupils used ICT to present a talk about themselves or an interest. The quality of their work was good because they had access to good resources, and the task was challenging. In another example, pupils in Year 11 made brisk progress with their learning and achieved well. This was because the teacher worked closely with pupils when they needed help and did not leave them waiting. Appropriately high expectations and good subject knowledge also helped pupils make progress and ensured that their attitudes were positive. Pupils learnt well as a result: they concentrated on their work, were productive and put in a lot of effort. By the end of the lesson all had made good progress with their course work assignments. Similarly, pupils in a Year 10 GNVQ lesson learnt well because the teacher had a secure knowledge of the subject: however, what really made the difference and contributed well to pupils' learning and attitudes were the good relationships which motivated pupils well.

169. Other lessons are either just satisfactory or unsatisfactory. In an unsatisfactory Year 7 lesson, for example, the purpose of the lesson was unclear and pupils had little idea of what they were supposed to be doing. Importantly, too, teaching did little to motivate or engage pupils in the work and some were left for long periods of time without contact with the teacher. As a result a significant minority of pupils made little progress with their work and achieved very little because they had very little idea about what was expected of them: one boy left the lesson without having seen the teacher and thus achieved almost nothing. On the other hand, an important aspect of the satisfactory teaching is the way pupils are given individual help: the teachers' good subject knowledge means that this help is often well directed. However, weaknesses in the quality of visual resources and the way some pupils are left for too long without help mean that teaching is not as good as it could be. In a satisfactory Year 11 NVQ lesson, for example, the teacher's good subject knowledge ensured that pupils' questions were answered well: However, some pupils were left too long without help and this limited pupils' achievements: it was pupils' very positive attitudes to learning that helped them to make progress.

170. The amount of time given to teaching the ICT course in Years 7 and 8 is only just adequate: each class gets about 10 weeks as part of a technology programme that includes aspects of design and technology. However, in Year 9 there is no special course for ICT and although some subjects use computers, for example, music, pupils' experiences and achievements are not monitored carefully enough. This means that the school cannot be sure what pupils are doing or whether the work is appropriate. The picture is similar in Years 10 and 11 but here more pupils use computers either through the GCSE, GNVQ or NVQ courses or through subjects and there are some good developments. In English, mathematics and science, for example, pupils take a certificate of competence in an aspect of ICT and pupils studying French use computers to email pen pals in France. In music, good use is made of computers to develop pupils' creativity. There are also good opportunities for pupils to use the computer room before school, during lunch and after school. Again, however, pupils' experiences and achievements are not monitored effectively so the school is not sure how many pupils miss out using computers or how well the work they get meets their needs. The current systems for recording how many pupils use the computer room outside of lessons suggests the number is small. Importantly, too, some aspects of ICT are not covered well: in design and technology, for example, there are few opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in control.

171. Leadership and management of ICT are not strong enough to ensure that developments and improvements are carried through fully. Without doubt, improvements have been made since the last inspection: the hardware has been upgraded, the contribution of other subjects to ICT has been charted, many pupils in Years 10 and 11 now take the certificate of competence and there is a system for recording pupils' experiences. However, some of these developments have not been consolidated which means they have not had the impact on pupils' achievements that they should. There is, for example, a good system for recording pupils attendance at the ICT clubs before and after school but there are entries for only a very few pupils. Moreover, there is no evidence that these are used to monitor pupils' experiences. Similarly, the use of ICT by subjects is not monitored or evaluated systematically: most pupils in Years 10 and 11 experience ICT but some do not. As a result, the school's information about the quality of pupils' experiences, and their achievements, is based on intention rather than what happens in practice.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- Strong ethos for learning languages.
- Raising standards through highly effective teaching and learning strategies.
- Inclusive teaching, with a particular focus on boys' performance.
- Good starts and ends to lessons.
- Rigorous and systematic use of French/Spanish for the purposes of all classroom communication in the majority of lessons.

Areas for improvement

- Consistent use of the target language by all teachers.
- More opportunities for pupil interaction in pairs and groups in some classes.
- Dissemination of best practice in lesson planning to provide a secure structure for progression.

173. Standards are high in French and the majority of pupils are achieving to their full potential. By the end of Year 11, all pupils leave school with an appropriate qualification in French. This is due to the commitment and drive of the teachers, who prepare them rigorously to meet the course requirements. The number of pupils entering GCSE is rising year on year and over the last five years there has been a dramatic increase in standards. In the most recent examinations, the percentage of pupils achieving A* - C in GCSE was well above the national average. Boys are performing significantly better than the national average and are also achieving relatively higher results in French than they do in other subjects. This is a direct result of the inclusive teaching strategies used to motivate them and accelerate their learning. In GCSE lessons observed during the inspection, boys were often chosen to model language and demonstrate role-play, for example, in a French lesson on pocket money. Those not entering GCSE follow a course leading to the Certificate of Achievement. In 2001, 100 per cent of the pupils entered were successful.

174. Spanish has been successfully introduced for the more able pupils in Years 8 and 9. There is a small option group in Year 10, preparing the AQA Modular GCSE. In the lesson seen, standards were appropriately high. Pupils were able to follow sustained instructions in Spanish about directions around the town and were making very good progress in consolidating their learning through a relevant and well-structured sequence of listening, speaking, reading and writing activities.

175. By the end of Year 9, the standards achieved by the majority of pupils are in line with national expectations in French and Spanish. Most lessons are well planned to promote linguistic progression. In a French lesson on where people live, pupils demonstrated their ability to use and understand French to describe different environments. The teacher used paraphrase and questioning techniques very effectively to encourage pupils to use more complex sentences. Pupils also showed a developing awareness of grammar by thinking about the French that they were using to describe different places and explaining to their teacher how adjectives work. In Spanish, lessons proceed at a very brisk pace and pupils make very good progress moving from word to sentence to short text level very rapidly. In a lesson on 'describing your bedroom,' pupils were able to assimilate new words quickly and could soon recognise them in quite lengthy recorded descriptions about other people's bedrooms.

176. Pupils want to learn languages in this school. They come into the classroom ready to listen to their teachers and to one another. They are eager and willing to think about what they are doing and to analyse how language works. There are clear links to literacy. Boys and girls are keen to improve their performance and are ready to focus on what they are saying and how they are saying it, for example, a boy in Year 11 explained to the class the difference between c and ç, highlighting the relationship between sound and how things are written down. This is due to the positive ethos for learning that the teachers have fostered through active and dynamic teaching,

which offers pupils sufficient stimulus and challenge to engage and sustain their interest. In the very best lessons, pupils are fully involved in using the foreign language from the first few minutes of entering the classroom. In Year 10, in a lesson on directions, and in Year 11, in a lesson on pocket money, pupils moved around the room, interviewing other pupils, which gave them opportunities to take responsibility for their own progress and participate in creating a positive learning environment where French was the natural means of communication. The teacher circulated among the pupils, extending the more able and supporting those in difficulties by sensitively remodelling what they were saying. Even in a lesson where the structure for progression was not so securely planned in Year 9, pupils were willing to reflect on the language they were learning and identify constituent parts of a sentence, identifying infinitives.

177. In the majority of lessons observed, teaching was very good and on occasion, excellent. There are clear starts to lessons, where the objectives are shared with pupils. Pupils are told what they are going to do and how these particular activities will help them learn. Most teachers use the foreign language consistently and pupils are invited to ask for clarification or give explanations to their peers in English, if necessary. Good learning habits are developed from Year 7, when, for example, in a lesson on the timetable in French, a boy was invited to explain the task in English and set the class to work. The rest of the lesson was conducted entirely in French with the teacher using other strategies to ensure comprehension, for instance, personalizing the timetable by referring to teachers' names and room numbers, so that pupils could recognise new concepts without needing to ask in English. Lessons are usually well planned with clear, incremental progression in listening, speaking, reading and writing. Lessons normally end effectively giving pupils the opportunity to consolidate and demonstrate what they have learned during the lesson that they did not know before.

178. In a few lessons, the structure for learning is less clearly defined. The lessons concentrate on activities rather than learning objectives and there is too much use of English by the teacher. In such lessons, pupils are not fully involved in using the foreign language and there are insufficient opportunities to work in pairs and small groups. Pupils do not have a sense of progression, using language building blocks systematically to communicate something for real. In the best lessons, pupils are encouraged to become independent users of the language because the teaching strategies have fostered confidence in grammatical control. The dissemination of best practice in planning effective sequences of activities and in using the target language consistently across the department as a whole is an area for development.

179. The department is very well managed by an excellent practitioner, who leads by example. The quality of teaching and learning is monitored regularly and the individual needs for professional development are fully recognised and supported. The department works together very effectively as a team. All teachers share the desire to support pupils and give them access to good quality educational opportunities. No effort is spared in providing extended opportunities for pupils to learn through extra revision classes. There is a first rate action plan for the gifted and talented, which identifies an appropriate and creative range of activities to develop independent learning and pupil autonomy. Some of these approaches could be modified and developed more widely for other learners.

180. Since the last inspection, the department has exceeded its targets and by any measure is doing very well. New modular GCCE programmes are being taught in French and Spanish. Standards have been raised from below national expectations to significantly above. Homework is set regularly and builds incrementally on the work of the classroom. There is a well-conceived vision for the development of ICT, which is gradually being implemented. The departmental framework for ICT and modern foreign languages also supports the programme of study for citizenship. For example, a lesson with Year 10 in French provided opportunities for pupils to apply their ICT skills in communication by e-mail with pupils in a French school. Such opportunities make a very valuable contribution to pupils' personal development. The chance to use French to express their own thoughts and feelings and to compare their lives to the lives of their peers in France encourages pupils to recognise the true value of language and culture and helps them to develop a real sense of their own identity in an increasingly global community.

MUSIC

181. Overall, the quality of provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Teaching is underpinned by good subject knowledge.
- Very effective use of ICT in music lessons supports pupils' learning.
- The chosen stimulus is often very motivating for pupils and prompts good progress.

Areas for improvement

- Provision of more focused opportunities for pupils to evaluate their work and the development of their evaluation skills.
- The provision of opportunities for professional development to include opportunities for observing and working with other music specialists.
- Accommodation which limits learning opportunities.

182. Standards in music are in line with expectations for the small number of pupils following the GCSE course in Year 10. By the age of 14 the majority of pupils should reach the expected standard. Their skills in practical composing have improved since the previous inspection. However, their ability to evaluate their work in order to improve it is not so well developed. Pupils show good concentration, involvement and enjoyment in their instrumental lessons and in the extra-curricular ensembles and make good progress.

183. Teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good. Very good teaching prompts pupils to respond positively, often because the stimulus is well chosen. This was demonstrated in Year 7 lessons where pupils composed the sound tracks for a horror film, using electronic keyboards linked to a clip from a Dracula film. Pupils were strongly motivated and made good progress, achieving a good standard in their compositions and showing a good understanding of the genre. In a Year 10 GCSE lesson a poem provided an effective stimulus and engaged pupils' interest. ICT is used very effectively in music lessons. The teacher's knowledge of both music and ICT is very good. Resources for lessons are very well prepared, especially when ICT is used, ensuring that the lessons flow well. Good strategies are often used to help pupils to develop their understanding, for example getting pupils in Year 10 to conduct music so that they could feel the pulse for themselves. In all lessons pupils are actively engaged in making music.

184. In some lessons there is very little direct teaching and opportunities for productive questioning are limited. On occasions lessons seem rushed with too little time for pupils to consolidate the new skills they are developing. In these lessons, pupils do not make such good progress, particularly in developing the skills of analysis, critical evaluation and reflection. There are opportunities for pupils to evaluate both their work in progress and completed work but these are often too brief and both the teacher's and the pupils' evaluations are sometimes too superficial. This is a key area for development so that pupils will learn to be much more critical in their thinking and more specific in identifying areas which they will work on in order to refine their compositions and performances.

185. The day-to-day running of the department, including the management of the peripatetic instrumental teaching, is effective. However, because there is only one member of staff in the department and there is no curriculum-related line management, it is important that professional development should be extended to provide opportunities for observing and working with other music specialists.

186. Accommodation is cramped with limited space for rehearsals, performances and group work. Space for instrumental teaching is also restricted.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

187. Overall, the quality of provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Strong leadership of the department.
- A wide range of extra-curricular activities which are very well supported by large groups of pupils.
- Good teaching.
- Pupils respond very positively and their enjoyment of the subject is very evident.

Areas for improvement

- Improve the on-site accommodation for the subject.
- Examine the possibility of offering dance as a GCSE subject.
- Consider offering pupils in Years 10 and 11 the opportunity to take the Junior Sports Leaders award.

188. Standards in physical education are in line with expectations for pupils in Years 7,8 and 9. Pupils taking the non-examination course in the subject in Years 10 and 11 are also attaining standards that are in line with that expected, with a small number of pupils doing even better. However, in the most recent GCSE examination, although the proportion of pupils gaining the higher A* - C grades was significantly better than the previous year, it was below the national average.

189. Last year teacher assessment at the end of Year 9 reported that attainment was in line with national expectations. Inspection evidence is that pupils arrive at the school from their primary school bringing with them a variety of physical education skills and experiences, with a significant number of them having skills that are lower than expected. They quickly respond to the good quality teaching, make good progress and by the time they are 14 years old most are attaining levels that are at least in line with national expectations. They perform well in a variety of activities. In games activities pupils demonstrate good levels of skills, often showing good ball control, and being aware of simple attack and defence strategies, although some pupils find it difficult to apply their skills in full game situations when the element of competition is introduced. In gymnastics, body management skills are developing with most pupils able to display a range of movement both on the floor and on apparatus, with an increasingly competent ability to link them together into simple sequences. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of how to prepare for physical activity and some are able to lead classes in warm-up activities at the beginning of lessons.

190. In Years 10 and 11, good levels of skill are clearly evident in a wide range of activities, particularly in soccer, netball and basketball. Pupils have a good understanding of attack and defence strategies, and are able to apply this in games situations. They have a good knowledge of rules and conventions of a number of games and activities and are able to undertake a wide range of roles including performing, officiating and coaching. Pupils in the examination groups are developing an understanding and expertise in both the theoretical and practical aspects of the subject. Higher attaining pupils present written work that is well structured, but some have limited subject knowledge and their coursework folders are sometimes incomplete. Their practical work is satisfactory, but they find it difficult to achieve success in the theoretical aspects of the course. The number of pupils currently following the course is impressive.

191. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated and are given much support and encouragement by their teachers and fellow pupils and reach a very satisfactory level of attainment. Teaching is sensitive, and there is no evidence of pupils with special educational needs being disadvantaged by the curriculum offer.

192. Many school teams take part in a large number of inter-school competitions and matches and gain much success. A number of the school's teams are Southwark Schools' champions, and a number of the school's pupils have represented London Schools at athletics.

193. In spite of a complete change of staff since the last inspection, the good standard of teaching reported at that inspection has been maintained. All lessons observed were judged to be at least satisfactory with the vast majority being judged to be good or very good. Lessons are conducted in an orderly manner, with explanations clearly stated so that pupils are aware of what is required of them, and what they need to do to improve their performance. Lessons are conducted at a brisk demanding pace achieving a good balance of activities and offering all pupils a range of appropriate challenges. There is an expectation that pupils will work hard and behave well, and generally these expectations are met. They respond very positively to the enthusiasm and energy of their teachers. Pupils work hard, are co-operative, and behave well. Their enjoyment of the subject is very evident.

194. The curriculum offered is inhibited by the poor on-site facilities. Nevertheless in spite of the time taken in travelling to off-site centres the requirements of the National Curriculum are just being met. However, there is little doubt that because of the limited amount of time that pupils are actually taking part in the various activities their performances are being adversely affected. The department should examine the possibility of widening the curriculum by offering dance to its Year 10 and 11 pupils. The procedures for assessing and recording pupils' attainment have been revised with comprehensive information now being kept of pupils' attitudes and attainment levels. The department now needs to store this wealth of information electronically so that it is more readily available.

195. Staff, and some senior pupils, give very freely of their time to provide a wide range of extra-curricular activities which are very well supported. Pupils have the opportunity to take part in skiing trips to Spain and soccer and netball tours to Holland.

196. The on-site accommodation is of concern. The thirty-minute coach ride to Southwark Sports Centre is not a productive use of the time allocated to the subject. There is an urgent need for the school to get an all-weather surface put on the school playground, as this would, in part, ease this very serious problem. Because the time taken travelling to the off-site accommodation requires a time allocation of two and a half hours, the pupils remaining on site for this period have a lesson too long to be productively used.

197. This is a well-led and well-managed department. Good quality documentation covers all aspects of the department's work, and helps in the delivery of the subject. The staff who teach physical education work well together, support each other, and show a very strong commitment to their pupils.

GNVQ HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

198. Overall, the quality of provision in Health and Social Care is **good**.

Strengths

- Good teaching ensures that pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- Pupils have good attitudes to their work and respond well to the demands made upon them.
- Pupils benefit from studying a vocational course.

Areas for improvement

- Sometimes, pupils rely too much on the teacher instead of using their initiative.

199. In the small sample of lessons seen, teaching was good and this enabled pupils to make brisk progress with their learning. As a result standards are broadly average and pupils achieve well. Teachers have a good understanding of the course and the assessment requirements: this knowledge helps them to set work that is suitably demanding and to give good guidance to pupils about their work. Well-planned and organised lessons, good relationships and the sensitive way pupils are dealt with also ensure that pupils make sufficient progress with their learning. These strengths also explain why pupils' behaviour is good: they have a lot of respect for their teachers,

behave well and show a real sense of achievement. Sometimes, the pace of learning is only satisfactory because pupils rely too much on the teacher for help. This is partly because some pupils lack the confidence but it is also because they are not given a clear idea about what they should do or what is expected of them. The upshot is that some pupils do not develop their initiative or independence as much as they might.