

INSPECTION REPORT

LANGLEY SCHOOL

Solihull

LEA area: Solihull

Unique reference number: 104108

Headteacher: Mrs Susan Orlik

Reporting inspector: John Palmer
2450

Dates of inspection: 21 – 25 May 2001

Inspection number: 190323

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11-16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Kineton Green Road Olton Solihull West Midlands
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Kenneth Davis
Date of previous inspection:	18 November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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2450	J.C. Palmer	Registered inspector		Equal Opportunities Sort of school School's results and pupils' achievements How well pupils are taught How well the school is led and managed What the school should do to improve further
9874	M. Milwain	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development School's work in partnership with parents
17530	M. Cureton	Team inspector	English Drama English as an additional language	
22878	G. Nolan	Team inspector	Mathematics	
23496	J.M. Martin	Team inspector	Science	
18261	A. Hill	Team inspector	Art and Design	
2971	K.J. Hooper	Team inspector	Design and Technology Information and communications technology	
14573	H. Wareing	Team inspector	Geography	
23016	T. Morrison	Team inspector	History	Curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils
31332	J. Marshall	Team inspector	Modern Foreign Languages	The school's care for its pupils
22501	S. Jones	Team inspector	Music	
19295	P. Wall	Team inspector	Physical education	
7339	D. Hanlon	Team inspector	Religious education	
3055	C. Tombs	Team inspector	Special educational needs	The work of the Unit For Pupils With Specific Learning Difficulties

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Langley School is an 11-16 mixed comprehensive community school with 960 pupils on roll. Most children are white, although approximately 11 per cent are from minority ethnic backgrounds, mostly from the Indian subcontinent. English is an additional language for 87 pupils, only two of whom require support. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is above the national average owing to the two special centres, providing for the needs of pupils with physical disabilities and for those with specific learning difficulties. The school's intake represents the full range of socio-economic backgrounds. Pupils enter the school with a spread of attainment that is broadly in line with the national picture but with a disproportionate number with lower than average attainment and reading ages. At the time of the inspection the normal teaching timetable for Year 11 was suspended to allow revision activities in preparation for the GCSE examinations.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This good and popular school is well managed by the senior staff and governors under the inspirational personal leadership of the headteacher. Langley School has very many strengths and relatively few weaknesses. Teaching is good and, as a result, pupils make good progress throughout the school and achieve standards above the national averages. The consistently caring school ethos and the very good provision for pupils' moral and social development result in very good behaviour and attitudes to the school. Although it has some weaknesses, the curriculum is broad and balanced and includes very good provision for the expressive arts of art, drama and music. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Teaching is generally good and is very good in art, drama, music and German.
- Standards of achievement are generally above national averages.
- Pupils behave very well and have very good attitudes to school, reflecting very good procedures to promote good behaviour and support pupils' personal development.
- The wider community makes a very good contribution to school life.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and they are very well integrated.
- Careers education is very good.
- The provision for extra-curricular activities is very good.

What could be improved

- Weaknesses in the timetable, including split classes and insufficient or disrupted lesson time, impair the teaching of English, mathematics, science, religious education, design and technology, information and communications technology (ICT), music, modern foreign languages and personal and social education.
- The teaching and learning of pupils of higher ability is not yet effective in ensuring that sufficient numbers, particularly girls, achieve the standards of which they are capable in English, mathematics and geography at GCSE level.
- The school does not meet the statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship, nor for the teaching of religious education, nor, in the case of younger pupils, for design and technology and ICT provision.
- Many older pupils do not receive their entitlement to courses in design and technology.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made satisfactory progress since its last inspection in 1996. Standards of pupils' achievement have risen and improvements have been made to planning, personal and social education and the use of registration time. Outdated computers have been replaced. However, weaknesses persist in religious education and information and communications technology provision in subjects across the curriculum. The spiritual content of assemblies is now good but the school still does not provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils, on the grounds that it lacks the space to do so.

High standards have been maintained in the teaching, assessment and support of pupils with special educational needs and in the co-ordination and leadership of provision for them.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 16-year-olds based on GCSE examination results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
GCSE examinations	B	C	C	C

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

Average GCSE points scores are in line with national averages and the performance of schools with a similar intake. The proportion of pupils achieving five or more GCSE passes at the higher grades is above the national average and well above that for similar schools. In work seen during the inspection pupils achieve standards by the end of Years 9 and 11 that are above the national averages and reflect good progress.

The proportion of boys gaining a higher grade in English, and of all pupils gaining a higher grade in science, GCSE in 2000 represents very good progress in comparison to schools with a similar intake. In the statutory tests at the age of 14, pupils attained standards in English that were in line with the national average and well above it in mathematics and science, where their performance was in the top five per cent of schools with a similar intake. Since 1996 the school's results in the statutory tests for 14-year-olds have been broadly in line with the national trend. In work seen during the inspection, by the end of Year 9 pupils achieve standards that are above national ones in English and mathematics, and well above them in science. In recent years, GCSE results have been rather above the national averages and have risen in line with the national trend. The school has come close to reaching its own deliberately challenging targets for pupils' achievement at GCSE.

Standards of achievement are particularly high in art and drama throughout the school. Standards of achievement are unsatisfactory, in the first three years, in design and technology and ICT. Overall, in subjects across the curriculum, pupils make good progress, except in religious education in Years 10 and 11, where progress is slow.

Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in gaining basic literacy and numeracy skills albeit from a low starting point. More-able pupils do not yet achieve high enough standards in a range of subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are very enthusiastic and interested in their studies.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good; incidents of bullying are rare. Pupils display initiative and personal responsibility.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils have a good understanding of the effects of their actions on others. They are polite and relationships are very good.
Attendance	Attendance rates are above the national average.

Pupils' attitudes, values and behaviour are very good and are strengths of the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged 11-14 years	aged 14-16 years
Lessons seen overall	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.

Of the teaching seen, 95 per cent was satisfactory or better and 21 per cent was very good or excellent. Five per cent was unsatisfactory. The quality of pupils' learning is generally good: they work at a good pace with concentration and interest.

The teaching of English to the younger pupils is good and in the GCSE years it is satisfactory. The teaching of both mathematics and science throughout the school is good. Teaching across the school is generally good, with particularly good teaching of drama, especially to the older pupils when it is excellent, and art and music. The promotion of literacy is satisfactory but varies across the curriculum. The teaching of literacy is strong in English, physical education, science, mathematics, geography and ICT. The teaching of numeracy is good, especially in mathematics. It is also effective in science, art, design and technology and ICT. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with specific learning difficulties and those with physical or sensory disabilities, make good progress in a range of subjects as a result of accurate assessment procedures, small-group teaching situations, effective support from special support assistants and work that is matched to their needs. More-able pupils do not attain the high standards of which they are capable because often they are not provided with work that is sufficiently challenging, although the school is in the process of addressing this issue.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Although broad and balanced, the curriculum is unsatisfactory because weaknesses in the timetable impair provision for mathematics, design and technology, ICT, music, modern foreign languages and personal and social education.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school provides effective and appropriate support both within class, on a withdrawal basis, and through the services of a range of external agencies. However, Years 7 and 8 pupils in the Specific Learning Difficulty centre are not taught all the subjects of the National Curriculum, which restricts breadth.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Provision for the two pupils for whom English is a second language and who need additional support is good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Overall provision for pupils' personal development is good, including very good provision for their moral and social development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides good support and guidance to pupils and monitors their progress well. Procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are very good.

The school works well with parents, who make a good contribution to children's learning. Careers education is very good, as is the contribution of the community to pupils' learning. The statutory requirements for the teaching of religious education, and of design and technology and ICT to younger pupils, are not fully met. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and supporting pupils' personal development are very good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The work of the management team and the other managers is good. The headteacher is very effective in leading and motivating the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors meet their responsibilities effectively.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school evaluates its own performance satisfactorily and is becoming increasingly effective in taking appropriate action as a result.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes satisfactory strategic use of its resources, including the diligent pursuit of good value in its purchasing decisions.

Despite temporary difficulties, the curriculum is taught by appropriately qualified specialists. Learning resources are generally good. Accommodation is very good, well maintained and makes a significant contribution to the quality of learning in many subjects and to the pupils' experience of school. Pupils with mobility difficulties have unrestricted access to the entire site. The leadership and management have been particularly effective in reflecting the school's aims and values in their work as is particularly clear in the very good behaviour of the pupils and high quality of the curriculum for the creative arts. The school management has not ensured the effective use of computer technology in the teaching of subjects across the curriculum.

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 good progress made by the pupils. The charismatic and effective leadership of the headteacher. The good provision for the performing arts. The good provision for pupils with special educational needs, especially the work of the centres. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The inconsistent setting of homework according to the homework timetable. More information about how their children are doing, especially early in Year 7. A perceived 'anti-work' attitude of a minority of pupils which demotivates other children. The low level of awareness by pupils of other minority cultures and faiths.

The inspection team agrees with the parents' views as to the strengths of the school. The team did not find evidence of the inconsistent setting of homework. Pupils' attitude to work is not impaired by any significant anti-work sub-culture. Information about pupils' progress is good, but parents would benefit from an earlier meeting with subject teachers in Year 7. Multicultural education at the school is relatively underdeveloped.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. In 2000, in the tests at the end of year 9, pupils achieved standards in line with the national average for English and above that of schools with a similar intake. Results in the mathematics and science tests were well above the national averages and in the top five per cent of schools with a similar intake. The upward trend, since 1996, in the school's average points scores for all three subjects is broadly in line with the national pattern. In the last three years, girls outperformed boys, broadly in line with the national picture, in that both boys and girls did better than the national averages for their sex in all three subjects. However, girls performed further above their sex nationally than did boys in both mathematics and, especially in English. The teacher assessments in design and technology, geography, history and modern foreign languages are generally close to, or above, the national averages, with girls outperforming boys. The school's own analysis indicates that, throughout Years 7 to 9, girls make faster progress than boys and less-able pupils make faster progress than more-able pupils. The levels of achievement of pupils from minority ethnic groups match those of the wider pupil population.
2. In the GCSE and GNVQ-equivalent examinations in 2000, the average points score was in line with the national averages and those for schools with a similar intake, but reflected good progress by those pupils in comparison to their achievements in the tests at the end of Year 9. The same pattern describes the school's performance in terms of one or more GCSE, or GNVQ-equivalent, pass grades and five or more pass grades. However, the proportion of pupils achieving five or more GCSE, or GNVQ-equivalent, A* to C passes was above the national average and well above the average of schools with a similar intake and the normal progress of similar pupils in the tests at the end of Year 9.
3. In English and in science the percentage of pupils achieving an A* to C grade was well above the national averages and represented extremely good progress since these same pupils sat the tests at the end of Year 9. Their performance in English was very good in comparison to pupils in schools with a similar intake and, for science, in the top five per cent of these comparator schools. The percentage of pupils achieving an A* to C grade in mathematics was in line with the national average, and above that in schools with a similar intake, which represented very good progress since the test at the end of Year 9.
4. The GCSE results in 2000 were well above the national averages in art, business studies, science, drama, English, geography and ICT, but below them in English literature and home economics. Results in all other subjects were broadly in line with national averages. In terms of their own results in other subjects, pupils underperformed in French, mathematics, history and English literature. Girls did particularly poorly in French and particularly well in art. Boys did very well in science, German, English and geography but particularly poorly in English literature. Overall, girls continue to outperform boys at GCSE except in mathematics, English and geography, where higher-ability girls underachieve. The apparent closure of the gap by boys in the 2000 examinations is entirely due to the good performance of the male, intermediate GNVQ manufacturing group.
5. The school's own analysis indicates that ethnic minority pupils continue to achieve standards similar to those of other pupils and that less-able pupils continue to make better progress than more-able pupils. Overall, pupils make good progress through the school.

6. Over recent years pupils have achieved results at GCSE which are above the national averages and rising in line with the national trends.
7. Over the past three years, the school has consistently set itself appropriately challenging targets for GCSE and come close to reaching them. It is making good progress towards achieving its targets for 2001.
8. In the work seen during the inspection, pupils achieve standards by the end of Year 9 that are above the national averages for English and mathematics, and well above them for science. In the work seen during the inspection, pupils achieved standards by the end of Year 11 that are broadly commensurate with their performance at GCSE. Only in design and technology and ICT, both in Years 7 to 9, and in religious education in Years 10 and 11, was the overall standard of work unsatisfactory. Although specialist teaching is satisfactory in design and technology, and good in ICT, the timetable provision for these subjects gives inadequate and disrupted lesson time. Standards in design and technology are further impaired by a recent, significant turnover in specialist teaching staff. Pupils' design skills by the end of Year 9 are poorly developed and pupils are ill-equipped with the concepts required to make satisfactory progress. In Year 10 and 11, the minority of pupils who study these subjects make good progress and achieve standards in the external examinations which are above the national averages. They become active and confident problem solvers, drawing from a range of appropriate resources and information and take personal responsibility for their own work.
9. Standards of pupils' work seen in mathematics and science are good across the school. In Years 7 to 9 they are good in English, drama and art and design. In Years 10 and 11 they are good in geography, music and physical education. In both drama and art they are very good. Typically, in these subjects, pupils make good progress because they are focused on their work and are taught by skilled and sympathetic teachers. Pupils have well-developed skills of investigation and of presentation which underpin their successful learning of most subjects.
10. In a very good Year 9 art lesson observed, the pupils studied the work of Kandinsky as a stimulus to producing their own work. Pupils had good skills in drawing and the use of a fine liner. Higher-attaining pupils clearly understood the principle of 'abstraction' and were able to apply it in their own work. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, made very good progress, assisted by their positive and constructive attitudes to their work.
11. Pupils have generally satisfactory skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening and good mathematical skills. These skills underpin their usually good, and only rarely unsatisfactory, progress in subjects across the curriculum.
12. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall, but particularly in English, drama, mathematics, science and art.

13. Those pupils identified as being able, especially girls, do not make the progress expected of them. There are too few A and A* grades, especially in English, science, history, French, design and technology and physical education.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. Pupils have very positive attitudes to school, attitudes to learning are good and pupils arrive on time for lessons. After a short break during a double period-lesson, pupils in Year 10 returned promptly to the classroom. Mealtimes are civilised occasions and pupils move around school in an orderly and purposeful manner. Pupils are confident when speaking to adults and are able to express clear opinions. The school provides a clean, well-ordered environment which creates a good atmosphere for learning, and pupils respond accordingly. Pupils in years 7,8 and 9 share responsibility for carrying out litter patrols.
15. Overall, pupils' behaviour is very good both in lessons and around school. Incidents of poor behaviour are dealt with by the staff promptly and consistently.
16. Pupils have very good relationships with each other and respect each other's views. This was seen particularly in religious education, design and technology, mathematics and science lessons. There is a good relationship between pupils and staff and this makes a significant contribution to teaching and learning. A group of pupils in Year 8 said that they felt able to approach staff with their problems both academic and personal. In lessons, pupils show a willingness to help each other and to share ideas. Pupils in a Year 10 geography lesson were able to organise themselves in discussion groups.
17. The attendance rate is above the national average. Exclusion rates are low.
18. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with specific learning difficulties or physical or sensory disabilities, display positive attitudes to work in lessons, particularly when they are given appropriate opportunities to succeed and where their achievements are recognised and celebrated. This enhances their learning. For example, they confidently read aloud in English lessons, join in class discussions about human reproductive systems in science, and answer questions readily, and in the target language, in French lessons. Their behaviour is very good in class and around school. They are naturally accepted by their peers and socialise independently.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. The quality of teaching across the school is generally good and rarely less than satisfactory. The teaching in Years 7 to 9 is generally good in English, mathematics, science, German, history, ICT and physical education and it is very good in drama and music. It is generally satisfactory in all other subjects, although in religious education and French it is sometimes unsatisfactory, lacking pace and appropriate focus upon the needs of individual pupils. In Years 10 and 11 the teaching is generally good in mathematics, science, German, geography, history, ICT and physical education. In other subjects it is broadly satisfactory, except in music where it is very good and in drama where it is excellent.
20. This healthy picture is a consequence of the high morale of the staff and of their subject knowledge and enthusiasm. Teachers are particularly skilled at managing pupils and ensuring that they are set work that is well matched to their stage of learning. For instance, in an outstanding drama lesson in Year 9 the pupils were taught to investigate the concept of urban myths and to develop body language and presentational skills. The teacher gave well-

structured opportunities for group work with appropriate aides-memoire. The teacher's constant attention to, and support for, individual pupils and his carefully targeted characters resulted in excellent levels of concentration and motivation and a rapid pace of learning so that all pupils made extremely good progress, including one pupil with physical disabilities.

21. Skills of literacy and numeracy are well taught in English and mathematics lessons respectively. Special support assistants are well targeted to ensure that pupils with special educational needs make good, often very good, progress. The development of literacy across other subjects of the curriculum is satisfactory and, for mathematics, is good. A fuller evaluation of literacy and numeracy is given in the English and mathematics subject sections of this report.
22. Teaching is generally well targeted to meet the needs of different groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, who make good progress. The school has identified the need to improve the achievement of boys and a range of appropriate strategies are in place which are having an effect, especially the setting and monitoring of short-term learning targets. Pupils from minority ethnic groups are very well integrated and make good progress.
23. There are no pupils on the earlier stages of language acquisition. English is an additional language for 87 pupils, only two of whom require support. There is good provision for them. One pupil has received help from the LEA specialist outreach teacher and has now joined mainstream lessons, where she is making good progress. The other pupil attends literacy catch-up lessons three times a week, and is doing well. Integration of both pupils is good. Progress of both pupils, both social and linguistic, continues to be well monitored by the special educational needs co-ordinator.
24. Provision for the most-able pupils is in need of improvement. In too many subjects, especially in Years 10 and 11, pupils are insufficiently stretched. This is too often true in English, history, French and religious education. It is also true in science and in design and technology in the earlier years. However, the introduction of target setting for all pupils in all subjects and the high priority given to raising the levels of achievement of these pupils in the new School Improvement Plan are having a positive effect, as is the implementation of the 'Gifted and Talented Pupils' project. Good examples of more-able pupils being stretched were seen in many lessons covering the curriculum. For example, in a Year 10 German lesson, more-able pupils were expected to answer the teacher's questions in complete sentences and the teacher consistently challenged these pupils to produce the more complex sentence structures of which they were capable. Although extension work is set in many subjects, more-able pupils are not consistently challenged to stretch themselves in lessons. The pupils need consistently to 'stand on tiptoe' if they are to reach the standards of which they are capable. The provision for pupils with particular talents, for instance in sport or the arts, is good.

25. Resources are well used to support teaching. The use of assessment to target teaching better to meet the needs of pupils is satisfactory and improving. The use of homework to extend learning is satisfactory.
26. Overall, across the school, pupils are generally learning effectively as a result of the good teaching and make good progress.
27. The teaching of students with special educational needs is often good, and occasionally very good, in most subjects. Teaching in the Specific Learning Difficulties Centre is never less than good. As a result, pupils achieve well and make good progress. Good assessment procedures accurately place students at learning stages and this enables teachers to build on prior learning. This ensures that students experience success and raises their self-esteem. They settle readily into classroom routines and become confident learners. Well-targeted support from special support assistants and learning support teachers, mainly in English, mathematics and science, enables teachers to engage all pupils in planned class discussions, role play and investigative work and, as a result, learning improves. Targets in students' Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are precise and comprehensive but are not always sufficiently used by subject teachers to inform their planning, teaching strategies and the most effective use of special support assistants.

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

28. The school offers a broad curriculum encompassing all the subjects of the National Curriculum. It has some very strong features that have been recognised by the Schools Curriculum Award, Sportsmark, the Basic Skills Agency and an award from the Arts and Sports Lottery Boards. Since the last inspection, the school day has been extended and the curriculum remodelled to develop opportunities for pupils and enhance their achievement. Schemes to enhance pupils' learning skills have been introduced in both mathematics and science, as have summer schools for drama, technical skills, art and literacy. Time has been increased for the teaching of English and mathematics, as well as history, geography and science in Years 7 to 9. Thinking and study skills to enhance pupils' achievement have also been introduced in Years 7 to 9. In Years 10 and 11 a range of alternative programmes of study and qualifications has been piloted to increase work-related opportunities for pupils, and increase the achievement of boys. These work-related courses not only provide added breadth but also meet pupils' needs because of their relevance to the world of work and preparation for adult life.
29. Overall, the curriculum is unsatisfactory as it has weaknesses that impair learning. The statutory requirements for religious education throughout the school, for design and technology and ICT in Years 7 to 9, and for a daily act of collective worship, are not met. In Years 7 to 9 all pupils study the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, together with art, design and ICT, drama, French or German, geography, history, music, personal and social education, physical and religious education, and thinking and study skills. Pupils have the opportunity to study a second modern foreign language from Year 8, and careers education and guidance is introduced in Year 9. However, there is insufficient time allocated to ICT, music and design and technology, whilst the rotation of lessons in design and technology with those in ICT throughout Years 7 to 9, together with lessons in personal and social education in Year 9, disrupts the teaching of each subject. Many classes are split between teachers which damages coherence in modern foreign languages in Years 7 to 9, and in English and mathematics throughout the school. The use of computers as a teaching aid is underdeveloped in many subjects.

30. In Years 10 and 11 the majority of pupils follow a compulsory curriculum comprising English, mathematics, science, French and/or German, design and technology and ICT. In addition they choose to study three subjects from history and/or geography, art and/or music and/or drama. Additionally pupils may choose a work-related GNVQ course in manufacturing or health and social care, or a GCSE course in business studies or childcare. However, the statutory requirement to provide all pupils in Years 10 and 11 with approved courses in design and technology is not met, and there is insufficient time for the study of mathematics and for the separate sciences of biology, physics and chemistry.
31. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities. These are well supported by pupils and in many instances are over-subscribed. The opportunities provided are open to all pupils regardless of gender or race. The success of the extra curricular programme is due to the enthusiasm and hard work of the staff involved, and this enthusiasm is reflected in the attitude of the pupils taking part. A survey carried out by a deputy headteacher indicates that over 75 per cent of pupils take part in extra-curricular activities. A discussion with pupils in Year 10 emphasised the popularity of this part of the school's life. Many of the extra-curricular activities give another dimension to the formal curriculum, for example in sport, music and mathematics. Learning becomes fun. The arts area of the curriculum is enhanced by the extra-curricular work through The Dovehouse Theatre. In drama and music groups, pupils develop their performing skills and also help the school to become a part of the local community. Pupils in Year 10 have the opportunity to take part in The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme; those pupils who take part do so with great enthusiasm. Some of those taking part felt that the chance to learn a new skill had been useful. Work in the community was also felt to have been worthwhile.
32. The provision for personal, social and health education is good and includes sex education and attention to drug misuse. A very imaginative programme of lessons has been created for pupils in Years 7 to 9 and is taught very effectively by a small team of specialist teachers. For example, Year 7 pupils become members of an imaginary tribe, 'The Umbotty Tribe', who live on an island in the Pacific Ocean, and, through activities and discussions, pupils learn about aspects such as community spirit, crime and sanctions, the role of parents, conservation, property and ownership, the effect of visitors, gambling and sexual attraction. In Years 10 and 11 lessons are combined with religious education, careers and the world of work and include topics relating to the family, marriage and positive relationships, drugs and citizenship. However, the quality of teaching is variable in these lessons. Science lessons and tutorial time also contribute effectively to pupils' development.
33. Overall, provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good. Provision for the spiritual development of pupils is satisfactory. Since the last inspection, the school has put more care into the content of assemblies, which now often include an element of spirituality or opportunity for reflection. In a Year 10 assembly a teacher, with great sensitivity, shared with pupils her recent experience of a funeral and read reflective poems. Within the curriculum, pupils are able to consider the theories of evolution and their place in the universe in science lessons. In drama, activities extend the imagination and provoke contemplation. In religious education, Year 7 pupils have opportunities to reflect on the meaning and purposes of prayer. Elsewhere, however, there are few opportunities for spiritual growth or reflection and the school still fails to comply with the statutory requirements for collective worship.
34. Provision for pupils' moral education is very good. By their own example and expectations that pupils will behave considerately, teachers act as very good role models. The personal and social education programme covers a number of topics that raise pupils' awareness of

rights and responsibilities, law and order, and prejudice. There are good contributions to pupils' moral development in many subjects. In science, for example, pupils learn about genetics and diseases and are able to discuss issues raised in newspapers, such as Dolly the sheep and the Siamese twins. In religious education, pupils consider moral issues such as abortion and, in art, pupils discuss environmental issues such as waste and recycling. In design and technology, responsible behaviour is emphasised to ensure safe working. In a Year 10 assembly, pupils were encouraged to reflect on the consequences of their actions. The Year Councils also provides pupils with opportunities to discuss issues with senior teachers.

35. The school's overall provision for pupils' social development is very good. Opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively are provided in many subjects, developing teamwork skills and learning to value the contribution of others. Social interaction is also promoted through a range of extra-curricular activities and visits both in this country and abroad. Work experience in the upper school provides experience of the world of work and the Year 9 Equal Opportunities Day involves pupils in school and community-based activities. Pupils' awareness of the needs of the less fortunate in society is developed through charitable fund-raising events. For example, a Year 9 tutor group collected foreign coins to raise money for Macmillan Cancer Relief. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to show initiative and take responsibility. These include Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, Junior Arts Leader Award, Junior Sports Leader Award, older pupils helping younger ones in paired reading and Year 6 induction, and pupils acting as guides for Open Evenings.
36. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. There are visits to places of cultural interest in this country and abroad. In art, for example, pupils have the opportunity to visit London and local art galleries. In music, pupils have the opportunity to attend concerts at Birmingham's Symphony Hall. Cultural diversity is well developed in art, which includes the study of a range of cultures, and in music, where Japanese, African, Latin American, Gamelan, ragtime and blues music are part of the curriculum. However, there are missed opportunities to explore the diversity of the pupils' cultural backgrounds as a resource for learning across the curriculum and the major religious festivals are not celebrated.
37. Careers education and guidance is a very strong feature. It is well administered and seamlessly integrated into the curriculum. Pupils in Year 9 are offered guidance in their choice of study In Years 10 and 11 and the pathways open to them for further education and the world of work. All departments have clearly expressed statements, in the subject option brochure, of their contribution to prospective careers and keep a small, but appropriate, number of careers books available for pupils. The English department assists pupils in the preparation of their curricula vitae. Additionally, Year 9 pupils receive further guidance in an annual Equal Opportunities event. In Years 10 and 11, in addition to continued guidance within the personal and social education curriculum, a three-day Industry Week provides experience of work for Year 10 pupils, for example participating in a manufacturing project in association with Peugeot. All Year 11 pupils undertake a week's work experience in local businesses and commerce. Additional work experience is arranged, where it is believed appropriate, and there is an annual Careers Convention. The provision is supported by clear partnership arrangements with the Careers Service and local businesses. They are active in their support, and opportunities are also made available for teachers to extend their understanding and knowledge. There is regular monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of the provision, which includes an annual analysis of leavers' destinations. The school has been recognised for its careers library provision and is currently piloting the National Standard Award.

38. The school has extensive links with both the local and the wider community. These links make a very good contribution to pupils' learning. Visits to art galleries, museums and concerts enhance the curriculum in both the arts and the sciences. The school takes full advantage of the facilities of The Dovehouse Theatre to take the work of the school into the community. Pupils respond with enthusiasm. A recent production was oversubscribed to the extent that the school was able to form two casts and double the number of performances. The music and drama curriculum is enriched by theatre and concert visits and by the work of visiting groups, such as The Welsh National Opera and members of The City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. The school has benefited from sponsorship by a variety of businesses including Sainsbury's and John Lewis.
39. There is a close working partnership between Langley School and its contributory primary schools. As a result, on transfer from primary education, year and form tutors are able to develop pupils' personal and academic skills with the minimum disruption to the pupils.
40. Curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and has a positive effect on their progress. All pupils who have special educational needs are identified on entry and a range of organisational approaches, such as setting, grouping and individual work, addresses their individual needs. Appropriate targets for learning are incorporated into IEPs. These plans are reviewed regularly and provide the necessary detail to enable teachers to plan suitable learning experiences. Appropriate emphasis is given to improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, both in discrete lessons and across the curriculum. For example, key words like 'disease', 'democracy' and 'government' are practised in history. In design and technology, measuring skills are reinforced in a project on making bird feeders. All pupils, with the exception of those in the Specific Learning Difficulties Centre in Years 7 and 8, who follow a relevant but narrower curriculum, have equality of access to the full range of learning activities that promote achievement and personal development. These include the extensive range of extra-curricular activities, including pupils with physical disabilities taking a full and active part in canoeing and abseiling, and before-school activities such as, for example, the 'paired reading' and 'catch up' literacy and numeracy clubs. Pupils with special educational needs are appropriately accredited through the Certificate of Achievement, GNVQ and GCSE. The school is able to call on the advice and support of a range of external services to improve its care and provision. These include the 'outreach' teaching service, the psychology service, teachers for the visually and hearing impaired, the speech and language service and physiotherapists.
41. Provision for able pupils is satisfactory and developing, but has yet to raise their standards across the whole school. Pupils have been identified and monitored. A range of enrichment and curricular activities has been organised and links with outside agencies have been set up. Pupils with particular talents in sport, drama, art and music are appropriately supported and challenged.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

42. The school rightly prides itself on the quality of care that it exercises over the well-being and development, both personal and academic, of each pupil.
43. Relationships are very good and pupils know and are known by their tutors. The system whereby, as far as possible, year heads and tutors stay with the same pupils throughout their school career, enables trust and strong relationships to be built up. The school's comprehensive personal, social and health education programme, taught by a small team of specialists, is complemented by a pastoral programme, well taught by form tutors. As a result,

pupils develop personal and study skills, self-esteem, consideration for others, confidence and initiative.

44. Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance is above average; there is little internal truancy. The monitoring of attendance by tutors and year heads is thorough: unaccounted absence is followed up swiftly and the educational welfare service is involved where necessary. Pupils are awarded certificates for good attendance.
45. Arrangements for child protection are very good. The designated member of staff is also the pastoral co-ordinator. He is very experienced and his training is regularly updated. Two year heads and the medical room supervisor are also undergoing training. The staff handbook lays out clearly the procedures to be followed and contains very helpful advice for teachers. There are good links with the relevant agencies.
46. The school is very conscious of its duty to ensure the health and safety of pupils and all adult members of the school community and is fortunate to have a governor with long experience in the field who has been a source of invaluable advice. There have been two reports in the last three years, both of which have been favourable. The installation of closed-circuit television and the erection of a perimeter fence in recent years have greatly increased the security of the school site. The school has an active Health and Safety Committee which includes the site manager. A draft risk-assessment policy is in the process of consultation; meanwhile the head of science, who has undergone risk-assessment training, has introduced a departmental policy and practices which are models for other departments. The school nurse, the medical room supervisor and a number of first-aiders among the staff all make a valuable contribution to pupils' health.

47. The school has a positive behaviour policy in which the contribution of each pupil to the school community is valued. Pupils are encouraged to be considerate and helpful towards others. Every contribution, however modest, is recognised whether by a word in the corridor or tutor group or by the award of certificates for attendance and for achievement and service in all spheres of activity. There is a merit system in Years 7 to 9; badges, for instance for help in the library; letters of commendation; and letters of thanks for some service to the school. Notable service and achievements, in respect of the whole school, are marked by the award of special ties and badges. Every contribution of pupils to school life is recorded by the tutor and head of year and forms part of their National Record of Achievement.
48. The school expects high standards of behaviour and this expectation is backed up by a clear hierarchy of sanctions which are applied consistently by all staff. Teachers provide good models and the visible presence of teachers and senior staff about the school at break and lunchtime and before and after school keeps problems to a minimum. Tutors and year heads monitor behaviour closely and, where pupils are having difficulties, parents are involved at an early stage. Procedures in the case of exclusion are detailed, clear and strictly adhered to; documentation is thorough. Parents are informed clearly of their rights and how they can seek help from external agencies. Inevitably, there are occasional instances of bullying but pupils are not afraid to report them and express great confidence that they will be dealt with swiftly and effectively.
49. The school has a wealth of assessment data, which is analysed carefully by the headteacher and deputy to provide a baseline from which to calculate the progress of pupils in relation to their potential, as indicated by the assessments. This data is supplemented, at different stages, by the results of other assessments, including National Curriculum tests at age 14, and the mid-year information system and the Year 11 information system in Years 7 and 10. The information gained is used to set targets for the School Improvement Plan. All departments receive a copy of the assessment data for each teaching group, enabling them in their turn to set targets and to calculate the value added by their teaching. Each year, the headteacher and deputy conduct a review of results, explore ways of improving them and set new targets for the following year.
50. Assessment and monitoring of academic progress within departments are satisfactory, and, in science, are very good. In general, practice is not always consistent within and across departments and not all relate assessment to National Curriculum and GCSE criteria. By Year 11, however, most pupils have a clear idea of where they stand in relation to examination targets. Departments are beginning to use their analysis of results at all levels to inform planning and teaching.
51. In addition to the monitoring of academic progress done by departments, tutors and year heads are very effective in monitoring individual pupils across all their subjects. They know the pupils well and have a good statistical base from which to work. During registration time, tutors were observed discussing reports with pupils and comparing these with the targets that had been set. Their knowledge of the pupils enables them to identify problems quickly and set in motion a plan of action. Pupils are very appreciative of the help they receive. The care, organisation and record keeping of tutors and year heads are a strength of the school.
52. The support for pupils with special educational needs, including those with specific learning difficulties and physical and sensory disabilities, is good and contributes to their good progress and achievements. All staff are aware of the procedures for identifying, assessing and providing for such pupils and the school fully complies with the requirements set out in the Code of Practice. The targets in pupils' IEPs are precise and measurable and when they

are used effectively they inform planning and teaching. Both IEPs and Statements are regularly reviewed and parents are fully involved and kept well informed. The special educational needs co-ordinator and teachers in charge of the Specific Learning Difficulties Centre and Physical Disability Resource Centre, between them, arrange, attend and invite key people to all reviews. They ensure that the provision is re-examined in the light of any progress or regression that the pupils have made.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

53. The school is well regarded by parents, most of whom believe that it provides a good education for their children: “My son has had a good experience at Langley,” was the comment from one parent. As a result of the school’s popularity, pupils come from a wide catchment area. There is an active parent-teacher association with an enthusiastic committee which organises a number of social and fund-raising events throughout the year. A good relationship has been built up between the parent-teacher association and the school.
54. Information for parents is provided through annual reports which give them guidance on their children’s progress and future academic objectives. Information about the school is provided to parents through a well-produced prospectus. Newsletters, to which the parent-teacher association also makes a contribution, provide a further source of information. Written information to parents is produced only in English which does not recognise the school’s small, but significant, population from other ethnic backgrounds. The return from the pre-inspection parent questionnaires indicates that almost 75 per cent of parents feel well informed about their child’s progress. Parents of pupils in Year 7 are kept informed of their children’s progress throughout the year. A well-recorded monitoring system helps form tutors to give up-to-date information to these parents. Annual meetings, at which parents have the opportunity to discuss their children’s progress, are well attended, although parents of pupils in Year 7 would appreciate an earlier opportunity to meet the subject teachers.
55. Parents support the school directly, for instance through help with drama productions and on school visits. Parents give moral support to the school by ensuring that their children arrive well prepared: in physical education, for example, pupils’ kit is of a very high standard. Some parents also have links with commerce and industry, providing the school with a rich resource which enhances many areas of the curriculum. For example, improvements to the school’s design and technology workshops were made with advice and help from a local engineering company.
56. There is a home/school agreement and parents support their children through the use of homework diaries.
57. The school has plans to develop a Family Learning Centre, initially focused on ICT, which will provide an opportunity for parents to learn new skills alongside their children.
58. Since the last inspection the school has continued to develop its strong links with parents.
59. The partnership with parents of pupils with special educational needs is very good and was commented upon in the meeting with the registered inspector. Parents are kept well informed by regular contact and by the relevant information provided by the school. Some parents attend training evenings and are given insight into the strategies or equipment being used. This enables parents to play a fully supportive role and enhances pupils’ learning. Pupils’ targets in their Education Plans, their progress and achievements are shared with parents in regular consultations. Annual reviews are well attended.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

60. The headteacher and her senior management team efficiently and effectively manage the school and have been particularly successful in developing and sustaining the remarkably consistent ethos under which pupils from all backgrounds and levels of prior attainment behave very well and treat each other, and adults, with courtesy and respect. Langley School is a civilised and civilising place in which teachers and other staff are happy to come to work and pupils are happy to come to learn. Both in lessons and around the school pupils and staff work well together and pupils blossom in confidence under the consistent care and concern shown for their education and general well-being. This happy state of affairs is due in large part to the leadership and charisma of the headteacher who leads the way by personal example and by a quietly determined insistence that all staff focus upon the needs of individual pupils.
61. As a result, pupils with special educational needs are very well integrated into the general life of the school, as are pupils from minority ethnic groups.
62. The headteacher's commitment to the value of the arts has enabled talented and dedicated teachers to develop provision of very high quality in drama, art and music, with great benefit to the spiritual, moral and social development of all pupils and, in particular, to their high levels of self-belief and inter-personal skills. The arts have a proud place within a comprehensive curriculum that, broadly, meets the needs of the pupils.
63. The school has made improvements, since the previous inspection, in its planning and has moved from a school development plan to a school improvement plan and now also includes priorities for consideration over a longer, three-year, period. More recently the school has made great strides in the development of its system for analysing pupils' performance in tests and public examinations in order to identify underachievement by pupils and relative underperformance by subjects in order to set appropriately challenging improvement targets and subsequently to monitor progress towards them. This system is beginning to improve the rigour and effectiveness with which teachers challenge underachievement and do something about it, but is not yet consistently secure in all departments.
64. However, the problems identified in the curriculum section of this report remain. Weaknesses in the planned provision of ICT across all subjects, and generally in Years 7 to 9, and time for the teaching of religious education throughout, were identified in the previous inspection in 1996 and have not yet been addressed.

65. The governing body is highly supportive of the school and the headteacher and carries out its business effectively through appropriately minuted meetings, including those of its committees. The curriculum committee receives reports from all subject departments and feeds these through to the meetings of the full governing body. The governors are actively engaged in the life of the school. Several governors are linked to subject departments and offer support through visits. The governor with responsibility for special educational needs is particularly active and effective. However, there is no well-embedded tradition of governors analysing the performance of the pupils in public tests and examinations, agreeing priorities for improvement and monitoring subsequent progress. The recent good developments by the headteacher and deputy head in the analysis of data on pupils' performance mean that the governors are well placed to improve their own work in this respect. The governing body also needs to ensure that it meets its statutory responsibilities with regard to the provision of religious education, design and technology and ICT.
66. The school makes satisfactory strategic use of the resources available to it. Once it has corrected the weaknesses in its provision to meet statutory curriculum requirements, it will be making good use of these resources. The senior managers and governors are very effective in attracting outside grants and always act in the best interests of the pupils in allocating resources within the school in order to sustain a well-qualified teaching and support staff.
67. The school systematically applies the principles of best value in all its major spending decisions.
68. Currently, in some areas of the school, there are clear weaknesses in the match and sufficiency of teachers to meet the demands of the curriculum. However these difficulties are short-term and, when the new academic year commences, the appointments already made will resolve most of them. Otherwise, most specialist teachers are well qualified in their subjects and, where this is not the case, for example in history in Years 7 to 9, standards are not seriously impaired. The deployment of staff is generally good, although the number of classes split between different teachers in English and mathematics across the school, and in modern foreign languages in Years 7 to 9, adversely affects the continuity of teaching and the pace of progress in these subjects. This problem is complex and has its roots in the school's organisational strategies. There are very good arrangements in place for the induction of new staff and especially so for newly qualified teachers. They receive very good formal and informal support, for example from other staff acting as mentors. All elements of this programme are most highly valued by newly qualified teachers. Specialist staff for all pupils with special educational needs are experienced and well qualified. Support assistants are well managed and in the main effectively used. The quality and performance of the administrative, clerical, technical and library staff, provide good support for the efficient day-to-day running of the school. Arrangements for the performance management of teachers in most subject areas are now well in place. This process has already begun to contribute to the professional development of many teachers, although there are still identifiable areas of need still to be tackled, especially relating to the successful teaching of ICT in some subjects. Many teachers have taken the opportunity to identify, and then undertake, relevant staff development opportunities with the support of the school's well-established programme. The school is aware of the need for more support for pupils in subject areas and plans are in hand to appoint further assistants for September.
69. The school has been ambitious and successful in continuing to raise the overall standard of its accommodation. The most recent addition, that of the Arts and Sports Centre, is a clear indication of how a combination of planning, commitment and leadership has significantly enhanced this aspect of the school. On the outside the whole site is pleasant and very well

kept with very few problems relating to either litter or graffiti. The extensive grassed areas provide for a combination of play, recreation and learning in a number of subjects for pupils of all ages. Within the school's buildings, areas provided for relaxation are used with respect by all, for example in the "quadrangle", and there is good access for everyone to almost all areas of learning. Inside, standards are similarly high, and a particular strength, the very high quality of display, is to be seen throughout the school. This feature of the school enables its pupils to celebrate their success in learning, and ensures that the school as a place of work is bright and attractive. Much of the work displayed in classrooms is also informative and often crosses traditional subject boundaries, for example highlighting the important place of literacy skills in physical education. Specialist subject facilities are generally good, though space is at a premium in some science laboratories, temporary classrooms are not well ventilated in very warm weather and the art and design area still lacks storage space for pupils' three-dimensional work. In arts and sports the quality of accommodation is very good, enabling drama in particular to benefit from a learning environment matched only in professional circles. The Specific Learning Difficulties Centre, also relatively new, is excellent. The accommodation is excellent. The Resource Centre For Pupils With Physical Disabilities, in addition to the normal teaching areas, has rooms for medical and physiotherapy staff. A specially designed kitchen has been adapted to allow wheelchair users full access to the facilities and to the food technology curriculum. A lift, ramps and automatic doors provide full access to all parts of the school and the curriculum for pupils and adults with physical disabilities. The Specific Learning Difficulties Centre is well designed and spacious.

70. The quantity, range and quality of resources to support teaching and learning are good in most departments. For example, in history there is a good range of printed materials, including poetry to broaden pupils' knowledge and understanding of the First World War. There are exceptions: in design and technology there are insufficient learning resources to show the effect of the subject on everyday life and in religious education, although resources have improved since the last inspection, there are clear gaps in the availability of those learning materials, artefacts, literature and visits that would make a valuable contribution to the multicultural dimension of pupil development. In art, there are insufficient facilities for print making or for computer-aided design. In several areas the provision of ICT equipment is good but is not effectively used by teachers and thus the school's use of new technology for learning is currently weak. Most subject-based learning is well resourced, there is no reported shortage of textbooks, for example in core subjects, and in the school's Open Access Learning Centre additional learning materials are provided to support pupils' work. The school makes very prudent use of the additional grants made available for learning resources from a variety of sources. In matching funding in development projects such as the Arts/Sports centre, it ensures that all areas of the school enjoy maximum benefit from spending. Resources are effectively used to improve the quality of education for all pupils with special educational needs. The allocation and use of funds for pupils with special educational needs are appropriate and well targeted to match individual needs and the requirements of those pupils with Statements.
71. The special educational needs provision is well managed and co-ordinated by the head of special educational needs. He is well supported in his work by the teachers with responsibility for the Specific Learning Difficulties Centre, the Resource Centre For Pupils with Physical Disabilities, and for gifted and talented pupils. Together, they provide good professional leadership for their colleagues. Special educational needs has high status within the school, which sets out to be socially inclusive in its aspirations and its practice. It features prominently in the School Improvement Plan. The special educational needs provision and policy are effectively monitored by the headteacher and the experienced governor with responsibility for special educational needs. He visits the school regularly, meets once a term

with the special educational needs co-ordinator and reports on special educational needs issues to the full governing body.

THE CENTRE FOR PUPILS WITH SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFICULTIES (SpLD)

72. Since the last inspection, a new, purpose-built centre accommodates pupils with specific learning difficulties and has been incorporated into the main school building. It includes three spacious classrooms and a large multipurpose meeting room. The SpLD centre caters for up to 28 pupils, some of whom come from Birmingham. Many are brought in by taxi or minibus. There are clear criteria in place for the admission of pupils to the centre, administered by the LEA. Pupils have undergone formal assessment and have Statements of Special Educational Need.
73. The achievement and progress made by pupils in the SpLD Centre are very good. Pupils make very good progress academically across most subjects of the curriculum, having acquired the confidence and key skills which enable them to generalise and adapt new learning. This is as a result of consistently good and occasionally very good teaching, accurate assessment procedures and a range of support strategies. Pupils make good, and occasionally very good, progress in literacy and numeracy, because teachers assess individual strengths and weaknesses. They then provide an appropriate, multi-sensory programme of work that is comprehensive, systematic and builds on prior learning. Teachers' high expectations and confidence that pupils can overcome their specific difficulties encourage pupils to apply themselves. This results in a purposeful classroom ethos in which good learning occurs. Records show that pupils make very good gains in reading, for example an average gain of over two years in reading age in a one-year period. Pupils who started school in the SpLD Centre are appropriately accredited in Year 11 through the Certificate of Achievement, GNVQ and GCSE. Last year, a pupil from the SpLD centre, who was admitted with a reading age of seven years, achieved four 'C' grades at GCSE. Others also make significant gains in line with their potential.
74. Older pupils with SpLD continue to achieve well after they have left the centre and make good progress in classes and subjects in the main school, in which they are fully integrated. For example, in an English lesson supported by a teacher from the SpLD centre, pupils showed exceptional speaking and listening skills, when playing out the roles of chat show hosts. They adapted their talk to the demands of the situation with increasing confidence. They engaged the interest of the class with the variety of their vocabulary, ideas, expression and sense of humour. This was made possible because planning and organisation were very good. The teacher introduced the lesson clearly and set the scene. Questions and discussions clarified the task and everyone's contribution was valued. The activity was suitably challenging and pupils were highly motivated. A good-quality worksheet and appropriate newspaper article enabled pupils to plan and prepare their scripts. Time flew and everyone enjoyed the activity. The plenary at the end reviewed progress and celebrated performances. The pupils left the lesson with a sense of achievement and raised self-esteem.
75. Assessment procedures in the centre are very thorough and contribute to pupils' progress and achievement. Pupils are assessed on entry and reassessed at the end of each year. Targets in pupils' IEPs are very precise and inform teaching and planning. These are regularly reviewed and amended. Annual reviews are properly convened with parents and support services in attendance. Teachers also take care to monitor pupils' emotional and behavioural responses and provide advice and strategies to reduce anxiety and enhance self-esteem. They encourage pupils to take a full and active part in all school activities and to accept and exercise responsibilities.

76. The centre is well led and co-ordinated. Staffing is appropriate. It includes three teachers and two special support assistants. All staff are suitably qualified and experienced. They are appropriately deployed to meet individual needs or the requirements of pupils' Statements. The contribution of the special support assistants working in the centre is effective. They work with individual pupils on specific programmes, carry out ongoing assessments during lessons, support SpLD pupils in the main school and contribute to reviews. The centre is able to call on the services of a range of external services, including the Educational Psychology Service and Learning Support Service, to enhance its provision. The work of the centre is effectively monitored by the SEN co-ordinator, the headteacher and governing body.
77. Resources are good and easily accessible. Good use is made of ICT to improve learning and motivate pupils through, for example, programs like Word Shark and Number Shark. Good use is also made of finely graded literacy programmes, such as Corrective Reading and Language Laboratories, steadily to consolidate pupils' progress. The link with parents is very good. By sharing pupils' targets with parents and by arranging workshop/training sessions for them on advice on helpful strategies, pupils' learning is enhanced. Homework is set regularly and this further consolidates and extends learning.
78. Pupils from the centre have only limited access to a broad and balanced curriculum in Years 7 and 8. The levels of inclusion are needs-led and increase with age, with a planned return to the main school or their local schools in Year 9. This lack of access to the full National Curriculum compromises the breadth of pupils' experience of the curriculum in the first two years at school.
79. The centre has maintained the high standards of teaching and learning noted in the previous inspection.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

80. Key Issues

In order to improve further the standards attained by pupils and the quality and effectiveness of educational provision, the school should:

- (1) Correct the weaknesses in curriculum provision which impair learning, specifically:
 - (a) the insufficient lesson time for religious education; for mathematics and the separate sciences of biology, physics and chemistry in Years 10 and 11; and for ICT, music and design and technology in Years 7 to 9 (see paragraphs 30, 64, 108, 132, 159, 174 and 187);
 - (b) the rotation of lessons in design and technology with those in ICT throughout in Years 7 to 9, together with lessons in personal and social education in Year 9, which disrupts the teaching of each subject (see paragraphs 8, 29, 132 and 137);
 - (c) the number of classes which are split between teachers, and therefore impair coherence, in English and mathematics throughout the school and modern foreign languages in Years 7 to 9 (see paragraphs 8, 29, 68, 94 and 108).
- (2) Further improve the teaching and learning of pupils of higher ability in Years 10 and 11 in order to improve their levels of attainment, particularly girls in English, mathematics and geography (see paragraphs 1, 13, 24, 41, 84, 102 and 149).
- (3) Meet the statutory requirements for religious education throughout the school, for design and technology and ICT in Years 7 to 9 and for a daily act of collective worship (see paragraphs 29, 33, 64, 65, 185, 187 and 194).
- (4) Meet the statutory requirement to provide all pupils in Years 10 and 11 with approved courses in design and technology, unless completing the formal disapplication procedures (see paragraphs 30, 65 and 134).

81. In addition to the key issues for action listed above, the school should consider the following improvements:
- (1) develop the use made of ICT in the teaching of subjects across the curriculum (see paragraphs 29, 64, 137, 152, 156, 159, 163, 164, 171 and 193);
 - (2) develop opportunities across the curriculum for spiritual growth or reflection (see paragraph 33);
 - (3) take advantage of the diversity of multicultural backgrounds from which many pupils come by using this diversity to enliven and enrich the teaching of subjects across the curriculum and through the celebration of religious festivals (see paragraphs 36, 177 and 193);
 - (4) give an opportunity, early in Year 7, for parents to meet their children's teachers (see paragraph 54);
 - (5) enable the governing body to identify weaknesses in teaching and in the achievements of pupils in order to agree priorities for improvement and monitor progress (see paragraph 65);
 - (6) improve the learning resources available to enrich the teaching of other faiths in religious education lessons (see paragraphs 70 and 193);
 - (7) improve the access of pupils with specific learning difficulties to a broad and balanced curriculum in Years 7 and 8 (see paragraph 40).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

181

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

64

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	18	45	29	5	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	960	n/a
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	92	n/a

Special educational needs

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	53	n/a
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	262	n/a

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	87

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	16
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	25

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.4
National comparative data	7.8

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.39
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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	93	98

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	48	70	76
	Girls	79	81	79
	Total	127	151	155
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	67 (81)	79 (71)	81 (58)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	29 (26)	59 (46)	48 (21)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	53	77	67
	Girls	69	86	76
	Total	122	163	143
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	64 (70)	86 (77)	75 (70)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	31 (46)	65 (56)	41 (38)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (28)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	82	98	180

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	47	69	76
	Girls	51	94	97
	Total	96	163	173
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	53.5 (52)	90.6 (89)	96.1 (97)
	National	47.4 (46.6)	90.6 (90.9)	95.6 (95.8)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	38.5 (37.7)
	National	38.4 (38.0)

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	30 83.3
	National	n/a

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	11
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	5
Indian	48
Pakistani	28
Bangladeshi	8
Chinese	1
White	852
Any other minority ethnic group	6

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	57.71
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.06

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7– Y11

Total number of education support staff	20
Total aggregate hours worked per week	481

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	77
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 2	n/a
Key Stage 3	22.6
Key Stage 4	21.4

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	2	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	2	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	44	2
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	2,508,411
Total expenditure	2,494,118
Expenditure per pupil	2,603
Balance brought forward from previous year	74,847
Balance carried forward to next year	89,140

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	960
Number of questionnaires returned	153

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	42	50	6	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	47	46	4	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	31	58	6	0	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	50	16	6	1
The teaching is good.	33	60	4	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	41	35	18	4	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	36	2	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	41	2	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	34	45	12	2	5
The school is well led and managed.	55	37	1	1	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	41	1	1	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	53	39	2	1	4

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

Parents are very supportive of the school and of its values and believe their children make good progress. They find the school well managed and praise the leadership of the headteacher. Provision for children with special educational needs, including the work of the centres, is highly regarded. A minority feels that the homework timetable is not followed rigorously, with too much or too little homework at times and that it sometimes lacks structure. Some wish to know more about how well their children are doing, particularly early in Year 7.

Other issues raised by parents

One parent felt that the school did not do enough to recognise and celebrate minority ethnic groups. Some parents felt that some pupils had an 'anti-work' attitude that intimidated and demotivated other children.

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

ENGLISH

82. On entry to the school in Year 7, pupils' attainment in English is slightly lower than the national expectation. Although the full range of ability, except the very highest, is represented, there is a disproportionate number of comparatively low achievers.
83. In the national tests taken when pupils are 14, the proportion achieving levels 5 and above in the year 2000 was broadly average. Girls do better than boys. Pupils' attainment rose between 1997 and 2000. In comparison with all schools, pupils' achievement in English is close to the average, with a higher than average proportion of pupils achieving level 6. The school's performance was above average in comparison to similar schools.
84. In the year 2000, the proportion of pupils achieving grades A*-C and A-G in GCSE English was significantly better than the national average. Boys' achievement was significantly above the national average for boys, but girls' achievement was in line with the national average for girls. No pupil gained an A* grade in 2000, although the proportion of those who achieved an A grade exceeded the national average. In the past three years, the proportion of pupils achieving grades A*-C has remained constant. The proportion of boys achieving these levels has improved; that of girls has remained constant.
85. The proportion of all pupils achieving grades A*-C in English literature in 2000 was significantly below the national average, although in previous years it has been consistently significantly above it, for boys as well as for girls. Pupils have frequently obtained better grades in the subject than in English. In 2000, pupils did less well in English literature than in their other GCSE examinations. The marked decline in the number of grades A*-C was unforeseen by the school and is a subject of dispute with the examination board.
86. By the time they are 14, pupils speak clearly in lessons and many contribute well orally when they ask and answer pertinent questions. Pupils' reading aloud lacks confidence and skills of discussion are not well developed. Pupils realise, however, that they must change the way they speak on more formal occasions. In a lesson in Year 8, pupils spoke confidently to the class on a subject of their choice, but their enunciation was unclear. Pupils do not always listen with enough attention to the teacher or to each other.
87. By the end of Year 9, pupils have studied a worthwhile range of literature. All have tackled at least one Shakespeare play with interest and a measure of success. In their study of the poetry of the First World War, pupils respond with great empathy and begin to articulate their deep feelings about the suffering of the soldiers. They have real understanding of the high price many of the soldiers paid for victory. As they read the poems, pupils see in them the emotions of guilt, anger and helplessness, all of which they feel. In these lessons they learn how responses to texts are influenced by context, and by the experience and invention of readers and writers.

88. Pupils write in an adequate range of styles, including letters, diaries, poems, accounts and extended narrative pieces. All have written well word-processed guides for new pupils to the school which show a good sense of audience. In their study of literature, pupils identify and use persuasive language to help them in a range of writing. In their study of language Year 8 pupils used a sequencing exercise to help them to write a poem on personal journeys. In their study of written forms, Year 7 pupils turned a play script into direct speech, using correct punctuation. They were able to write a scene as prose, using a variety of synonyms for “said” to make their text more interesting. Pupils often work well in pairs. Pupils present their writing neatly. They take pride in their work. Although pupils use information communication technology to present their work in striking and original ways, its use could be further developed.
89. By the time they are 16, pupils’ listening skills have improved. They work together confidently and productively. In a year 10 class of girls, for example, pairs of pupils studying Andrew Marvell’s “To his coy mistress” took the roles of the principals and rehearsed the poet’s arguments to enjoy life here and now. Pupils made useful comparisons between the poem and Liz Lohead’s “Rapunzstiltskin” during this lesson. Pupils have good opportunities for public debate and performance during Years 10 and 11.
90. In their reading, pupils recognise poetic forms such as the sonnet. They reliably identify an iambic pentameter. They identify, and can justify, poetic techniques such as rhyming couplets, unusual and obsolete words and varieties of word order. They write an original poem using these features. In a Year 10 lesson on Simon Armitage’s poem “About his person”, pupils showed a good grasp of the power of the imagery of death and violence when they are offset by images of love and marriage. In “I am very bothered” by the same poet, pupils in a boys’ group identified images of the senses and quoted from the poem to support their answers.
91. Pupils’ writing is well organised, often extensive, and almost always grammatically correct. Striking and well-written empathetic writing of a personal nature is a strong feature of their attainment in Years 10 and 11.
92. All pupils make good progress in Years 7 to 9, because they are well taught, and make at least satisfactory progress in Years 10 and 11 with boys doing better than girls. All the teaching seen was at least satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and a high proportion was good. One lesson was excellent. Teachers have good knowledge and manage their classes well. In the good lessons, teachers planned well, having careful regard for the prior attainment of their pupils and providing a motivating and appropriate range of activities to extend and consolidate their learning. Imaginative strategies held pupils’ interest. In a Year 9 lesson, for example, pupils opened a sealed envelope containing the jumbled lines of a poem. They were motivated by this to concentrate on a sequencing exercise which held their attention through to the subsequent activity of writing a poem. In a Year 9 lesson on emotive language, the teacher planned well to provide a good balance of activities which kept the lesson moving at a rapid pace, held pupils’ interest and encouraged them to learn. Resources were generally well used and frequently supported the learning of all pupils in the class. In the excellent lesson on the poetry of the First World War, the teacher showed the pupils a relative’s “dog tag” still bearing traces of the mud of Flanders and his discharge papers describing the nature of his wounds. This helped to make the poetry very real to them. In this lesson, a video clip from “Regeneration” shocked them. They were given extracts from a memoir to extend their understanding of the period. Large-format question sheets supported small-group work in this lesson and this helped pupils to connect the poems with their context. In less successful lessons, activities are not pitched at the right level, and limit the

most able. Planning is not sufficient fully to support the learning of the complete range of ability in the class.

93. Teaching in Years 10 and 11 is generally satisfactory and sometimes good. Teachers are knowledgeable, especially in their teaching of English literature, but no lesson seen in Years 10 and 11 provided pupils with sufficient insight into the poetic imagination. Some teachers showed little enthusiasm and some of the tasks set were dull. An activity to support the work on “To his coy mistress“ by Andrew Marvell was appropriate and motivating, but the glossary provided to help pupils’ understanding, in which, for example, “Instant fire” was translated as “bursting with energy”, was not used to illuminate images in the poem. Curriculum time is generous in Years 10 and 11, and teaching sometimes slows down to fill it, so that an element of daydreaming limits the progress of some pupils.
94. The curriculum is satisfactory throughout the school. Literacy teaching based on the national model has been successfully introduced. There is a good spelling programme in Years 7 to 9. Worthwhile literature is taught throughout. A useful programme of ICT teaching is being successfully developed. Too many classes are shared between more than one teacher throughout the school. This makes it difficult for teachers to pinpoint pupils’ weaknesses and improve them consistently. As some teachers do not know their pupils well, they have difficulty in pitching learning activities at the right level and pupils’ progress sometimes suffers.
95. Management of the subject is satisfactory. Resources are generally good. Induction of new teachers is very good and students are well looked after. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching is, however, not sufficiently rigorous. Monitoring of pupils’ work is satisfactory. Analysis of examinations statistics is not sufficiently rigorous to develop and guide further the work of the department.
96. Since the last inspection there has been a satisfactory level of improvement. The proportion of pupils achieving grades A*-C in the GCSE examination remained above the national averages. Attainment In English literature, after a period in which the proportion of pupils achieving grades A*-C exceeded the national average by a wide margin, declined in 2000.
97. The school is taking part in the national pilot “Language for Learning” in Years 7 to 9. Provision is recent and therefore is becoming established.
98. There is a whole-school policy, which has yet to be effectively monitored. A wide- ranging training programme for teachers has included skills such as the implementation of active reading strategies, the teaching of spelling, reading for information and the management of group talk.
99. Procedures to improve the quality of speaking and listening, reading and writing are being established in all departments. Literacy objectives are being systematically included in schemes of work across the school. Objectives to improve writing and spelling are currently better established than those to improve reading and listening. Not all departments have yet produced a subject-specific policy to aid learning in their subject. Where there are policies, such as in mathematics and religious education, they are not yet consistently applied. Emphasis on key vocabulary helps pupils’ conceptual understanding particularly well in science, where technical terms are referred to continually and changed as the topics being studied are changed. Specific terminology is well promoted in physical education and mathematics. Literacy targets are specifically taught in ICT. Key words are now displayed in the majority of classrooms.

100. The promotion of literacy varies throughout the curriculum. It is particularly strong in physical education, science, geography, ICT and English. Literacy catch-up lessons are held throughout the week. A literacy summer school to improve the standards of all pupils was held for the first time last year.

MATHEMATICS

101. The attainment of the pupils on entry to this school is broadly in line with national expectations. At the end of Year 9, the attainment in the statutory tests is well above the national average, in comparison with both the national figure and that for similar schools. Pupils at this stage do better in mathematics than in English. The girls perform better than the boys.
102. By the end of Year 11, the percentage of pupils gaining A*-C grades at GCSE is broadly in line with the national average for all schools. A similar picture emerges for the more-able students gaining A*-B grades. The boys' percentage grades at A*-C is above the national average for all boys, but the girls' percentage grades for A*-C is below that for all girls. However, when a comparison is made of the subject's performance relative to pupils' performance in other subjects, the grades for mathematics are one-third of a grade below the average, for boys almost half a grade below the average and for girls one-fifth of a grade down. In Years 10 and 11, the standards of mathematics observed during the inspection were good and the achievement of the pupils was also good. In Year 10, high-attaining pupils handled confidently equations of lines using the co-ordinates of two points on the line; average and low-attaining pupils were seen doing cumulative frequency curves and answering questions using the subsequent graph in an able manner. In Year 11, as part of their revision for GCSE, pupils were seen coping without too much difficulty with ratios in trigonometry, quadratic equations, surface areas and volumes of solids.
103. The standards in mathematics observed during the inspection in Years 7 to 9 are good and consistent with the statutory test results. Likewise, the achievement of pupils is good in relation to their entry level and they all make good progress through Years 7 to 9, especially those with special educational needs. During lessons, high-attaining pupils in Year 7 were seen forming equations of straight lines after calculating their gradient and intercept, in Year 8 pupils of average attainment were handling the properties of angles and parallel lines confidently and in Year 9 pupils of low attainment were competently calculating simple interest using percentages. The reason for this lies in part in the fact that the school is a member of the national project in the earlier years and this has strengthened the transition from Year 6 to Year 7, and ensured progression in the teaching of the subject. The lessons all contain an initial explanation of what the pupils are to learn, a taught element, a practice session and a final summary of the lesson.

104. A good feature throughout the school is the extent to which calculators are 'not used' as a matter of course, and the way in which mental skills are constantly used to work out solutions to problems. The curriculum offered is very good and is based on the Enhanced Programme from Exeter University. A new GCSE examination is being adopted which is based on a modular approach, which it is thought will be of benefit to all pupils, particularly the boys, with testing coming at the end of each module.
105. The department has introduced a structured programme of investigative work in Years 7 to 9 and this should benefit the performance of pupils in the external tasks for GCSE. ICT is fully embedded in the curriculum for all the pupils.
106. The attitudes of the pupils to the subject are never less than satisfactory and in 80 per cent of the lessons seen they were good or better. They show an interest in what they are doing, and the positive manner in which the teachers respond to the answers from pupils does much to develop good relationships in the classroom. Teaching is never less than satisfactory and in 65 per cent of the lessons seen it was good or better. The teachers have high expectations of their pupils and want them to do well. They use methods which allow the pupils to learn by giving good explanations and demonstrations combined with good skills in the asking of questions. The teachers make sure that sufficient work is available for the children to do both in class and at home. Therefore, the reason for the relative subject underperformance at GCSE in this subject is not to be found in the teaching but in the timetable arrangements.
107. The work of the pupils is regularly marked. However, there is an inconsistency in the use of the marking policy of the department. The policy makes provision for comments to be used by teachers to point out to pupils what they have to do in order to improve.
108. The head of department gives clear direction to the work of the department and promotes high standards. There is a comprehensive handbook for teachers and a very good scheme of work. She makes every effort to monitor the work of the department but her time to do this effectively is curtailed by the fact that she is required to teach 20 per cent of her time outside the subject. She also analyses the information of the pupils provided on entry in order to place the pupils in sets for teaching purpose. The setting system has benefits for all the pupils, particularly for the more able and those with special educational needs. However, throughout the school, many classes are split between two teachers, which creates problems of continuity and communication. It is further compounded in Years 10 and 11, where the pupils lose 12.5 per cent of teaching time because the department is required to deliver cross-curricular ICT. The performance of the pupils at GCSE is affected by these arrangements, as the depth of study, extension work and reinforcement that can be provided is impaired.
109. The accommodation and resources are both good and make a positive contribution to effective teaching and learning.
110. Since the last inspection, improvement has been good. The department has embedded ICT in the curriculum; it now has a good development plan with short-, medium- and long-term targets; and it continues to provide satisfactory or better teaching. By the end of Year 9 results continue to be very good; the results at the end of Year 11 are satisfactory; the scheme of work has been completed; and the pupils continue to have positive attitudes towards the subject. However, the marking of pupils' work is still inconsistent.
111. The Mathematics Department is part of the pilot project "Key Stage 3 National Strategy for Mathematics", and this has allowed the department to build on the impact of the National Numeracy Strategy in primary schools. The effect on the numeracy skills of the pupils is

good. There is a clear understanding and consistent practice among the teachers of mathematics of when and where to use mental skills for calculation. The pupils are given instructions 'not to use calculators' for particular problems, for example, in Years 7 to 9, in calculating percentages in simple interest and, in Years 10 and 11, in calculating probabilities using decimals. However, calculators are used sensibly when the size and complexity of the numbers involved in a problem demand their use, for example in science with low-attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11 calculating fuse ratings and the cost of electricity.

112. The pupils throughout the school are able to substitute numbers into formulas. Their work, both in presenting data graphically and making sense of data presented to them in this form, is very good, as shown in mathematics with high-attaining pupils in Years 7 to 9 calculating equations of lines from given line graphs. The satisfactory use of ICT by the pupils, for example in the creation of spreadsheets and databases, was observed during the inspection.
113. An audit of the contribution to numeracy of each department in the school has been undertaken. This revealed that the level of capability required of the pupils by the subject departments is often expected before the skill is taught in mathematics. An in-service training day has taken place during which all the staff were made aware of the common errors that pupils throughout the school make with regard to numeracy. In addition, all teachers were brought up to date with some of the new ways in which pupils are taught to work out solutions to problems, for example by subtraction of numbers.
114. A numeracy policy has been approved by the governing body of the school. A further in-service training day is planned to launch the policy and to set up a working group of teachers to monitor the impact of the policy across the school.
115. During the inspection, evidence of the use of numeracy across the curriculum was seen in measurement in science, spatial development in art, isometric drawings and averages in design and technology, in ICT, and in numeracy progress units in provision for pupils with special educational needs. The mathematics and special educational needs departments will run a joint numeracy summer school in 2001.

SCIENCE

116. On entry to the school, pupils' attainment in science is in line with national expectations and has risen slightly over the last three years. However, a significant number of pupils start with poor basic skills on entry to the school.
117. In 2000, pupils' results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 were well above the national average. The number of pupils reaching the expected level 5 and above was very high compared to the results of pupils in similar schools, as was the number of pupils reaching level 6 and above. Results of teacher assessment were below test results, but this reflected rigorous marking of investigative work rather than any weakness in practical skills. There has been overall improvement in standards over the period 1997-2000. There is no significant variation in the standards of boys and girls and pupils have achieved better in science than in English or mathematics.
118. In the GCSE examinations in 2000, results in science overall were well above the national average. The department provides a variety of courses to match the needs of pupils. Most pupils are entered for the double award in science and the number of pupils gaining grades A*-C was well above the national average. In this course boys strongly outperformed girls. All the pupils taking separate chemistry, biology and physics at GCSE gained grade A*-C and the performance of boys and girls was similar. Results for pupils taking the single award

in science were in line with expectations and on this course girls outperformed boys. Overall, the number of pupils achieving the highest grades of A* and A was slightly below the national expectation. This is because high-attaining pupils, especially girls, prefer to take the double award rather than the three separate sciences, both routes being taught in 20 per cent of curriculum time. Overall results have been stable over the last three years. Pupils achieve significantly better in double award science than in other subjects in the school.

119. The work seen during the inspection in Year 9 is good and supports the view that pupils achieve well in Years 7 to 9. Pupils have gained a good grasp of a wide range of science topics and improve their depth of understanding by the end of Year 9. High- and middle-attaining pupils can use word equations effectively to explain how chemical reactions occur and can use the particle theory when describing the effect of temperature on the rate at which solids dissolve, and they can relate this to the weathering of rocks. A group of low-attaining pupils could describe how to make sugar dissolve faster in tea, but found some of the scientific vocabulary involved confusing. The Cognitive Acceleration Through Science Education course (CASE), which has been in place for four years, has had a positive impact on the development of good practical skills and has improved pupils' confidence when planning experiments and analysing the data they collect.
120. Pupils are offered a variety of courses in Years 10 and 11. They can take a modular or linear course in single, double or separate sciences. All pupils achieve well by the end of Year 11, but low-attainers make particularly good progress owing to help provided by science teachers and the classroom assistants. Pupils taking courses at the higher level show good knowledge and understanding of complex concepts. They can explain the life cycle of stars and can compare the characteristics of the waves generated during an earthquake. Middle- and lower-attaining pupils can describe clearly how convection currents are used to ventilate coal mines. By the end of Year 11, pupils are able to carry out investigations involving a number of variables and collect accurate data, which they analyse effectively, using good graphical skills. Their reports show that they have good presentational skills and that some pupils are using the Internet effectively to research topics.
121. Throughout the school pupils show a positive attitude to science. In Years 7 to 9 pupils are keen to answer questions and are interested in the tasks set. However, there are limited opportunities for them to express their own ideas and to research topics of interest to them. In Years 10 and 11, displays in the department show that pupils are interested in current issues in science, are taking part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities associated with science and are using the Internet to extend their knowledge. Throughout the school pupils behave well and work safely and sensibly in the laboratories. They collaborate effectively and handle apparatus with care.
122. Since the last inspection, standards across the school have improved. The introduction of the separate science course in Years 10 and 11 has provided challenge for the high-attaining pupils and the use of ICT has become an important tool in extending pupils' experience of science. Pupils now keep a log of their achievements in ICT.
123. Teaching is good across the school and some very good teaching was observed in Years 10 and 11. Lessons are very carefully planned and include a wide variety of teaching methods, including video clips, demonstrations and practical tasks to help pupils understand the ideas involved. Many lessons start with questioning about previous work. This is an effective method of focusing pupils' attention, but opportunities are missed to listen to pupils explaining their own ideas. Practical work is well organised and, with the support of the laboratory technicians who provide good-quality resources, pupils are able to achieve meaningful results in the short time slots allocated for practical work. Teachers have very

good subject knowledge, enabling them to illustrate their lessons with examples of the application of science to everyday life, leading to some lively discussion. Class management is good and lesson objectives outlined at the beginning of the lessons are generally summarised before the close. In a small minority of lessons, where there is a lack of variety in the tasks provided or where pupils are not actively engaged in learning, some pupils lose concentration and show their lack of interest. Teachers' expectations are generally high. However, in Year 7, pupils are taught in form groups and there is a very wide range of attainment in each group. The provision of good-quality extension material for high attainers is limited, although help sheets are provided for low-attainers. Teachers' expectations of pupils with special educational needs are good. Pupils receive help from science teachers and learning support assistants and are provided with help sheets, writing frames and word sheets to enable them to make progress at the same rate as others in the group. Homework is set regularly. In Years 7 to 9 homework frequently involves completing tasks begun in class rather than providing the opportunity for pupils to check their understanding. Homework is generally marked in sufficient detail for pupils to understand how to improve their standard, but this is not always the case.

124. The science department is very well led and effectively managed. The head of department has recently initiated a new management structure, which is having a positive effect on teaching. Documentation is detailed and policies, with the exception of the homework and marking policy, are fully implemented. Subject performance is rigorously monitored by the management team. In the most effective lessons, pupils are aware of their current level of achievement, the target they have been set and the criteria they need to meet to achieve their target. Support is available for underachievers both in lessons and afterwards at a drop-in clinic. A recent review of teaching styles and the introduction of a programme of monitoring and evaluating teaching, planning and assessment, have enabled teachers to share best practice and this has proved effective. Teachers are well qualified and have a wide range of expertise. They are able to teach their specialism in Years 9 to 11. Teachers are currently receiving training in the use of ICT to support science teaching and they are extending their use of this in the classroom. Very good use is made of the suites of computers in the school, but updating provision within the department would enable more opportunities to develop skills, especially data-logging skills. A wide-ranging programme of activities outside the curriculum including visits, quizzes and science clubs, provides opportunities for all pupils, especially those gifted in the subject, to extend their experience of science.

ART AND DESIGN

125. The proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-C in the GCSE examination in 2000 was significantly above the national average and amongst the highest in the school. All boys attained grades A*-C, although the number taking the examination was too small to compare with national averages. Girls' results over the past three years have risen in line with national averages. Results for boys over the same period show a very significant improvement. An important factor in the rising trend of boys' attainment is the focus that the department has given to boys' underachievement. The number of boys opting for art textiles remains very low, but the head of department is countering by developing computer-aided design and ensuring that there is a strong technical component in the curriculum.
126. Small number of pupils is entered for the short course GCSE each year, if their course preparatory work is insufficient for them to gain a reasonable pass at full GCSE level. Results from this course are not so good as the GCSE results, but the majority gain a creditable pass at grades B-D. All of pupils have passed the GCSE examinations on both courses over the past three years.

127. Pupils arrive at the school having had a generally unsatisfactory introduction to art and design at their primary schools. The department ensures that the basic skills of line, tone, colour, texture and form are taught well in the first years at Langley School. By the age of 14, pupils' achievements are generally good and above national expectations for their age, and represent good progress in terms of their prior attainment. Pupils in Year 7 quickly pick up the skills of clay modelling and form good basic dragon shapes. More-able pupils put character and detail into their models, experimenting with tools for mark-making to produce texture on their maquettes. In Year 8, pupils use well-developed drawing and painting skills in their observational work on natural forms. The high standards expected by teachers ensure that they develop their work in individually creative ways. The most-able pupils, whose names do not necessarily appear on the school's 'most-able' register, demonstrate advanced observational and drawing skills in their work. By the end of Year 9 the majority of pupils are familiar with the term 'abstract' and can comment on the work of famous abstract artists, such as Picasso. More-able pupils can see the potential in 'abstraction' and are able to simplify and blend their observational sketches to create new patterns of colour and texture. Pupils who have physical disabilities, including visual impairment, make the same very good progress in lessons as others, being effectively supported by the teachers or by support staff who know them well. Those on the special educational needs register make very good progress overall.
128. Work seen during the inspection shows very high attainment by the age of 16. The standard of work in pastel and oil colour, and in textile work, is particularly high. A strength of GCSE coursework is the sustained development of themes chosen by the pupils. In Year 10 pupils, recollect many facts about the life and work of James Rosenquist. The mechanistic nature of his later work has a particular appeal to boys, although girls' achievements, when studying his work, are no less than those of the boys. Pupils use tjanting tools expertly in working on batik textile prints and are creative in using mixed media for their textile work. They draw and paint very good observational studies, based on the work of artists such as O'Keefe and Dali, using natural forms such as shells and flowers. Less-able pupils tend to work slowly on their drawings and are less observant than others. The more able sketch quickly and confidently, experimenting with colour and taking advantage of 'accidental' effects to push their work beyond conventions such as 'frame'. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 cover a wide range of styles and media, using sketchbooks to explore ideas from their research. Some of their architectural project work demonstrates a good grasp of perspective and a basic understanding of buildings from different cultures.
129. Teaching is very good throughout the school. In Year 10 and 11 it is sometimes excellent. Teachers have a sound grasp of all aspects of their subject and plan very effectively for lessons. The very good preparation and planning for lessons is particularly important in Years 7 to 9, where lesson time is limited. The enthusiasm that teachers have for their subject sustains the interest of pupils and is a factor in the very good progress they make. Contextual studies are particularly well taught and pupils make very good use of the wide range of artists they study. Very good use is made of 'gallery sessions' at the end of most of the lessons. Pupils develop their critical skills as they comment on their own and others' work. Excellent relationships are developed in lessons and the ethos for learning is relaxed, but creative and hard working. This ensures very good behaviour and a positive approach to learning. Good use is made of regular homework to extend the work of the lessons. Pupils are expected to work independently and to become independent learners by Year 11. There is a weakness in the development of pupils' awareness and understanding of the contributions made by minority ethnic communities to society as a whole. The use of annotation in sketchbooks and preparatory work for examinations is beginning to support the school's literacy initiative. The use of computers to manipulate scanned images is increasing as teachers attend appropriate in-service training.

130. This is a high achieving department that benefits from strong, well-informed and enthusiastic leadership. Since the last inspection, high overall standards have been maintained and there has been a very significant improvement in the attainment of boys in the GCSE examinations. Teachers work in accommodation that is cramped, but they strive hard to make the environment attractive and stimulating, using the work of pupils. Computer-aided design work is restricted by unsatisfactory hardware and software and printmaking resources have not been developed effectively to support both textiles and the extension of painting and drawing. The department is planning to form closer links with the dramatic and performing arts subjects, a plan that could considerably enhance the status of a school that is close to gaining the Artsmark Gold Award.

131. The department has made a good response to the last inspection report, raising the attainment of boys, improving the quality of teaching and learning and introducing computer-aided art.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

132. Pupils' standards of achievement by the end of Year 9 are below average. However, by the end of Year 11, standards are in line with national expectations. Pupils' progress in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory, but it is good in Years 10 and 11. Pupils' achievement at the end of Year 9 is lower than average because the time available for the delivery of the curriculum is very low. The rotational timetable prevents pupils from consolidating the skills they need to solve problems. In addition, there has been a significant turnover of staff.
133. Nevertheless, pupils have competent manipulative skills and work safely. Pupils make good quality products, for example compact disc holders and celebration cakes. However, pupils' ability to research and analyse design problems is insufficiently well developed, except in textiles. In textiles, pupils develop very good- quality outcomes, for example greetings cards and cushion covers, all of which are different, because they have good access to a wide range of stimulating resources, they share their design ideas and investigate a variety of processes as their designs develop. Pupils are highly motivated when engaged in practical activities. They are co-operative and respectful. Pupils' designing skills are poorly developed in most areas. Thus, more-able pupils do not achieve the National Curriculum levels of which they are capable and those with special educational needs require a lot of adult support to achieve successfully.
134. Only a minority of older pupils choose to take the subject but, in recent years, by the end of Year 11, they achieve levels that are above the national average in external examinations. Higher-attaining pupils develop their designs imaginatively, for example when they suggest how to modernise the image of a hotel. Pupils taking child development undertake research into a range of issues such as accidents involving children. The more-able pupils research and explore possibilities thoroughly and present their findings in a professional manner making good use of ICT. Because they evaluate their work as it develops, it shows a good depth and breadth of understanding of how design and technology have an impact on everyday life. Pupils following a vocational course in health and social care take considerable responsibility for their own work and evaluate their work well. The achievements of pupils taking a vocational course in manufacturing is below average. The work of lower-attaining pupils reflects less involvement in their work and less care in presentation. Pupils from minority ethnic groups achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well when taught by special educational needs staff.
135. Teaching is hardly ever less than satisfactory and this represents an improvement since the last inspection when there was a significant amount of unsatisfactory teaching across the school. In half of the lessons observed, it was good; in a few lessons, it was very good. In the most successful lessons, teachers were very successful in teaching design skills. Pupils were able to explore a range of possibilities and discuss their work to clarify their thinking. Pupils were encouraged to consider the principles of design, for example function, audience, colour and proportion. Teachers provided a good range of stimulating resources to extend pupils' imagination and understanding. They encouraged pupils to share their ideas and questioned them well to help them to clarify their thinking. This enabled pupils to produce a wide range of outcomes of a good standard. In most lessons, pupils were clear about the purpose of the lesson, time limits were set on activities and some teachers wrote the targets for the lesson on the board. Pupils were able to question teachers well to clarify their understanding, particularly in lessons where the activities were relevant and interesting. In a particularly successful lesson, pupils worked in teams to investigate the influences of production methods on the output and the quality of the product. The teacher's good relationships with pupils encouraged their full involvement in their learning and, as a result, the quality of their work was good.

136. In less successful, but satisfactory, lessons the teachers' range of teaching strategies and resources was more limited and this made it more difficult for pupils to learn. As a result, pupils were less motivated and involved. In these lessons, all pupils did the same tasks and teachers used insufficient questions to check and extend pupils' understanding. Insufficient use was made of everyday and stimulating resources, such as video and film, to help pupils to understand. Some teachers make very good use of ongoing feedback to pupils that helps them to improve. Pupils are assessed at the end of each module and a record is kept and passed on to the next teacher. However, the lack of detail about learning outcomes for different groups of pupils in teachers' planning leads to inaccurately high assessments of pupils' National Curriculum levels in Years 7 to 9.
137. Since the last inspection, the department has made sound progress. However, development has been limited by the turnover of staff and the non-availability of well-qualified teachers. The eight-week rotational timetable significantly impairs pupils' achievement by the end of Year 9. Time for the subject is eroded by sharing the rotation with ICT and personal and social education. A new head of department was appointed in January. As a result, there is clear leadership and the department is buoyant and beginning to work as a team. New schemes of work have been written. However, these are not yet well focused on learning outcomes with reference to the Programmes of Study and there is insufficient use of ICT, for example to help pupils to understand computer-aided design and manufacture. The extended range of courses in Years 10 and 11 has resulted in improved motivation for older pupils. There are no well-established systems for monitoring and evaluating the department. Although there are very good displays of textiles work and there are high-quality displays in the food room, the environment of the department is not sufficiently stimulating and does not reflect the spirit of the National Curriculum.

DRAMA

138. Provision for drama in the school is of exceptional quality. Since the last inspection attainment in drama has improved and is now very good. The proportion of pupils gaining levels A*-C in the GCSE examinations has increased steadily for the last six years and is now significantly above the national average, for girls as well as boys. The subject continues to be a popular choice in Years 10 and 11.
139. Pupils make good progress by the time they are 14. In a series of lessons in Year 9, pupils recognised the potency of urban myth. They chose a favourite, and collaborated effectively to plan and rehearse a dramatic interpretation in four freeze-frames, which they showed confidently to the class, using expressive body language to portray character and dramatic situation. In so doing, they proved it is possible to create an effective character in less than a minute. In a lesson on expressing the status of characters dramatically, pupils used techniques such as movement, space, and facial expression to convey meaning. They collaborated effectively in an improvisation in which, as the story unfolded, the participants' status changed and it was possible for the audience to see when, and often why, characters changed from dominant to submissive and back again. Self and group evaluation, and well-considered and constructive evaluation of others' work, are strong features of learning in Years 7 to 9.
140. Pupils, including those with special education needs, make excellent progress at Key Stage 4. By the time they are 16, pupils confirm their group skills as they focus on the symbolism of a stage set. They look for significant clues to the characters who act out their lives within it. Through this they construct simple but telling dramas involving two people in the same situation. Interpretations are both humorous, and, at times, moving, as a "middle-aged" man

makes a bid for freedom from his mother. In their presentations, pupils decide who speaks first, if they speak at all, and, if they do, what is said. They pay an impressive degree of attention to the characters' thoughts and feelings and give them careful expression. They use space, pause, body language and dialogue with striking dramatic effect.

141. Teaching is always very good and frequently excellent. Lesson planning is of a very high standard. In lessons in which two teachers and the student teacher were involved, their roles within the lesson had been planned to create the maximum dramatic effect. Pupils paid rapt attention in these lessons, as if they were an audience. As a result, their concentration was of a high order and they learned very well indeed. Teachers have established excellent class working routines, so that no time is wasted in lessons. They maximise the attention they pay to individuals and small groups by encouraging them continually to evaluate their ongoing work so that if they get into difficulties they know specifically the sort of help they need. The quality of help given in these circumstances is superb and very well focused. It is the standard of these interventions which helps pupils to make the excellent progress that they do. Class management appears to be effortless. Pupils are interested in what they are doing, and work together co-operatively and well. They are conscientious in everything they do. They present their work with no false modesty. They watch others' presentations intently, so they are able to identify elements of characterisation and staging which will help them to improve their own work. All lessons go at a rapid pace so that much ground is covered, giving pupils the opportunity to make the greatest progress of which they are capable. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are very high and amply realised.
142. Co-ordination of the subject is excellent. The curriculum is very good, and links with other arts subjects to extend learning. Drama makes a significant contribution to pupils' speaking and listening skills in English throughout the school. One member of staff teaches in both subject areas and several members of the English department produce plays. Drama gives good opportunities to pupils to explore further the social and personal issues they study in their lessons in personal and social education.
143. The head of drama also manages The Langley Arts Centre, including The Dovehouse Theatre and drama complex. Ten thousand patrons paid to see productions last year, and this audience continues to expand. The complex provides the school with teaching accommodation of an exceptionally high standard. Commercial management is skilful and efficient. The theatre foyer, which doubles as a coffee bar during performances, is a beautiful space, handsomely floored in slate, and lit by a stained glass wall specially commissioned by the school. This is fully appreciated by the pupils and helps them to realise that a theatre can be a very special place.
144. Learning is supported by the appointment of older pupils as Junior Arts Leaders. They help younger pupils to succeed in drama and a range of other arts subjects, and in so doing extend their own personal skills and development. This initiative is now being promoted nationwide. Opportunities for pupils to extend their learning by taking part in extra-curricular activities are excellent. About 40 pupils attend weekly drama clubs. The school maintains a small group of pupils who become expert in stage technology and help with amateur and professional productions. A full-scale play or studio production is always in rehearsal. Pupils make frequent visits to a wide variety of dramatic performances. The school welcomes a range of professional and amateur players to the theatre. The Welsh National Opera and Birmingham Royal Ballet gave workshop performances last year. Local primary schools perform their plays in the theatre and form a substantial minority audience.
145. Artists in residence have been a strong feature of past provision and have had positive impact on pupils' learning.

146. The school has organised Arts summer schools for the last six years. These help to generate interest in drama and provide opportunities for older pupils to help younger ones. This year, almost 200 pupils will be on the school site enjoying drama, music, art, stage technology, media and dance alongside a variety of sporting activities in preparation for another school year of enjoyable study.

GEOGRAPHY

147. Standards in geography are in line with national ones by the end of Year 9. Boys' attainment is slightly below national expectation and girls' attainment is above it. The work seen shows the pupils can use a variety of geographical skills and that teachers expect high standards of presentation of maps, diagrams and written work. Project work produced by the pupils in Years 7 to 9 confirms the emphasis placed on presentation and shows that pupils can use the skills they have been taught to describe and explain geographical patterns and processes. The satisfactory progress made by pupils in Years 7 to 9 is in line with the national expectation.
148. The department places great emphasis on the development of literacy skills during Years 7 to 9. Project work and key assessments, carried out at appropriate intervals, are taken as opportunities to develop pupils' skills in constructing sentences, paragraphs and chapters of focused extended writing.
149. Standards are well above the national average at GCSE. Pupils make generally good progress in Years 10 and 11. Boys' attainment was higher than girls' in 2000. This was not expected in terms of these pupils' performance at the end of Year 9. Boys made better progress than girls, and more boys than girls achieved an A* grade.
150. In 2000 many pupils were entered for the lower-tier examinations when they should have been entered for the higher and this has resulted in a larger cluster of results, well above the national average, at grade C and relatively few at other grades. This has particularly affected girls. Literacy development is well supported by the department at Key Stage 4. Pupils prepare presentations on the viewpoints of different interest groups for subsequent class discussion of agricultural developments.
151. Teaching is good overall. Some is very good and none is unsatisfactory. Teaching is better when specialist teachers teach in specialist classrooms, where there is good display work associated with the topics being studied and resources are readily available to support the lesson. Teaching is satisfactory when specialist teachers allow the pace of the lesson to fall as they concentrate their attention on ensuring all pupils understand the tasks and can perform the skills that are being taught. Teaching is much less effective when it is taught in rooms that pupils do not associate with academic study. Specialist geography teachers contribute to the teaching of other subjects and some teachers from other departments teach geography. Teaching is less effective when taught by non-specialist teachers. Opportunities are lost to explore the background and origins of pupils from minority ethnic groups in the teaching of this subject. Good use is made of outside visits, including field trips.
152. Daily informal contact is an important aspect of departmental management. This allows for planning the use of resources between teachers based in the humanities block. Formal meetings include teachers from other departments who contribute to the teaching of geography. Senior managers carry out the formal monitoring of teaching. There is also peer monitoring by members of the department but this has been restricted by recent long-term absence. The department follows the school's policy on assessment, marking regularly and setting targets for pupils' future work. The department supports the development of pupils' literacy skills and makes good use of pupils' numeracy skills. Good use is not yet made of

ICT in geography. Use of the Internet for research is often set as a homework exercise, sometimes without enough attention being given to ensuring the searches are specific enough.

153. Since the last inspection there has been satisfactory improvement. The quality of teaching seen was at least satisfactory and marking and feedback to pupils about their work is now in line with school policy. However, there has not been enough improvement in terms of a planned provision of ICT within geography. It relies on pupils' home access or use of ICT in the school, outside normal lesson time.

HISTORY

154. At the end Year 9, on the basis of the lessons observed and of pupils' written work, pupils' attainment is in line with the standard expected nationally, reflecting the National Curriculum assessments made by the teachers. The proportion of pupils attaining GCSE grades A*-C in 2000 is above the national average, although the number of higher grades achieved is lower than the proportion achieved nationally. Girls tend to outperform boys, although not significantly.
155. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 use a variety of sources critically, and make interpretations and judgements about their validity. By the end of the Year 9 they are able to recognise different types of reason for, and the results of, changes, and are able to assess their importance. Pupils use correct terminology, and have acquired a sound understanding of chronology. They begin to be able to explain and analyse interpretations of the past by studying such issues as Slavery and the Holocaust. Higher-attaining pupils are able to evaluate these interpretations. They show a facility in the selection, organisation and deployment of relevant information to produce well-structured and varied writing. Lower-attaining pupils select and organise information to produce structured work. They can recognise and explain where aspects of the past have been represented in different ways.
156. By the end of Year 11, attainment for the majority of pupils is in line with the expected standard. All pupils increase their historical knowledge. They use sources to add to their knowledge, and can use them critically in structured written work. They are able to judge their reliability and value. In their study of early twentieth century Russia, pupils are able to recognise that the same set of changes can affect different people in different ways. Their writing is confident and extensive and makes reasoned arguments. It reflects a greater understanding, a wider historical view, and a maturing style. Higher-attaining pupils' extended written work is more effective, sometimes demonstrating empathy, with detailed use of source material. Pupils have a sound understanding of historical concepts and skills. Listening skills are good, and pupils communicate orally, both clearly and effectively. Generally, however, there is little use made of ICT.
157. Teaching is good overall and never less than satisfactory. Teaching is characterised by suitable planning, with a range of methods and strategies that match curriculum objectives in order to increase understanding. Lessons are generally well paced, and there is a good balance of teaching and learning styles, with pupils taking an active part in the learning process. In a Year 8 lesson on Slavery, pupils were encouraged to understand the concept of freedom, first through sorting cards illustrating different aspects of the concept, which developed their thinking skills, and then through a discussion of the issues that arose. Through the exercise, pupils recognised the essential aspects of freedom and were able to relate these to their work on slavery. Teachers' questioning is perceptive and inclusive, and pupils themselves ask questions to increase their knowledge, or aid understanding. In all the lessons observed, the teachers' management and organisation of pupils were strong features. Attitudes to the subject are positive and the majority of pupils sustain their concentration, and remain on task. Throughout the school behaviour is good, as are relationships. Appropriate

homework is regularly set, and extends and enhances the work undertaken in class. Pupils generally make sound progress throughout the school. They are developing a satisfactory understanding of sources and change, and are acquiring knowledge of aspects of the past. There is generally a good use of resources to stimulate learning and, although it is not explicitly planned within the scheme of work, the subject makes a very positive contribution to pupils' personal development, for example through developing awareness of the consequences of Stalin's totalitarian government of Russia, the persecution of minority groups in Nazi Germany, and the culture of peoples taken into slavery. However, in Years 7 to 9, the insecure subject knowledge of some teachers impedes progress as lessons become over-reliant upon the textbook. Pupils throughout the school are encouraged to use different ways of communicating their knowledge and understanding, for example, writing newspaper headlines and articles on the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand, which precipitated the First World War, and letters of invitation to a Holocaust survivor, outlining their understanding of events. Lower-attaining pupils, and those with special educational needs, make good progress in writing notes, and handling sources of evidence, particularly where the work is well planned to meet their particular needs. The progress of higher-attaining pupils is broadly satisfactory. Throughout the school, the pace is insufficiently brisk to offer enough challenge to these pupils and, although their work is assessed, the information gained from assessment is not used consistently to ensure that the tasks set and the resources used meet their needs.

158. The requirements of the National Curriculum are met, and work is planned to ensure that there is a systematic development in pupils' learning. There is clear educational direction, and the aims, values, and policies of the school are reflected in the work of the department. There is a positive commitment to high achievement. However, planning for improvement is insufficiently systematic or detailed. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are in place, but are not well enough developed to ensure that assessment is used as a basis for curriculum planning and account taken of the needs of individual pupils. Accommodation is good and is enhanced by the good display of pupils' work. There are sufficient, and easily accessible, resources to meet the requirements of the curriculum. However, there are insufficient specialist teachers of the subject, which, on occasions, impairs the quality of pupils' learning. The department makes good use of off-site specialist facilities to enhance learning. The use of ICT is not well developed. Since the last inspection, progress, overall, has been satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

159. Overall, pupils' standards of achievement are unsatisfactory. By the end of Year 9 standards are unsatisfactory because too little time is devoted to the subject and there is too big a gap between pupils' experiences from one year to the next. These difficulties are compounded because the skills learned in the specialist lessons are not systematically developed and extended across the curriculum. By the end of Year 11, however, the standards of achievement for older pupils who take ICT are good and this represents very good progress.
160. By the end of Year 9, pupils have had experience of a good range of functions. Those who use computers regularly merge and manipulate information confidently. They have experiences of using graphics, spreadsheets and databases, for example to total a week's school meals. However, too few opportunities are provided for pupils to apply their learning to real situations.
161. By the end of Year 11, pupils who take Information Studies and Business Studies are confident users of ICT. The highest achievers choose, select and integrate information and present it to a very good standard, for example when making travel brochures. They solve problems, for example ones relating to small businesses, and have a good understanding of the relative merits of different software for handling information, data and graphics. They successfully interrogate and manipulate data. Lower-achieving pupils cover similar work and present it to a good standard, but they are less confident and skilful. Pupils take responsibility for their work and annotate it in relation to the examination requirements. Their level of concentration is good and they remain on task throughout the lesson. Discussion is focused on the task. Pupils demonstrate sound literacy and numeracy skills through their work. Standards in external examinations are above national ones.
162. Teaching of this subject is generally good. Teaching is good in most specialist lessons and it is never less than satisfactory. Planning is clear, although outcomes from the learning are not always well focused on what it is anticipated that pupils will know, understand and be able to do. Teachers have appropriate skills and knowledge and the less experienced teachers are supported by the head of department. Teachers make good use of pupils' work to share good practice and help pupils to understand how to improve their work. Relationships within lessons are productive and pupils ask good questions that illustrate their good learning skills. Teachers, however, do not make good use of questioning to establish or extend pupils' understanding. In some classes pupils sit through explanations of processes with which they are familiar, either because they make extensive use of computers at home, or because they have covered them in previous work. Most teachers are aware of the needs of pupils with

special educational needs and support them well on an individual basis. However, insufficient use is made of pupils' IEPs. There is insufficient use of pair and group work or modified resources to support individual learning needs. Pupils' progress is assessed and monitored particularly well in Years 10 and 11. However, at the end of Year 9, teachers' assessment of the attainment of pupils receiving support in lessons is inflated because no adjustment is made for the help being given.

163. Coverage of the National Curriculum is narrow owing to the constraints of the timetable and the inconsistent use of ICT across the curriculum. Schemes of work do not acknowledge the very wide range of skills and knowledge within classes, although there are plans to revise them. Increasing numbers of pupils are choosing to take the subject in Years 10 and 11.
164. ICT is well used across the school in mathematics and science. In geography, pupils make a scale model of a fictitious island, "Drasinia", as part of a Geography Challenge. In drama, six pupils are developing a web site for the subject. Older pupils scan and manipulate images in art, they sequence software to compose in music and develop charts in design and technology to support their planning. Some pupils make regular use of the Internet and electronic mail. Six pupils are developing the school's intranet. Lunchtime and after-school clubs are well attended, particularly by boys. However, insufficient use is made of computers in most subjects and resources in the library are unsatisfactory.
165. There has recently been a change of leadership and there is a clear sense of educational direction. Since the last inspection, the ratio of computers to pupils has been improved and is now good. However, there is a shortage of peripherals, such as printers, in some areas and of keyboards in music. The policy for the subject has been revised but is still in draft. Progress across the school since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. However, the school is committed to improving provision and it is a priority on the School Improvement Plan. Nevertheless, there is no planned progression for pupils across the curriculum and many teachers lack appropriate skills and knowledge. There is good technical support and pupils have access to the Internet. However, provision across the curriculum is not adequately planned or monitored.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

166. In 2000, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 in the teacher assessments at age 14 was slightly below the national average, though the proportion reaching the higher Level 5 was above. These results are not as good as for the previous two years. Girls perform better than boys.
167. In the GCSE French examinations in 2000, the proportion of pupils gaining A* to C grades was close to the national average, though the proportion gaining the highest A* and A grades was below the national average. All pupils gained at least a Grade G. On the whole, pupils performed less well in French than in most other subjects, but in line with their prior attainment. In German, the proportion of pupils gaining grades A* to C was well above the national average, as was the proportion gaining the highest grades, A* and A. On average, pupils achieved more than half a grade higher than could be expected, given their prior attainment. There has been some fluctuation over the last three years but German results have been significantly higher than those for French, which have declined. Overall, however, achievement in relation to prior attainment is satisfactory in French and good in German.
168. Inspection evidence confirms these judgements. By the age of 14, pupils are able to understand and extract information from a range of aural or written texts in French or German. Pupils listening to French children talking about their school routine had to be able

to separate the relevant from the irrelevant in order to answer questions. In both languages, the highest-achieving pupils are able to write accurately about their homes, their towns and schools, and describe holidays they have taken. Writing in German is more accurate, fuller and uses a greater variety of structure and vocabulary. In French, pupils do not have enough opportunities to write at length or to use the past tense. Speaking skills are better developed in German. Pupils are confident in using the language they know, speak clearly and with good pronunciation, and have opportunities to ask as well as answer questions. For the most part, pupils within a particular class are given the same task, providing insufficient challenge for higher-attaining pupils and too great a level of difficulty for the least able. In one Year 9 French class, the written material was beyond the reading ability of the lowest-attaining pupils and the writing task was too complex.

169. It was not possible to see Year 11 lessons because of the examinations and there was insufficient written work to form a secure judgement as to their attainment. In Year 10, standards of listening and reading comprehension are good in both languages. A French group dealing with holidays was able to understand authentic material of some length from the tourist office in Annecy and answer detailed questions about it. Another class was able to listen to groups of young people talking about their holidays and pick out the relevant detail. The writing skills of the highest-attaining pupils in French have not really progressed from the previous year. There is too little extended writing and use of the past tense and pupils are not able to write about future plans. Below this level, pupils writing about their home and their daily routine use a narrow range of structure and vocabulary, and with no great accuracy. In German, higher-attaining pupils make good progress in the development of writing skills and handle all the main tenses confidently and accurately. Average pupils have a firm grasp of the present tense, word order and the case system and the least able can copy accurately and write a few sentences about themselves and their homes and families. In speaking, standards are again higher in German than in French. Higher-attaining pupils have good pronunciation and are confident speakers. They can both ask and answer questions, and talk about past holidays and future plans. In one lesson they enjoyed acting as 'interpreters'. Pupils are less confident in speaking French, not least because they hear the language less in the classroom. Pronunciation is satisfactory but pupils make mistakes in forming questions and speaking about the past. Overall, standards are good in German and below average in French.
170. Teaching is satisfactory overall. In German, apart from one lesson taught by a temporary non-specialist, all the teaching was good or very good. In French, a third of the lessons seen were unsatisfactory and a third were good. Most lessons were well planned, contained a variety of activities and were well managed. In some, the teacher did not make the learning objectives sufficiently clear, with the result that the pupils were not able to focus their attention. In general, teachers use the language being taught as the means of communication in the class. This is particularly true in German and accounts, in part, for the higher standards of speaking. In several classes in French, the lack of fluency of the pupils stems from their not hearing the language sufficiently. The best lessons were demanding, conducted at a lively pace and evoked an enthusiastic response from the pupils, as in a Year 8 German class where pupils had to invite out a friend and make arrangements to meet. In a very well-managed sequence, the pupils went round the room issuing invitations, making every effort to copy the intonation they had heard earlier. Their enthusiasm was evident. In this lesson, and in several others, high expectations were matched by good achievement. The reverse was also true. In a year 9 French lesson, in which higher-attaining pupils were comparing school subjects, imprecise objectives and a lack of challenge and pace resulted in passivity and a lack of progress. Written work is marked regularly, but the marking is not related to National Curriculum and GCSE criteria. Equally the marking is not analytical and

does not provide sufficient guidance as to how the work can be improved and the pupil reach the next level.

171. Curriculum arrangements, apart from the grouping of pupils in Year 10, are largely satisfactory, though insufficient use is made of ICT to enrich pupils' experience, and modern foreign languages make insufficient contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Assessment procedures are thorough: the department analyses its results, uses them to set targets and modifies the curriculum and teaching to remedy weaknesses. Assessment, however, is not tied sufficiently closely to National Curriculum and GCSE criteria. There is some monitoring of the work of the department but it lacks rigour. The head of department, who is new in post, is hard working and well organised and leads by example. Since the last inspection, improvement is satisfactory. Standards have been maintained in German but have not risen in French. Tasks set are still not sufficiently differentiated to meet the needs of the highest- and lowest-attaining pupils. Nevertheless, there is every indication that the department is well placed to move forward.

MUSIC

172. At the time of the inspection, the head of music had left the school at the end of the spring term and the newly qualified teacher, who had been at the school since September, was acting head of department. A very few lessons were being taught by two non-specialist teachers who played musical instruments. A new head of department had been appointed for September 2001.
173. In 2000 the proportion of pupils achieving the higher grades A* to C at GCSE was well above the national average. Over 50 per cent of the cohort achieved A* or A grades and this is a great improvement on the previous year. GCSE results have been consistently well above national averages since the last inspection, despite a slight drop in 2000.
174. By the age of 14, pupils' attainment in music is broadly in line with national expectations. Pupils in Year 9 can combine musical elements appropriately to compose music for an advertising jingle. They show well-developed skills for performing as a member of a group and a good understanding of musical features and vocabulary. However, their appraising skills and their use of notation when composing are underdeveloped. This is because the amount of time for music is insufficient to teach all aspects of the Programme of Study of the new National Curriculum in sufficient depth and for enabling more pupils to achieve the higher Level 6. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in lessons.
175. There was insufficient first-hand evidence on which to make a judgement about pupils' attainment in music by the age of 16. At the time of the inspection, the Year 11 pupils had all left and their coursework had been sent off for moderation. The attainment of Year 10 pupils is above average for their age. Pupils can compose well-structured and coherent pieces using a picture as a stimulus and show good understanding of harmony through their layering of parts in compositions. Some pupils show skill in using music-sequencing software on the computer to compose effective pieces. Pupils' individual performing skills are good and they show very good ensemble skills in their performances of different styles of music.
176. The quality of teaching is very good overall. There is a very good pace to lessons and teachers are consistent in their high expectations of behaviour. As a result pupils stay on task, work productively and behave very well. Teachers make very good use of the instrumental resources available and the music accommodation. Consequently pupils work effectively together in small groups in the practice rooms and make good progress with their tasks because they can hear what they are playing and singing. The teachers plan their

lessons very effectively. In a Year 7 lesson the teacher had planned a series of short activities which developed pupils' understanding and confidence and led to pupils producing very successful 'raps'. Teachers make very good use of their own musical skills to model or demonstrate examples. In a Year 9 lesson the teacher performed two versions of an advertising jingle to illustrate different ways of using the voice and different backing styles. As a result the pupils gained a clearer understanding of the possibilities for composing their own jingles. However, tasks and materials are not always sufficiently adapted to challenge and to meet the needs of higher-attaining pupils, particularly in Year 9. Consequently, these pupils do not always make sufficient progress by the end of the lesson.

177. The acting head of department is carrying out her role very effectively, particularly in supporting her non-specialist colleagues with lesson planning. She has also recently incorporated some of her own units of work into the departmental schemes that have not yet been updated to take account of the requirements of the new National Curriculum. In the current schemes, learning objectives for each unit of work are not always specific enough and do not include planning for pupils of different levels of attainment. Arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory but procedures do not yet show how the results of assessments will be linked to National Curriculum levels of attainment. Resources are good overall but the keyboards are ageing. None has onboard sequencing facilities to enable teachers to meet the National Curriculum requirements for ICT in music effectively. Since the last inspection, old computers have been replaced and provided with more up-to-date music-sequencing software. Music teachers are also well supported by a technician for a few lessons per week. Extra-curricular opportunities are good and enhance pupils' performing skills. Many pupils take part in activities such as orchestra, choir, soul band and vocal ensemble and perform in concerts and productions involving dance and drama. There are opportunities for pupils to be involved in the music of non-western cultures, for example Japan and Africa, but not enough use is made of the musical traditions of the minority ethnic groups from which some pupils come. Musically talented pupils and some of the extra-curricular groups achieve very good standards of performance. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

178. Attainment by pupils in physical education is in line with national expectations. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 are in line with this judgement. However, the latest GCSE results were below the national average for A*-C grades. The performance of these pupils in the 2000 GCSE examinations was lower in physical education than in their other subjects. Girls' examination results were well below the national average, whereas boys' were well above. Higher-attaining girls did not choose physical education as an examinations option in 1999. Over time, overall performance in GCSE in the subject is erratic. Standards of work seen in Year 10 classes are above average. Pupils' work in folders is accurate, well written and provides full answers to questions set. In class most pupils showed a thorough, clear and accurate knowledge of the 'factors affecting fitness' and expressed their explanations well and used specialist language confidently.
179. By the age of 14, the levels of personal fitness of most pupils, both boys and girls, are good, and above the national average. All have a clear and well-developed knowledge of how to prepare for physical activity and many can work quite independently and maturely in this aspect of the subject. In games and athletics the performance of skills is average, with a wide range of achievement. For example, in tennis many boys can sustain a worthwhile rally showing strength in a range of shots whilst others have still to master basic racquet skills. In rounders, many girls have improved their throwing, catching and fielding skills and can now play the game to a good standard; others have yet to reach this level. Most pupils in Years 7

to 9 are making good progress and those with special educational needs have grown in self-confidence as a result of their success in physical activity.

180. By the age of 16 standards of personal fitness are well sustained. This is seen in the confident and mature way in which all pupils prepare for the activities as well as the way in which fitness is revealed in rounders, softball and cricket. The overall level of skill seen in these games is sufficient to enable most pupils to enjoy their lessons. In the Junior Sports Leader Award groups, most pupils make good progress and girls are more confident than boys at this stage. The way in which they plan, lead and feed back on activities is confident and mature. The practices they devise reflect the standards and characteristics of the teaching they have themselves experienced. Many pupils across the school achieve well in extra-curricular sports and games. Their success, both as individuals and in teams, is reflected in the results of competitions at district, regional and national level.
181. The high standard of teaching is a strength of the department. It is almost always good, often very good, and occasionally outstanding. All teachers have good subject knowledge which they use to set clear learning objectives in most lessons. The pupils then know exactly what to do in order to improve. Lessons are well planned, and pupils are well managed. Pupils respond positively in all lessons and are well able to take responsibility confidently and maturely in leading the warming-up activities at the start of lessons. The highest level of response comes in those lessons where teaching is very good, where it is energetic, engaging and encouraging and the tasks are most challenging. Most teachers make regular checks on the level of the pupils' knowledge as well as their progress in skill acquisition. They know the pupils well and have a keen awareness of their strengths and weaknesses and especially so of those with special educational needs, enabling them to become more confident through achieving in this subject. Standards of behaviour are high because teachers have high expectations of the pupils. Overall, learning is consistently good, in line with the teaching. Attitudes are positive and a key indication of this, and of the level of parental support for the work of the department, is to be seen in the very high levels of pupil participation and the very consistent standard of personal sports kit.
182. The requirements of the National Curriculum are fully met throughout the school and the department provides a broad, balanced and popular programme. Although the GCSE course is well established, the number of pupils who opt to follow this course is low when compared to similar schools, and especially so for girls. The Junior Sports Leader Award course, recently introduced, is already proving popular and provides a new dimension in accreditation for all pupils in Years 10 and 11. The extra-curricular programme of sports and games is good. The number and range of activities available show clear commitment from the staff. Arrangements for assessing recording and reporting on the work of the pupils are well in line with those for the whole school. Assessment data is not used to gather and provide evidence against which to judge the overall effectiveness of the work of the department, monitor more closely pupil progress and plan for further developments in the subject.
183. The documentation that underpins the work of the department is excellent. It is well considered, very coherent and provides a very strong framework for effective management on a day-to-day basis. What has been achieved in this regard, and over a very short time, by the new head of department is most creditable. She already has a very clear understanding of the department's strengths and the vision to lead the team of teachers to build on those strengths and move the subject forward and raise standards. Specialist facilities for physical education are very good. There are extensive grass areas outside and the new Arts/Sports Centre provides an excellent facility.

184. Since the last inspection, many small changes have been made and, when viewed cumulatively, they represent considerable improvement. Overall levels of attainment are more consistent and the range has been narrowed, so there are fewer weak performers. Levels of personal fitness across the school are higher than average. The common approach to preparing for physical activity is now very well established amongst all teachers and the overall standard of teaching is higher, with no areas of weakness. Under the present leadership, there is clear potential for this department to continue to improve.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

185. For the majority of pupils, attainment at the end of Year 9 is only just satisfactory. It is below the expectations of the local Agreed Syllabus for a significant minority of pupils whose knowledge and understanding is not always firmly based. Standards of achievement for some higher-attaining girls at the end of Year 9 are lower than those expected in relation to their ages and abilities. Standards are adversely affected by teaching methods that do not take account of pupils' wide ability range, a situation that is made worse owing to sufficient time for religious education throughout the school.
186. In Years 7 to 9 the majority of pupils acquire satisfactory knowledge and understanding of Christianity. Pupils in Year 7 have opportunities to reflect on the meaning and purposes of prayer and some are able to recognise and use key vocabulary associated with Christian prayer. Many pupils in Year 8 are developing a satisfactory understanding of Christian denominational differences locally and worldwide. In Year 9 most pupils are gaining an understanding of religious commitment through a study of founders and key figures.
187. The key issue of the last inspection report drew attention to the low time-provision for religious education, a situation that has yet to be addressed and, therefore, the statutory requirements for the teaching of religious education are still not being met throughout the school. Since the last inspection, where standards were deemed to be satisfactory, there has been no improvement in pupils' attainment at the end of Year 11. There are no GCSE entries in this subject. Teaching of religious education in Years 10 and 11 during the week of the inspection was minimal. However, observation of one Year 10 lesson, scrutiny of pupils' books, and discussions with pupils and staff reveals that standards are not satisfactory in the religious education components of the personal and social education carousel which all students follow. The shortage of curriculum time continues to limit severely the possibility of coverage of religious education as required by the Agreed Syllabus and pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, are unable to build upon the knowledge and understanding of religions acquired by the end of Year 9.
188. In 70 per cent of lessons seen the teaching and learning of religious education was satisfactory or good, though these were consistently better in Years 7 and 8 than in Year 9. Overall, teachers' planning within schemes of work and in lessons is clear, structured and learning objectives are shared with pupils. Since the last inspection, the development of pupils' reflective and enquiry skills has improved. This was evident in a good Year 7 lesson where pupils volunteered to share their own prayers with the rest of the class. In one prayer an able girl posed the question of why an all-powerful and loving God fails to prevent young children from dying of cancer. The teacher's subsequent handling of this issue was sensitive and, as a result, the majority of pupils were able to relate what they had learned to their own experiences, gaining good understanding about the purposes of prayer. In a Year 8 lesson, pupils also learned about the Christian community of Taizé in France. Pupils were actively involved in a well-paced lesson and undertook a range of tasks in groups. Again, the teacher's secure knowledge, good humour, challenging questions and constructive support, including for children with special educational needs, helped all the pupils to evaluate what

they had learned, consolidate their knowledge and develop their insights into the diversity of Christian communities in the world today. Homework is consistently set and sometimes tasks are very interesting.

189. In 30 per cent of lessons observed the teaching and learning of religious education was unsatisfactory. This contrasts with the last inspection which reported that teaching was satisfactory or good across the school. Teaching was weaker in lessons where the teacher's expectations of pupils' attainment was low. Teaching was 'mechanical' and pupils with special educational needs were not sufficiently supported. This was particularly evident in Year 9 lessons where a physically disabled pupil was excluded from participating in group discussion, owing to the unintentional, but poor, seating arrangements, and in another, where a partially sighted pupil was not adequately supported through the provision of enlarged text. There has thus been little progress regarding the provision for pupils with special educational needs since the last inspection. This state of affairs remains less than satisfactory.
190. Less satisfactory teaching was also evident in lessons where the pace was slow, tasks were not challenging for higher-attaining pupils and there was an over-reliance on mundane comprehension tasks, such as copying notes from a textbook. In a Year 9 lesson on the life and work of Dr Barnardo, these factors frequently contributed to a small number of boys losing interest in their learning and then distracting others. Additional contributory factors were the high temperature and lack of ventilation in the religious education room.
191. Whilst the majority of younger pupils are responsive and keen to learn, with positive attitudes to religious education, this is not the case for many Year 9 pupils. When given the opportunity, however, most pupils in Years 7 to 9 show that they can work well in groups, listen to each other with respect and sometimes, as in one Year 9 lesson, spontaneously applaud each other's efforts.
192. Departmental management is constrained by current staffing levels, and it is not yet sufficiently strong to ensure clear leadership and guidance on the improvement to the weaknesses in the subject identified in the previous report. For example, assessment and marking are not used consistently for diagnostic purposes, nor were they used to inform planning. In addition, there is an over-reliance on particular teaching methods such as note copying, comprehension tasks and (undifferentiated) worksheets. Teaching and learning are insufficiently varied and stimulating.
193. The range and quality of resources are still not sufficient to fulfil the multi-faith requirements of the Agreed Syllabus, or to support the needs of all pupils across the ability range. There is little celebration of world religions and pupils have few opportunities to learn about, and from, religions first hand by, for example, visiting local places of worship. Links with local faith communities, use of religious artefacts and the involvement of visitors in lessons are insufficiently developed to make the teaching of world faiths more interesting and accessible to all pupils. Apart from the use of video, there is an absence of use of ICT to undertake, for example, virtual tours of places of worship, access to religious artefacts or to support pupils' independent research. Given limitations in both the time allocation and the range of resources for religious education, ICT could make an invaluable contribution to the achievements of pupils, particularly in Years 9 to 11.
194. The school acknowledges that since the last report there has been little progress and that it is not currently meeting its statutory requirements for religious education. However, the school plans to address some of the department's weaknesses through the appointment of another religious education specialist and by increasing the curriculum provision.

