

INSPECTION REPORT

THE WILLIAM ALLITT SCHOOL

Newhall, Swadlincote

LEA area: Derbyshire

Unique reference number: 112938

Headteacher: Mr John Crossley

Reporting inspector: Ross Maden

2793

Dates of inspection: 14th – 18th January 2002

Inspection number: 190618

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11 to 16

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Sunnyside
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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Jean Mead

Date of previous inspection: 12th December 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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2793	R. Maden	Registered inspector		Information about the school The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
13786	S. Walsh	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
4749	M. Ash	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	
3758	A. F. Barringer	Team inspector	English	
30702	P. Bowyer	Team inspector	Mathematics	
21954	T. Chipp	Team inspector	Art and design	
28178	J. Connor	Team inspector	Provision for pupils with special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
20716	R. Grogan	Team inspector	History Religious education	
30512	J. Mackie	Team inspector	Science	
17556	M. Miller	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Equality of opportunity	
31850	D. Nevens	Team inspector	Music	
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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	12
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?	15
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	20
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	22
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	23
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	26
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	27
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	31

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The William Allitt School is a mixed comprehensive educating boys and girls in the age range of 11-16. There are 746 pupils on roll, which is smaller than other secondary schools. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is 12.7 per cent, which is in broadly in line with the national average. There are three pupils for whom English is an additional language which is low. None are at the early stage of learning English. The percentage of pupils on the school's special educational needs register is in line with the national average; the percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs is above the national average. Attainment on entry to the school is below the national average, but is improving, as determined by testing in Year 7. On average, the percentage of adults with higher education is well below the national average as is the percentage of children living in high social class households in the wards the school serves.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school. The school achieves standards of work that are close to national averages. Most pupils make good progress in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory progress in Years 10 and 11. Pupils have good attitudes to school. Almost all of the teaching is at least satisfactory and in over two-thirds of lessons the quality of teaching is good or better. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum for pupils although not all pupils are receiving their full entitlement to information and communication technology (ICT). There are very good procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare. The partnership between parents and school is very good. The leadership and management provided by the headteacher are good. In relation to the level of funding received, the school is providing good value for money.

What the school does well

- There is a high proportion of good quality teaching throughout the school.
- Relationships between pupils and adults in the school are very good.
- It provides a caring and supportive environment for pupils.
- Leadership and management are good.
- The partnership between parents and the school is very good.
- The library is used as a positive resource to help pupils' learning.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs helps them to make good progress.

What could be improved

- Not all subjects use ICT to support teaching and learning so that pupils do not receive their full entitlement to the National Curriculum requirements for ICT.
- The use of marking, reports and monitoring and evaluation to identify academic targets for individual pupils in all year groups and to identify what pupils need to do to reach these targets.
- Increase the provision for pupils' spiritual development across all subjects.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in December 1996. The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. The number of pupils on roll has increased reflecting the popularity of the school with parents. The proportion of pupils reaching the national average in the National Curriculum tests in mathematics and science has increased significantly. The proportion of pupils gaining five or more GCSE grades A*-G and one or more A*-G has consistently been above the national averages. The proportion of pupils gaining five or more GCSE grades A*-C between 1995 and 2001 has not increased in line with improvements nationally. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. The governors have

made satisfactory progress in tackling the key issues identified in the last inspection report. Standards have improved in mathematics, art and design, French, German, and physical education. Exclusion procedures have been brought into line with DfES regulations and expectations of pupils have been effectively raised. With the development of a very good literacy policy there have been overall improvements in the teaching of literacy since the last inspection.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
GCSE examinations	C	C	C	D	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E

Pupils' attainment on entry is below the national average. Pupils' results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 in the year 2001 were well below national averages for English and close to the national average for mathematics and science. When compared to results in schools with pupils of a similar background the school's performance in the tests was below average in English, close to the national average for mathematics and above average in science. However, the inspectors are in agreement with the school that the 2001 National Curriculum test results for English are untypical as these results are significantly different from the pattern of results for the period of 1997 -2000.

In 2001 the proportion of pupils gaining five or more A*-C grades in GCSE examinations was below the national average. The proportion of pupils obtaining five or more passes at grades A*-G was well above the national average. When compared with similar schools the proportion of pupils gaining five or more GCSE grades A*-C in 2001 was below average. It was well above for the proportion of pupils gaining five or more GCSE grades A*-G and in line with those gaining one or more GCSE grades A*-G and below average based on average total points score per pupil. Boys' results were below average and girls' results were close to the national averages for 2001. Despite the school's disappointment with the 2001 results analysis shows that the school's value added for this year group was higher than the county average.

By the end of Year 9 pupils have reached standards which are close to the national averages for all subjects except ICT where standards are below. This means that pupils have achieved well in Years 7 to 9. In Years 10 and 11 pupils achieve satisfactory standards in most subjects except for ICT where standards are below the national average. Standards in the non-examination classes for religious education are also below those required of the locally Agreed Syllabus because the amount of time for religious education in Years 10 and 11 is too low.

Most pupils achieve well in English, mathematics, art and design, geography history, modern foreign languages, music, physical education and religious education by the end of Year 9. In all other subjects pupils' achievement is satisfactory. By the end of Year 11 most pupils are achieving well in mathematics, history and modern foreign languages. In all other subjects, pupils' achievement is at least satisfactory except for ICT where it is unsatisfactory. In 2001 the school did not meet its published targets for the proportion of pupils reaching five GCSE grades A*-C nor did it meet its target for an average points score. However, the school did meet its target for the proportion of pupils gaining one or more GCSE grade A*-G. The targets set for 2002 are sufficiently challenging.

Pupils' standards in speaking and listening are good and above national averages. Their standards in reading and writing are in line with national averages. Pupils' standards in numeracy are satisfactory. Most pupils are confident in applying number in subjects across the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Pupils' standards in numeracy are good. Scrutiny of work completed in the school confirms that all pupils are achieving well. This is especially noticeable in Year 7 where high expectations by teachers and the positive impact of the National Numeracy Strategy have had a beneficial effect on pupils' attainment.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Almost all pupils enjoy coming to school and have positive attitudes to learning in their lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The school is very orderly. In particular pupils' behaviour in the two dining rooms at lunchtime is outstanding.
Personal development and relationships	Very good between pupils and pupils and pupils and adults within the school. Pupils mature into confident young adults.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance is better in Year 7 than it is in Years 10 and 11.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teachers' knowledge of their subjects allied to their enthusiasm for teaching their subjects has a positive impact on pupils' learning and on the progress they make. In English and mathematics the quality of teaching is good and in science it is satisfactory. Teaching in drama was excellent. For all other subjects, teaching was at least satisfactory and usually good.

Teachers plan lessons very well. The high quality of planning enables pupils to sustain their interest and concentration throughout lessons. There is a good range of teaching methods to involve pupils in their learning and to ensure there is a good pace to lessons and that pupils work productively. Generally the level of challenge provided by teachers meets the needs of all pupils. Teachers, effectively supported by education care officers, enable pupils with

special educational needs to make good progress. Most teachers are skilful in managing pupils' behaviour and deal effectively with the rare occasion of pupils' challenging behaviour. The marking of pupils' work is satisfactory and the best marking indicates clearly to pupils what they need to do to improve their work. There are limited opportunities for pupils to demonstrate independent learning in lessons but several departments including science and history are effective in using the library to promote independent learning. The major weaknesses in the small number of lessons that were judged to be unsatisfactory were that either the work set did not provide sufficient challenge for pupils or that the management of pupils' behaviour was weak.

There has been an overall improvement in the teaching of literacy since the last inspection and the standards are satisfactory. The teaching of numeracy skills is good.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The school does not comply with statutory requirements for religious education Years 10 and 11 and ICT. The current range of options in Years 10 and 11 is narrow.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils are sensitively supported in their learning by a strong team of education care officers and these pupils achieve well. The provision is efficiently organised by an experienced co-ordinator who leads the team well.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. It is satisfactory for pupils' cultural development. However there is no daily act of collective worship for all pupils. There are few opportunities to enhance pupils' spiritual understanding outside religious education.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There are high standards of care in this small and friendly school and teaching and non-teaching staff are very supportive of pupils. The use of marking and reports to identify academic targets for individual pupils in all year groups and to identify what pupils need to do to reach these targets is a weakness.
How well does the school work in partnership with parents	The partnership with parents and the school is good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher is dedicated and well supported by his senior staff. The quality of leadership and management for those who have pastoral and curriculum responsibilities is good.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their duties well, with the exceptions of ensuring that pupils receive their full entitlement to ICT, teaching that meets the needs of the Agreed Syllabus for religious education in Years 10 and 11 and receive a daily act of collective worship.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has good procedures for monitoring and evaluating its work.
The strategic use of resources	There are sufficient specialist teachers for a school of this size. Learning resources and accommodation are satisfactory. The principles of obtaining best value for money are applied and high levels of financial management are maintained.

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 teaching is good • Their children are making good progress • The school has high expectations • The school is well led and managed • Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school if they had a problem • The school is helping their child to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework set • The range of extra-curricular activities

Most parents are very supportive of the school's efforts to provide a high quality education for their children. Inspectors broadly agree with parents on the issues that please them most. Inspectors judge that the range of extra-curricular activities is good. Unfortunately the information available for parents in the prospectus does not adequately reflect the good provision. Inspectors judged the amount of homework set to be appropriate. Pupils are expected to work hard at home and this helps them to make good progress, especially in Years 7 to 9.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils' attainment on entry is below the national average. There is, however, a changing pattern of pupils' prior attainment on entry to the school. Based on the National Curriculum tests at the age of 11 there are as many pupils in Year 7 who are above the average level as there are below. In other year groups the proportion of pupils above the national average is significantly less than those below.

2. Pupils' results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 in the year 2001 were well below national averages for English and close to the national average for mathematics and science. When compared to results in schools with pupils of a similar background the school's performance in the English tests was below average in English, close to the national average for mathematics and above average in science. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels (Level 6 and above) was well below the average for English, close to the national average for mathematics and above the national average for science. Taking the three years 1999 to 2001, pupils' performance in English fell below the national average and exceeded the national average for mathematics and science. However, the inspectors are in agreement with the school that the 2001 National Curriculum test results for English are untypical as these results are significantly different from the pattern of results for the period of 1997 -2000. Since the last inspection, the trend in the school's average National Curriculum points score for all three subjects was broadly in line with the national trend.

3. In 2001 the proportion of pupils gaining five or more A*-C grades in GCSE examinations was below the national average. The proportion of pupils obtaining five or more passes at grades A*-G was well above the national average. Over the period 1999 to 2001 the proportion of pupils obtaining five or more A*-C grades in GCSE examinations was close to the national average. The proportion of pupils obtaining five or more passes at grades A*-G was above the national average. When compared with similar schools, the proportion of pupils gaining five or more GCSE grades A*-C in 2001 was below average. It was well above for the proportion of pupils gaining five or more GCSE grades A*-G and in line with those gaining one or more GCSE grades A*-G. Results based on average total points score per pupil were below average. Boys' results were below and girls' results were close to the national averages for 2001 but based on the last three years pupils' results were close to the national average. Based on the prior attainment of pupils at the end of Year 9 in 1999, the percentage of pupils achieving five or more A*-C GCSE grades was close to the average and well above average for five or more GCSE grades A*-G. At the time of the previous inspection, the percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more A*-C grades was 38.1 which is close to the 2001 figure of 39.4. The percentage gaining 5 or more A*-G grades and one or more A*-G has for each year since 1996 been above the national figures. However, the trend in the school's average GCSE point score per pupil was below the national trend.

4. Analysis of the results for individual subjects in 2001 indicates that there were relatively better results in mathematics, history and drama. Results for art and design, English literature, business studies and physical education were relatively weaker than the results gained by pupils in their other subjects.

5. Pupils enter the school with standards below the national average. By the end of Year 9 pupils have reached standards which are close to the national averages for all subjects except ICT where standards are below. This means that pupils have achieved well in Years 7

to 9. In Years 10 and 11 pupils achieve satisfactorily in most subjects with only standards in ICT being significantly below the national average. Standards in religious education are also below those required of the locally Agreed Syllabus because the amount of time for religious education in Years 10 and 11 is low.

6. Most pupils achieve well in English, mathematics, art and design, geography history, modern foreign languages, music, physical education and religious education by the end of Year 9. In all other subjects pupils' achievement is satisfactory. By the end of Year 11 most pupils are achieving well in mathematics, history and modern foreign languages. In all other subjects pupils are managing at least satisfactory achievement except for ICT where there is underachievement.

7. In 2001 the school did not meet its published targets for the proportion of pupils reaching five GCSE grades A*-C nor did meet its target for an average points score. However, the school did meet its target for the proportion of pupils gaining one or more GCSE grade A*-G. The major reason why the school did not meet its targets was the disappointing results gained by some under-achieving boys. Despite the school's disappointment with the 2001 results the analysis by the local education authority shows that the school's value added for this year group was higher than the County average. In the light of the 2001 results the targets for 2002 are demanding and ambitious.

8. In almost all departments across the curriculum, pupils listen attentively. The reading of the great majority of pupils is adequate for their understanding of textbooks and other materials. Writing is generally carefully presented in most areas of the curriculum.

9. Standards of numeracy are good. Scrutiny of work completed in the school confirms that all pupils are achieving well. This is especially noticeable in Year 7 where high expectations by teachers and the positive impact of the National Numeracy Strategy has had a beneficial effect on pupils' attainment.

10. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs at the ages of 14 and 16 is in line with those expected nationally. Few pupils leave school with no qualifications. This represents good achievement on the part of pupils who arrive at the school with low levels of prior attainment, with particular reference to literacy. There are only three pupils with English as an additional language and these pupils are making progress at the same rate as other pupils in the school. The school are aware that boys perform less well than girls in GCSE examinations and are implementing effective strategies to challenge underachievement.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Pupils have good attitudes towards school. The vast majority of pupils arrive at school on time. They are pleased to see their friends and are ready to start work. Lessons start promptly and time is rarely lost due to lateness. Pupils are proud of their school and treat the buildings and school property with respect. Many pupils are involved in activities out of lessons, including sporting musical activities and drama productions.

12. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and behave well in lessons. They usually enjoy their lessons. In Year 7 mathematics lessons pupils were attentive. There was a good working atmosphere. Pupils were able to work well in pairs or as individuals. In drama lessons pupils often had excellent attitudes, exhibiting a remarkable level of commitment that was directly related to inspirational teaching. The whole class buzzed with energy and enthusiasm. There are a very small number of pupils, usually Year 9 boys, who do not respond well to teachers.

13. Pupils demonstrate good behaviour both in lessons and around school. In lessons they respond well to teachers high expectations of behaviour. The school is a very orderly community. Pupils behave well at breaks and move sensibly through the narrow corridors. Behaviour in the dining halls and in the Year 11 common room is extremely good. There have been four permanent exclusions and 25 fixed term exclusions during the last twelve months. This is because the school insists on high standards of behaviour and will not tolerate bullying or threatening behaviour towards pupils or staff. As a consequence pupils are confident that there is very little bullying and any concerns they have will be taken seriously.

14. Relationships are very good especially between adults and pupils. There is mutual respect and pupils are confident to express themselves. In a Year 11 careers lesson, the very good relationships between pupils and the teacher allowed pupils to be fully involved in role play. When three pupils posed as an interview panel and single pupils played the part of job or college applicants, pupils were able to make sensible evaluations of their classmates' performances and participants in the role play were able to accept constructive criticism.

15. Pupils develop responsible attitudes and grow in maturity during their time in school. This is very evident in personal and social education lessons and religious education lessons where pupils are able to discuss contentious issues with growing maturity. For example in a Year 11 personal and social education lesson, pupils discussed whether prison sentences were always justified. They were able to develop their viewpoints and understanding, moving away from expressing very 'black and white' views and eventually realising that these were very complex moral issues. In religious education lessons, pupils learn to respect religious and cultural differences. For example, Year 8 pupils were able to discuss Moslem prayers and pilgrimages. Older pupils were able to discuss arranged marriages, and listened carefully to a range of viewpoints. The school takes issues of racism very seriously. There are very few racist comments or incidents but any incidents are dutifully recorded and followed up.

16. Pupils respond very well to responsibilities. Year 7 pupils enjoyed looking after a very large number of Year 5 pupils during a day's visit. Year 9 pupils volunteer to look after the library and take their duties very seriously. Many pupils use the library and they behave very well often getting on with research or homework tasks. Some very mature Year 10 girls do a sterling job supporting Year 8 pupils and helping them develop their reading. Pupils value the school council. Form representatives attend regularly and report outcome back to their classmates. Many pupils are keen to improve the fabric of the school.

17. School attendance rates are satisfactory and have decreased slightly over the last few years. Rates of unauthorised absence are below the national average. Pupils in Year 7 have good rates of attendance and attendance rates in Years 8 and 9 are satisfactory. Attendance rates in Years 10 and 11 are barely satisfactory. There are a small number of pupils in Years 10 and 11 who rarely attend school and many more that take odd days off school.

18. As a result of the good organisation and standard of support, pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into mainstream classrooms. Pupils with physical handicaps are helped in this respect by the provision of equipment, such as lifts and 'stairmasters', and the timetabling of lessons in ground floor classrooms. This ensures that they have access to many areas of the building, and is further evidence of the school's inclusive approach. They participate well in lessons and gain much from their contact with subject teachers. Overall, they behave well and show positive attitudes to their school work.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

19. Teaching and learning are good overall and show improvement since the last inspection. At the time of the last inspection 94 per cent of lessons were judged to be satisfactory or better and this has now improved to 96 per cent. However, the proportion of lessons judged to be very good or better has increased from 11 per cent in 1996 to 22 per cent in the current inspection. Of the 138 lessons observed in Years 7 to 11 during this inspection, seven in ten were judged to be good or better. Only five lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory.

20. Teachers' knowledge of their subjects, allied to their enthusiasm for teaching their subjects, has a positive impact on pupils' learning and on the progress they make. Overall pupils are making good gains in developing their skills, knowledge and understanding. There are many examples, particularly in design and technology, history and drama where the enthusiasm shown by teachers for teaching their subjects ensures a positive response from pupils. Their enthusiasm 'rubs off' on pupils and in these lessons pupils work hard to respond to the demands of the teaching.

21. A real strength of the school is the constructive, purposeful relationship between teachers and their pupils. The good use of praise by teachers enables pupils to feel secure and confident enough to answer and ask questions. Teachers have appropriately identified gifted and talented pupils. Effective extension work to meet the needs of the gifted pupils is provided by some teachers. There is, however, a lack of consistency across the whole school in ensuring that all subjects identify extension activities for higher attaining pupils.

22. The planning of lessons by teachers is very good and the high quality of planning enables pupils to sustain their interest and concentration throughout lessons. There is a good range of teaching methods to involve pupils in their learning. This ensures a good pace to lessons and for pupils to work productively.

23. Generally the level of challenge provided by teachers meets the needs of all pupils. The exception to this is ICT where the level of challenge does not fully stretch pupils. Most teachers are skilful in managing pupils' behaviour and effectively dealing with rare occasions of challenging behaviour. There are limited opportunities for pupils to demonstrate independent learning but several departments including science and history are effective in using the library to promote independent learning.

24. In Years 7 to 9 the quality of teaching is excellent in drama, good in English, mathematics, art and design, geography, history, modern foreign languages, physical education, special educational needs and religious education. In all other subjects teaching is satisfactory. In Years 10 and 11 the quality of teaching is excellent in drama, very good in history and good in English, mathematics, art and design, geography, modern foreign languages, music, physical education, religious education and special educational needs. In all other subjects teaching is satisfactory.

25. Most teachers share the aims of the lessons with pupils and this provides an effective focus to their learning in lessons. At the end of lessons many teachers test pupils' understanding to judge whether the lesson's aims have been met.

26. In the small number of lessons where the quality of teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory the major weaknesses were that either the work set did not provide sufficient challenge for pupils or that the management of pupils' behaviour was weak. In general there is too little use made by teachers of ICT to support learning.

27. Teachers mark pupils' work carefully and accurately but not all teachers are using marking to indicate to pupils what they need to do to improve their work. The school has a lot of data from external and internal testing of pupils' attainment. Teachers are not using the assessment information to identify academic targets for individual pupils in all year groups to raise standards. The weakness is that few teachers identify what pupils need to do to reach these targets in terms of skills, knowledge and understanding. Most targets concentrate on improving attitudes and behaviour.

28. Inspectors agree with the parents' views that teaching is good in the school. Most parents felt that the amount of homework set was appropriate but there was a minority who felt it was inappropriate. Inspectors agree with their majority view of parents. Homework tasks are appropriate and build upon the work started in lessons. The amount of homework set is suitable for pupils of this age. Pupils felt that the amount of homework set was suitable but felt aggrieved when their classmates did not meet the deadlines for homework and were given extensions without punishments.

29. The quality of support teaching available to pupils with special educational needs is good. Education Care Officers work with specialist subject teachers in mainstream classrooms to ensure that all pupils have access to the full range of curricular opportunities. The Education Care Officers know the pupils and their needs well. Many have been involved with the school for a period of years, and put this level of experience to work for the benefit of pupils. In the best-supported lessons Education Care Officers and subject teachers interchange their roles which means that pupils with special educational needs have the same access to specialist teaching as other pupils in the same class. The effect of this is that pupils with special educational needs make gains in their learning at the same rate as other pupils. The Education Care Officers are attached to departments, which means that they have a good knowledge of the requirements of schemes of work. They are able to advise subject teachers about appropriate approaches. This means that material is well adapted so that pupils can learn effectively. Subject teachers and Education Care Officers are able to plan jointly, but pressures of time mean that this is not always done as well as they would like.

30. There has been an overall improvement in the teaching of literacy since the last inspection. The school has an outstandingly thorough literacy policy and each member of staff has a subject teacher checklist for 2001 – 2002. In a few subjects, very valuable work is being done and much progress has been made but, in the majority of curriculum areas, the main thrust of the policy has not yet been taken up and converted into classroom practice. The teaching of literacy is satisfactory.

31. The teaching of numeracy within the mathematics department is good. A well designed cross-curricular numeracy policy has recently been developed and is having an impact in other departments, notably geography. Here pupils confidently display and analyse data, they use percentages correctly, and they can understand and apply the principles of ratio and proportion. However, in science much of the routine numeracy work (such as graph

plotting and data collection and display) is mundane with evidence of weak numeracy skills, especially in Year 10. The teaching of numeracy skills is satisfactory.

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

32. The curriculum is sufficiently broad and balanced and fulfils statutory requirements with the exception of ICT across the school. In addition, for pupils in Years 10 and 11 the time allocation for non-examination religious education is insufficient to meet the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus. The curriculum is socially inclusive in that all pupils have equal access to all areas of the curriculum. For example, the school caters for pupils with physical disabilities through a mixture of timetabling rooms with easier access and the provision of equipment to allow them to cope with stairs. The length of the teaching week at 25 hours complies with national recommendations.

33. For pupils in Years 7 to 9 all National Curriculum subjects are taught plus religious education. Drama is taught as separate subject in Years 7 and 8, but as part of a 'carousel' arrangement with art and design and music in Year 9. As a result, there is a lack of continuity which restricts the progress pupils make in art and design and music. ICT and design and technology also operate a 'carousel' arrangement with a similar effect. There is grouping by ability on entry in English and mathematics in Years 7 to 9, which allows teachers to target the needs of pupils more closely. In modern languages in Years 8 and 9 grouping by ability allows German to be taught as a second foreign language to higher attaining pupils. Although overall time allocation increases for modern languages in Years 8 and 9, this allocation is split between French and German, effectively giving each language less time than in Year 7 which restricts the progress pupils make. Performing arts subjects also have a 'carousel' arrangement in Year 9 instead of separate teaching of art and design and music. The low time allocation for ICT and the 'carousel' arrangements lead to a lack of continuity in learning for this age group. This is contributing to low standards in the subject. There are satisfactory strategies in place for the teaching of literacy and numeracy. There is some personal, social and health education provision available during the weekly tutor period, but the impact of the programme of study and the quality of teaching it is variable across the school. Curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. They are not excluded from any subject or activity on the grounds of their difficulties, and departments plan effectively so that they make adequate progress in relation to their prior attainment.

34. For pupils in Years 10 and 11 all statutory subjects are taught, plus religious education, personal, social and health education and careers education. ICT is taught in mathematics on a rota basis, so that it is taught in alternate half terms. Pupils are effectively taught in ability groups for English, mathematics and science, and the choice of how pupils are grouped is at the departments' discretion for each option subject. All pupils follow a course in science leading to a double award at GCSE. Outside the three main subjects, pupils are recommended to choose one humanities subject and one performing arts subject from the two option pools. The fact that there are only two option pools places restrictions on the breadth of opportunity available to pupils in this age group. This issue is recognised by the school and the timetable arrangements from September 2002 will allow pupils to choose three option courses.

35. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. A small number of pupils are disapplied from studying a modern language to follow a work-related course which consists of a college link, enhanced work on the key skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT, participation in a Team Enterprise project and regular mentoring sessions with an individual mentor drawn from local industry. Pupils attend a local college for half a day per week, choosing from a range of courses including, construction, engineering and motor vehicles, catering, hairdressing and care. Pupils work towards qualifications through the National Vocational Qualification scheme, or from the City and Guilds awarding body. This arrangement has proved popular and successful for those pupils involved. There is a low allocation of time for ICT in Years 10 and 11 and this restricts the progress pupils make in this subject.

36. Provision for personal, social and health education is taught in the weekly form tutor period to pupils in Years 7 to 9 and in addition as part of a shared arrangement with careers and general religious education to pupils in Years 10 and 11. There is effective provision for drugs education and sex and relationships education which are taught in accordance with appropriate school policies. There was no scheme of work for Years 10 and 11 in personal, social and health education, but the co-ordinator is developing modules and is planning for the introduction of citizenship education. As yet this work is not formally monitored. A good example of the early impact of the work done by the co-ordinator is the booklet produced by Year 11 pupils, which is designed to keep Year 9 pupils out of trouble. Year 11 felt that Year 9 was the year for them when things began to go astray, and they wished to share the benefit of their own experiences as a preventative measure.

37. Provision for careers education is good. There is a well planned discrete programme of careers education for Years 10 and 11 and appropriate provision in Year 9. The school has good support from the careers service and there is a spacious pleasant careers library. The school is keen to increase pupils' aspirations. Its good links with local schools and colleges, together with good quality guidance results in pupils being well prepared for their post 16 destinations. However there is a lack of information about higher education such as university prospectuses which would help pupils to be more selective about their AS and A2 level choices.

38. The school is outward looking and has strong links with other local educational establishments. The good links with feeder primary schools have been retained. Teachers from the secondary school continue to visit to teach art and design and there is a piece of English work that provides some continuity between Year 6 and Year 7. The head teacher is very active in local educational groups and in the local community. The school's links with local colleges are good and pupils are encouraged to visit a wide range of providers.

39. Provision for the development of pupils' ICT skills across the other subjects of the curriculum is inadequate. There are two key reasons for this. First, the historical lack of resources for ICT; most departments still lack the necessary hardware or software to make their required, statutory contribution to ICT education. However, some departments, such as science are now starting to make the required investment in programs and equipment, such as data-loggers. They are starting to plan for the necessary learning opportunities for the pupils. Good use and developing approaches are also to be seen in art and design. Secondly, there have been weaknesses in the organisation and management of the staff training required under the national programme to enable all teachers to become competent in the use of ICT. Liaison between ICT and other subjects is unsatisfactory. Insufficient discussions have been held to highlight what is needed and how departments can improve. For example, the majority of teachers are not yet sufficiently confident enough to make the required assessments of ICT use by pupils in their subjects.

40. At present, ICT is not sufficiently reflected in the planning of departments. It is better in some subjects, such as modern foreign languages, but weaker, for example, in mathematics, history and music. It is poor in design and technology. The use of ICT is encouraged in geography, but this often relies on pupils having home computers to undertake work or research. There are, consequently, significant inconsistencies in provision and practice across subjects. ICT is not yet sufficiently embedded in the school's teaching practices. More effective use needs to be made of the school's resources through the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and for pupils with special educational needs. Although specialist programs are being used to raise the key literacy and numeracy skills of pupils with special educational needs this is, as yet, only on a limited basis.

41. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities, with sport, performing arts and music playing significant roles in the provision. Sport is well represented, and teams from William Allitt compete at local level in football, basketball, and rugby. Girls' hockey is developing well and becoming increasingly popular. Coaching is available in cricket through a link with Derbyshire County Cricket Club, and in football through a link with Derby County Football Club. The South Derbyshire Music Centre meets at the school, and several pupils take advantage of this added resource. Pupils have visited both France and Germany with the modern languages department. Drama is strong in the school, and pupils regularly take part in a major school production. In addition, there is a good range of activities taking place at both lunchtimes and after school, including juggling, choir, mathematics club, science club, gym club, and guitar and other individual instrumental lessons. During Year 10 pupils undertake work experience. In Years 7, 8 and 9 pupils took part in an "Enrichment Week". This involved them in activities designed to extend the scope of the National Curriculum. Pupils visited the Black Country Museum and a safari park, and undertook work on the environment, industry, sexual health and the media.

42. Overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. For pupils' moral and social development, it is good. Cultural development is satisfactory but spiritual development is a weakness. Pupils' spiritual development is being fostered primarily in religious education where, through the study of Christianity and other religions, pupils are beginning to develop an understanding of the way in which their beliefs inform their perspective on life and their patterns of behaviour. The school's personal, social, moral and spiritual policy provides clear definitions of spirituality and the specific values and attitudes the school will encourage, but in acts of collective worship, in subjects, other than religious education, there is little evidence of planning for pupils' spiritual development. However pupils' spiritual values are being engendered through work in some subjects. For example, pupils empathise with the destructive effects of homelessness in a "hot seating" exercise. In English and modern foreign language text books refer to other faiths and festivals.

43. Pupils' moral development is good. They clearly understand right from wrong and are willing to express their views on ethical issues. They demonstrate a respect for others' interests and feelings and are open to the views of others when in discussion. They are trustworthy; property, including borrowed equipment and wall displays, is universally respected. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop a strong personal moral code. The personal and social education course explores the responsibilities of friendship, marriage, the raising of children, the relationships between crime and punishment, and the need for personal integrity. Tutor time discussions, sometimes derived from actual school events, encourage pupils to define and redefine their views on, for example, different perceptions of defence and aggression. In geography, the moral dilemmas associated with the exploitation of fragile environments such as the equatorial rainforests are examined fully. The provision for pupils' social development is good.

44. The good relationships that exist within the school show that pupils' social maturity is well developed. They work successfully in groups, sharing views and opinions and where needed offer help to each other. Pupils are well behaved as they move around the school and pupils in wheelchairs are strongly supported by their peers. Behaviour at lunchtime, including in the dining room where there is little adult supervision, is good. Many subjects actively promote group work and discussion. Tutorial work and the personal, social and health education course cover issues associated with citizenship, responsibility to the school and wider community and entry into the world of work and in science the nature and use of antibiotics informed a debate on the impact of their misuse on health care in general and the development of "superbugs" in hospitals. All tutor groups in Year 8 fund raise for a variety of charities. The work of the school council encourages pupils' understanding of the rights and responsibilities of decision makers.

45. Planned opportunities for the development of pupils' cultural awareness are limited but satisfactory. Whilst pupils are developing a good understanding of their own culture and environment through, for example geography coursework which examines the role played by coal mining in the prosperity of the local area and the effect of its demise, in most subjects the multicultural nature of our society is underrepresented. For example in mathematics work and wall displays do not reflect the essential multi-cultural society in which we live. However, through visits to a mosque and a gurdwara, the appreciation of music from other cultures, and the study of other countries in geography pupils are beginning to develop an understanding of other cultures. The few pupils of different ethnic origins are well integrated into the school community.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

46. The school provides a very supportive environment for its pupils. Hard working conscientious year heads and form tutors provide good continuity of care. The school's policy of constantly monitoring pupils' attitudes and motivation results in good monitoring of personal development by form tutors. Form tutors in Years 7 to 9 also teach personal and social education lessons and this further enhances the very good relationships that develop between form tutors and their pupils. Form tutors know their pupils very well. Good quality careers provision helps older pupils make informed decisions about their future. Pupils appreciate the very good supportive relationships that exist between school staff, including the head teacher, senior members of staff, class teachers and support staff, and themselves. This helps them to feel safe and secure.

47. The school's health and safety procedures are very good. There is very thorough risk assessment closely aligned to a programme of building maintenance. There are good arrangements for first aid and the school nurse makes a significant contribution to pupils' welfare. Child protection procedures are good. The co-ordinator takes his duties seriously and ensures that staff are aware of child protection issues. There is a need to ensure that child protection records are stored securely.

48. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are good. The school has a highly effective behaviour policy acknowledging the importance of relationships, mutual respect, classroom management and organisation, and the match of work to pupils' capabilities in the management of behaviour. There are also sensible rewards and sanctions. The majority of teachers have developed their own effective strategies for managing behaviour and sanctions are used judiciously. Pupils who are at risk of exclusions are often supported by the local education authority's behaviour support service.

49. The procedures to monitor and eliminate oppressive behaviour are very good. All alleged cases of bullying are taken very seriously and thoroughly investigated. Consequently pupils report that there is very little bullying. They have confidence in the head teacher in particular and feel that they can report their concerns directly to him.

50. The school's procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good. The school has effective systems for identifying individual pupils with attendance problems. They get good support from the education social worker. The school has been successful in improving the attendance of some pupils. However there are still too many pupils in Years 10 and 11 taking odd days off. Improvement in record keeping would allow the school to analyse its attendance figures more carefully in order to identify areas where improvements could be made. The school has recently introduced a system of calling parents on the first day of absence. There is the potential to improve this system further to provide more detailed and accurate records, encourage better attendance and to help parents realise the importance of regular attendance.

51. For pupils with special educational needs, there are effective relationships with all agencies involved in supporting pupils. Individual education plans, which are published in every pupil's daily planner, reinforce the school's inclusive approach, in that all teachers are aware of the needs of all pupils and can cater for them accordingly. The role of the form tutor in monitoring pupils' progress towards targets set for them is critical. The paired reading project is a good example of the thoughtful nature of the provision. It gives a good opportunity for older pupils to become involved in the community life of the school and exercise a degree of responsibility. At the same time, it is directed towards providing targeted help to pupils with low literacy levels with a view to raising standards in reading. The pupils involved give a wholehearted commitment to the project, and are good at identifying weaker areas of performance in the pupils they are assisting.

52. The school's policies and procedures for assessing, recording and reporting on pupils' progress are good. They are well written and contain detailed and comprehensive guidance for subject departments. Consequently, most pupils, in all years agree that they are well informed of their levels of attainment and know about how this compares with National Curriculum subject standards.

53. The practice of pupil self-assessment is well established in most departments and subsequently linked to simple target setting. Targets produced by these processes are however very general, usually referring to attitudes to work, and they do not identify for the individual what needs to be done in order to improve. Whilst the majority of departments are aware of this gap in making the fullest use of assessment information, only a very few departments or teachers have begun to extend the assessment process to provide individual pupils with this level of guidance on how to raise levels of achievement.

54. Overall departments are at different stages of development in making use of assessment information to guide both short and long term planning. At whole school level, the information provided locally and nationally is used extensively to evaluate the school's effectiveness and set whole school targets, though there is no clear link between these and departmental, or pupil target-setting. At present, the schools use of assessment information to guide curricular planning is only satisfactory.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

55. Parents continue to be very pleased with the standard of education offered by the school. Parents value the family atmosphere of a relatively small school and the way teachers know their children very well. They feel that their children are expected to work hard and that they make good progress. Parents are aware that the school is managed well and that teaching is good. They feel comfortable about approaching the school if they have questions or problems. Parents were concerned about the amount of work their children are expected to complete at home. The setting of appropriate amounts of homework is high on the school's priorities and there is a very clear policy for teachers to follow. Homework was found to be well used during the inspection. Parents were unclear about the range of interesting activities available outside lessons. The inspection team identified a wide range of exciting opportunities available to pupils include several unusual options, for example, juggling. Unfortunately the prospectus does not make this clear to parents. There is an active school association which involves parents and teachers. In addition to raising useful funds the association has arranged social events for the pupils.

56. The school provides very good information for parents. There are regular newsletters from the head teacher and a very full magazine called 'Community Link' which also includes community news and news about local primary schools. Although the prospectus contains a significant amount of information, it is a fairly dry document and does not adequately reflect the warm friendly nature of the school. Parents feel that they are well informed about progress. Parents receive two interim reports detailing their children's National Curriculum grades and a full subject report at the end of the year. There are also traditional parents' nights where parents can meet subject teachers.

57. Written reports are of satisfactory quality. Parents are told which National Curriculum level their children are working at. There is additional information to help parents understand National Curriculum grades but there is very little detail about the subjects pupils have studied. Teachers' written comments often focus on pupils' behaviour and attitudes. Many subject reports do not inform pupils how they can improve their academic performance. Some English and science reports do this but this is not consistent. For example, in a good quality science report, a pupil is told in order to improve he must use scientific facts and theories to explain expected patterns in data, but in some English reports pupils are simply told to read widely. Pupils do set their own targets but these targets are often very general for example, to work harder. The school has a well established system of motivation and attitude grades. These are idiosyncratic and although pupils understand the grades parents find it puzzling when a grade E is used to represent excellent effort when they are used to grade E attainment grades being generally used to represent a low level of attainment.

58. The school has sustained its extensive efforts to involve parents in their children's education. There have been meetings for parents of pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 describing study skills and strategies for raising attainment. Parents have been provided with an excellent parents' guide to helping children succeed at school. Parents of pupils who are studying for GCSE examinations are also provided with very high quality information about mock examinations and GSCE examinations. They are sent individual letters which clearly describe their children's expected GCSE grades and what parents can do to help their

children achieve them. Parents are told about the effect of every day factors such as late bedtimes and time spent watching television. Arrangements such as coursework deadlines and other important dates are very clear through course guides for Years 10 and 11. There has also been a meeting for parents of Year 11 pupils where revision for GCSE was discussed. These meetings for parents have been very well attended. Parents feel that the school works closely with parents and this is strength of the school. There is a satisfactory contribution of parents to children's learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

59. Overall the quality of leadership and management is good. The headteacher provides a good quality of leadership and management. He is a dedicated headteacher who provides clear leadership for raising standards, with a particular strength in producing high quality policy documents for improving standards of teaching and learning. He is well supported by his senior management team. A particular strength of the senior management team is their presence around the school. They are prominent around the school at lunch and break times and it is evident that pupils find the headteacher and his senior staff very approachable.

60. The current senior management team is in the process of being restructured with a vacancy for a permanent deputy headteacher. The restructuring is effectively being used to review the responsibilities of all members of the team and, where practical, to delegate some of the administrative tasks for which they are currently responsible. All members of the senior management team have clearly defined roles and responsibilities, which reflect the main priorities in the school's development plan.

61. The quality of those teachers with posts of responsibility is good. There is a particular strength in the high quality of leadership and management by year heads. There is good or very good leadership in most subject areas. There are weaknesses in the leadership of ICT in ensuring that National Curriculum subjects are using ICT to support teaching and learning. The major area for development by heads of department is to identify specific academic targets for pupils in each year group and identify the methods which pupils need to adopt to meet these targets.

62. Successful bids for enhanced resource status mean that there is targeted funding available for a specific number of pupils over and above the normal level of resources provided by the Local Education Authority. This funding is used well to support the learning of pupils with special educational needs through materials, equipment and additional support staff, and is instrumental in ensuring that the pupils identified stay in touch with their mainstream education.

63. The special educational needs team is well led by an experienced practitioner. In addition one of the Education Care Officers has been promoted into a senior role so that she can lead some of the work of developing the Education Care Officer team further and assume some of the administrative duties associated with managing the Code of Practice. Documentation is of a high order, and fully reflects the changes to the Code of Practice which came into force in January 2002. The information on pupils on the Code of Practice register is thorough, detailed and makes it easy to track the progress of individual pupils through the school. This detailed information is published to the rest of the staff in the form of update booklets, which ensure that teachers know a great deal about the nature of a pupil's difficulties, and can draw on a range of suggested strategies to tackle them. Annual reviews of statements of special educational need are carried out in accordance with statutory requirements, and parents or carers are kept fully informed. They are given every opportunity to be involved in the process.

64. The governing body is well informed about the work of the school and uses this information to contribute effectively to the leadership of the school. Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. In most respects the school fulfils its statutory duties but pupils in Years 10 and 11 are not receiving sufficient time for religious education to meet the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus. Pupils are not receiving their full entitlement to the National Curriculum requirements for ICT, nor are they receiving a daily act of collective worship. The special educational needs section of the governors' annual report to parents still does not comply with all statutory requirements in terms of reporting on the successes of the policy, any changes to it, contacts with the Local Education Authority, funding arrangements and how resources are allocated to this aspect of the school's work.

65. The school development plan has an appropriate number of priorities for raising standards. The issues identified by the school reflect several identified by the inspectors. Those identified by the school include improving the quality of teaching and learning, reviewing the curriculum, the provision for more able pupils, assessment, use of ICT, primary liaison, personal and social education, developing key skills, school inclusion and implementing the performance management policy. Department development plans reflect the priorities of the school development plan. The monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school is good.

66. There are 37 full time staff and 8 part time staff giving an overall staffing figure of 41 full-time equivalent. The pupil to teacher ratio is 18.2 to 1, which is above the average for comprehensive schools.

67. While around one fifth of the staff were appointed in the last two years, including 3 newly qualified teachers in the last year, there is a significant proportion of very well established teachers who have been at the school for over 20 years. There is generally a very good match between what the staff teach and their qualifications and knowledge of the subjects. There are few examples of staff teaching outside their field of expertise for example, music, with impact on standards. The appointment of part time teachers in particular subject areas is effective in meeting the needs of the curriculum.

68. Non-teaching staff make a significant positive contribution to the life of the school. The administrative and clerical staff, caretakers, lunchtime supervisors and cleaning staff are efficient and friendly and the librarians are very helpful to teachers and pupils. They offer very good guidance for reference and resources and maintain a pleasant working environment. A strong team of Education Care Officers is effectively used in class and contribute significantly to the good progress made by pupils with special educational needs.

69. Arrangements for performance management are good. There is a good policy in place and teachers have been observed systematically over the past year by team leaders. The humanities department has recently begun to pilot a system of cross departmental monitoring where teachers in one subject area are observed by their peers from another. This gives staff the opportunity to experience a wider range of teaching styles. There are good systems in place to support newly-qualified teachers. A very supportive booklet gives practical advice and information and a programme of monitoring sessions are arranged. Initial teacher training students are well supported during their time in the school and two have recently been appointed to the staff.

70. In response to the last inspection report, the school has undertaken a series of well-targeted whole school training days focussing on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Procedures to meet departmental and individual training needs are well organised and carefully budgeted. Progress in introducing ICT training through the New Opportunities

Fund has been held up by technical difficulties but interim sessions on basic ICT skills have been taught by staff after school.

71. Since the last inspection more staff, but not all, are now more confident in using ICT. Financial pressures since the last inspection have meant that it has not been possible to make the investment in new technologies, which the school would have liked. A plan has been agreed to provide the number of computers for pupils which matches the national average by the end of the next financial year.

72. Overall accommodation and resources are adequate. The school has an effective programme of improvement which supports the priorities identified in its development plan. It works productively with the local educational authority and other relevant bodies to access appropriate funding for special initiatives, such as the recent upgrading of science laboratories and the conversion of the redundant primary school building as a performing arts centre.

73. Most accommodation problems are due to the design and age of the building, but the rolling programme of repair and updating is gradually tackling improvements to the temperature control in classrooms and deterioration of the windows. Regular risk assessment and daily on-site repairs and maintenance ensure a high standard of environmental health and safety. There are deficiencies in the accommodation for science, English, art and design, physical education and ICT. Although facilities for the disabled are generally good, parts of the first floor remain inaccessible to wheelchair users. The quality of accommodation is enhanced by informative and attractive wall displays which cover a wide range of topics and records of events, mainly using material produced by pupils.

74. Resources are lacking in history, modern foreign languages and for special educational needs. ICT provision is still inadequate across the school and especially in music. As well as its appropriateness as a self study and reference resource, the library makes an important contribution to the curriculum. It promotes literacy, independent learning skills and provides specialist subject support. Through a series of projects and initiatives, pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of gender, equal opportunities, racial, global and environmental issues. They also have opportunities to practise computer skills and may access the Internet with permission.

75. The expenditure per pupil is in line with the national average. Finances are managed effectively. The governing body accepted all of the recommendations from the most recent auditor's report in May 1998. Opportunities are taken to ensure that the principles of 'best value' are followed when making decisions on the purchases of goods and services. The financial planning for the current year has reduced the budget deficit from previous years. Specific grants, including those for special educational needs, Standards Fund and New Opportunities Funding are appropriately spent on the purposes for which they were intended and in line with the priorities identified in the school's development plan.

76. In relation to the level of funding the school receives, the quality of education provided and the standards pupils achieve the school is providing good value for money. At the time of the last inspection the leadership and management of the school was a strength. Although a new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection the quality of leadership and management remains a strength of the school.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

77. In order to improve the school further, the governing body, headteacher and teaching staff should:

- (1) Ensure that all subjects use ICT to support learning and that all pupils receive their full entitlement to the National Curriculum requirements for ICT by:
- Ensuring that all departments identify in their schemes of work opportunities to use ICT to support learning;
 - Ensuring that all teachers receive sufficient training to feel confident in using ICT;
 - Increasing the amount of time pupils are taught ICT;
 - Implementing the plan to increase the number of computers to match the national average.
- (Paragraphs:)
- (2) The use of marking, reports and monitoring and evaluation to identify academic targets for individual pupils in all year groups and to identify what pupils need to do to reach these targets by:
- Ensuring that all pupils in each year group are set academic targets based on prior assessment data;
 - Ensuring that pupils know what gains in skills, knowledge and understanding are required to meet these targets.
- (Paragraphs:)
- (3) Increase the provision for pupils' spiritual development across all subjects by:
- Ensuring that all departments through their planning identify opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual development;
 - Increasing the amount of time for the non-examination religious education course in Years 10 and 11 to meet the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus;
 - Ensuring that all pupils receive their entitlement to a daily act of collective worship.
- (Paragraphs:)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	138
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	52

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	5	25	67	36	5	0	0
Percentage	3.6	18.1	48.6	26.1	3.6	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	746
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	89

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	29
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	133

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	24
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	21

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3

National comparative data	8.1
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National comparative data	1.1
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	68	70	138

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	24	44	49
	Girls	40	46	48
	Total	64	90	97
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	46 (74)	66 (75)	70 (70)
	National	64 (63)	66 (75)	70 (70)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	12 (41)	38 (44)	37 (31)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	34 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	37	42	45
	Girls	50	50	48
	Total	87	92	93
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	64 (66)	67 (71)	67 (64)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	26 (30)	35 (41)	28 (37)
	National	31 (31)	42 (39)	33 (29)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	64	68	132

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	15	62	63
	Girls	37	65	65
	Total	52	127	128
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	39 (44)	96 (94)	97 (95)
	National	48 (47)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	35.7
	National	39.0

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	3
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	662
Any other minority ethnic group	3

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	25	4
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	41.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.2

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	227

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	74.1
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	25.4
Key Stage 4	23.6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	£
Total income	1 871 347
Total expenditure	1 816 520
Expenditure per pupil	2 570
Balance brought forward from previous year	(96 003)
Balance carried forward to next year	(411 176)

Figures in parentheses indicate negative values

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7.6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	7.6
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.3
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	746
Number of questionnaires returned	303

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	40	50	7	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	47	49	2	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	32	54	7	1	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	58	10	4	1
The teaching is good.	35	57	4	2	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	51	41	6	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	58	37	2	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	67	32	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	38	50	8	1	3
The school is well led and managed.	49	44	2	2	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	41	49	4	1	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	41	12	3	14

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

ENGLISH

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good throughout the school.
- Pupils are enthusiastic and well motivated, and work well together in small groups.
- Relationships are very positive, both in the classroom and throughout the department

Areas for improvement

- The performance of boys in GCSE in both English language and literature is below the national average.

78. The overall standard of pupils' attainment at the end of Year 9 is in line with that found nationally. Results in national tests in 2001 were well below the national average and were well below those in 2000. Of test papers re-marked on appeal, the levels of a significant number were up-graded. During recent years there has been an upward trend, with results in 2000 above the national average and well above those of similar schools. Taking account of the levels of literacy of pupils on entry to the school, which was below average, by the end of Year 9 pupils have, in recent years, made good progress. Attainment at the end of year 11 is in line with that found nationally. Results for both English language and English literature in the GCSE in 2001 were below the national average. Girls performed much better in both subjects and were close to their respective national average in language and marginally above in literature. Boys' results were not as good as those in 2000. Considering their levels of literacy on joining the school, however, pupils (especially girls) make sound progress by the end of Year 11.

79. The general standard of speaking and listening is above average throughout the school. Almost all pupils listen attentively. They work together effectively in pairs and small groups. In many classes group work is of a high standard with pupils meeting clear agendas, reaching agreed conclusions and reporting back to the class fluently. By the end of Year 9 the great majority of pupils use standard English. The overall level of oral work has improved since the last inspection. Most pupils answer questions willingly, audibly and articulately. When pressed by rigorous questioning by teachers, they are capable of extending answers coherently and persuasively. A few low attaining pupils, although answering willingly, fail to think ideas out thoroughly before speaking. In their discussion of a short story by Charles Dickens, groups of high attaining pupils in Year 11 talked knowledgeably, fluently and productively about key issues in the text. The quality of this work was helped by the teacher's clear explanation of tasks and expectations. The majority of pupils read aloud with good variation of pitch and pace. Some low attaining pupils, however, particularly in Year 7, lack fluency and encounter difficulties with longer words. In conversation with adults, pupils are courteous and articulate.

80. The overall standard of reading comprehension by the end of Year 9 is average. A significant minority of pupils, however, have reading ages below their actual age, but effective methods of improvement are in place to raise the reading level of those pupils. Intensive help and support from specialist staff is provided for pupils who have particular difficulties with reading. Older pupils in Years 10 and 11 also give valuable assistance through paired reading. The great majority of pupils read well enough to understand the wide range of books they study. Those finding difficulty study materials that are closely matched to their personal

reading levels. By the end of Year 9 pupils identify and describe accurately elements of novels and plays such as plot, themes and characters. In their study of *Romeo and Juliet*, for example, one class of high attaining pupils in Year 8 were becoming familiar with the plot of the play through detailed reading aloud of the text in small groups. They were also gaining in confidence through reading the text together, rather than to the whole class. Throughout Years 10 and 11 pupils read set books of increasing complexity. They bring to their study a growing understanding and maturity. They also begin to use the appropriate terminology of literary criticism accurately and confidently. Very good use is made of the excellent facilities in the library, especially by younger pupils. All pupils are inducted during Year 7 into proper use of this valuable facility.

81. The overall quality of writing matches that found nationally. Handwriting and presentation are better than average. Most pupils write effectively for a range of purposes and audiences with particularly good examples of persuasive writing. The quality of completed work in files shows that pupils draft their work effectively. Some low attaining pupils, especially in Year 7, make frequent errors with sentence structure, spelling and punctuation. By the end of Year 9 high attaining pupils produce lively written work that is well planned and largely accurate in detail. During Years 10 and 11 the writing of many pupils develops in maturity of expression. The best work of high attaining pupils in Year 11 reaches a very high standard matching the highest grades in GCSE. Both boys and girls produce assignments that are accurately set down. Some of the most successful writing is in response to literature and in personal reflective pieces. In their analysis of a video of an advertisement for a media studies assignment, pupils showed perceptive understanding of the film maker's intention, and wrote clearly and relevantly about the nature of advertising.

82. Pupils throughout the school are well motivated, eager to learn and have a very positive attitude towards the subject. Relationships are mutually respectful. Pupils sustain concentration well throughout the unusually long lessons. Those with special educational needs behave especially well as a direct result of the sensitivity and skill with which they are taught. In group work pupils are careful to respect the views and opinions of others. They listen well and give way when others are speaking. The good behaviour and enthusiasm of pupils springs from the security and confidence they feel in their teachers.

83. Teaching is uniformly good. Because teachers plan and prepare lessons thoroughly pupils are clear about the aims of lessons and the targets they must meet. Classroom management is efficient and effective. Teachers use questioning skilfully to draw relevant and accurate responses from pupils. In one group of lower attaining pupils in Year 11, for example, robust and forceful questioning from the teacher encouraged perceptive and relevant analysis of a video. The brisk pace of the questions stimulated a good response. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and attainment. Relationships are purposeful and, in the main, relaxed. Collaboration between support teachers and staff is very good. Pupils with special educational needs are managed with particular care and expertise. In all lessons the level of tasks is matched skilfully to pupils' level of attainment. Teachers use a wide range of approaches and draw upon many different ways of creating interest. Video material is particularly well employed. Pupils' work is marked consistently and conscientiously with helpful comments and clear guidance for ways to improve. The general quality of teaching is significantly better than at the time of the last inspection.

84. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. Departmental documentation is very thorough and helpful. Assessment of pupils' work and monitoring of levels of achievement is good. Teachers know their pupils very well and pupils appreciate the care and attention paid to their progress. Teachers take great care to create attractive learning environments in classrooms but there is no suite of rooms for the subject or departmental office. Rooms are dispersed about the site and movement of materials and equipment is wasteful both of time

and energy. The popularity of the subject owes much to the concern staff show for pupils. Teachers share the same aims and objectives and are supportive of one another. During the secondment of the head of department the subject has been well managed with a combination of energy and wisdom.

85. In almost all departments across the curriculum, pupils listen attentively. They are encouraged to use discussion as an essential part of their learning in art and design, history and religious education. Pupils carry out imaginary interviews with famous historical characters and, in religious education, they use discussion widely with articulate feed back to the whole class. In the majority of subjects, however, speaking has not been fully integrated into schemes of work and although, some have broad policy statements, these have not yet been converted into regular classroom practice.

86. The reading comprehension of the great majority of pupils is adequate for their understanding of textbooks and other materials. In art and design, the humanities and modern foreign languages, accurate spelling of specific vocabulary is encouraged by good display of key words. Although words are displayed in some other subjects such as science, there is little evidence of their use. In some subjects good use is made of the excellent facilities of the school library to extend knowledge and understanding through research. Pupils use books and ICT facilities effectively in history and religious education to develop projects.

87. Writing is generally carefully presented in most areas of the curriculum. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 use writing frames effectively in art and design to structure descriptive passages. In research projects in history pupils make good use of a variety of sources and write interesting, extended assignments. A whole range of different types of writing is used in religious education such as letter writing, diaries and personal reflective work. This writing is carefully planned and accurately expressed. In modern foreign languages pupils draft their writing skilfully.

88. There has clearly been an overall improvement in the teaching of literacy since the last inspection. The school has an outstandingly thorough literacy policy and each member of staff has a subject teacher checklist for 2001 – 2002. In a few subjects very valuable work is being done and much progress made but, in the majority of curriculum areas, the main thrust of the policy has not yet been taken up and converted into classroom practice.

Drama

89. The subject is taught as a separate subject and is grouped with other performing arts. Provision is very good overall. The standard of pupils' work throughout the school is above that found nationally. In the GCSE examination in 2001 the proportion of pupils achieving grades A*-C was in line with the national average. Pupils in a Year 7 class with a wide range of levels of attainment, are already achieving good standards after only one term. They work well together in groups and plan their presentations quickly and efficiently. Their mimed circus acts were thoroughly prepared and showed good controlled movement, sharp awareness of space and successful management of body language and facial expression. One outstanding feature was pupils' ability to remain in rôle throughout. The whole class was constructive in their comments and evaluation of the work of others. Such achievement in Year 7 results from the detailed preparation of very effective schemes of work that are taught with great expertise, energy and enthusiasm. Pupils' response is outstandingly positive and they clearly enjoy their work. Those with special educational needs succeed just as well as those with higher levels of attainment. In Year 9 pupils develop high levels of trust in pairs and group work. Their speaking and listening is above average and they show keen awareness of the feelings of others. In Years 10 and 11, pupils follow the GCSE examination course. They plan efficiently in groups and work at a brisk pace. Pupils improvise speech fluently and

project voices effectively. Some groups create imaginative presentations, extending their experiences together as the work develops. Throughout Years 10 and 11 the total commitment to their work remains an outstanding feature of their work. In Year 11 a number of pupils in the class are already working at the level of the higher examination grades. Their personal performance in a hot-seating exercise had a strong emotional impact upon others through total absorption in the rôle and through skilled control over voice projection, body posture, gesture and expression.

90. The quality of teaching is excellent overall. Expertise in the subject is outstanding and schemes of work and individual lessons are very carefully planned and prepared. From the beginning of Year 7 pupils are trained to follow a strict code of behaviour in the studio. The energy and enthusiasm of the teacher stimulates and drives pupils to succeed. All pupils are included in all activities and they respond very positively. Relationships are very good through both key stages, and the commitment of pupils in Year 11 is exceptionally strong. Departmental documentation is very thorough. The subject plays an important rôle in the cultural life of the school with regular large-scale productions. Management of drama is excellent.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- Teachers have high expectations of pupils, which enables pupils to make good progress.
- Most teaching is good or very good.
- The mathematics department is a well-qualified team, ably led by a well-organised head of department.

Areas for improvement

- There is insufficient use of ICT, especially in Years 10 and 11.

91. The GCSE results in 2001 were broadly average when compared with national figures. This represents a noticeable decline from the GCSE results in 2000 where the whole school's results were well above average. In 2001 girls significantly outperformed boys at GCSE, widening the gap that was seen in 2000. At the end of Year 9 the National Curriculum test results were broadly in line with national averages, again dropping below the results obtained in 2000 where the school's results were above national average. At this level there was little difference in the performance of boys and girls.

92. Year 9 pupils of middle attainment can find the n^{th} term of linear sequences, they can understand the angle properties of geometric shapes and they can tabulate data and calculate appropriate measures of average. Higher attaining pupils in Year 9 can understand numbers expressed in standard index form, they can apply Pythagoras' theorem to right angled triangles and they can construct cumulative frequency diagrams. Year 11 pupils of middle attainment can approximate numbers to an appropriate level of significant figures, they can calculate areas of plane shapes and volumes of prisms and they can construct cumulative frequency diagrams. Higher attaining pupils in Year 11 can manipulate algebraic fractions, they can calculate missing values in non right-angled triangles by application of the sine rule and they can calculate the standard deviation of a set of data.

93. Analysis of data showing the attainment on entry to the school suggests that pupils taking the GCSE exam in 2001 entered the school with below average attainment and had significantly lower attainment than that of the 2000 GCSE cohort. In the current Year 11, where pupils are taking a modular examination, results so far in GCSE mathematics suggest

that results in 2002 will be comparable to those achieved in 2000 (where they were well above average). Achievement, therefore, for all pupils in mathematics is good. Scrutiny of work completed in the school confirms that attainment of pupils is above average and confirms that all pupils are achieving well. This is especially noticeable in Year 7 where high expectations by teachers and the positive impact of the National Numeracy Strategy have had a beneficial effect on pupils' attainment.

94. Most exercise books are neat and tidy with a lack of graffiti showing that pupils take a pride in their work. Although most work is marked there is little evidence of diagnostic comment in exercise books and regular classwork is not graded against National Curriculum levels.

95. The teaching seen during the inspection was mostly good with some lessons being very good. The only example of unsatisfactory teaching arose with a group recently split between two teachers. Here, a lesson that was insufficiently well planned produced unsatisfactory attitudes from a Year 10 class and consequently there was insufficient progress made by pupils. Currently there are three mathematics groups in the school that are shared between two teachers and it is important to co-ordinate the work efficiently between staff to prevent negative responses from pupils. Most lessons are well planned and teachers' classroom management is good. The relationships between teachers and pupils are generally very good and this heightens interest in the subject and helps pupils make good progress. Most lessons bring all pupils onto task with well-structured question and answer sessions. This has the effect of including all pupils in the lesson and aiding pupils' concentration. However, the use of time in the 75-minute lessons is variable. Most lessons make good use of the time and here teachers are adept at keeping pupils on track; in a minority of lessons pupils do little more than an hours' worth of work. It will benefit both the teaching and learning of mathematics when the timetable is altered to hour-long lessons next year. Homework is set once a week and is generally treated seriously. Here the marking forms part of the school's assessment procedure.

96. The teaching of basic numeracy skills is good – Year 7 lessons follow the National Numeracy Strategy of a three-part lesson with numeracy reinforcement and this promotes good learning. Where the three-part lesson is adopted outside of Year 7 it proves an effective use of time. A well-designed cross-curricular numeracy policy has recently been developed and is having an impact in other departments, notably Geography. However, its impact in other areas, for example science, is less clear.

97. Gifted and talented pupils are identified in Year 7 by the department and are offered a place in a mathematics club (held at lunchtimes) and a chance to participate in the Leeds university mathematics challenge. These ideas should be expanded to include older pupils as the only provision for gifted and talented pupils in Year 8 and above is within the scheme of work, where some extension work may be provided in class. However, it is clear that higher attaining pupils in the top set in Year 11 are being challenged appropriately in their lessons. Pupils with special educational needs are often helped by learning support assistants in lessons. Such classroom assistants are used effectively in lessons and, together with good teaching, help pupils with special educational needs to make good gains in knowledge.

98. The positive ethos of the department means that pupils respect property and generally do not abuse equipment. Pupils work well singly, in pairs or in groups as appropriate. Pupils are generally polite when spoken to and conduct themselves in a mature way. There is a lack of multicultural stimuli in the mathematics area; worksheets and wall displays do not reflect the essential multicultural society in which we live.

99. The leadership of the department is very good. The head of department is very well organised; the scheme of work is comprehensive but accessible and the departmental development plan is clear and relevant. Important issues (such as the continued implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy and the improvement of ICT usage) are addressed appropriately. The mathematics department contains a mixture of experienced teachers and young staff; it is a strong team, with a capacity to improve.

100. The schemes of assessment, the monitoring of pupils' progress and the setting of targets are processes that are in the early stages of development. Assessment data is used to indicate progress and set targets with pupils being made aware of these targets. However, the reports to parents are in need of improvement as they do not make it clear how pupils are supposed to meet their targets.

101. The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching in the subject follows a school format whereby the head of department observes other staff teach, discusses the strengths and weaknesses of the lesson and records the results of the discussion. Some use has been made of observation by staff of each other's lessons and this is a scheme that might usefully be extended with the aim of dissemination of good practice. The procedures adopted for the induction of newly qualified staff are very good.

102. The use of ICT in the subject is unsatisfactory. Currently only pupils in Years 7 and 8 are sure to use ICT facilities; only a minority of older pupils will use computers and this is an issue that needs to be addressed. The use of calculators in mathematics lessons is appropriate.

103. The standard of accommodation is generally good; rooms are spacious and well lit. There can be a problem with poor ventilation in the winter, however. Walls have pleasing displays of pupils' work as well as some instructive wall charts. Key words of the subject appear on all classroom walls but insufficient use is made of them in lessons. There are sufficient textbooks in Years 7, 10 and 11 for pupils (although not enough for the books to be allowed home). New books need to be purchased for Years 8 and 9 – an issue correctly addressed in the development plan. For homework the department produces good quality worksheets, which are available to all staff.

104. The last inspection in December 1996 highlighted the issue of improving standards in examinations (and especially boys' attainment). Standards of exams have risen a long way since that report, although the department does need to continue to monitor the differences in examination performance by boys and girls. The overall improvement from the last inspection has been good.

SCIENCE

Overall, the quality of provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 are above average
- Relationships between pupils and teachers are very good
- Good leadership and management provide a clear focus on achievement

Areas for improvement

- Provide more opportunity for pupils, particularly girls, to discuss and debate scientific ideas
- Provide more science specific targets which give guidance to pupils on what they need to do to improve their learning.

105. Standards in the 2001 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 were close to the national average and above average when compared to those in similar schools. In lessons, pupils demonstrate similar levels of knowledge and understanding. However, scientific enquiry skills, which require pupils to make predictions, establish fair tests and evaluate outcomes are less fully developed. This is because these skills are comparatively weak when pupils enter the school. As a result, pupils' standards at the end of Year 9 are close to the national average and achievement is satisfactory. Pupils show appropriate levels of knowledge and understanding across the three aspects of the science curriculum – living processes, materials and physical processes. The majority of pupils are able to describe what is happening in a chemical reaction, recognise the differences between reflection and refraction and know the factors affecting the rate of photosynthesis in plants. Higher attainers are able to use formulae to represent chemical reactions and apply their knowledge of reflection to quantitative problems. Pupils demonstrate appropriate practical skills of observation, measurement, recording and representation of results in tables and graphs.

106. The proportion of pupils gaining A*-C grades at GCSE in 2001 was below the national average and lower than that achieved in 2000. The proportion of boys gaining A*-C was lower than that of the girls. However, when comparing their performance in science with that in their other subjects, the girls did significantly less well and the boys did significantly better. The standard of work observed is currently in line with national expectations, for both boys and girls. Overall pupils demonstrate a sound level of knowledge and understanding across the three aspects of the science programme for pupils of this age. Practical skills are secure, with pupils undertaking experiments with a good awareness of health and safety issues. Pupils are able to use their mathematical skills to undertake calculations and draw graphs. Some pupils, however, lack the confidence to do simple mathematical processes such as subtraction, without the use of a calculator. Scientific enquiry skills remain in need of improvement, in particular, to consolidate understanding of scientific ideas. The current evidence for Year 11 reflects standards that are an improvement on last year's performance. The overall achievement of pupils from the end of Year 9 to Year 11 is satisfactory.

107. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with some good features. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good and teachers manage pupils well in the classroom. This ensures that pupils are interested, enthusiastic and concentrate well. Lessons are purposeful, start promptly and almost all pupils are properly equipped and ready to learn with writing materials and exercise books, which are well cared for. All staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter which enables them to make clear and accurate presentations so that pupils can engage with the work in hand. Confidence in subject matter also enables teachers to rephrase and refocus questions to help pupils improve their understanding. In a Year 11 class having difficulty with the idea of reactivity of

metals, the teacher effectively used an example on rusting, which enabled the group to understand. There are good examples of teachers using pupils to model scientific ideas, as in Year 8, where a boy acted as a vibrating molecule in air, to demonstrate wave motion. This enabled the pupils to recognise how sound travelled. In the same lesson, a pupil drew waves on a moving piece of paper, and under the guidance of the teacher and encouragement of the pupils was able to represent differences in pitch and amplitude. This enabled the whole class to develop their understanding of the distinction between the two aspects of sound waves. There is an increasing use of ICT to support teaching and learning in science. For example, a software programme on radioactivity enabled pupils to explore the nature of ionising radiations and the absorption by different materials. The immediacy of the virtual laboratory enabled pupils to engage interactively and discuss together how to set up the experiment and evaluate the outcomes. Teachers give praise appropriately for good work which encourages pupils to achieve. In some instances, clear targets for learning are seen in pupils' books which enable them to see what they have to do to improve their learning in science. Good use is made of the educational care staff in lessons to support the learning of pupils with special needs so that their achievements and progress are in line with the whole group.

108. The considerable use of worksheets in science to underpin learning results in a broad coverage of scientific knowledge, such that pupils are able to recognise and use a wide range of key technical words. However, there is an over emphasis on filling the gap with the proper scientific word, which limits both scientific understanding and literacy developments. When pupils are engaged in writing or practical activities, teachers sometimes miss the opportunity to talk to individuals and groups to explore and extend understanding through questioning. This leads to a superficial rather than a deeper understanding of key ideas. In some sessions, the time allowed for simple writing activities is too long, leading to a leisurely pace overall which thus limits learning. Although there are some good examples, insufficient opportunities are given to students to talk and discuss scientific ideas as a strategy to develop independence and underpin learning. In Years 10 and 11 pupils do know their potential GCSE grades. They are less sure about what they need to do to improve their science other than to work harder or revise more. Girls are more reluctant to answer questions and some in Year 11 have too low an expectation of what they can achieve.

109. Leadership and management of the department are good. The head of department is providing clear direction for the team, which is working to common aims and objectives, clearly linked to those of the school. The departmental improvement plan has an appropriate set of priorities, including the development of scientific enquiry. Monitoring and evaluation are developing. There are good systems for tracking pupils' progress and analysing performance data by teaching groups. The monitoring of teaching has begun as part of the performance management cycle. The department are well served by the laboratory technician. The use of ICT to underpin knowledge and understanding in science and to develop ICT skills is an exciting development in science. Target setting for groups of pupils is established. At present there is insufficient use of progress data to set individual learning targets for pupils which are science specific. Progress since the last inspection is therefore, satisfactory.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- Very good use of marking and individual guidance during lessons.
- Gifted and talented pupils make very good progress throughout the age range.
- Very effective planning and organisation of lessons.

Areas for improvement

- The time allocated to art and design in Year 9 is insufficient and inconsistent.
- Pupils are not clear about how well they are doing against National Curriculum levels.
- There is inadequate working space for large groups of GC SE pupils.

110. The standards attained in art and design by pupils at the end of Year 9 are average. This represents good achievement from their entry in Year 7 when standards of attainment were below average. The large majority of pupils achieve very well through Years 7 and 8 as they acquire skills in drawing and painting from observation and learn how to develop their images into designs in other media. Imaginative and illustrative art work is encouraged through a well planned literacy strategy including the use of descriptive writing and poems, often set as homework, to help pupils visualise more clearly and resulting in some very good character studies of people and places. Opportunities for developing numeracy skills are not as plentiful, though issues of shape and proportion are addressed when drawing buildings and the human figure.

111. The very good progress made in Years 7 and 8 is disrupted, for most pupils, by the effects of a carousel system with music and drama in Year 9. The time available is significantly reduced and compressed into two half term sessions in the year, causing difficulties with continuity and affecting pupils' experience of these subjects prior to making decisions about GCSE options. Scrutiny of pupils' folders suggest that average and lower attaining pupils are most affected by the disruption. Higher attaining pupils and those with a particular talent for the subject continue to achieve well.

112. Standards attained by pupils at the end of Year 11 are satisfactory. Although the proportion of pupils attaining the higher A*-C grades in art and design fell to below the national average in 2001 the trend over the last three years has been one of rising attainment. The 2001 results were greatly affected by the poor performance of boys, only 1 in 5 of whom gained the higher grades compared to the girls, who matched the national average for girls with 3 in 4 gaining A*-C grades. The results for both boys and girls were relatively low in 2001 compared to the average of all their other subject grades. The standards of attainment seen in Year 10 and Year 11 during the inspection, in lessons and in folders, cover a wide range but are broadly in line with the expected standards for their age, showing a satisfactory level of achievement over the two years. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as a result of the effective individual guidance given by the teachers and especially where they are supported by educational care officers. Gifted and talented pupils continue to make very good progress and there is the opportunity for outstanding pupils to take art and design GCSE in Year 10.

113. Pupils refine their practical skills over the two years. Strengths in their work include good decorative pattern work in designs developed from observational drawing and very good mixed media collage, some in a pop art style, and some influenced by Egyptian designs and the paintings of Gustav Klimt. There is scope for a fuller development of the expressive qualities of some of the art work.

114. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils are good throughout the age range. They cooperate well when working in pairs or groups and have good relations with their teachers. GCSE pupils take pride in presenting their work and many attend after school sessions to mount their work for display.

115. The quality of teaching and learning is good across the whole age range. In almost a third of the lessons teaching and learning were very good and there was no unsatisfactory teaching. Strengths that underlie the teaching in art and design are the high quality of teachers' planning and ongoing assessment. Lessons are very well organised with materials and equipment prepared and readily accessible. Teachers give very good individual advice and mentoring to pupils during and outside lessons so that they are aware of their strengths and weaknesses and know what they have to do to improve. In the more successful lessons the teaching style was lively and teachers demonstrated a very secure subject knowledge. Where lessons were less successful there was too great an emphasis on individual guidance allowing some pupils to drift off task. The large group sizes in years 10 and 11 and their limited working space restricts the impact of the teaching and pupils' achievement.

116. There is a good scheme of work for Years 7 to 9 that incorporates a wide range of two and three dimensional media and techniques and maintains a good balance between the acquisition of knowledge about artists and the development of skills. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through art and design is satisfactory overall. Social and cultural aspects are well catered for and pupils have frequently had the opportunity to work with professional artists on projects in the local community. Both the teachers have recently undertaken training in ICT and are incorporating it into their lesson plans. Most of the work is still at an exploratory level, as pupils become familiar with the programmes, but good examples are already beginning to appear.

117. Procedures for assessing, recording and reporting pupils' performance are good. They relate well to the individual guidance given during lessons and pupils receive certificates in recognition of consistent effort throughout a project. The department has a good collection of examples of pupils' art and design work that teachers use effectively to illustrate the standard and quantity of work that they expect from pupils. These pieces of work are not yet assessed against the new National Curriculum levels for art and design with the result that, although they are aware of their strengths and weaknesses, pupils are not clear about how well they are doing against national standards.

118. Leadership and management in art and design are good. The two teachers and the technical support assistant form a well established and knowledgeable team with a very strong commitment to raising standards in the subject. The department makes a very good contribution to fulfilling the school's aims and values through the teachers' care and concern for their pupils and their involvement in developing links outside school.

119. Accommodation for art and design is unsatisfactory. Although the two rooms are of reasonable size there are inadequate storage facilities. Materials, equipment and ongoing work are stored around the rooms and encroaching on the available working space. This has particular impact on the large GCSE groups where it limits the scale of pupils' work and restricts the range of activities available to them. Good displays of pupils' art and design work enliven the environment of the art and design rooms and the school as a whole.

120. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. The quality of teaching in Years 7 to 9 and the standards attained have both improved. GCSE results have varied considerably and fell in 2001 but the trend stays close to the national average. The time allocated to art and design in Year 9 is still limited and hinders progression through proposed changes to the timetable could rectify this.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- The department is well led and managed.
- The GCSE results in textiles are above the national average.
- Pupils have good attitudes and behave well in lessons.

Areas for improvement

- The department does not provide planned opportunities for pupils to be taught systems and control or ICT.
- The results attained by boys are well below those attained by girls both at age 14 and age 16.
- The assessment of pupils' work against National Curriculum levels by different teachers is not always consistent.
- Designing skills are not taught as thoroughly as other aspects of the subject.

121. In the work seen during the inspection pupils' attainment by age 14 is average. Pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve at the levels predicted by their attainment on entry to the school. By the time they reach the end of Year 9 they are able to cut, shape and join so that they can make a range of articles in different materials including fabric, wood, plastic and metal. They also have knowledge of the essential nutritional value of foods and can cook simple dishes. They have a simple understanding of aspects of electronics. They understand the process of design and have been introduced to the basic techniques of drawing so they can communicate their design ideas. The highest attaining pupils produce articles of good quality and express their ideas clearly. Lower attaining pupils can all make items of an acceptable quality but they find it difficult to communicate the design process and their ideas clearly. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into lessons and make progress in line with their peers.

122. Pupils' attainment in 2001 as judged by teachers' assessments at the age of 14 was below the national average. This was also the case in 2000. These assessments indicate that attainment has been rising over the last three years. This improvement is continuing. During the inspection the standard of pupils' work seen was average. Teachers' assessment of pupils' work is on the whole accurate. However, some teachers are assessing some work too generously. Overall, results for boys are significantly lower than those for girls.

123. During the inspection, attainment by the age of 16 was judged to be around the national average. Standards are highest in textiles and weakest in resistant materials reflecting the differences in the quality of teaching in these aspects of the subject seen during the inspection. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and they make sound progress in Years 10 and 11. They all have an understanding of the designing and making process. They can specify a design brief and develop and express their ideas in a way that results in a finished product in their chosen subject. Pupils of all levels of attainment are able to manufacture items. The highest attaining pupils produce very high quality products and portfolios that

underpin their designs and evaluate their work. Almost all pupils are able to produce appropriate supporting materials to indicate how they have achieved their final design. The lowest attaining pupils are not able to provide detailed evidence to indicate how they have planned and evaluated their design.

124. The results of the GCSE examination for 2001 were below the national average but pupils performed as well as they did in examinations in their other subjects. GCSE results have declined over the last three years but this matches the levels of pupils' attainment as they join the school. Standards are now broadly average and in line with pupils' attainment in other subjects. The performance of boys in 2000 and 2001 was significantly worse than that of girls. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 can choose to study one of three subjects for GCSE: textiles, food or resistant materials. Results in resistant materials were much lower than those in food or textiles in all three years.

125. Pupils have good attitudes to the subject and behave well in lessons. They show appropriate respect and a sense of responsibility for the workshops and the equipment they use.

126. Teaching is always at least satisfactory and often good and this leads to satisfactory and often good learning. Teaching is better in textiles than in food and resistant materials. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are able to use this effectively to support pupils in producing finished items. They have very good classroom control. In lessons where they have high expectations, pupils respond by working effectively. For example, in a textiles lesson in Year 11, pupils were working hard on a wide range of different designs. Each pupil was working with great care and some pride on a final product of their own individual design. Teachers monitor pupils well and this encourages a good rate of activity in the lessons. Lessons are generally well planned, however, insufficient emphasis is given to rigorous approaches to the design process, especially in resistant materials. The teaching methods used are in the main well chosen. As a result, pupils are interested in what they are asked to do, concentrate well and develop increasing levels of independence as they move through the school. This is not always the case. At times the teacher controls the activities of the pupils too much. For example, in a Year 9 lesson the teacher provided the ideas and the structure for a piece of research the pupils were to do. They were not encouraged to use their own knowledge and experience. Because they were not able to exercise some independence in helping to define the best structure for the work, they misunderstood the task and the teacher had to explain it several more times before it was clear. Homework is used productively, both to ensure that pupils are well prepared in advance of activities and to reinforce work begun in lessons. Teachers know which pupils have special educational needs and what their difficulties with learning are. These pupils are supported well in lessons and they make good progress. In practical lessons, the differences in pupils' attainment are well catered for. Marking is variable in quality, despite a very good policy. At its best it is encouraging and provides a commentary that shows pupils how to improve their work. However, this is not the practice of all teachers and this does not ensure that all pupils make appropriate progress.

127. The curriculum is broad and enables pupils to develop a wide range of skills in different materials. However, the department lacks the equipment needed to teach systems and control which is an important component. In addition, pupils' ICT skills are not developed in the ways required. Thus, pupils are not given opportunities to analyse, produce and display their work. The ICT department has just introduced a basic course using simulation software to control a lighthouse light and buzzer. These activities are not sufficiently coordinated and extended by design and technology teachers to meet the National Curriculum requirements for systems and control.

128. The processes used for the assessment of pupils' attainment at age 14 are not moderated sufficiently thoroughly to ensure consistency in the levels awarded by different teachers. The leadership of the department is good. Data is used to predict results and analyse the effects of teaching. This process is not yet sufficiently developed to detect why boys are performing less well than girls.

129. Overall, the department has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. At that time attainment was reported to be at the national average at the end of Year 9 and Year 11. Standards seen in lessons indicate that this remains the case. Girls were said to perform less well than boys and that is no longer so. Now girls are doing better than boys. Designing was judged to be often unsatisfactory. The department have worked hard to improve this aspect of their work and it is now better than at the time of the last inspection. However, practice is uneven across the different strands of the subject and designing is not as well taught in resistant materials. Teachers are aware that pupils need to evaluate their work throughout the process of designing and making but these skills are not practised enough and extended to include sufficient reflection, discussion and writing.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Progress made by pupils in Years 7 to 9.
- Pupils' attitudes to the subject.
- Good relationships between teachers and pupils
- Well led department

Areas for improvement

- Use of assessment to set academic targets in order to raise the standard of attainment for all pupils.

130. By the end of Year 11 attainment is below the national average, although in the previous three years, standards have been rising and results for the 2000 examinations showed that the percentage of pupils reaching higher grades was close to the national average. In the current year, however boys under-performed the girls significantly, and the number of pupils reaching higher grades was well below the national average. All pupils completed the course and only a few failed to achieve a pass.

131. By the end of Year 9 higher attaining pupils are reaching standards well above the national average. Pupils of average ability are for the most part reaching levels at least in line with the national average. Pupils with lower ability are below the national average in attainment. Teacher assessment of the number of pupils achieving Level 5 or more at the end of Year 9 has risen between 1999 and 2001 and is now above the national average.

132. Standards of work seen in lessons in Years 7 to 9 are above average. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and the majority of pupils make every effort to answer questions fully, using appropriate geographical language. They develop a good understanding of the reasons for industrial change and the impact of that change on the community and the environment. Year 8 pupils can describe the elements of our weather and can explain the influence of relief and latitude on rainfall and temperature. Pieces of extended writing are generally well executed, particularly by pupils of higher ability who use ICT for research and presentation. Apart from the assessment pieces, written work is restricted to short responses of only one or two sentences and more use should be made of written exercises of intermediate length, particularly for pupils of average and lower ability.

133. Work seen in lessons is more variable in Years 10 and 11. Higher attaining pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. Pupils are able to interpret choropleth maps and can account for the variations in population density across Derbyshire. Year 10 are competent map readers, quickly learning new skills such as drawing and interpreting cross sections. All pupils including those of lower ability show that they can appreciate the conflicting demands of commercial exploitation and environmental conservation in the Brazilian rainforests. Written work seen however, is of insufficient length and that of boys of average ability was poor, lacking depth and perception. This inhibits their progress. In coursework, Year 11 pupils demonstrate a variety of research techniques and a wide range of data presentation. The standard reached by the higher attaining pupils is excellent. A printed check list assists pupils of average and lower ability to present their coursework competently. With the exception of boys of average ability, pupils make good progress in Years 10 and 11.

134. Presentation skills are good in all years. All pupils make sound oral contributions to lessons. Some are well observed and perceptive, indicating a very good understanding of the subject. Year 9 contributed well to a discussion about a shanty settlement in Brazil. They identified the characteristic features of a favela settlement, how these conditions affected the lives of the people and finally expressed opinions about the impact of government policies on such settlements. In Year 7, pupils enthusiastically debated the reasons for industrial change in East Derbyshire and began to consider the effect of these changes on the lives of the people.

135. Overall the standard of pupils' learning is enhanced by good teaching. Teachers use their sound knowledge of the subject well. In the majority of lessons, teachers have high expectations of their pupils. Pupils are given clear instructions of what they have to do and tasks and activities are well chosen to stimulate their thinking. Pupils learning is developed through the use of good resources including up to date text books, satellite images, internet pictures, slides and maps. In the study of industrial change in West Derbyshire, teachers' knowledge of the local area is used effectively to assist Year 7 to understand the concept of primary, secondary and tertiary industry. Praise and encouragement give pupils of all abilities the confidence to debate geographical issues in class discussions and to respond well to challenging questions. Work is structured to meet the needs of all pupils through the use of extension material for the more able and supporting word frames or alternative work sheets for lower attaining pupils. Where additional adult support is available in the classroom, good liaison between the Education Care Officer and the teacher enables supported pupils to make good progress. The teaching of literacy and numeracy in geography is well developed although there is insufficient opportunity for pupils to write at mid length in class. New geographical vocabulary is emphasised and displays of key words assist pupils' learning. Graphs and numerical tables are used regularly by pupils to tabulate their results and in the teaching materials used. In a small minority of lessons, the pace is too slow and as a consequence, there is insufficient time for pupils to complete written tasks. A variety of homework tasks extends the work of the classroom encouraging pupils to conduct their own research and to write at length.

136. Teachers support pupils well engendering confidence and an enthusiasm for the subject. As a consequence pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good and the atmosphere within the classroom conducive to learning. The majority of pupils respond well to their teachers and take pride in their work. Pupils are supportive of each other when working in groups and listen attentively to others in discussion. They demonstrate a good understanding of the environmental issues surrounding the exploitation of the equatorial forest and show empathy with peoples living in less economically developed countries.

137. The department is well led and there is a shared commitment to the maintenance of high standards. Geography rooms are made interesting and attractive by attractive displays of pupils' work, augmented by maps and pictures which broadens pupils' knowledge of the world around them. Departmental policies have been agreed and new schemes of work are in place which include a greater variety of activities, although planned opportunities for pupils to take charge of their own learning are still insufficient. Good arrangements are in place to monitor teaching, but greater emphasis must now be placed on the evaluation of pupils' learning in the light of the new schemes of work. Pupils' books and assignments are regularly marked but assessment data is not used to set subject specific academic targets for improvement.

138. Since the last inspection, development within the department has been good. GCSE results show a rising trend and in Years 7 to 9, new schemes of work have greatly contributed to the overall good standards of teaching and learning. Continued development is needed, however, to improve the quality of written work completed as part of class activities and to set sharply defined, academic targets for pupils in order to raise standards.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- Very good teaching on the GCSE course enables pupils to achieve results that are consistently
- around the national average.
- Subject leadership is very good, supporting a good standard of teaching and learning in history
- across the school.
- Effective use is made of common assessment tasks to develop pupils' skills in the subject and their general literacy.

Areas for improvement

- Make use of textbooks in Years 8 and 9.
- Adapt learning materials to a greater extent, to cater for lower and higher attaining pupils in the mixed ability classes.
- Increase the use of ICT in lessons.
- Further develop assessment criteria to enable more precise target setting in Years 7 to 9.

139. Standards in history are high for the school and equal to the national average for pupils aged 14 and 16. At GCSE, this high standard has been maintained over the last four years, rising above the national average in 1999. The proportion of candidates achieving the top grades A*/A exceeded the national average in 2000. In 2001 results were close to the national average and pupils did better in history than in the average of all their other subjects. Girls outperformed boys, as in previous years, achieving results above the national average for girls.

140. In work seen during the inspection, pupils are achieving well in Years 7 to 9 and reaching average standards overall by age 14. Year 9 pupils are able to make good use of historical sources and select relevant information for their reports on conditions in factories and mines and life in town and country at the time of the Industrial Revolution. More capable pupils can explain reasons for the success of manufacturers such as the Darbys of Coalbrookdale. They are making satisfactory progress but tend to copy information when sources are not adapted for them, as sometimes happens. Lower attaining pupils stay at the level of describing social conditions, rather than explaining changes. In lessons, most pupils were able to distinguish between the idyllic view of rural life and the reality for 19th century farm labourers. Pupils develop their writing well over the three years in a range of styles, from Year 7 projects on famous people and Year 8 eyewitness accounts of the Spanish Armada, to extended reports on aspects of the Industrial Revolution in Year 9. Regular practice in organising and presenting historical information in essay format is enabling them to achieve the expected standards for their age at 14.

141. At age 16 attainment is in line with the national average, as pupils continue to make good progress on the GCSE course. Year 11 pupils have kept detailed notes on each of the study units, if lacking variety in the style of note taking. Their coursework on the economic history of Burton on Trent is thorough but some pupils get bogged down in details that are not always relevant to the question. Pupils memorise historical facts well, as a result of regular verbal quizzes at the start of lessons. Lessons are based on historical sources and pupils develop the skills of analysis well. For example Year 10 pupils studying Luddism were able to marshal evidence for and against the interpretation that it was just spontaneous mob violence. Good use of GCSE revision questions prior to the mock examinations has helped Year 11 pupils to develop their examination technique well.

142. Pupils are positive about their learning in history and it is a popular choice of many in Year 10. Most pupils apply themselves well to tasks and produce their best effort on assessed work, many of them using ICT to print it out. Behaviour is generally good in lessons, but there are a few instances of some pupils, mainly boys, persisting in talking when they should be listening. The GCSE course has been carefully designed to appeal to the interests of all pupils and lessons succeed in being highly enjoyable and amusing. Excellent working relationships between teacher and pupils motivate all to work hard at their studies.

143. The quality of teaching is good overall and very good in Years 10 and 11, where high expectations and thorough practice in examination technique produce good results from pupils across a wide range of ability. In the majority of lessons, enthusiastic delivery and much good humour gain pupils' interest and promote good learning. The past is created vividly in class, so that pupils feel what it must have been like to live in a Victorian tenement and understand the anger of Luddites losing their jobs to new technology. Similarly, the sixties era of Mods and Rockers was revived in a stimulating Year 11 lesson that included film clips, pop music and a lambretta display arranged by the librarian.

144. Teachers make very good use of source material in each year, training pupils early to question the reliability of evidence, such as the paintings of Plains Indians hunting the buffalo, examined by Year 8 pupils. Pupils with lower levels of literacy struggle with some of the

selected sources and would benefit from further adaptation of materials and activities to suit their ability. Teachers encourage pupils to make use of ICT for homework but its use in lessons is underdeveloped. Regular assessment tasks are an integral part of the teaching, requiring pupils to demonstrate their understanding by using information creatively. Marking of them could be more specific to highlight strengths and weaknesses and set precise targets for progress to a higher level in the skills being tested.

145. Leadership and management of the subject are very good, ensuring high standards are maintained through careful monitoring of teaching and pupils' performance, and regular review and revision of the schemes of work. Teacher-produced resources are very good but there is an absence of textbooks for pupils to use in Years 7 and 8. Excellent support from the school library stock of reference books and displays of artefacts goes some way to meeting this deficiency.

146. Since the previous inspection the department has made good progress. The change of examination syllabus to one that allows the school more flexibility to cater for its pupils' interests has produced better results all round, and enabled more pupils to achieve the highest grades at GCSE. Valuable work has also been done to devise a series of assessment tasks that form an integrated part of pupils' studies in Years 7 to 9. Further refinement and clarification of the assessment criteria for these assignments are needed to sharpen feedback to pupils on how they can improve. A major achievement of the department is the sustained energy and enthusiasm of the teaching, which makes history so enjoyable for pupils.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in ICT is **poor**.

Strengths

- The very recent improvements in ICT resources to enable the development of learning opportunities for the pupils.
- The understanding of weaknesses within the department by the school's senior management, and the action being currently undertaken to remedy the situation.

Areas for improvement

- The management of ICT and the educational direction provided by the leadership of the department.
- Standards and pupils' achievements in all year groups.
- Teachers' marking and the monitoring and recording of pupils' attainment and progress.
- The provision of proper schemes of work.
- The provision of sufficient time to enable the National Curriculum for ICT to be properly taught in Years 7 to 9 and for the introduction of a GCSE course in Years 10 and 11.
- The development of effective links with other subjects to improve the teaching of ICT across the school.
- Resources require further improvement to bring them up to national average standards.

147. There has been insufficient improvement since the last inspection. This is because the leadership and management of the department are unsatisfactory and the educational direction of the subject is poor. The current capacity to succeed and implement the necessary improvements is weak. However, the headteacher and senior management have a good understanding of the department's problems and are actively taking the necessary advice to remedy the situation.

148. Standards of work seen during the inspection for pupils in Year 9 are below average. Their key ICT skills are under-developed. This represents a decline since the last inspection. There is an assumption that pupils' ICT standards on entry in Year 7 are below average. However, no assessments of pupils are undertaken. No portfolios of pupils' work are maintained to exemplify or set the expected standards. The department's procedures for assessment generally are poor. Proper records of pupils' attainment and progress are not maintained and it is therefore difficult to see how comments reported to parents can be justified. Reports do not fully meet statutory requirements. They lack course information, analysis or targets for improvement. The marking of pupils' work is a weakness of the teaching and is not sufficiently objective. There is very little evidence of marking on pupils' work or advice to help them improve. There is a lack of understanding of the National Curriculum levels of attainment. The teacher assessments for pupils in Year 9, in summer 2001, suggest that pupil attainment in ICT is above average. There is no evidence for this, particularly as the attainment of those same pupils, currently in Year 10, is below average.

149. Standards of work seen during the inspection for pupils by Year 11 are below average. There has been no improvement since the last inspection. Indeed, their standard of work is more often at a Year 9 than a Year 11 level. The course offered in Years 10 and 11 is a certification course which does not allow the pupils to gain the equivalent of a higher A*-C GCSE grade. This does not meet the needs or aspirations of the pupils. In discussions with pupils, they themselves failed to see its relevance. Pass rates for the course are low and this represents underachievement. There has been little improvement in pass rates over the past three years for the three units of work studied. On average, only three out of five pupils gain a pass in database work; fewer than half gain a pass in the use of spreadsheets; only two-thirds gain the necessary skills in desktop publishing. Too many pupils are leaving school at the end of Year 11 without even an entry-level qualification in ICT, or the key skills necessary in the subject for them to meet the demands of post-16 courses.

150. No lessons in Years 10 and 11 were seen during the inspection. Judgements on standards were consequently made on an extended scrutiny of pupils' work. These rotation arrangements have a negative impact on attainment, learning and pupils' achievement, as there is a lack of continuity between lessons. In Years 7 to 9 pupils only have fortnightly lessons in ICT, half the national average. In Years 10 and 11 they have only a quarter of the time expected for a GCSE course. Whilst whole school planning is in place to remedy this for September 2002, the situation is unsatisfactory for all pupils currently at the school.

151. Until very recently, resources for the subject, particularly the quality of computers and software, have been poor. Spending has been limited by the school's budget deficit. The school is still some 30 computers short of the national average and does not expect to meet this target until 2004. However, the current programme of upgrading the ICT resources is starting to have a positive impact on the quality of learning opportunities for pupils, particularly in Years 7 to 9. Teaching, learning and pupils' achievements in lessons seen for these year groups are satisfactory, although standards are below average. Pupils' interest and attitudes are starting to be kindled through, for example, new and challenging software. Behaviour is good. Where teaching and learning are good, the teaching is brisk. Clear demonstrations and explanations give pupils confidence to attempt tasks. They subsequently work well and confidently in pairs and are mutually supportive, for example in a Year 8 lesson involving a

control simulation program. Here pupils cooperated successfully in creating flow charts on screen to operate the light and foghorn for a lighthouse. The pupils achieved well and gained a good sense of self-value in the progress they made. However, where teaching in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory, there is a tendency to expect the pupils to be more passive learners. Pupils need to be given more regular opportunities to be actively involved in lessons and to take responsibility for their own learning.

152. Greater attention is required in planning for the specific needs of pupils with special educational needs, who make unsatisfactory progress. Insufficient attention is paid to the needs of pupils who may be gifted or talented in the subject. This results from the weak management of ICT, as proper schemes of work are not in place for any year group or course offered. Planning for the teaching of ICT requires significant improvement if the statutory requirements for the National Curriculum are to be properly met. Pupils are not being provided with the full range of learning opportunities they, or their parents, should rightfully expect. The overall progress pupils make as they move through the school from Years 7 to 11 is unsatisfactory. The range of expected links with other subjects, to ensure their proper contribution to ICT education, are not effectively in place. Overall, the subject needs to re-examine its approach to provision for the pupils' personal development.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Overall, the quality of provision in modern languages is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Teaching is good.
- Leadership by the head of modern languages is very good.
- Teachers work well as a team, producing good materials for learning.
- Teachers take pupils on visits to France and Germany, so that pupils can use the languages.

Areas for improvement

- Some teachers need to use more pair work and to speak more French and German in the classroom.
- Pupils need regular reading sessions.
- Pupils need to check their written work more carefully to avoid basic errors.
- The department lacks sufficient text books, readers, magazines, and computer software.

153. The former system had French and German in alternate years. This still exists in Year 11, where German is the first language for almost all pupils. There is also one French class for pupils who either joined the school late or pupils who have opted for the subject. In Year 10 the first language is French, and there are no pupils learning German. In Year 9, the first language is German. Two sets also learn French in each half year. In Year 8 one class does only French, and another only German. Three other classes learn both French and German. In Year 7 all pupils learn French. In Years 10 and 11 a few are disapplied from studying a modern language. The department has suffered from staffing difficulties in recent years, and this has impacted on standards.

154. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 were below national standards in French in 2001. In comparison with national standards, French GCSE results were below average in 2001. GCSE results in French were lower than standards in similar schools in 2001. They were similar to most other subjects in the school. However, it is expected that GCSE results will improve in 2002. Performance in the lessons seen in Years 7 to 11 showed pupils working at national standards. In Years 7-11 pupils are stronger in listening, speaking, and writing, and weaker in reading. Year 11 pupils are able to listen to the tape of a French dialogue in a rail station, and understand the details given. Year 7 pupils could say which school subjects they liked and disliked, and explain the reasons in French. Year 9 pupils were able to read information in French and decide whether statements about it were true or false. Year 10 pupils could produce a sustained piece of writing in French about their home town.

155. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 were below national standards in German in 2000. German GCSE results were well below national standards in 2000. Results in German were lower than standards in similar schools in 2000. They were also lower than most other subjects in the school. However, it is expected that GCSE results will be in line with national standards in 2002. Performance in the lessons seen in Years 8, 9 and 11 showed pupils working at national standards. In Years 8, 9 and 11 pupils are stronger in listening, speaking, and writing, and weaker in reading. When speaking German, Year 8 pupils were able to express opinions about their own leisure activities, and when listening they could understand what other pupils said about their lives. Year 9 pupils were able to read and understand information about leisure activities. Year 11 pupils were able to write an account of an evening out, including a visit to a cinema.

156. Overall, there is a satisfactory amount of written exercises and sustained writing in French and German: however, pupils make unnecessary errors in grammar and spelling. Pupils do not check their written work carefully enough: the errors pupils make in written work are preventing them from achieving higher standards. Girls usually attain better results than boys. There are no significant variations between pupils of different ethnicity, background, nor ability. Pupils do not have regular reading sessions. Pupils spend most of their time using the foreign languages in listening, speaking, reading and writing: this contributes to their literacy skills, but these are at lower levels than they would be in English. Numeracy activities have been incorporated successfully into schemes of work, and are used by teachers. At present pupils have limited access to computers, but it is hoped they will have more access by April 2002.

157. The overall quality of teaching is good. Teaching in French is good. Seven tenths of the lessons seen were good or better. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Teaching in German is very good. Three fifths of the lessons seen were very good. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. In both languages the quality of teaching is improving standards: pupils are achieving well and making good progress.

158. In French and German teachers are proficient in the foreign language, have good accents, and project their voices clearly. They use the foreign languages for most of the lesson to develop pupils' listening skills. Most use a little English to check understanding or explain grammatical points, but some use too much English. They plan a well organised sequence of activities, which involve the pupils in their learning. They use overhead projectors and other resources effectively to increase learning. Standards of discipline are generally good, but a few pupils find it difficult to concentrate sufficiently. Time is used well, and some teachers are good at encouraging oral work in pairs: this improves listening and speaking skills, and develops pupils' confidence. However, some teachers should use pair work more. Staff display pupils' work, maps, posters, and other authentic material, which increase the pupils' knowledge of the languages and countries concerned. Pupils' work is assessed regularly, and results inform subsequent teaching. Useful homework, which

consolidates learning, is set regularly. The teaching of those with special educational needs is good, and meets the needs of these pupils as well. Teachers manage classes well, and give pupils a variety of experiences in the classroom, including songs, role plays, videos and class surveys, which extend and consolidate their learning. Teachers ensure that all pupils make appropriate progress. They provide challenging tasks for the higher attainers, and give support to those with special educational needs. Most pupils, including the higher attainers and those with special educational needs, make good progress in lessons throughout the school.

159. Almost all the pupils behave well. They show interest in their work, sustain their concentration, and develop good study skills. Their response is usually good throughout the school. Many pupils show an obvious sense of enjoyment in lessons. They work well in pairs, and sometimes have opportunities to use their initiative in creating role plays and working independently. Their positive attitudes are enabling them to improve their performance. However, a few pupils find it difficult to concentrate and achieve their potential.

160. The organisation of the curriculum meets statutory requirements. The head of modern languages monitors the progress of pupils in French and German. The department is very well led and organised, has prioritised development plans, and works well as a team to produce resources for effective learning. The department lacks sufficient text books, readers, magazines, and computer software. Visits to France and Germany encourage social interaction and personal responsibility, and improve language competence. The text books and other materials used, together with the visits abroad, help develop awareness of the diversity and richness of other cultures. The quality of teaching, the attitudes of most pupils, visits abroad, and the leadership of the head of modern languages have a positive effect on standards. However, insufficient use of the foreign languages by teachers, insufficient use of pair work and reading, lack of resources, and the errors pupils make in written work are preventing pupils from achieving higher standards.

161. The department has made good progress on the issues raised in the previous report. A sustainable system for the provision of two modern foreign languages has been introduced. Lessons are planned in line with the national programmes of study, and differentiation has improved. Standards are also improving in French and German.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- Good teaching which promotes effective learning
- Appropriate balance of activity supports and integrates the development of pupils' practical skills
- Pupils at all levels of attainment behave well in most lessons and try hard to improve.
- The subject leader is committed to continuous improvement in opportunities and standards

Areas for improvement

- Timetable allocation in Year 9 hinders pupils' achievement and disrupts continuity of learning.
- Computer resources are not available for pupils to gain music technology skills.
- Some pupils in Year 10 have inadequate practical skills and do not read music well enough.

162. Pupils entering the school in Year 7 have a well below average standard of attainment in music. With the exception of a very small number who have previously learnt to play an instrument, their practical skills in performance are poor. They have little experience of composing music, limited knowledge of musical styles and little understanding of musical structures and terminology.

163. By the end of Year 9 good achievement by most pupils means that overall standards of attainment are average. Pupils have gained fluency in performing on tuned and untuned percussion instruments. They can sing in tune, maintaining a good level of pitch even when unaccompanied, or if the accompaniment is different from their part. Most pupils can play electronic keyboards accurately with either hand and some are able to use both hands at the same time in independent parts. They have the confidence to perform alone and are developing the physical and aural experience necessary to perform in small groups and as a whole class.

164. Pupils have good opportunities to develop their skills in composing. In Year 7 they can create short pieces in three-part form, using keyboards, percussion instruments and guitar. This activity was preceded by a productive whole class discussion about how the middle section could be different from the outer ones and pupils made a comprehensive list of contributory features, such as speed, volume, rhythm, instrumental sound and mood. Pupils in Year 8, learning about theme and variations, are able to extend the same basic idea at a more sophisticated level to produce a contrasted melody which fits a given repeated bass. In Year 9 pupils can compose attractive three-part textures using irregular rhythms for contrasted untuned percussion sounds.

165. Analytical listening and appraising is generally good by Year 9 and because their teacher insists on correct technical terminology when answering, most pupils can identify the characteristics of styles and types of music with a better than average degree of accuracy. Pupils listen attentively to both recorded music and to performances by their peers. They generally value each other's efforts and contributions. Knowledge of notation, musical signs and symbols has improved by Year 9, although most pupils in Year 7 can identify basic notational symbols and explain what they mean. Pupils in Year 8 understand the concepts of sharps and flats and different note durations, including half beats. Throughout these years,

only a small number of pupils can read music fluently, mainly those who have individual instrumental lessons.

166. Because of the appropriate levels of extra support and care they receive, pupils with special needs achieve well in relation to their attainment levels. They are helped by tasks and working materials which are adjusted to their requirements and by support from their fellow pupils, especially in group activities.

167. A small number of pupils sat GCSE in 2001. The results were above the national and the school averages. Attainment and achievement in Years 10 and 11 is average overall. Attainment for some pupils in Year 10 is well below average. Despite good teaching, lack of fluency in performance and low levels of technical and background knowledge restrict their achievement. The majority of students in this year need a system of specific improvement targets, closely monitored and regularly reviewed, in order to promote progress. Pupils in Year 11 are producing compositions of average standard. Some of these pupils have good listening, appraising and analytical skills but others show considerable weaknesses and a lack of underpinning musical knowledge.

168. Overall pupils demonstrate a positive attitude to the subject. They are co-operative and obedient, except where the customary secure framework is absent. They concentrate well and make a real effort to improve their standards. Some pupils in Year 10 are disinterested and reticent because they lack confidence in the subject. However, pupils in Year 11 are much more positive and enthusiastic about the musical opportunities provided for them.

169. Teaching is good, sometimes very good. Only one unsatisfactory lesson was observed in Year 7, taken by a non-specialist teacher. Teaching is well planned and the management of different pupil activities within the timescale of each lesson is skilful and productive. There are high expectations that all pupils will behave well, work hard, co-operate with each other and improve individually and collectively. A secure framework is provided which pupils understand and respect and which encourages creative activity.

170. Lesson aims and instructions are clear and checks are made to ensure that pupils understand what they have to do. Pupils are engaged at the very beginning of lessons by the use of vigorous question and answer sessions to recapitulate previous material and in the final resume. Alternatively the lesson starts with a lively practical session, such as singing, which draws pupils into an immediate musical experience.

171. During group activities, pupils are closely monitored by their teacher, who supports them well and encourages them always to improve their work. The subject leader has good specialist knowledge and performing skills and her demonstrations provide an important standard for pupils to aim for. Her relationship with the pupils is very good.

172. These positive features of teaching promote good learning. The development of pupils' skills and experience is enhanced by the integration of key musical elements of performing, composing and listening. Pupils in Year 7 learn about musical structure by singing, listening, analysing and composing pieces in three parts. In year 9, pupils explore characteristics of the salsa and calypso through listening and analysis, performing and composing. Pupils have useful individual resource packs for each topic they study, for example Film Music or Music of the Caribbean. They also record their activities and compositions in their own exercise books for future reference. Performances and compositions are sometimes stored on tape and this feature could be usefully extended to all years and used as a basis for future evaluation and discussion by pupils.

173. Pupils work together well in pairs or small groups. They learn how to make choices from available material by discussion and mutual agreement. They gain team, negotiation and leadership skills.

174. As pupils rely to a large extent on electronic keyboards for performance and as an aid to composing, learning correct fingering from the beginning of Year 7 would provide additional fluency and higher levels of competence. This would be of particular advantage for those who choose music in Years 10 and 11. Appropriate preparation before singing and pupils' basic understanding of its physical process is a good feature, but it does not happen in all lessons.

175. Pupils have no contact with music computer skills because the resources are unavailable. At the most basic level the introduction of this opportunity would permit greater facility in notation and for composing. It would allow pupils in Years 10 and 11 to prepare and present their submitted compositions for GCSE in a professional format.

176. The development and continuity of learning for pupils in Year 9 is restricted by a carousel arrangement of music, art and design and drama. Lack of continuous provision throughout the year hinders the further development of practical skills, extend pupils' experiences and deepen their supporting knowledge. This means that pupils who choose to continue music in Year 10 start at a lower level of attainment than they should.

177. Pupils are assessed on a profile basis in key skills and the accumulated gradings feed into the National Curriculum assessments at the end of Year 9 and the pupils' reports. Pupils also make a personal assessment of their achievement in each unit of their work. In lessons more use could be made of pupil evaluation in order to develop their critical judgement.

178. Music is well led and managed. Since her appointment as a newly qualified teacher, just over two years ago, the subject leader has established a good scheme of work which promotes a balanced approach to the development of skills and provides opportunities for pupils to experience a wide variety of music from many cultures. She has created a positive image for the subject and a clear understanding amongst pupils that it demands serious effort and rigour from them. There has been an increase in the number of instrumental teachers, who now work with a growing number of pupils learning woodwind and brass instruments, and guitar. This in turn has permitted the development of extra curricular ensembles, as well as the continuation of the choir. These developments are offering extended musical opportunities for pupils, increased responsibilities for high attainers particularly and a cultural resource which can benefit the school.

179. Achievement, judged as generally satisfactory in Years 7, 8 and 9 at the last inspection, has now improved. Standards of attainment are maintained. There is now a better balance of activities to promote the development of pupils' skills. The integrated approach to learning provides a better basis for all-round development. Pupils are studying a wider range of musical styles. There are growing opportunities for more extra curricular experiences. The subject will shortly be accommodated in newly converted performing arts centre. Overall improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Overall good standard of teaching.
- The department is well managed.

- Almost all pupils have a positive attitude.
- Relationships amongst pupils and between pupils and teachers are good.

Areas for improvement

- Use assessment information to track all pupils' progress more closely.
- Set, detailed learning targets for individual pupils.
- Increase the degree of challenge for improvement in some classes.
- Standards of attainment in GCSE classes.

180. GCSE results in the year 2001 were well below the national average for A*-C grades and below the school's average for all subjects. This was a clear characteristic of the year group, though in physical education there has been a fall in each of the last two years. Unusually in 2001 boys did not do as well as girls.

181. Attainment on entry to the school is variable as is the pupils' experience in the subject. Overall it is generally below average. Work seen in Year 7 classes indicates weaker games skills overall but levels of physical fitness are much nearer expected levels for this age group. In some activities clear progress is being made by most pupils. For example, in a Year 7 gymnastics class, almost all girls achieved well and there was clear improvement in the quality of their sequence work within the lesson. Boys in a Year 8 football group are capable of playing the game to a good standard for their age especially in their passing skills and team play.

182. By the end of Year 9 overall standards are close to the national average level. Levels of personal fitness are above average in some classes, for example, in a health related fitness group, most boys showed a good understanding of how to measure fitness and then, how to improve on standards reached by targeted exercise in circuit activities. The improvement on standards overall to reach average levels at this stage represent good added value to the level of attainment on entry to the school.

183. Overall standards at the age of 16 are average, in line with expected national levels, though this judgement is drawn from fewer observations in this age group. The strongest component continues to be the level of personal fitness reached by most pupils, both boys and girls. Some pupils exceed these standards and especially so in games. Boys do particularly well in football and in basketball where the school's current Year 11 team have remained undefeated in all competitions for a considerable length of time.

184. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well throughout the school in physical education and especially in the earlier years 7, 8 and 9. Success in physical tasks helps raise their self-confidence which in turn aids them in making further progress. In all years, higher attainers in individual sports and in team games compete successfully in local, regional and national competitions.

185. Throughout the school, most pupils display a positive approach to the work in lessons and in the extensive extra-curricular sport and games programme provided by the department. Almost all behave well and have a clear understanding of what their teachers expect of them in terms of behaviour as well as performance. Most are eager to do well and demonstrate, through good standards of personal kit, attendance and participation, their keen interest in the subject.

186. Overall the quality of teaching is good and this ensures that learning is good and accounts for the improvement in standards over five years. Teachers know the subject well and have been successful in devising and managing activities that engage the interest of pupils and offer them the opportunity to achieve. In many classes, an encouraging style and sensitive feedback ensure that pupils are aware of how well they are doing. The next stage in learning, ensuring that pupils know what to do in order to improve further, is not made sufficiently clear in some lessons: the challenge for further improvement is insufficiently well emphasised. Lessons are well planned and most conform well to the established departmental pattern with a thorough and demanding warm-up in preparation for physical exercise. Classes are well managed and there are good relationships amongst pupils and between the pupils and their teachers. This latter feature encourages and promotes achievement as seen, for example, in the clear focus and eagerness to succeed in a Year 11 swimming group engaged in improving their knowledge and technique in water safety.

187. The department is well managed by a hard-working, capable and committed leader. The organisation of the programme is very good, as are the clearly written and comprehensive plans and policies. Assessment procedures are good, in line with the whole school programme, and the head of department has worked hard to ensure that this subject area has kept pace with change and development. The use the department makes of information gathered by assessment processes is at present limited to tracking pupils' progress in GCSE classes. Although pupils are well engaged in self-assessment processes and some general target-setting, the practice of teachers setting detailed, individual, learning targets for all pupils, is not yet well established as a clear strategy for raising standards.

188. Since the last inspection standards of attainment by the age of 14 have improved and are close to national standards in all aspects. The programmes of study are fully in line with National Curriculum requirements at both key stages and learning aims are now clearly identified. At present the range of indoor activities available for all pupils is limited by smaller than usual indoor teaching spaces. The arrangements made by the department to use off-site facilities in attempting to broaden the range and quality of pupil experiences is not easily affordable.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Teaching is consistently of a high standard across the school.
- Excellent use is made of discussion techniques and projects to engage pupils in learning.
- There are very good resources for learning.
- Management of the subject is highly efficient.

Areas for improvement

- More time needed to meet the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus in Years 10 and 11.
- Develop the use of ICT in lessons.
- Make use of subject specific criteria for assessing pupils' work and giving feedback.
- Continue to improve the matching of materials and tasks to suit the different levels of attainment of pupils in mixed ability classes.

189. Standards in religious education are average by national comparison at age 14. The amount of time allocated for statutory religious education in Years 10 and 11 is less than half that recommended to cover the Derbyshire Agreed Syllabus, which means that pupils are not able to study in sufficient depth to reach the required standard. Up to 25 pupils are entered for GCSE in religious education each year, and in 2000 the results were above the national average. In 2001 they fell back to some 15 points below average, similar to earlier years. The current Year 11 pupils on the GCSE course, both in the recent mock examinations and in their coursework preparation, are achieving standards more in line with the national average.

190. At age 14 attainment is average, which represents good achievement by pupils to reach the required standard. They have a satisfactory knowledge of four major faiths – Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism. In their presentations on coming of age ceremonies in each of the faiths, Year 9 pupils showed good understanding of what it means to take responsibility for what you believe. They are less confident at analysing the similarities and differences between practices and beliefs in the four religions. Pupils are making good progress in developing their own views on moral issues through discussion. For example, in a thought provoking Year 9 lesson, they were able to think through their views on rights and responsibilities in marriage in a series of exercises, culminating in an exchange of views from both sexes. Whilst pupils have a general idea of their progress in the subject, assessment criteria are not being applied rigorously enough to give specific pointers as to how they can improve.

191. Pupils' writing in the subject develops well over Years 7 to 9 and the standard of presentation is high. High quality displays of their work along the humanities corridor are an attractive feature of the department. Year 8 pupils produce graphic accounts of their visits to a mosque and a gurdwara. Careful drafting of key pieces of assessed work raises the quality and accuracy of their writing. Their imaginary eyewitness accounts of miracles and baptisms show good insight to religious experience. Some of the reflective writing is particularly poignant, such as Year 9's prayers for an unborn child and reflections on the trials of being a teenager.

192. In work seen, attainment at age 16 on the GCSE course is on a par with that found nationally. Most pupils have produced detailed sets of notes, carefully structured to aid revision. Their knowledge of the main beliefs in Christianity and Islam is good and they have made thorough preparation for their coursework assignments. In lessons on pilgrimage to Mecca, pupils showed good understanding of the importance of Hajj for Muslims, capturing the feelings of pilgrims in imaginary postcards they might write home.

193. Standards on the compulsory course in Years 10 and 11 are below average, due to the shortage of time for the subject. In lessons pupils are learning well and achieving the required standard but there is no continuity of learning when the time slot has to be shared with two other courses, little time to go into sufficient depth on the topics for study and no expectation of homework. Excellent discussion materials and the rapid pace of lessons enable pupils to think through some moral issues, such as responsibility for the environment, and sort out some of their beliefs. Faced with the challenge, pupils are able to think on their feet and offer some explanation for their views.

194. Pupils' enjoyment of the subject is evident in lessons and in their positive response to homework projects. Pupils are sensitive in their discussion of values and beliefs and adopt a mature approach, respecting each other's views, as in the Year 9 lesson where boys and girls listened to views on marriage from both sexes. In Years 10 and 11, pupils value the opportunities for discussion on the compulsory course, finding them helpful for clarifying their own ideas. Good relationships between teachers and pupils ensure good behaviour and application to tasks in all classes. Teachers create a secure atmosphere in which pupils feel safe to express their views and exchange ideas.

195. The quality of teaching in the lessons observed was never less than good and almost half the lessons were very good. A strong team of experienced colleagues, led by the specialist teacher, is maintaining a good standard of teaching overall, promoting good learning. Lessons are well planned with clear aims and high quality supporting materials. Some of the worksheets are not sufficiently challenging for higher attaining pupils, but they are stretched in open-ended tasks, such as the Year 9 project to produce a radio broadcast and slide presentation on the initiation rites of different faiths. Teachers manage their pupils extremely well, maintaining a good pace of working and making best use of the long lessons. In Years 10 and 11, pupils' involvement in lessons is maximised through highly effective use of a range of activities, including video excerpts and games, to prompt discussion. The stimulating atmosphere created promotes effective learning. Lessons often inspire pupils to be creative on homework tasks, and many produce work worthy of display. Whilst pupils make much use of ICT on projects, it is not yet being used as a medium for learning in lessons. Marking tends to be too general with comments, and sometimes there is too long a gap between completion of work and feedback on it.

196. Management of the subject is highly efficient, providing non-specialists with lesson plans and good quality resources for delivering effective lessons. The departmental bank of teacher-produced resources is impressive, as is the stimulating subject environment created in the religious education room and along the corridor. Since the last inspection there has been satisfactory progress in developing courses and assessments, and creating more opportunities for pupils to reflect on the relevance of religious beliefs to their own experience of life.