

INSPECTION REPORT

**CHALLNEY HIGH SCHOOL FOR BOYS AND
COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

Luton

LEA area: Luton

Unique reference number: 109681

Headteacher: Mr V Galyer

Reporting inspector: Mr D J Thompson
15640

Dates of inspection: 20th – 24th May 2002

Inspection number: 190875

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

© Crown copyright 2002

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11 – 16 years

Gender of pupils: Boys

School address: Stoneygate Road
Luton
Bedfordshire

Postcode: LU4 9TJ

Telephone number: 01582 599921

Fax number: 01582 586069

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr D Wilkinson

Date of previous inspection: November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
15640	Mr D J Thompson	Registered inspector		What sort of school is it? How high are standards? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
16472	Ms C Stormonth	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?
12008	Mr D Bray	Team inspector	Music	
19858	Mr J Follett	Team inspector	Physical education	How well are pupils taught?
10327	Mr P Garham	Team inspector	Science	
01421	Mr K Gould	Team inspector	Mathematics	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
30569	Mr P Hind	Team inspector	English	
01153	Mr S Lavender	Team inspector	Religious education	
27407	Mr W Stoneham	Team inspector	History	
07431	Mr M G Lewis	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
19533	Ms J Martin	Team inspector	Equal opportunities Special educational needs	
12969	Mr I Middleton	Team inspector	Art and design	
08119	Mr D Milham	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
12968	Mr J Parker	Team inspector	Design and technology	
12957	Mr J W Stout	Team inspector	Geography	
15594	Ms J Felce	Team inspector	Business studies Community education	

16902	Ms S Teheri-White	Team inspector	English as an additional language	
-------	-------------------	----------------	-----------------------------------	--

The inspection contractor was:

Northamptonshire Inspection and Advisory Service
Cliftonville Centre
Cliftonville Middle School
Cliftonville Road
Northampton
NN1 5BW

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

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

REPORT CONTENTS

	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?	11
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	15
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	21
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	24
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	25
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	28
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	29
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	33

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Challney High School for Boys is a comprehensive school for boys aged 11–16. It has 773 pupils, making it smaller than average. Numbers have increased in recent years and the school is currently over-subscribed. Pupils are predominantly non-white, mostly of Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Indian origin. There is a small number of refugees from Africa and eastern Europe. Pupil mobility is very high; the proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school other than at the usual time is much greater than average. The school serves an area of relatively high social deprivation. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is above the national average and English is an additional language for almost all pupils. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. Standards of attainment on entry are well below average. The school makes substantial additional provision to support pupils for whom English is an additional language.

At the time of the inspection, Year 11 pupils were on study leave for examinations. Inspectors have used an evidence base which includes samples of Year 11 pupils' work, extended interviews with Year 11 pupils and analysis of documentation in order to reach judgements. However, the inspection team regrets that it has been unable to observe Year 11 lessons, especially as the very effective strategies employed by the school to raise achievement have increasing impact as pupils get older.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an outstanding school, which is very successful in providing a calm, caring and happy environment in which all pupils can do their best. Very strong leadership and good teaching produce very high achievement. Above average levels of funding are used well, representing good value for money.

What the school does well

- The school is led very well; a wide range of highly effective strategies are being used, resulting in very strong achievement for pupils.
- Teachers work very hard, have established very positive relationships with pupils and are highly committed to helping all groups of pupils to succeed.
- Extensive efforts are made to improve pupils' English and overcome literacy difficulties which provide a barrier to learning.
- Teaching has improved since the last inspection and is of good quality throughout the school.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to school and behaviour is of a very high standard.
- Parents are very satisfied with the school.
- A wide range of courses is offered that meets the needs of pupils very well.
- There is very effective provision of community education which plays a key role in enabling parents to support their children's progress.
- Pupils achieve particularly high standards in information and communication technology (ICT) and modern foreign languages at GCSE. Results in Year 9 national tests in English demonstrate very high achievement.¹

What could be improved

- Although assessment has improved since the last inspection, it is still used inconsistently to help pupils know how well they are doing, how they can improve, and to report their progress to parents.
- Although opportunities to learn independently have improved since the last inspection, pupils still need more opportunities to think for themselves and to develop their research skills.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

¹ The words 'standards' and 'attainment' are used to describe pupils' performance in comparison with all schools nationally. The words 'achievement' and 'progress' are used to describe pupils' gains in knowledge, understanding and skills or their performance in relation to other pupils with a similar background.

The school was last inspected in November 1996. Since that time the school has maintained standards which represent very high achievement. This has been achieved through a tireless commitment to pursuing excellence. The quality of teaching, monitoring by senior and middle management and the setting of academic targets have all improved. The school has appointed a literacy co-ordinator and staff have worked hard to improve pupils' speaking skills. Assessment procedures have improved, especially in the production of extensive data on pupils' performance. However, there is still room for further improvement in the area of assessment and in the provision of opportunities for independent learning.

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	B	B	B	A*	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E

At age 16 examination results were above average, when comparing the performance of boys at Challney High School with boys nationally. GCSE results, in comparison with schools taking pupils from similar backgrounds² were in the top 5%. Analysis of pupils' results, when compared with their previous performance in national tests at age 14, shows that they make very strong progress. The school has received the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) School Achievement Award for excellence in 2000 and 2001, as well as being named by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) as a school succeeding particularly well 'against the odds'. Examination performance is particularly good in French and ICT. There is very good achievement in science and religious education. Achievement in examinations is at least sound and often good in all other subjects. There has been an improving trend in results and the school has achieved its targets. At age 14, pupils' results in national tests were close to average in English and well below average in mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools, this represents achievement in the top 5% of schools for English and well above average achievement in mathematics and science. Pupils make very good progress in lessons, overall.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Pupils value the high quality of school life. They work very hard and show pleasure and pride in their work. Their very positive attitudes contribute strongly to their progress.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are polite and helpful to visitors. They behave very well both inside and outside the classroom. Behaviour in assembly is exemplary.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are excellent. The overall atmosphere is one of pleasant, social camaraderie. Pupils praise their teachers strongly and there is a very strongly shared commitment to succeed. Pupils' personal development is very good. They respond well when given opportunities to work independently.
Attendance	Very good. Challney is in the top 10% of schools nationally. The rate of unauthorised absences is well below the national level. Extended holidays account for a large amount of absence. Punctuality to school is satisfactory; use of public transport provides some difficulty for pupils.

² Similar schools are those taking broadly the same proportion of pupils that receive free school meals
Challney High School 8

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.

The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. Teaching is at least satisfactory in almost all lessons. In almost two-thirds of lessons it is good or better and in almost one-third of lessons teaching is very good or excellent. There are no subjects in which the overall quality of teaching is less than satisfactory.

Teaching is very good in all years in information and communication technology (ICT), history and geography. Teaching is good in all years in science, business studies, French, music, physical education, religious education and personal and social education (PSE). A significant overall strength of teaching is that subjects are taught by specialists who have good knowledge and understanding which they use effectively to help pupils learn. Teachers' planning is good in almost all subjects, with a good match of resources and techniques to learning objectives. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well and have established very positive relationships with pupils. This is a key factor in producing a work-orientated ethos in which pupils achieve very well. Teachers generally make satisfactory use of homework to extend pupils' learning beyond the lesson. The quality of marking and assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory overall, but with too much variation across subjects. It is used effectively in ICT, history, music and French, but in many other subjects it does not inform pupils of how well they are doing or how they can improve.

Teaching of literacy skills is good and pupils' literacy skills are being developed well. Mathematics teaching is effective in developing numeracy skills but development of numeracy across subjects is too inconsistent. ICT skills are promoted well in a wide range of subjects, although there is too little use in design and technology and physical education. Overall, good teaching meets the needs of all pupils well and enables them to learn effectively.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	There is a very good range of learning opportunities and statutory requirements are met well. There is a full range of extra-curricular activities, both after school and at lunch times. The needs of gifted and talented pupils are met very well. There is insufficient time for music.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. There is a strong commitment to pupils with special educational needs. They are given full access to a balanced curriculum. The use of small class sizes and targeted work on literacy and numeracy enables pupils to make very good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. The school works very hard with pupils and their parents on improving pupils' use of English. A literacy co-ordinator has been appointed and many detailed improvements have been made to the literacy programme.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very effective. Every subject has explicit plans for developing spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects. This is more widespread than normally seen but some opportunities are missed. The school does not fully meet the requirements to hold a daily act of worship.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school is a very caring community; tutors know each pupil very well and there is a very strong pastoral system. There is a good assessment policy but too much inconsistency in the use of assessment to let pupils know how well they are doing and how to improve.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Good. The school sees a close partnership with parents as fundamental to its drive to raise standards. The overall quality of information to parents

	is good but reports of pupils' progress to parents give too little information on gains in knowledge, skills and understanding.
--	---

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and the school's leadership team work very well together. There is a very good strategic plan and well-chosen strategies have been implemented to improve teaching further and overcome any identified weaknesses in provision for pupils – these have contributed strongly to pupils' very high achievement. Subject management is good overall but there has been insufficient focus on ensuring a co-ordinated experience for pupils in design and technology.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. There is an effective governing body. Governors have a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They work in a productive partnership with teachers to share the schools strategic direction. Most statutory responsibilities are fulfilled well, but governors have not ensured that requirements for a daily act of worship and reports on pupils' progress are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. There is a widespread use of external education advisers, and more thorough monitoring and development of the quality of teaching than is normally seen. The school's detailed strategic and development planning identifies clear criteria for success, and progress against them is evaluated well and used to inform future development. There is an extensive amount of data on pupil performance but this is not used sufficiently well by many subject co-ordinators.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Staff are encouraged to bid for funds to support higher standards and these are carefully analysed by governors and the leadership team. Implementation of successful bids is already improving achievement. The school makes very good, and still improving, use of computers; this is improving pupils' education and making administration more effective. Specific funds are matched very well to their purpose, with a strong emphasis on improving pupils' learning. Different providers of services are considered to ensure that best value is gained. Teachers' skills are matched well to subjects taught. Accommodation is good and learning resources are mostly sufficient for pupils' needs.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boys like the school • Pupils make good progress • Behaviour is good • Teaching is good • The school expects pupils to work hard • The school is helping pupils become mature and responsible • The school is well led and managed • Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside lessons • How closely the school works with parents • The amount of work pupils are given to do at home

The large majority of parents returning the questionnaire and attending the meeting for parents agreed with the positive comments. Relatively few parents expressed negative views. The inspection confirms the positive views of parents. The range of activities outside lessons is good. Pupils are given sufficient

homework but the homework timetable is not shared with parents. The school works closely with parents, but reports on pupils' progress are ineffective.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

Standards on entry

1. Pupils enter the school at the beginning of Year 7 with standards which are well below the national average.

Performance in examinations at ages 14 and 16

2. At age 14, pupils' results in the 2001 national tests were close to average in English and well below average in mathematics and science, when compared with all schools nationally. There was strong improvement in English in 2001 as results were well below the national average in 1999 and 2000. Results in mathematics and science have been consistently well below average over this 3 year period. Analysis of test results at age 14, in comparison with schools taking pupils from similar backgrounds, shows that achievement was in the top 5% of schools nationally for English and well above average in mathematics and science.
3. At age 16, standards in GCSE or GNVQ examinations were above average, in comparison with all boys' results nationally. This is based on pupils' total average points score; the school's policy of entering as many boys as possible for a large number of subjects made a strong contribution to this positive picture. GCSE performance in French is particularly good, with results significantly above average. Results are close to average in design and technology, history, mathematics and Gujarati. Below average results were attained in business studies, combined science, English language, English literature and statistics. There has been an improving trend in the school's results over the period 1997–2001.
4. GCSE results, in comparison with similar schools, based on the number of pupils eligible for free school meals, were well above the national average. This very positive achievement is demonstrated consistently for pupils obtaining five or more A*-C grades, five or more A*-G grades and for those achieving at least one A*-G grade. Analysis of pupils' GCSE/GNVQ results, when compared with their previous performance in national tests at age 14, show that pupils make very good progress. Their achievement is in the top 5 per cent of schools nationally. Strongest achievement is demonstrated in French and information and communication technology (ICT). There is very good achievement in science and religious education. Achievement is at least sound and often good in all other subjects.

Standards of pupils currently in Years 7 to 11

5. Overall, standards are below average in Years 7 to 9 and average in Years 10 and 11. This represents good progress from age 11 to 14 and very good progress from age 14 to 16.

Years 7 to 9

6. Pupils make very good progress in English and in ICT. In English they become increasingly skilful at varied kinds of writing but spoken contributions are often short. In ICT pupils quickly achieve standards in line with the national average; for example, in

developing their ability to move around and modify spreadsheets.

7. Pupils make good progress in mathematics, science, art and design, geography, history, modern foreign languages, physical education and religious education. In mathematics pupils develop a good understanding of basic concepts, within the National Numeracy Strategy. High attainers are able to use Pythagoras' theorem whilst low attainers show appropriate development of calculation strategies. In science, pupils show good gains in knowledge and understanding of key scientific concepts, such as reactions between metals and acids. In art and design, pupils apply their understanding of other artists to their own work, enabling them to reach standards similar to those seen nationally. In geography pupils develop sound knowledge and understanding of the differences between places around the world. In history, pupils make good progress, from a very low starting point, to attain standards which are below those typically seen nationally. In modern foreign languages, pupils develop good listening and reading skills, although confidence in pronunciation and fluency of speaking is less well developed. Pupils achieve standards which are typical for their age in physical education; standards in cricket are above average and although attainment in swimming is below average pupils make good progress from a very low starting point. In religious education pupils are developing a range of knowledge and understanding of the principal world religions.
8. Pupils make sound progress in music. Progress in lessons is good but the insufficient amount of time allocated to the subject and the loss of momentum caused by rotating lessons with ICT prevents overall progress being better.
9. Pupils make good progress in the food and textiles aspect of design and technology, reaching standards similar to those normally seen nationally. However, there is insufficient progress in the resistant materials aspect, mainly because of a lack of opportunities to encourage designing and making activities matched to higher National Curriculum levels.

Years 10 and 11

10. There were no opportunities to observe Year 11 lessons during the inspection. The following comments are based on observation of Year 10 lessons, scrutiny of samples of work for Years 10 and 11 and discussions with pupils and teachers.
11. Pupils make very good progress in mathematics, science, ICT, modern foreign languages, history and the food and textiles aspects of design and technology. In mathematics, pupils are able to find a formula to describe the n th term in a series and high attainers can determine whether two sets of data are connected. In science, pupils develop their investigative skills well and can carry out experiments with precision and safety. In ICT, pupils build further on skills developed during Years 7 to 9, to reach above average standards. They make good use of images and text when creating websites, including effective use of hyperlink, producing work of a professional standard. In French, pupils reach high standards in writing, producing examples of outstanding extended writing for coursework. Speaking is, however, lacking in fluency and accuracy. Very good progress in history enables pupils to reach average standards. Written work is detailed, interesting and expresses balanced views. Inspection of source material is a strength. In the food aspect of design and technology pupils carry out effective research and investigation which they apply well to preparing their own dishes. In textiles, they develop and apply a good range of ideas for sports and leisurewear.
12. Pupils make good progress in geography, physical education, religious education and business studies. In geography, pupils develop a sound understanding of the way the

landscape is changing and the importance of looking after the world. Pupils reach standards typical for their age in physical education, including a good awareness of the importance of exercise for future health and enjoyment, although theoretical knowledge, demonstrated in written work, is often too limited. In religious education pupils demonstrate very good knowledge and understanding but their ability to argue a case or evaluate opinions is less well developed. In business studies pupils make good progress in recalling, understanding and explaining concepts. Pupils make satisfactory progress in English and music. In English, although some pupils show a well-structured analysis of complex texts, others are unable to deal with the more complex areas of style, form or purpose. In music, they do well in performing and composing, producing imaginative and effective pieces of music, but less well in listening.

13. Pupils make insufficient progress in the resistant materials aspect of design and technology. Design work is too superficial and there is insufficient use of computers.
14. Pupils with special educational needs enter the school with very low level basic skills, and through good teaching across the curriculum they make very good progress, especially in Years 10 and 11, so that they leave school with good levels of national accreditation. They make good progress in developing the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, so that by the end of Year 9 they make considerable progress within the National Curriculum. They make slower progress in achieving targets within their individual education plans, because their individual needs are not systematically addressed.
15. Gifted and talented pupils make good progress during Years 7 to 9 and very good progress during Years 10 and 11. For example, they are able to quickly understand the limiting factors of photosynthesis in science. Talented pupils studying food and textiles have produced work of the highest grades. A high attaining pupil in geography analysed data and drew sophisticated conclusions when comparing settlement patterns in Luton. Gifted and talented pupils produce high quality work, using a variety of software, in ICT,
16. Standards of literacy are below those normally seen. The school works very hard and is successful in substantially raising achievement in literacy. However, written work does not demonstrate more complex areas of style and speaking contributions are often short.
17. Numeracy standards across the school are around national expectations by the end of Year 11. Given that pupils enter the school with standards well below average this represents good achievement. Pupils' abilities to collect data and to present and analyse information are much improved by Year 11 and good examples of this were seen in subjects such as science, geography and modern foreign languages. Numeracy was seen as a particularly strong feature of the planning in history: the subject inspector commented that it had featured in each lesson seen.
18. The school sets targets to predict examination performance for each year, in conjunction with the local education authority. The school has achieved its targets so far and is on track to do so in 2002.
19. Since the last inspection, in 1996, the proportion of pupils achieving the highest levels in year 9 tests has increased in English, mathematics and science. The proportion of pupils achieving at least Level 5 has increased in English and mathematics, but fallen in science. Overall standards for pupils aged 14 are similar now to those inspected in 1996. The average GCSE points score in 2001 was above average, as it was in 1996. Overall, despite a very high proportion of pupils leaving or joining other than at the usual time, the school has maintained standards which represent very high achievement.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

20. Pupils have excellent attitudes to school and their behaviour is very good. This is even better than what was reported at the last inspection. Pupils really enjoy school and most have a real desire to succeed, working hard and listening carefully to advice to raise their attainment. Relationships throughout the school are excellent, making a harmonious, vibrant and inclusive community where the ethos is respectful and clearly focused on learning and achievement. Parents were highly complimentary about how the school has helped their children become confident and enthusiastic about their learning.
21. Attitudes to learning are excellent and pupils value the good education and high quality school life they enjoy at Challney that makes them feel secure and happy. Pupils respond particularly well when they encounter effective teaching with high expectations; they get fully engrossed, work very hard and show obvious pleasure and pride in their work. This was seen consistently in information and communication technology and science and in many history, geography, physical education, personal, social and health education and modern foreign language classes. Pupils also enjoy drama and in a Year 7 English lesson, where pupils wrote their own scripts about school based situations, they showed maturity and vivid imagination in an outstanding lesson. Pupils with special educational needs, and those pupils for whom English is not their first language, have excellent attitudes to learning. They try hard to succeed and please their teachers and respond well to praise and encouragement. These very positive attitudes are a very important factor in the significant progress pupils make.
22. Behaviour around the school is very good. Pupils are extremely polite and helpful to visitors. They know exactly what is expected of them and usually behave very well both inside and outside the classroom. Teachers are able to concentrate on the lesson's work without having to dwell on behaviour. When behaviour is not up to the normally high standard it can be traced back to weaknesses in teaching: when there is a lack of clarity about what to do, weak behaviour management, a lack of challenge or when pupils have difficulty understanding some specialised vocabulary. This was seen in a Year 7 mathematics lesson when pupils were given a task involving rows and columns and there was confusion about what these meant.
23. Behaviour between lessons is very good as pupils make their orderly way to the next lesson. Lunchtimes are very pleasant, sociable occasions in the cafeteria and buttery. Behaviour in the playground is usually very good as many pupils play cricket and football with good-natured camaraderie. Behaviour in assembly is exemplary; pupils show respect and listen attentively. Pupils confirmed strongly that "they don't have bullies and they don't want them." On the rare occasion when bullying is reported it is dealt with very quickly and effectively. The exclusion rate is very low and the very small number of fixed term exclusions was fully justified for unsafe behaviour. There have been no permanent exclusions for seven years and this is highly commendable.
24. Relationships are excellent, based on mutual respect and a very strongly shared commitment to succeed. Many pupils praise their teachers and feel privileged to be at this school. The personal development of pupils is very good. Pupils are able to take on greater responsibility and develop greater maturity as they move up through the school. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons make a significant contribution to personal development and help pupils to organise and manage themselves better and to encourage good behaviour and a good work ethic. Good citizenship and a healthy life style are also promoted very well. Pupils have good opportunities to take on responsibility as prefects, peer mentors and when they lead assemblies, raise large sums for local hospital and hospice charities and do various jobs. Pupils help diligently in the library and cafeteria and enjoy the trust placed in them. Pupils are very good

ambassadors for the school when they show parents around at open days and consultation evenings. Year 8 pupils help to induct Year 7 pupils when they start school and help them settle quickly. Work experience debriefs indicate some excellent personal development outside school.

25. When pupils are given opportunities to work independently they respond well and the quality of learning is very good. This was seen in some of the best history, science, English, information and communication technology and design and technology lessons. When pupils prepared travel brochures in a Year 9 English lesson, or when Year 10 pupils used information and communication technology to produce a geography project, they produced work of high quality. This is not a strong feature, however, and there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to become more independent learners. Pupils need more chances to think for themselves and show initiative, to develop their own ideas and acquire better research skills. Some lessons are too tightly controlled and restrict pupils' freedom to choose, to gather their own evidence, to observe, to question and to investigate their learning. Pupils seldom came to their own conclusions about their learning and this was a particular feature for younger pupils.
26. Pupils with special needs respond very well to learning, and have very positive attitudes to class work. They come to lessons expecting to learn, and settle down quickly. In the few instances when tasks are ill matched to their needs, or learning and behaviour expectations are unclear, they quickly go off task and lose interest. They are very dependent upon adults to structure and guide their learning, and have few strategies of their own to aid their study.
27. Attendance is very good and this places Challney in the top 10% of schools nationally. The rate of unauthorised absence is well below the national level. Absence is attributable to genuine illness, and extended holidays account for a large amount of absence. There is no evidence of truancy. Punctuality on arrival at school is satisfactory. A small number of pupils have difficulty in getting to school on time because they rely on public transport and have long distances to travel and this often causes problems.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

28. The quality of teaching is good overall. During the inspection 135 lessons were seen across Years 7 to 10 and teaching was satisfactory, or better in almost all lessons. In well over half of lessons it was good or better and in a quarter of lessons teaching was very good or excellent. There were no subject areas in which teaching was regarded as less than satisfactory and teaching was very good in ICT, history, geography and Urdu. Teaching was good in English, science, French, music, business studies, physical education, religious education and PSHE. This is a much more positive picture than was found at the time of the last inspection and represents good progress.
29. Teaching was a key point for development in the last inspection report. This was to develop further the quality of teaching and ensure that all teachers share the high expectations of the best. To meet this target the school embarked on a quality assurance programme involving an annual cycle of rigorous departmental reviews with joint lesson observations using trained inspectors working alongside heads of department and senior managers in the school. The school's self analysis of this work shows teaching to have improved significantly since 1996. It has reduced the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching and increased the proportion of good or better teaching considerably. The findings of this inspection confirm this positive picture. The school has developed and implemented an 'Effective Teaching Policy' with clear goals to raise pupils' expectations and improve the quality of learning. There are very explicit

guidelines for teachers on planning and lesson structure. The monitoring and evaluation criteria are clear and the policy links to the management of teachers' performance. The school is the lead school of the Chiltern Training Group which, in association with the University of Luton, provides fully accredited one year training for graduates to gain qualified teacher status through training alongside experienced teachers in the school. These trainee teachers are mentored by experienced colleagues and this has also had an impact on the development of teachers' skills, knowledge and understanding.

30. A strength of the school is that subjects are taught by the teachers who are specialists in their area and, as a result, have a good knowledge and understanding of their subject and are effective in developing pupils' knowledge and skills. For example, in a Year 10 geography lesson the teacher used his very good knowledge of key events which have affected changes in birth and death rates in different countries. This enabled pupils to gain a good understanding of key factors, such as contraception and the discovery of vaccines, which have led to changes in population rates in different societies over time. In a Year 9 history lesson, on the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, the teacher used good knowledge of events to promote pupils' understanding of the ending of World War II and at the same time consider the moral and ethical issues.
31. The teaching of basic skills is good. For example, pupils' literacy skills are being developed well; such as on road travel in the Middle Ages, where good teacher questioning, on pupils' analysis of source materials, ensured pupils' vocabulary was extended effectively with the use of terms such as 'bias', 'contradiction' and 'reliability'. Mathematics teaching is effective in developing numeracy skills and all subjects have plans for developing numeracy within the teaching. However, in some subjects this needs further development. The development of ICT skills across subjects is good overall. There were some good examples seen during the inspection, of teachers using ICT to enhance learning in subjects, particularly in English, maths, French and business studies. For example, in a Year 10 English lesson the teacher made use of a software package which enabled pupils to enhance the quality of their short story writing. For some other subjects, however, for example physical education and geography, the planning, coverage and development of these skills, through planned opportunities in lessons, needs further development. Many pupils make good use of computer facilities after school and during lunchtimes and the majority of pupils have good access to computers at home. As a result, many have developed good ICT skills and often use these to produce high quality work.
32. Teachers' planning is good in almost all subjects with all having detailed schemes of work. Where lesson planning in subjects is very good, for example in science, ICT, history, geography and French, a common feature across these subjects is a sharing with pupils of the key objectives for the lesson and a recap at the end to review what pupils have achieved and what they need to do next. Other strengths include the use of well thought-out teaching activities and work for pupils which is matched well to the requirements of the GCSE examination syllabus. For example, in a Year 10 French lesson the planned use of a range of high quality resources, including tapes and videos, ensured pupils remained focused and built up their language skills. In a Year 9 cricket lesson pupils made very good progress in improving their batting stroke play through the use of a good series of skills practices. In some elements of design technology, however, the planning of work is less well developed and results in tasks set which do not challenge pupils sufficiently and, as a result, progress is too slow.
33. In all subjects teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well and very positive relationships exist between teachers and pupils. Specialist teachers create a secure learning environment and inject their enthusiasm for their subject into their teaching. As a result, pupils enjoy their work and generally make good progress. This is a particularly

true consequence of the teaching in history, science and French, where teaching is carried out at a brisk pace and good quality learning takes place at a more rapid rate.

34. Teachers generally make satisfactory use of homework to extend pupils' learning. In some subjects, for example, science, business studies and ICT, the setting of homework is good; the work set is usually very appropriate and is effective in extending pupils' learning further.
35. The quality of marking and assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory. In many subjects pupils receive helpful feedback from teachers about the quality of their work. The quality of marking and the value of the comments made are, however, variable across subjects. In ICT, history, music and French there are examples of effective use of marking to improve standards. In other subjects however, for example English, mathematics, physical education and some elements of design and technology, although marking is generally used positively to encourage pupils, it is less effective in informing pupils how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve further.
36. Teaching of pupils with special needs by subject teachers and by learning support assistants in withdrawal sessions is sound. Most learning support assistants make good connections between the activities in withdrawal sessions and planning in English. However, in the absence of a structured basic skills programme, and insufficient use of specialist approaches to address specific learning difficulties, their teaching is variable. Subject teachers know the individual needs of pupils with special needs and seek to ensure their inclusion in learning activities. When teaching involves a variety of active learning tasks, pupils with special needs engage very well and produce high quality verbal and written responses. When there is no in-class support, tasks and teaching strategies are often not matched to their needs because the individual education plans give teachers insufficient guidance. Where there is in-class support, the subject teachers and Learning Support Assistants plan for these pupils well. The support is helpful, especially when additional materials are used to support these pupils. Occasionally, the approach to support can lead to the isolation of a pupil with special needs within the class. Overall the school has gone to considerable lengths to understand the diverse social and ethnic backgrounds of its pupils and developed teaching approaches which meet their needs well.

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

37. Pupils have a very good range of learning opportunities. The quality and range of the school's curriculum is very good and statutory requirements are met well. In 1992 Challney High gained the prestigious Schools Curriculum Award - an award given to a small number of schools which demonstrate a clear commitment to promoting educational excellence. It continues to provide a good curriculum for all its pupils. The school's curriculum policy states a commitment to breadth and balance ensuring that all pupils work in all main areas of learning. This policy has been updated this year and takes into account the recent national recommendations for the curriculum and, in particular, the flexibility offered to pupils in Years 10 and 11. This excellent policy document encompasses all the National Curriculum subjects and religious education covering the philosophy, broad goals and pupil outcomes for each of these subjects. The curriculum policy also covers such areas as literacy and numeracy, personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship. The school is well advanced in its plans for the formal introduction of the teaching of citizenship in September 2002.
38. The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 shows very good commitment to breadth and balance. All the National Curriculum subjects are covered plus religious education and PSHE. All pupils also follow a literacy course based on the approaches advocated by the National

Literacy Strategy. The time allocation for information and communication technology (ICT) is shared with music – on average each of these subjects is taught for half a period per week. This does allow for ICT and music to be taught in smaller groups. Despite this reduced time the recommended national scheme of work for ICT is appropriately covered although the time for music is below average and adversely affects pupils' progress. Some pupils are withdrawn from some foundation subjects (for example, art and design and design and technology) to allow them extra teaching in literacy and numeracy where their skills are improved.

39. In Years 10 and 11 the principle of commitment to a broad curriculum is maintained. Pupils follow one of three different pathways. The pathways are decided by looking at a pupil's performance in Year 9, both in national tests and teacher assessment. Pathway 1 is the most academic course. Pathway 2 contains fewer subjects so that pupils have more time to concentrate on each; it also contains a vocational course in ICT. Pathway 3 has fewer subjects still and enables pupils who need it to spend much of their time studying in smaller groups. Each pathway leads to a different number of GCSE qualifications: from more than twelve in Pathway 1 to around eight in Pathway 3. This is very effective, overall, in enabling boys to follow a course matched well to their needs.
40. Pupils in Pathway 3 do not study French but may choose to take Urdu. In this pathway some pupils, therefore, do not study a modern foreign language. They are, however, properly disapplied from this requirement of the National Curriculum. In each pathway some pupils may opt for art under the design option. Currently around 40 pupils have chosen this option which does not fully meet the current requirement for pupils to undertake a course in design and technology in Years 10 and 11.
41. In addition, all pupils in each year group have one period per week for PSHE in all years. As part of the Community College, in Year 11, pupils may also attend evening classes or activities not available in the school curriculum. A number of pupils do take this option and/or enter for other subjects, particularly other languages, through the school. This makes a good contribution to maintaining a wide range of choice.
42. The school's policy is that homework is set on a regular basis for all forms and that the amount of homework should increase as pupils move up the school and this was evident in the inspection. There is a homework timetable but this is not published for pupils or parents. Some homework is also set without regard to the timetable. Parents suggested that their children were given too little homework. The inspection team disagrees with parents but suggests that the lack of a published homework timetable may explain these views.
43. The school has a strong commitment to pupils with special educational needs and rightly believes that all have an equal right to a full and balanced curriculum. Provision is very good and in this respect there is improvement since the last inspection. There is a clear and detailed special educational needs policy which identifies the staff responsible, philosophy, goals and intended outcomes for pupils. Support for pupils is provided by keeping class sizes smaller, through in-class support and in small group withdrawal, for example, for literacy and numeracy 'catch up' sessions.
44. Pupils with special educational needs are included well in all subject areas, and in-class support is a key feature in ensuring their success. Additional help is provided for pupils with statements in withdrawal sessions, although the quality of these is variable, and there is insufficient use both of specialist special needs teaching strategies, and of the additional resources in the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies to address their difficulties in basic skills. Appropriate arrangements are made for these pupils in tests and examinations. The opportunities for these pupils for national accreditation at

the end of Year 11 are very good. There are good arrangements for college links and work experience to prepare pupils for the next stage in their life.

45. There are appropriate policies for the teaching of literacy and numeracy. The school has effective strategies for teaching these basic skills. This is clearly shown in the progress pupils make in mathematics during their time in the school. The school has appointed a literacy co-ordinator who has provided staff with excellent guidance on a very wide range of strategies for raising standards. These include fully planned schemes of work with clearly identified opportunities and methods for developing skills, use of exemplar materials for teachers, regular assessment, a strong focus on key words technical vocabulary and innovative approaches, such as the use of 'place mats' on desks drawing pupils' attention to how they can improve. Pupils are provided with an additional literacy lesson during Years 7 to 9, and attention to improving literacy across all subjects is a particular strength. Staff have worked very hard to improve pupils' literacy. There is very good use of the strategies in a wide variety of subjects to raise standards in listening, reading, writing and speaking. The strategies have had a strong impact on improving literacy skills for most pupils and this has had a positive effect on their learning in all subjects. However, pupils' speaking skills are still a barrier to learning in many subjects.
46. Opportunities for participation in extra-curricular activities are good. Pupils value the wide range of activities. There is a full programme of extra-curricular activities, including sports, both after school and during lunchtimes. The range of activities covers, for example, a mind mapping club, puppet club, web design, master classes, Ramadan games and involvement with charities. Some pupils were unclear about the range of activities on offer during the day. The lack of a published programme makes it difficult for pupils to avail themselves of the wide range of activities on offer and leads to parents' concerns that the sporting programme is too limited. The school has a wide programme of residential and non-residential visits. It is the school's policy to encourage all pupils to gain experience off the school premises at some time during their five years in the school. Examples include visits to Calais, the Luton Mosque, The Barbican and a Cambridge University taster day. Many trips are arranged, for example, to places such as Bassingbourne Army Barracks, the South of France and Saracens Rugby Club. There is too little involvement of visiting artists to enhance the art and design curriculum.
47. The school has recently appointed a co-ordinator for the needs of gifted and talented pupils. There are very good procedures for identifying such pupils and a very good programme of activities, additional support, visits and excursions. The programme includes amongst many others, activities such as mathematics master classes, a creative writing competition, visits to the Faraday Lecture series for science, games clubs and involvement in a history competition. The school makes extensive use of the gifted and talented programme run by the local education authority. It also seeks to raise pupils' aspirations, by visits, for example, to such institutions as Cambridge University. The programme of events is extensively detailed in the school's newsletters. Provision is very good.
48. Access and equality of opportunity to all aspects of the curriculum are very good. The school has a strong belief that everyone is of equal value regardless of colour, religion, culture, gender, ability or age. Equality of opportunity is regarded as a high priority for the school. This is well supported by school policies on gender, multicultural aspects, special needs and on staffing. The school does much to ensure that all are included. The very low rate of temporary exclusion and the fact that no pupil has been permanently excluded in the last seven years, are testaments to the school's efforts to provide education for all.

49. There is very good provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE). The well-planned programme covers all the statutory requirements for sex and drugs education and, commendably, citizenship is included in the new schemes of work. PSHE forms an important part of pupils' personal development and has a high status in the school. Pupils confirmed strongly how important and relevant the lessons are for helping them manage their time and organise themselves to optimise their learning. PSHE is a real strength on guiding pupils on aspects, such as how to behave, the development of social skills, how to take on responsibility and working together productively. Some very high quality lessons were observed during the inspection on "How to organise myself" in Year 7, and on child care in Year 10. There is good use of outside agencies to enrich the PSHE curriculum and the local police and health visitor are used very well and are frequent and welcome visitors.
50. The arrangements for careers education are very good and the school has a reputation for having a much better than local average success rate for pupils' placements when they leave school. Nearly all pupils continue their education and some courses are based on skills training for employment. All pupils' needs and aspirations are catered for very well. The Year 11 work experience programme is very well managed and has gained national and local awards for quality. There is a very good working relationship with the local careers service and interviews and advice help channel GCSE choices and select the best options for post-school destinations. The resources are very good and include a dedicated room for interviews and another room as a career resource centre. Useful trips out to army and RAF bases, the local hospital and courts, help pupils see the range of possible career opportunities. The school tries to take advantage of opportunities to involve the business community and has plans to extend this further.
51. There is very effective provision for pupils' personal development. Each subject area has explicit plans for the development of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of the subject. Whilst planning is very good, opportunities are sometimes missed. In a mathematics lesson on Pythagoras, for example, the opportunity to examine the historical and cultural aspects and to appreciate the beauty of the Pythagorean triads was not taken up. In religious education, however, pupils are encouraged to reflect upon many matters of religious importance; they display great interest in the religions of others.
52. Spiritual development, overall, is good. The school has a policy for worship. It has a SACRE dispensation and is not charged with holding collective worship which is 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character'. The school does not fully meet the requirements to hold a daily act of collective worship. It does, however, do much to attempt to meet this requirement. Each year group has an assembly in two weeks out of every three. Form tutors are asked to present the 'Thought for the Week' and to follow this up with their tutor groups. Most tutors do so. Registration periods were often seen as effectively used time for personal reflection and reading. In one very good registration period pupils were asked to consider 'God created the world' so 'Why should we kill animals if they were created by God?' An excellent debate ensued where various views were considered and accepted.
53. The school is a very moral community. It promotes this through its care for the individual and the way in which it includes all pupils. All pupils subscribe to the school's values, accept its regime and flourish under its caring approach. Pupils understand the difference between right and wrong. Pupils' moral development is good. Social development is excellent and pupils flourish in the school. The respect for each other's views and the very good relationships between pupils and their teachers exemplify this.

54. Cultural development is very good. The school provides good opportunities to raise pupils' awareness of cultures other than their own. The extensive programme of visits and residential excursions mentioned earlier supports this development. So does some work in subjects in the school, for example, in art which makes many references to the variety of cultures found in the school and elsewhere.
55. The school has very good pastoral links with its 19 feeder primary schools. New pupils visit for one day in the summer term prior to them joining the school in Year 7. The school has a well-established and understood transfer document. This enables Year 7 form tutors and teachers to be well informed about pupils' attainments and other personal information so that the transition to secondary school is smooth. A particular feature is the arrangement of individual visits to those pupils who have special educational needs for emotional or behavioural difficulties. Members of staff make some visits to develop the curriculum but there are too few pupil projects which start at primary school and continue at Challney. There are very good links with colleges of further education, including use of college staff to provide advice at the Year 11 parents' evenings. Overall provision is good.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

56. The school is a caring community underpinned by a very strong pastoral system that ensures the tutor knows each pupil very well. There are clear and well thought out procedures to provide very good support for individuals and consistent application of practice to promote good attendance, good behaviour and good work habits.
57. The procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are outstanding. All absences are rigorously followed up with a first day response. The school based Education Welfare Officer and bi-lingual secretary communicate parents' legal obligations for pupils' attendance very well. There is clear evidence of improvement in some of the small number of pupils with poor attendance. Representatives of the school and governors are working hard to persuade parents not to take extended holidays during term time and to give education the greater priority, with some limited success. Tough sanctions are imposed for the rare examples of persistent lateness and this acts as a good deterrent.
58. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good and are a real strength of the school. The pastoral team is a very dedicated group who go beyond normal bounds to help and support pupils who have difficulty in coping with school life. The behaviour policy advocates a strict regime, which is rigorously enforced, and all expectations are very clear. Incidents are carefully logged and behaviour contracts are agreed between school, parents and pupil to help modify persistently poor behaviour. In more extreme cases pupils are put on short-term personal education plans, where there is formal mentoring, and support and guidance is targeted. There is evidence of improvement in most cases. The pupils who find it hard to cope in the classroom spend time in the Learning Enhancement Centre where they are able to work more effectively in isolation under excellent supervision. These pupils feel that they make very good progress because they have good individual support and fewer distractions. They feel valued and their confidence and self-esteem are restored enabling them to rejoin normal lessons.
59. Peer mentoring helps pupils who are at risk of disaffection or being excluded; some of the prefects involved are excellent role models. The quality of support and help is outstanding. This is particularly effective when high attaining Year 11 pupils help other pupils to overcome their problems. PSHE lessons also provide very good quality support and advice for personal development and having a better quality school life.

The school is a community for all pupils and there are many support systems to ensure that all groups are included; examples include booster classes for Year 9 pupils, catch up classes for literacy and numeracy in Year 7, master classes for gifted and talented pupils, homework club for all, Summer English language school and Saturday morning revision classes. Arrangements for new pupil induction are good. Pupils are helped to find their way around the school and the timetable until they feel ready to cope.

60. The arrangements for child protection are very good and meet all requirements. The designated person has had recent training that was shared amongst staff to update them on recent changes to local procedures. The school is vigilant and all threats to pupils are carefully monitored. All pupils' medical conditions are well known and catered for. There are fewer than the recommended number of fully trained first aiders with a current valid certificate. Another two staff are undergoing training shortly to provide more adequate coverage. The management of health and safety is generally good and all the regular fire and electrical checking systems are in place. Risk assessments around the school and in subject areas are conducted regularly to ensure that the school is a safe and secure environment. The risk assessment in design and technology needs revision to take into account the specific hazards associated with the range of equipment and its use. Subject inspectors have drawn attention to some health, safety and training issues in design and technology and physical education issues in discussions with the school.
61. The school operates a good assessment policy but the practice between the different subject areas is inconsistent with some strengths and weaknesses. The best practice is in the modern foreign language department, which has well-established systems where teachers regularly assess work and provide good guidance to pupils. In this subject, the information is used well to start tracking pupils' progress. The use of comparisons with National Curriculum levels is excellent and data is used to identify weaknesses and to target improvement. Pupils are informed well about their overall performance. Stickers are used to suggest targets for improvement, to show current performance levels and to point to the demands of the next level.
62. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are very good in history, and are good in science, business education, physical education and religious education, design and technology and ICT in Years 10-11 and satisfactory in geography and ICT in Years 7 to 9, and for those pupils with English as an additional language. They are unsatisfactory in mathematics, religious education and design and technology in Years 7-9 and for special educational needs.
63. The use of assessment to guide curricular planning is satisfactory overall, but there is inconsistency in practice across subjects. There is clear evidence in history and geography of excellent use of assessment data to inform planning when the curriculum was changed to recognise areas where there was under-performance, to accommodate these weaknesses in the planning and address them effectively. However, this is not sufficiently widespread in most other subjects.
64. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are satisfactory. The school has a potentially good system of academic target setting using assessments on entry to the school as well as the end of Year 9 national test results to set challenging targets for all pupils throughout all year groups. The use of this data is yet to be fully implemented. There is little standardisation of practice in the use of National Curriculum levels and what pupils know about their own performance and what they have to do to go to the next level. The advice to pupils during some lessons, such as in mathematics, English and design and technology, is not specific, consistent, regular and useful enough to enable pupils to make rapid progress. Tasks are often not launched with defined and measurable outcomes and pupils' performance

in routine tasks is not often monitored, measured and reviewed sufficiently. The strong pastoral system encourages pupils to work towards generalised personal targets but the school makes insufficient use of the form tutor to monitor each pupil's academic development.

65. Assessment of pupils with special needs is unsatisfactory. There are very good arrangements for these pupils as they move from primary schools to Year 7, and assessment information is gathered well to produce a baseline of their learning needs, although there is no systematic assessment of behavioural needs. Information about these pupils is shared well with staff, but this is not drawn together in the individual education plans (IEPs). IEPs are too general, and the targets do not relate directly to identified needs. The IEPs do not provide sufficient information to guide the planning of subject teachers. Procedures for monitoring and reviewing all IEPs are unsatisfactory. The procedures for annual reviews of pupils with statements are not fully meeting the guidance in the Code of Practice with regard to reporting progress towards achieving annual objectives and the setting of further objectives to address the needs outlined in the statement. Transition reviews meet requirements.
66. Overall, assessment does not let pupils know sufficiently how well they are doing or how they can improve. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are very good. Pupils stay with the same tutor for the whole five years and relationships are excellent. Tutors keep very good records of each pupil for a range of attributes such as behaviour and attitudes, appearance, attendance and punctuality, homework and use of the school-parent contact book and these are reported very well in school reports. There are clear lines of communication for tutors and pastoral staff so that personal development information is shared well and tutors are able to help and guide pupils very well. The school makes good use of the support provided by external agencies in planning for pupils with special needs.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

67. The school has a good partnership with parents and parents hold the school in high regard. Teachers place great emphasis on working closely with parents and see a close partnership as fundamental to the school's drive to raise standards. Nearly three quarters of parents responded to the questionnaire and expressed high levels of satisfaction with the school and the education provided. Nearly all parents were pleased that their children enjoy school, are making good progress and are working hard.
68. There was some slight parental criticism about the provision of interesting activities outside lessons, getting the right type and amount of homework and being well informed about progress. The inspection team investigated these misgivings and found that the range of extra-curricular activities is good. The arrangements for homework are satisfactory overall and for some subjects the homework set is good, such as in science where it contributes well to pupils' learning. There is a homework timetable but it is not published, not in pupils' contact books and is not widely known. This has caused some confusion over what is expected. Pupils feel that homework set is usually manageable and appropriate. The information provided about pupils' progress has strengths and weaknesses. The strengths are in the good arrangements and high attendance for consultation evenings, where parents have good opportunities to discuss their children's progress. The weakness is in the annual reports of pupils' progress to parents that do not meet the statutory requirements and are unsatisfactory; although personal development is well reported, there is insufficient information on the knowledge, skills and understanding that pupils have acquired in subjects over the past year. There is great inconsistency in the quantity and quality of teachers' comments. Some of the targets and advice for improvement are too general to be useful. The profiling reports for older pupils report personal development well but there is not enough space on the form to make sufficient comments about subject progress.
69. The quality of other information for parents is good. The newsletters keep parents in touch with school news and events. The curriculum and other booklets are very good and let parents and pupils know what is planned well in advance. The governors' annual report to parents and the school prospectus are well written and meet all the requirements fully. Contact books are used well, with the exception of having too little information on homework, and provide a useful channel for effective two-way dialogue with the school.
70. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is satisfactory. Parents have great confidence in the school and prefer not to get involved in school activities other than those directly about education. The school has tried many ways of involving parents more in the life of the school but these are not always rewarded by parental contributions. The school takes advantage of high attendance at parents' evenings to advertise and promote other important issues. For example, the Year 9 parents' evening has an advice desk on options for GCSE, information on the three pathways available to pupils in Years 10 and 11, and a chance to talk to staff and the Careers Officer before final decisions are made. Further education colleges attend the Year 11 open evening to give helpful advice on post-school options. There are no parent groups and no parents help in school on a voluntary basis.
71. A large number of pupils are able to use computers to help with their work at home. The contribution of parents to children's learning is very good. There is good evidence to indicate that parents frequently contact the school about their children's education and other issues and the school is very helpful and open in this regard. There are many telephone calls and parents' visits. When parents have difficulty attending school, home visits have been arranged successfully. The school works very closely with

parents when there are behaviour, attendance and punctuality issues. The education welfare officer and the bi-lingual secretary are very effective communicators in a number of languages and have been able to support families very effectively to benefit pupils' learning. The joint approach to modifying unacceptable behaviour is seen as a critically important part of the school's success in behaviour management. A very large number of parents have taken advantage of the English courses on offer at the Community College. Reviews and feedback from parents indicate that as parents' English skills improve, they become much more involved in their children's education and have much greater understanding of school documents and can support their children more effectively.

72. The special needs team has very good links with parents of pupils with special needs, and this is a contributory factor to the success of these pupils. Good communication is ensured through telephone links and visits to homes, and this ensures that any personal difficulties these pupils experience are quickly overcome. Written communication about progress relating to the pupils' special needs is satisfactory, although it focuses more on progress within subject areas than in the achievement of targets in the IEPs.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

73. The headteacher provides excellent leadership. He is charismatic and passionate about providing the best opportunities for pupils at the school. He has set out and achieved a very clear vision of creating a calm, caring and happy environment in which all pupils can achieve.
74. The headteacher and six other teachers form a leadership team. They work very well together and are very strongly committed to promoting high achievement and preparing pupils for later life. They have worked energetically and tirelessly to ensure that the vision for the school is widely understood by pupils, parents, governors and teachers. This has been very successful and a very positive learning ethos permeates the whole school.
75. The team has produced a very good strategic plan which identifies highly appropriate priorities for development. The plan demonstrates a strong lack of complacency by setting out strategies for further improvement in areas where the school already does very well, such as involving the community and recruiting and retaining staff. These are balanced well with strategies for developing weaker areas such as supporting subject departments where achievement is below the very high standards set by the school. Other priorities include further raising the quality of teaching and learning, continuing to improve pupils' behaviour and providing even more use of computers. All of these have been chosen very carefully and have very good potential for raising standards. Overall, the combination of strategies already pursued by the school has been very effective; pupils are very happy, keen to come to school and their overall achievement is very high.
76. The quality of the middle management is good overall but there is considerable variation across the subjects, from satisfactory to excellent. There is very effective management in a few subjects such as modern foreign languages, and information and communication technology (ICT), where strategies to raise pupils' standards have been very successful. In English, although management is sound and results in national tests for Year 9 are close to the national average, there has been too little focus on raising GCSE results. In design and technology there is insufficient co-ordination of pupils' experience in different aspects of the subject. Pastoral management is very good, with a very positive effect on pupils' attitudes and behaviour. Overall, the school

has agreed challenging targets for pupil performance with the local education authority and these have been met.

77. The leadership team has established a very good system of supporting subject managers and their teams of teachers. There is widespread use of external education advisers and more thorough monitoring and development of the quality of teaching than is normally seen. All teaching staff are involved in the national approach to their performance management; the schools early involvement in a rigorous appraisal system for teachers has enabled it to adopt the performance management approach quickly and easily. All teachers have targets for improvement and receive regular feedback on their progress. This has resulted in a significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection.
78. The leadership team has been very innovative in identifying potential problems, which could have an adverse effect on pupils' achievement, and overcoming them before they occur. For example, the school has founded the 'Chiltern Training Group' for the initial training of teachers and is listed as one of the most effective providers by the national Teacher Training Agency. This has had a very positive effect on teacher recruitment, making a substantial contribution to ensuring that the school does not experience many of the difficulties encountered by other schools. The involvement of large numbers of teachers from Challney Boys School in providing the training has also been used very well to keep all teachers abreast of effective teaching techniques.
79. Although the leadership team has developed an extensive amount of data on pupils' performance this is not being used in a sufficiently well-focused manner by many subject co-ordinators. There is too little use of data to measure the effects of strategies for raising standards and to set targets and monitor progress for pupils.
80. The special educational needs co-ordinator ensures that the provision for pupils with special needs is good. Through effective teamwork and high quality relationships, the inclusion of these pupils has a high priority. Planning for these pupils is embedded within whole-school planning, and monitoring of action planning and of the quality of support is good. Special needs resources are deployed effectively to ensure pupils make good progress. However, the administration of the SEN Code of Practice, and the use of information technology to facilitate this and to improve access to learning for these pupils, are significant areas requiring development. The learning environment within the special needs area is unsuitable in its double role as a work area for the SEN team and a small group teaching room.
81. There is an effective governing body. Governors meet frequently and are fully involved in strategic decisions. They receive regular, detailed, well presented information from representatives of the school, on a wide range of issues, and this enables them to understand the school's strengths and weaknesses very well. The representation of at least one member of the school's leadership team on each committee helps to create a very strong partnership relationship. The governing body is very supportive of the school and keenly aware of its considerable success. Governors have strong faith in the abilities of the leadership team and the high level of commitment of all staff. They also play a key role in holding the school to account and intervening when necessary, such as on making changes to the race equality policy to ensure that it was fair and clear. Governors fulfil most of their statutory responsibilities well. However, at the time of the inspection they had not ensured that the school provided a daily act of worship or that reports met legal requirements.
82. There is a very good system of supporting educational priorities through financial planning. Subject teams are allocated funds to cover their basic provision and are also

required to bid for further funding through the standardised development planning process. This focuses staff thinking well on considering how standards can be raised. For example, in history a bid for new reference materials has been approved, based on the need to change examination syllabus, to provide pupils with a better opportunity to achieve. A strategic decision to appoint a non-teaching finance and personnel manager has been very successful. The budget is very tightly monitored and close liaison with the leadership team ensures that all funds are matched very closely to their intended purpose. For example, 'Excellence in Cities' funding has been used very well to provide learning mentors, helping pupils to overcome their difficulties and succeed. Use of other funds is having a positive impact on providing for gifted and talented pupils, such as involvement in master classes, and helping lower attaining pupils, such as in summer schools during the holidays. The school's commitment to using new technology to support management and administration is illustrated by the appointment of an ICT manager. This has resulted in an increasing use of computers for the storage and retrieval of information, such as development plans, assessment data and budget spreadsheets. National Opportunities Funding has been used to improve staff confidence and competence in using computers and this has resulted in increased use of computers in lessons. However, there is still need for further development in the use of computers, such as for: monitoring attendance; use of the code of practice for pupils with special educational needs; and selection of assessment data. Alternative sources of provision are considered, thoroughly and regularly, when allocating contracts for services, such as catering and grounds maintenance, ensuring that the best possible value is obtained.

83. The number, qualifications and experience of teachers match the demands of the curriculum very well. Almost all teachers are specialists in their field and their depth of knowledge is having a positive effect on pupils' progress. Teachers are very committed to their jobs and work very hard within and beyond lessons to make a positive provision for pupils. The school's extensive use of external advisers and its highly successful involvement in initial teacher training contribute to a very good capacity for further improvement. However, use of Learning Support Assistants is not always matched well to pupils' needs.
84. Accommodation is good. Considerable thought has gone into making the best use of an old building. This has been largely successful; the overall impression is of a warm, friendly and welcoming environment. There are many contributions to this, such as the Mediterranean theme in the senior dining hall and the display of art in an open area. The emphasis on celebration of achievement is apparent in the extensive display along corridors of photographs of previous pupils and their examination results. A programme of refurbishment has resulted in the recent improvement of two science laboratories, with two more scheduled for the immediate future. The school has recognised where further improvement is required, such as extending the library, and providing additional rooms for science and design and technology, and has made bids for funding to do this. There is a good provision for physical education, with a large field, sports hall and gymnasium, but the imminent loss of the all-weather pitch will have an adverse effect on provision for hockey. There is insufficient accommodation for music.
85. Learning resources are mostly sufficient for pupils' needs. There is good provision of written material, such as textbooks for every pupil to take home in modern foreign languages, and the use of school produced revision guides in ICT. There are fewer books in the library than normally seen but library staff provide teachers with up-to-date information on internet sites for subject study. Provision of computers is better than normally seen, including the use of portable, computer linked projectors. There is some innovative use of resources, such as 'place mats' on desks in English, with information to support learning and criteria for achieving levels of attainment.

86. The school is very effective and provides good value for money. The above average income per pupil is used to provide good teaching and a broad curriculum. Pupils' achievements are excellent.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

87. The governors, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) Further improve the use of assessment by:
 - making more consistent use of assessment to let pupils know what they are achieving and how they can improve;
 - ensuring that all departments use assessment data effectively to analyse subject achievement and improve their planning of the curriculum;
 - improving the use of assessment for pupils with special educational needs;
 - reporting pupils' progress to parents more clearly.(Paras: 35, 61-66, 68, 92, 101, 107, 121, 128, 137, 164, 183)

- (2) Provide more opportunities for pupils to learn independently by:
 - planning more opportunities in lessons for pupils to think for themselves;
 - emphasising the importance of research when setting pupils work to be completed outside lessons;
 - improving resources facilities in the library.(Paras: 25, 26, 106, 111, 120, 133, 158, 164)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	135
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	26

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	17	24	42	48	4	0	0
Percentage	13	17	31	36	3	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	773
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	394

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	22
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	223

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	741

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	54
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	31

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.5

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5

National comparative data	8.1
---------------------------	-----

National comparative data	1.1
---------------------------	-----

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	150	0	150

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	103	67	67
	Girls	N/a	N/a	N/a
	Total	103	67	67
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	70 (42)	45 (50)	45 (35)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	34 (2)	27 (25)	18 (20)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	34 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	70	70	63
	Girls	N/a	N/a	N/a
	Total	70	70	63
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	47 (48)	47 (55)	43 (47)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	9 (10)	22 (22)	29 (20)
	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	143	0	143

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	55	129	139
	Girls	0	0	0
	Total	55	129	139
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	41 (36)	93 (100)	97 (100)
	National	48 (47)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	40.8
	National	39.0

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	23
Black – African heritage	18
Black – other	1
Indian	46
Pakistani	539
Bangladeshi	78
Chinese	0
White	59
Any other minority ethnic group	9

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	1	0
Black – African heritage	1	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	3	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	50.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	17
Total aggregate hours worked per week	504

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	78.2
---	------

Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	23.5
Key Stage 4	21.1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
----------------	-----------

	£
Total income	2,360,816
Total expenditure	2,315,824
Expenditure per pupil	3,109
Balance brought forward from previous year	135,605
Balance carried forward to next year	180,597

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
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

773

Number of questionnaires returned

561

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	43	48	5	2	2
My child is making good progress in school.	44	48	4	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	43	5	2	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	42	13	6	3
The teaching is good.	46	43	5	1	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	36	45	14	4	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	42	43	7	1	6
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	30	4	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	34	44	14	3	5
The school is well led and managed.	49	37	5	2	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	41	6	2	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	36	13	7	11

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

- Pupils have achieved very well in Year 9 national tests.
- Units of work planned by the whole department ensure that pupils receive a structured and consistent curriculum in Years 7 to 9.
- Support for the improvement of literacy skills is very well co-ordinated.
- There is very good use of ICT.

Areas for improvement

- Pupils' attainment in the most recent GCSE examinations is below average.
- Assessment and target setting does not consistently support pupils' progress .
- Pupils' analysis of complex writing is too simplistic.
- Some units of work are not well enough structured, providing a poor match with their targeted objectives.

88. In 2001, the average point score of pupils in the Year 9 National Curriculum test results was in line with the national average for all pupils and above the national average point score for boys, having been below in 1999 and 2000. There was a particular improvement at the highest levels. Progress was excellent, placing the school in the top five per cent of schools with similar backgrounds. Teacher assessment at the end of Year 9 was lower than the test results. Pupils were well prepared for the tests, for instance, showing a good knowledge of their set Shakespeare text, and this raised test results above the standards of the wider range of work done during the course of Year 9. Results at GCSE English in 2001 were below the national average for the percentage of boys reaching grades A*-C, and for the average point score but were in line with the average percentage for pupils from similar schools. Considering pupils' previous attainment in Year 9, progress in Years 10 and 11 was satisfactory. Two-thirds of Year 11 pupils were also entered for GCSE English literature, with similar results, below the national average for attainment.

89. Standards of pupils currently in Years 7 to 9 are below average but pupils make good progress. Higher attaining pupils in Year 7 are already able to vary style and vocabulary, write accurately, and are aware of genre. Vocabulary develops well over Years 7 to 9, and, where there are suitable opportunities, pupils become increasingly skilful at varied kinds of writing. Pupils read a range of texts, and when supported they show understanding of quite complex writing. However, many pupils do not deal with the effects of language or the structure and purpose of writing, as with Year 8 pupils whose analysis of what they had read was 'He used good words'. There were no opportunities for extended speaking and listening observed during the inspection; in most lessons there were group discussions, but even in a lesson with excellent support from the teacher, pupils' spoken contributions to the whole class were short.

90. Pupils currently in Years 10 and 11 are making satisfactory progress. Standards are above average. Writing in Year 10 is, at its best, coherent and controlled in fiction and non-fiction, and shows thoughtful and well structured analysis of complex texts. For example, a Year 10 class showed good understanding of key differences in the language of tabloid and broadsheet newspapers. However, some work on literature in Years 10 and 11 does not deal with the more complex areas of style, form, or purpose;

for example, a Year 10 middle ability group, asked to analyse a piece of writing, began to summarise the content.

91. Teaching is good overall, never less than satisfactory, and at times excellent. The units of work used in Years 7 to 9, many of which have been designed by the department, provide a range of activities which, in most cases, effectively support learning. These units include quite challenging texts, such as Maupassant's 'The Hand' which was well taught with a range of preparatory activities, such as prediction, listening to an account of the author's life, reading, and questions for discussion on content and style. Almost all lessons observed were well structured with an effective introduction which prepared pupils for an activity to follow, an excellent example being a lesson which began with a five-minute reminder of the story of 'The Silver Sword' which included physical, visual and oral elements involving the whole class. Lessons such as these, both of which also included good use of questioning, increased the knowledge of pupils at all levels of ability. A further level of support for learning is provided by collections of words, used for specific tasks, and by other material on desks, walls and books, reminding pupils of ways to evaluate and improve their own work. There are well-organised and comprehensive units of work which involve the use of ICT; in one very good lesson, a low ability Year 10 group was beginning to use hyperlinks to connect different sections of a story, which reinforced their understanding of narrative structure. At times, the planned units of work are less well structured, and the activity planned does not achieve its targeted objective.
92. Teachers have good relationships with pupils, and are effective at dealing with the few examples of pupils' inattention. Assessment is inconsistent. There is some very good practice; for instance support for pupils in Year 9 included some very good assessment of work done, with model answers analysed, and evaluation of pupils' success in writing specific genres, and there was clear progress made. However, assessment is often confined to comments on effort or on technical accuracy or, at the other extreme, gives pupils targets, such as 'write clearly and make it interesting', without offering a strategy which would help the pupil to achieve the target concerned. Without such a supporting framework, many pupils do not become sufficiently independent learners; some coursework in Years 10 and 11 shows an over-reliance on the teacher as editor. There is no clear strategy for dealing with pupils' spelling mistakes, and so mistakes recur.
93. Pupils generally enjoy their lessons, and show positive relationships with teachers and each other, as with pupils in a Year 10 lesson who offered each other tactful support when reading aloud. Pupils in most lessons work with sustained concentration, often with challenging activities, and most are keen to learn.
94. There is a literacy department which contributes very effectively to the development of pupils' literacy skills. Units of work have been designed to foster speaking and listening through drama and imaginative approaches to starting lessons. Pupils also read multicultural literature and are given many opportunities to write within a range of genres. Pupils are encouraged to work independently, such as when they use ICT to draft and redraft newspaper articles. The department is managed very well, with clearly defined means of assessment, use of exemplar materials to assist teachers in assessing work and a wide range of resources to meet the needs of all pupils. Pupils enjoy their literacy units and demonstrate a high level of motivation.
95. Management of the department is sound. For example, the head of department has contributed to improvement in Year 9 national test results through a very good analysis of previous performance and targeted support for all pupils. A feature of the department is the shared contribution to the development of schemes of work, which provides more consistent experience for pupils. However, assessment is not

monitored or supported rigorously enough, and the department does not make sufficient use of available data to monitor pupils' performance. Accommodation is good, and display is used very well to show pupils' work and encourage improvement in writing. The department has given a lot of time to out-of-school support for GCSE and Year 9 national tests, has organised theatre visits to London and elsewhere, and has taken pupils to a visiting author at a local library. There are also opportunities for gifted and talented pupils, such as a creative writing workshop and extension classes.

96. Since the last report, the standard of teaching has improved, and schemes of work are more detailed. Pupils have appropriate texts to support their learning. Opportunities for speaking are now built in to the schemes of work, though assessment and target-setting remain inconsistent.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- Pupils make good progress in mathematics.
- Numeracy standards are improved by the effective teaching of this key skill.
- Results in GCSE mathematics are at the national average.

Areas for improvement

- Pupils do not receive sufficient feedback to help them know how they can improve.
- Teachers need to use a wider range of teaching styles.

97. In recent years results in the Year 9 national tests have been well below national averages. When compared to similar schools, however, the 2001 results showed above average performance. Higher attainers achieved well above average results. Results at GCSE improved significantly in 2001: the percentage of pupils achieving grades A*-C was at the national average and better than those achieved in the other core subjects of English and science. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher grades of A and A* is low. This is due to the most able pupils taking the subject a year early in Year 10. The proportion of pupils achieving a pass grade (A*-G) is high and pupils rarely leave the school without a GCSE in mathematics.
98. Pupils make good progress in Years 7 to 9 and very good progress in Years 10 and 11. The standard of work seen in lessons and in pupils' books reflects the above results. In Years 7 to 9 there is appropriate progression through the topics and pupils have a good and developing understanding of basic concepts. The National Numeracy Strategy Framework is used as a basis of planning and this ensures that pupils cover the range of mathematics at a level appropriate for their ability. In Year 9, for example, higher attaining pupils are able to use the theorem of Pythagoras to determine an unknown side of a right-angled triangle. Lower ability pupils show appropriate development of calculation strategies. In the GCSE course middle attaining Year 10 pupils are able to determine the next term in a simple series and to generalise in words and eventually find the formula which describes the nth term. Higher attaining Year 10 pupils taking GCSE statistics can apply the Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient formula to decide whether two sets of data are connected. However, standards of written work are well below average, particularly in presentation. Some words are incorrectly spelt. Graph work is weak, due, in part, to the use of exercise books with lines rather than squares. The good teaching of arithmetic skills means that pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, have an appropriate grasp and are able to use these skills elsewhere in the school. This is particularly evident in pupils'

improving recall of number and their development of calculation strategies.

99. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers have good subject knowledge and understanding of the mathematics they teach. Their strong commitment to the pupils, the ethos and culture of learning established in the school and the extra-curricular provision for mathematics, such as master classes, homework clubs and summer schools, are all factors which enable pupils to make good progress. Teaching quality in lessons ranges from very good to unsatisfactory. There is good emphasis on developing pupils' arithmetic skills and, as a consequence, pupils make good progress and by the time they leave school have average attainment. In a very good Year 8 lesson pupils made swift progress in their learning. The teacher started the lesson with a brief recap of what pupils had done in the previous lesson. He then quickly explained the purpose of the lesson which was to reduce ratios to their simplest form. Within 40 minutes pupils were successfully reducing ratios such as 18:16 and 96:120. The teacher's insistence on high standards of mental arithmetic enabled pupils to make good strides in their learning. In a very good Year 10 statistics lesson, the excellent relationships between the teacher and the pupils enabled the lesson to proceed with a very productive pace. However, there is some lack of variety in teaching methods and overall teaching quality is consequently diminished. There is too little use of overhead projectors, videos and ICT to improve pupils' learning and too few opportunities for pupils to work in pairs and larger groupings. Teachers have implemented the approaches advocated by the National Numeracy Strategy well. In some good and very good lessons aims are made explicit, key words are written on the whiteboard – and learning is summarised, against the aims, at the end. Standards of numeracy improve as a consequence of the focus teachers place on developing swift recall of number facts and in developing pupils' strategies for calculation. For example, in a Year 9 lesson the pupils were able to easily recall the squares of numbers to 12 and to use strategies to calculate 13×13 by breaking it into 10×13 and 3×13 . In some lessons there was a lack of clarity in instructions and as a consequence, pupils' pace of working was slowed. In some cases insufficient attention is given to the language demands of the subject. In one lesson, for example, the pupils initially struggled with a task because they did not understand the meanings of the words 'row' and 'column'. Teachers manage pupils well. The teaching enables pupils to learn and to make good progress. Lessons start and finish on time.
100. Pupils enjoy their mathematics lessons and work with interest and concentration. Behaviour in lessons and in corridors is very good throughout. Pupils persevere with their task throughout lessons – their attention to the work rarely wanes. Some pupils, though, do come to lessons ill prepared to learn; they lack books and pens and have to be given paper. This detracts from their learning.
101. Leadership of the department is satisfactory. The department is well organised. There is good and substantial documentation. Good progress has been made in implementing the National Numeracy Strategy and there are good schemes of work to support teachers. The teachers work well together as a team and have coped admirably with the unfortunate absence, through illness, of the head of department. There are weaknesses in marking and pupils do not receive sufficient feedback, either written or spoken, to help them know and remember what they have to do to improve. Homework is generally set but pupils are unaware of when this should be completed due to the lack of a published timetable. They are given too little time in lessons to record their homework tasks in their personal diaries. The highest attainers take a GCSE in statistics. The results for last year's Year 11 were well below average in statistics; this group took GCSE mathematics early at the end of Year 10. As a consequence of these low results this year's top group will take statistics in Year 10 and GCSE mathematics in Year 11. This has good potential for success.

102. Progress since the previous inspection has been good. There is above average achievement at all ages. GCSE results have risen significantly and numeracy standards are much improved. Some issues still remain from the last inspection: teaching quality remains inconsistent and there is too much variation in pupils' standards of presentation.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- Teaching and learning in Years 7 to 11 are good with pupils achieving very well.
- The science department is managed and led very effectively. Staff have a clear understanding of how to improve further.
- Some teaching is excellent and inspires pupils to learn at a very brisk pace.
- Good strategies are in place to promote high standards for gifted and talented pupils.

Areas for improvement

- Teachers provide some pupils with insufficient technical vocabulary.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to learn independently.
- Assessment is not used sufficiently to diagnose pupils' strengths and weaknesses or to set targets for improvement.

103. At age 14, results in 2001 national tests were well below the national average, but were close to average when compared with similar schools. The GCSE results in 2001 were below national standards but represent very good achievement when compared with pupils' previous results in Year 9 national tests. This confirms an improving trend in GCSE results and demonstrates very good progress in Years 10 and 11.
104. Pupils currently in Years 7 to 9 make good progress. They show good gains in their knowledge and understanding of key scientific facts and concepts; for example, Year 9 pupils can explain what happens when metals react with acids and can explain neutralisation with some confidence. The pace of learning in Years 10 and 11 is very good. For example, in a Year 10 lesson pupils demonstrated a secure grasp of relevant knowledge concerning the different processes involved in digesting food. They were able to use appropriate technical vocabulary to explain their precise answers well. Investigative skills are well developed by the time pupils reach Year 11. They can carry out practical investigations safely and with precision but evaluative skills are less well developed. Pupils overcome their literacy difficulties well. They gain a deeper knowledge of technical vocabulary and become more confident in expressing their ideas and understanding. This is supported effectively through inventive use of resources, visual clues and practical sessions in lessons to exemplify key scientific ideas. By Year 11 some pupils are using ICT in imaginative and skilful ways, especially in presenting ideas through projecting slides and well presented investigations.
105. The quality of teaching in Years 7 to 11 is good overall, and in some lessons, especially in Years 10 and 11, very good or excellent. This has helped pupils make very good progress in science. In some satisfactory and very occasionally unsatisfactory lessons, progress is too slow when pupils find difficulty in understanding the teacher's explanation or activities are ill-matched to pupils' needs.
106. In very good and excellent lessons the teachers' enthusiasm, rapid but appropriate questioning and suitable choice of resources captures pupils' enthusiasm. Good demonstrations, lively expositions relating science to everyday life, and well controlled pupil involvement in discussions sustains a brisk pace of learning. For example, in one

lesson pupils were so motivated by the enthusiasm and zest for the subject displayed by the teacher that they quickly concluded the limiting factors of photosynthesis and gave precise and enthusiastic answers. The more able pupils gained greatly. A feature common to the very good and excellent teaching is that teachers continually remind pupils of the time allocated for tasks, injecting pace into the lesson. Pupils with special educational needs and gifted pupils make very good progress as a result. In contrast pupils' progress is too slow when teaching is inappropriately matched to pupils' specific needs or is not planned effectively to build on their prior knowledge and understanding. For example, in a Year 9 lesson pupils had insufficient technical vocabulary and knowledge of particular animal and plant habitats to make progress in completing the tasks. Explanations were pitched at an inappropriate level and failed to assist pupils' understanding and the pace of the lesson slowed as a result.

107. The department is led very well. Management has many strong features; well organised systems ensure efficient evaluation of teaching and learning. Relationships in the department are good. Teachers are well qualified and the gender and ethnic mix provides good role models for the pupils. There is a strong enthusiasm for promoting the teaching and learning of science. Much work has been done to develop more appropriate resources for pupils with special education needs and for whom English is a second language. These assist many pupils, helped by language support teachers, to make good progress. Too often, however, the lack of precise objectives in individual education plans, hinders the setting of science-specific targets, making detailed progress difficult to assess. Although assessment systems are good and data is used widely to judge the department's performance, it is not always used effectively to diagnose pupils' strengths and weaknesses and set targets for improvement. The department is supported well by a committed team of technicians, who make a significant contribution to ensuring a practical science curriculum is sustained and resourced.
108. Progress since the last inspection has been sound. Standards have been maintained and the quality of teaching remains good. There is still too little effective use of assessment.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths:

- Pupils make good progress at GCSE, attaining well in relation to boys nationally.
- Teaching is well targeted to pupils' individual needs.
- Successful work is shared effectively through a good standard of whole-school display.

Areas for development:

- Assessment is not used well enough to help pupils improve.
- There are too few opportunities to learn from original art and artists.
- There is too little use of ICT.

109. Pupils consistently attain GCSE results near or above national percentages for boys gaining A-C grades. Good use of imagination is achieved. In 2001 53% attained A-C grades compared with 52% nationally whilst in 2000 a larger cohort attained 68%.
110. In the majority of projects in Years 7 to 9, standards are close to those expected nationally. Pupils achieve particularly well in work related to colour, pattern, and

abstraction in two and three-dimensional media. There is good evidence of pupils' knowledge of different artists in sketchbooks. Good results are achieved where pupils apply their understanding of other artists to practical work; for example, the Year 9 landscapes project, where different painting styles used are interpretations of those used by famous painters. This approach also succeeds where the artists used reflect the pupil's enjoyment of colour and pattern, for example the use of Matisse to inspire 2D observational collages and the use of Hundertwasser to inspire 3D papier-mâché buildings. Pupils clearly enjoy the opportunity to use challenging materials, such as in the masks project where all pupils achieved effective results. However, there is insufficient investigation of materials, techniques, visual and tactile elements overall.

111. The Year 10 and 11 course successfully develops pupils' ideas. A high level of research is evident, such as in pupils' work which explores Islamic art through a series of personal viewpoints. The qualities which characterise the most successful work in Years 7 to 9 are built upon. Some very successful work is created by pupils exploring colour to express mood. However, pupils have little opportunity to encounter original art and artists through gallery visits, or artists in residence, which limits the vision, particularly of the lower ability pupils. For example, several pupils created card sculptures which were only surface treated with colour and pattern due to limited direct experience of the interaction of light on 3D form. Pupils' understanding of how technologies relate to artistic processes are also limited by lack of opportunity; for example, there is little evidence of ICT or use of ceramic processes.
112. Nearly all lessons are taught by specialist staff. During the inspection week the teaching normally carried out by the head of department, who was absent, was covered by a specialist, trained teacher. Overall, teaching is of a satisfactory standard with several good features, particularly evident in the teaching of GCSE pupils. A particular strength is the use of visual communication which enables all pupils to understand the expectations of lessons without barriers of language. For example, well-designed stimulus sheets are used effectively, and in some lessons large prepared flip-chart illustrations show a possible interpretation of the lesson objective. Complementing this, the teaching environment displays examples of pupils' work which are used effectively to illustrate a diverse range of possible alternatives. The development of a gallery space adjacent to the studio also contributes to making expectations of high quality work clear, although the range is too narrow. In the most effective lessons the teacher observes the work of individual pupils carefully and makes well-focused suggestions for improvement, but this is not sufficiently widespread.
113. Pupils generally respect the advice given by teachers and respond well to the teacher's research although in some cases pupils do not match this with enough personal lesson preparation. They are positive about their work and support opportunities for working outside of lesson times.
114. During the period of inspection the established head of department was unable to contribute due to compassionate leave. The provision of good documentation and the commitment of other staff assisted the inspection process. Documentation shows a good match between subject and whole school aims which defines a clear role for art and design education in the school. During the absence of the head of department the commitment and level of involvement shown by the other full time specialist revealed good communication and accurate identification of the department's strengths and needs. Improvements since the previous inspection have been accurately targeted although assessment remains an area for improvement. There is insufficient use of assessment, including pupils' self-assessment, to help improve the standards of work.
115. Since the last inspection standards have been maintained and teaching continues to be satisfactory. Assessment remains an area for improvement.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Pupils have positive attitudes to the subject.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive.
- Teachers provide effective help and support for individuals in lessons.
- Pupils make good progress in food and textiles.

Areas for improvement

- Designing and making tasks in resistant materials in Years 7 to 9 are not sufficiently demanding.
- Pupils in Year 10 have too few opportunities to develop their designing and making skills in resistant materials before starting their coursework project.
- Assessment is inconsistently used to let pupils know how well they are doing or how they can improve.
- Pupils do not have a co-ordinated experience of the different aspects of design and technology.

116. Recent statutory teacher assessments of 14 year-olds have been just above those recorded nationally. However, these results were not subject to moderation. Pupils' results in the GCSE examinations over recent years have been variable, but have been above the national average at grades A*-C in two of the last three years. Most recently, in 2001, pupils' results in the design and technology subjects overall were higher than in their other subjects.

117. In the current Year 9, the attainment of pupils is similar to that normally seen at this age. From Years 7 to 9, pupils make sound progress overall, developing a foundation of basic designing and making skills, working in food, resistant materials and textiles. Progress, however, is variable across these material areas. Pupils make good progress in food and textiles, but progress in resistant materials is unsatisfactory. In food, for example, pupils in Year 8 learn how to record the sensory characteristics of different food products before batch producing their own biscuits and small cakes. In Year 9, they extend their knowledge and understanding of the properties of ingredients used in food products and demonstrate a good understanding of relevant health and safety issues. In textiles, pupils learn how to use a good range of constructional and decorative techniques. For example in Year 7, they produce accurately constructed textile jewellery boxes. In Year 8, they learn a variety of ways of applying colour to fabric, such as tie-dye and batik, which they apply to a variety of textile products. In resistant materials, pupils are able to measure, mark out and cut simple forms using hand and machine processes with appropriate accuracy, for example when making travel games in Year 8 and model aeroplanes in Year 9. Attainment is below average in resistant materials because the projects in these years are too closely directed by the teachers and do not provide opportunities for pupils to engage in designing and making activities matched to the expectations of the higher National Curriculum levels. Across the department, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to build upon and develop their knowledge, skills and understanding as they move from one material area to another. For example, pupils often repeat the same designing skills in different tasks, rather than extending the repertoire of skills developed within each task.

118. In Years 10 and 11, pupils are able to specialise in one material area. In these years, progress and achievement are good overall, but continue to vary across the

department. In the current Year 11, the attainment of pupils in the design and technology subjects overall is similar to that normally seen at this age. In these years, pupils in food and textiles make very good progress. In Year 10, they are able to extend their knowledge, skills and understanding before starting their GCSE projects. For example in food, they research and investigate a range of rice and pasta dishes before preparing dishes of their own. In Year 10 in textiles, pupils develop a range of ideas for sports and leisurewear and experiment with different stitching and constructions before applying them to their work. In Year 10 in resistant materials, pupils embark straight onto their GCSE project. At this early stage of the course, their work does not demonstrate the range or depth of work required by the examination. Their design work is superficial and they have not yet developed a sufficient understanding of the materials and processes that could be used to realise their designs. These pupils have insufficient opportunities to use computers to generate, model and communicate their designs. In Year 11, pupils in food and textiles have completed a good range of coursework projects, matched closely to the requirements of the GCSE examinations. Gifted and talented pupils have produced work of the highest grades. In resistant materials, the projects of a significant number of the Year 11 pupils do not reach the expectations of the higher grades. A good number of pupils in all material areas have used computers effectively to enhance the presentation of their GCSE coursework folders.

119. Overall, teaching is sound. Teachers demonstrate a secure knowledge and understanding of their material specialisms. Where teaching is most effective, teachers give clear introductions to lessons, describing the work to be undertaken. Similarly, teaching is effective when teachers bring their groups together at the end of lessons to summarise the learning that has taken place and the progress made. For example, in Year 8 in food, the teacher concluded the lesson with a series of brisk questions. Pupils were required to demonstrate their understanding of the sensory testing undertaken, using appropriate technical vocabulary. Relevant homework was then set, providing the opportunity for pupils to consolidate their understanding by completing sensory analysis on snack foods at home. Teachers provide good help and support on an individual basis within lessons, discussing the work completed and showing pupils how to proceed. Pupils learn effectively when teachers have planned a range of different activities for the one-hour lessons. For example in food, teachers ensure a brisk pace by engaging pupils in a variety of individual, group and whole-class activities and maintain a high level of interest and motivation. Where teaching is less effective, the tasks set are insufficiently challenging and expectations within lessons are too low. For example in Year 9, pupils making the aeroplanes spend too long assembling their products and should be tackling more demanding tasks at this stage of the course.
120. Pupils respond well and show a good level of interest in the subject. Standards of behaviour are always very good. Pupils work well together and relationships between pupils and teachers are good. In Years 7 to 9, pupils have insufficient opportunities to work independently and to learn how to make designing and making decisions of their own. In Years 10 and 11, the GCSE coursework provides good opportunities for pupils to take more responsibility for their own learning. In food and textiles in particular, pupils have responded well to this opportunity and their folders demonstrate a good level of involvement in their individually chosen projects.
121. The management of the department is sound overall. This is evident in the day to day running of the department and the planning and delivery of schemes of work. However, there are weaknesses in the leadership of the subject, which are having an adverse effect upon standards. It does not provide a fully co-ordinated experience for pupils as they progress through the school. For example, teachers do not share a common approach to the teaching of designing or communication skills as pupils move through Years 7 to 9. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and the impact upon learning

require strengthening to ensure that best practice is shared across the department. Assessment is inconsistently used across the department to let pupils know how well they are doing and how to improve their work during the designing and making of their projects. There are resource shortfalls which are restricting pupils' attainment; for example, the opportunity for pupils in resistant materials to use computer aided design and manufacture. A number of health and safety issues have been drawn to the attention of staff working in resistant materials.

122. Since the previous inspection, the department has made satisfactory progress and standards have risen to be similar to those normally seen. However, there are still too few opportunities for pupils to learn how to work independently and to build progressively on their prior knowledge, skills and understanding as they move through Years 7 to 9.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- A very high standard of teaching.
- A well-planned geography curriculum.
- A significant focus on helping the boys develop their literacy skills.
- Very effective management and organisation.
- Very good attitudes to learning by the boys.

Areas for improvement

- There is too little use of assessment to help pupils improve.

123. Attainment in geography for Year 9 pupils has improved in recent years. In last year's teacher assessments, standards were only just below those seen in other schools. Examination results at GCSE also continue to improve. Last year the number of pupils who gained the highest grades was close to the national subject average. Nearly half the pupils gained grades A-C. The number of pupils who gained grades A and B has increased significantly. Results demonstrate good achievement.

124. Pupils currently in Years 7, 8 and 9 make good progress, and demonstrate knowledge and understanding similar to boys in other schools. They have a sound knowledge and understanding of places in different parts of the world. For example, their work in Year 7 helps them understand changes in the local area, and lessons in Year 9 give them an insight into the effects of a growing tourist trade with developing countries such as the Gambia. Gifted and talented pupils also make good progress. For example in a Year 8 lesson, one pupil worked very hard on an extension task to help him to explain the patterns of shopping in Luton. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress. They are very well supported in lessons both by the class teacher and by the Learning Support Assistants. For example in a Year 7 lesson, a pupil was supported very effectively in improving his reading, so was able to find out about key events during an earthquake in Turkey. All the pupils gain valuable literacy skills in their geography lessons, with plenty of opportunities to read, write and talk about their work with the teacher and with the rest of the class.

125. Pupils who choose geography in Years 10 and 11, continue to make good progress. They gain a sound understanding of the way the landscape is changing, and the importance of looking after their world. For example in Year 10, their case study of Mappleton helps them understand how rapidly parts of the coastline of Britain are being

eroded, and of the steps that can be taken to lessen the effects on people and the environment. Lessons in Year 10 also give them a sound knowledge of other parts of the world. For example, they gain a sound understanding of the policies which support people in countries where the population is increasing comparatively quickly. Gifted and talented pupils also make good progress. Their coursework shows knowledge and understanding at the highest levels. In one example, a pupil was comparing settlement patterns in different parts of Luton. He collected and analysed useful data, and illustrated his work with carefully drawn graphs and charts of the results. His analysis of the data, and conclusion were well written, and showed a good understanding of the subject. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress, for example in a Year 10 lesson on coastal erosion, the boys took a full part in the lesson, which helped them with their writing development. Much of the work in geography helps all the boys with their literacy, with many lessons concentrating on the key skills of reading and writing.

126. The main reason boys make good progress is the very high standard of teaching. It is very good in both key stages. Teachers have excellent knowledge of the subject, and use this effectively to plan interesting and worthwhile lessons. They are also very sympathetic to the needs of all the boys in their class, and create an atmosphere for learning in which the boys feel valued and confident. For example, in a Year 9 lesson on tourism, the teacher used video to introduce the geography of the Gambia. He then set an activity using an illustration in text books, from which pupils could identify the possible difficulties that tourism can create. His enthusiasm was apparent to the boys, who worked with commitment and concentration. They very quickly gained background knowledge of the Gambian tourist industry, and an understanding of the advantages and disadvantages for the people of the country. Similarly in a Year 10 lesson on population, the teacher knew the boys in the class well, so could encourage and support them throughout the lesson. He provided very carefully researched background information for the boys to read. They used this to find out for themselves some of the significant developments in recent years which have affected changing birth and death rates in different countries. He then conducted an excellent class discussion, encouraging all the boys to take part. He was particularly sensitive to the needs of the less confident boys and helped them to overcome their shyness. The boys responded very well, speaking in turn and listening carefully to the contributions of others. As a result they gained a lot from the lesson, and could see the importance of changes, such as vaccination, on the world's population growth. All the teachers put a great deal of emphasis on helping the boys with their language. In one particular lesson for example, the teacher did this extremely well. She used her own specialist knowledge well to conduct a short revision of key terms in coastal processes. She explained them well, and encouraged pupils to write these in their books. She then gave them all the chance to explain the terms to the rest of the class. She did this with such sensitivity to the needs of the boys, that they took part with real enthusiasm, and were proud of their achievement at the end of the lesson. The teachers make good use of homework, particularly to help pupils with their work for the GCSE examinations.
127. The attitude of the pupils is very good. They show interest in their work and try hard. They are well behaved in class and take part with commitment and concentration. The boys in Years 10 and 11 show particular determination, and this is evident from their efforts in coursework. There are a small number of younger boys who lack concentration in their lessons and this adversely affects their progress.
128. The leadership and management of geography are very good. The head of department was absent during the inspection, but the acting head of department has made a significant contribution to ensuring the subject is well taught. There is a very strong sense of teamwork, and a shared commitment to the provision of a caring environment for learning. The teachers have a good understanding of the requirements of the

subject, and are making appropriate changes to the schemes of work. They have a good appreciation of the need to make better use of assessment to improve teaching and learning.

129. The department has made good progress since the last inspection in a number of key areas. There is now a consistently high standard of teaching. This is the main reason for the gradual increase in standards. The quality of written work has improved. Work in lessons is more challenging. The teachers have more realistic expectations of the gifted and talented pupils.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- Learning is enhanced by the very good quality of teaching offered.
- A very good contribution is made to developing the literacy and numeracy skills of all pupils.
- Pupils in all years make good progress.
- Pupils from a range of backgrounds show considerable interest and enthusiasm in their studies of history.

Areas for improvement

- There is too little use of ICT to support the learning of history.
- The range and quality of resources in the school library provide too few opportunities for pupils' research.

130. The standards attained by pupils, recorded in National Curriculum teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2001, were well below average. GCSE results in 2001 for the full course, were close to the national average for grades A*-C and for grades A*-G. For the short GCSE course standards were below average for grades A*-C, but were in line with national expectations for grades A*-G. These comparisons are made against all schools. The overall level of results on the short course suffered because a significant minority of pupils failed to complete the course. On both courses recorded standards were adversely affected by the pupils' literacy skills. Nevertheless, progress in Years 7, 8 and 9 and in Years 10 and 11 is good. All pupils, irrespective of their backgrounds, improve the standards of their work over time. The majority of pupils gain GCSE grades that are higher than those forecast when they commence the course, indicating good achievement.

131. For present pupils, standards in Years 7, 8 and 9 are below average, though the department caters for pupils of widely varying abilities. While some are working at below national standards, a significant minority is above this level. Work seen during the inspection indicates that all are making good progress, including those with special educational needs. A very good contribution is being made to developing the literacy skills of all pupils and this is leading to improving standards. For a minority of pupils, however, their limited writing skills and their understanding of English impedes their progress towards higher grades. Present pupils in Years 10 and 11 are recording standards of work that are in line with national averages though, again, there is a wide range of abilities, with some pupils recording very high standards in their work. The emphasis that is placed on developing literacy skills is key in improving standards. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, are making very good progress. Higher attaining pupils also make very good progress. Their written work is especially strong. It is detailed, interesting to

read, accurate and balanced in terms of the views expressed. The emphasis that is placed on interpreting source material is significant and this too is helping higher attaining pupils, in particular, to reach high standards in their work.

132. A key strength of the department is the very good teaching that is offered and the very positive impact this has on learning. Though one lesson seen was unsatisfactory, all other lessons were either good or very good. Many strengths are identifiable. Teachers plan their lessons well and lessons are challenging and proceed at a very good pace. Pupils behaviour is managed very effectively and their enjoyment for the subject is obvious and is typified by their enthusiasm. A strong feature of many lessons is the contribution made to developing the pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. In all years very good emphasis is placed on helping pupils to improve their writing skills and to write detailed, accurate and well-argued accounts of key historical events. In all lessons seen, pupils were given numerical problems to solve. Though these were often at a basic level, the approach is helping pupils to learn well and to develop key skills. Another particularly strong feature is the quality of assessment and marking. Pupils' work is marked to a high and consistent level and the helpful comments that are added give a clear indication of what has been done well and what needs to be done to secure further improvement. Assessment data is also used well to set targets for each pupil and monitor progress against these targets. On the rare occasions where teaching is less effective, learning suffers either because there is some misbehaviour that is not adequately controlled, or the lesson lacks pace and the pupils are not presented with sufficient challenges to inspire and motivate them. The main area requiring improvement is that ICT is not used sufficiently. Relevant Internet sites are not advertised in classrooms and pupils are not encouraged enough to use the Internet for research work. Very good teaching was seen in a Year 9 lesson on the atomic bombing of Japan in 1945. A well-structured lesson enabled the pupils to identify the four key motives put forward by the Americans to justify their actions. Very effective use was made of source material to reinforce and extend learning and the pupils were given some opportunities to reflect on the moral and social consequences of the bombing. Another very good lesson was seen with Year 7 pupils on the theme of road transport in the Middle Ages. There was a logical sequence to this lesson and a very good use of source material promoted very good learning. The lesson had pace and challenge and the tasks set made a very good contribution to literacy. Thoughtful planning also aided literacy and the quality of learning. The pupils were given a suggested plan for their written work. This successfully offered lower attaining pupils a structure for their written work while allowing more able pupils the opportunity to develop their own style and ideas. As a result all pupils made very good progress in the lesson.
133. The leadership and management of the department are very good and good progress has been made since the last inspection. A particular strength of the department is planning; schemes of work are detailed and comprehensive with a clear indication of how key skills can be developed. These plans are implemented well, though more emphasis needs to be placed on the role of ICT in the teaching of history. The use of assessment data is very good and the head of department is very good at monitoring the work of the department. Much thought has also been given to the curriculum. Options, especially at GCSE, have been chosen that reflect the interests of the pupils and, in each year, there are suitable visits to places of historical interest. There is a very good capacity for further improvement, though, in order to achieve this fully, the quality of the library resources should be improved. At present the library stock offers only limited opportunities for the pupils to undertake research and work independently. Since the last inspection, teaching has improved, pupils' attitudes to learning are better and attainment is higher. Use of ICT has not developed sufficiently.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in information and communication technology is **very good**.

Strengths

- Teachers' planning is very good
- Record keeping is very detailed
- Literacy is firmly embedded into lessons
- Pupils' task sheets and coursework guides are carefully prepared and aid learning well
- Examination pathways are provided for pupils of all abilities
- From a very low starting point pupils achieve very good examination results
- The department plays a leading role in Initial Teacher Training and is regarded as one of the best performing subject areas nationally.

Areas for development

- Marking across Years 7, 8 and 9 is too inconsistent.

134. In Year 9 teacher assessments for 2001 were just below national expectations, whilst in the previous two years they were in line with national levels. In all years pupils have started from a very low base. In Year 11 GCSE passes at A*-C have ranged from 63% in 1999, 52% in 2000, to 68.6%, significantly above the national average, in 2001. Over the last three years all pupils entered for the higher tier have maintained a 100% pass rate of grade C or above: a significant achievement. GCSE results show that pupils have made excellent progress when taking into account their previous attainment in Year 9.

135. Pupils make very good progress, from a low starting point, to reach average standards by the end of Year 9 within the taught discrete units. When modelling situations using a spreadsheet they use task sheets effectively to reinforce cell numbering and develop their ability to move around the spreadsheet quickly. They learn the difference between rules and variables and how to check if the rules have been built correctly. Pupils are able to modify spreadsheets for individual tasks, such as calculating the cost of burger ingredients. They are able to develop their ideas by exploring information, changing values and calculating total product costs. Pupils use images and text well in web page designs, such as when presenting coastline information. They can investigate information previously downloaded from the Internet and can combine relevant text and images into home pages. Pupils can create further pages and create hyperlinks to move between the pages. They can use colour and graphics with imagination. In an impressive control lesson pupils gained an understanding of how sensors provide feedback to control systems. They can identify the functions needed in flowcharts in order to plan subroutines to control a greenhouse environment. Using FLOWOL software they can use a computer to model a water sprinkler operating in response to a manual switch and operate an internal light in response to variable light conditions. They can include delays in their subroutines. Pupils are given the opportunity to use the interactive whiteboard to explain their systems in plenary sessions. In maths lessons pupils use ICT as a tool to reinforce learning about ratios when they investigate relationships between numbers. In French, pupils can use a variety of software to access, read and correct documents. They can place pictures, change fonts and work independently online in order to revise topics. Key skills of searching for and selecting, exploring, developing and presenting information using text, numbers and images and controlling things by modelling are well developed at a basic level. Pupils are enthusiastic and work hard. Those with special educational and language needs are fully integrated into all lessons and are supported with carefully structured task sheets.

136. In Years 10 and 11 pupils have a choice of pathways which allows them to study a full or short course GCSE, GNVQ intermediate, or GNVQ foundation. They are able to move across GNVQ pathways. By the end of Year 11 standards are significantly above

average. Pupils work enthusiastically on their coursework tasks which develop their own interests. They are taught how to present information in a consistent way. They can identify how authors present information in professional ways and can use these methods in their work. They can use key skills task sheets which help them identify all areas to be addressed in coursework projects. Pupils' work demonstrates good consideration of its audience. Gifted and talented pupils are challenged well. They produce quality work using a variety of software. Pupils are encouraged to use the interactive mimio whiteboard to give presentations of their work. A presentation of a web site design based on a Japanese cartoon character reflected the pupils' depth of knowledge and understanding. The site had been very thoughtfully created. Pages contain interesting and relevant information and hyperlinks are used effectively. Colour, graphics, text and moving images are imaginative and other features such as a moving status bar are included. This work is of a professional standard. Pupils have excellent attitudes and their behaviour is at least very good at all times. In GNVQ pupils can change variables, write functions, sum functions and use autofunction confidently in their spreadsheets. Pupils use ICT to enhance their learning in geography effectively by using the Internet to gather statistics prior to writing and presenting reports. ICT plays a major role in the learning enhancement centre to motivate and include pupils. Their graphical work is of high quality. All SEN pupils are fully integrated into all lessons and make good progress. However in a minority of subjects pupils have too little opportunity to apply their ICT knowledge. Earlier key skills are developed to a more proficient level, and a greater range of techniques is used.

137. Teaching and learning are very good. The quality of teaching and learning in all lessons observed was at least satisfactory with the majority very good or excellent across all years. This included where ICT was taught across subjects. This reflects teachers' good subject knowledge, very good planning and delivery skills. The majority of lessons begin with literacy tasks to enable pupils to understand key technical words and terms. These are reinforced with quality wall displays. Lesson objectives are projected onto the whiteboard and talked through in order that pupils clearly understand what the lesson is about. Lessons are broken down into short, cohesive manageable tasks and move at a very good pace. Very clear task sheets enable pupils of all abilities to make progress in lessons. Projectors are used effectively for whole class teaching to explain how software is used. The new interactive whiteboard is also used very effectively by both teachers and pupils to demonstrate processes and add pace to lessons. In English, pupils use ICT to enhance the presentation of short stories by combining text, images and graphics to produce work of a good standard. All lessons observed ended well with good plenary sessions which tested pupil learning over the lesson. Sometimes task sheets are used for this. Homework sheets are an important part of lessons. In Years 10 and 11 pupils' work is assessed using examination criteria. They receive individual feedback sheets which give marks awarded and comments for improvement, which help pupils to achieve high examination grades, as do very well written coursework guides. However, marking across Years 7, 8 and 9 is too inconsistent. The majority of pupils make very good progress in examination courses. Where teaching is less effective pupils spend too much time finding out information from the Internet. The majority of subjects are using ICT to support learning effectively, but access to a specialist room is difficult for a sequence of lessons, which limits potential.
138. Behaviour is very good in the majority of lessons. In some it is excellent. Attitudes in all lessons are very positive. Pupils enjoy their ICT lessons and work hard. They are attentive, polite, friendly, communicate well and are keen to answer questions when asked. Teachers are able to teach in a very positive learning environment. Pupils are keen to make progress and use computers at every available opportunity at lunchtimes and in after school clubs. Many pupils spend considerable time at home on their coursework tasks.

139. The department is led very well by an enthusiastic and dedicated assistant headteacher. He is ably supported by very hard working colleagues. The demanding Quality and Curriculum Authority scheme of work is in place and this is leading to higher standards by the end of Year 9. All staff are involved in the Chiltern Training Group programme which is also providing them with quality professional development. Departmental documentation is very good, and the development plan is moving the department forward well. The soon to be implemented changes have good potential to further enhance the quality of ICT provision across the curriculum, with subsequent raising of pupil achievement. A very good cross-curricular mapping plan for ICT in subjects is in place, and the mapping of ICT use in citizenship, social, moral, spiritual, cultural, literacy and numeracy aspects has taken place. Gifted and talented pupils have been identified and are encouraged to attend master classes and enter national competitions. The department is very ably supported by a knowledgeable network manager.
140. Good progress has been made since the last positive report. There has been a large investment in ICT with more to follow shortly. However, the use of ICT is still underdeveloped in aspects of design and technology and physical education.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French

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

Strengths

- GCSE results are better than the national average for boys.
- Written work is of high quality, in particular French GCSE course work.
- Teaching is good.
- The leadership provided by the head of department is excellent.
- Assessment is used very well to help pupils improve.

Area for improvement

- French speaking: pupils' confidence, fluency and accuracy in this skill lags well behind other aspects of the language.

141. Nearly all pupils study French in Years 7 to 9. By the end of Year 9, teacher assessments over recent years show that pupils have reached levels below the national average, but with an upward trend. In Years 10 and 11, French and Urdu are available. GCSE results show an upward trend, to well above the national figure for A*-C grades. This represents excellent achievement in the most recent examinations.
142. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 make good progress in lessons. The pattern of current pupils' attainment reflects the national picture, with talented pupils easily exceeding the usual expectation. About two-thirds of pupils have good listening and reading skills. They can understand and pick out information from demanding texts and recordings, and can work out the meaning of unfamiliar words, for example from a presentation written by the French assistante about her home town. Written work is of a higher quality than usually seen. Many pupils can write accurately and can put together longer compositions. For example, when pupils in an upper set had interviewed each other, they were able to write a commentary about how and when they used computers. Speaking, as observed in lessons, operates at a much lower level. Pupils acquire words and ideas quickly, but when they express them, the pronunciation, confidence and fluency are poor. Answers to questions are most often very brief.
143. Pupils make very good progress in Years 10 and 11. In lessons, and in the sample of work provided by the school, attainment in writing is very good, with many ambitious, original and complex compositions. There are more examples than usual of outstanding extended writing for coursework assignments. Attainment in listening and reading varies according to individual groups and pupils, and is good overall. In lessons, speaking is a weak area. Pupils do not say enough when they are questioned, and they show much less fluency, confidence and accuracy than is usual for this age group.
144. Teaching is good overall, and leads to good learning, especially in Years 10 and 11. Lessons are carefully planned, always including a series of rapid, linked tasks. This keeps pupils busy, focused and productive, and builds up their knowledge and skills by a variety of routes. High quality books, videos, tapes and worksheets engage pupils' interest and give reality and status to the subject. Displays of language material on classroom walls are of exceptional quality, and contribute to creating an environment where learning flourishes. Expectations are always high, so that pupils are encouraged to produce good results. In some lower sets, however, expectations and the accompanying resources do not match pupils' capacities, leading to reduced enjoyment and motivation, and a reduction in the pace of learning. ICT is confidently

and effectively used. This motivates pupils, encourages independent work, and enables pupils to achieve higher standards in written work than they otherwise would. For example, Year 8 pupils put the results of an opinion poll they had conducted into a database, used the database to display their findings in graphs and charts, and wrote an interpretation of their results. The French assistante is effectively used in lessons, and with small groups of pupils outside lessons. She provides stimulating resources which raise expectations and the sense of reality, and improves pupils' confidence and performance in oral work. Teachers have a very clear understanding of National Curriculum levels and GCSE criteria. They use this when planning lessons and GCSE course work to tell pupils what they have to do in order to gain high marks. Pupils use this advice very effectively in order to target, and achieve, good results. Assessment, and marking of written work, especially in Year 11, show pupils clearly how they have performed, and what they need to do to improve. This is a major support to their learning.

145. Pupils have positive attitudes to the subject. They are keen to learn, and respond positively to challenging work. They listen attentively and work well together. They are reticent when speaking in French.
146. The leadership and management of the subject are excellent. Policies and routines are clear and consistent, and are effective in encouraging good learning. Teachers work closely and collaboratively, with shared goals and understanding. The use of ICT is well organised and supports pupils in reaching high standards. The organisation and exploitation of assessment are a major strength. There are efficient systems for collecting information, related to National Curriculum levels and GCSE criteria, about pupils' performance. This information is systematically and clearly recorded; the use of IT to organise this is excellent. It is then used to identify weaknesses and to target 'borderline' GCSE candidates. Pupils are well informed about their performance. Marking is thorough, and offers information, targets, and advice. Stickers on pupils' written work suggest targets for improvement, to show their current National Curriculum level, and to point to the demands of the next level.
147. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. French GCSE results are better. More opportunities are successfully offered for speaking in lessons, and pupils now display an enhanced standard of independence and creativity. The use of National Curriculum levels in planning and assessing is firmly established. A French assistante makes a positive cultural, linguistic and motivational contribution. The fragile quality of pupils' speaking in French lessons remains an important area still to be resolved.

URDU

148. Results in GCSE examinations for Urdu are good. In the GCSE examinations in 2001, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher grades A*-C was 61%. The provision is available to Year 10 and 11 pupils. Pupils are appropriately encouraged to study in the medium of Urdu. There is an ethos of support for pupils' bi-lingualism by many teachers and occasionally Urdu may be supported by non-specialist staff. The subject is very well taught. The teacher has high expectations of the pupils, which are communicated to them through teachers' skilful use of questioning techniques, which show due attention to detail in grammar, pronunciation and spelling. The conventions of the language are well explained. Pupils respond very well and show a high level of motivation.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good.
- Literacy skills are taught very effectively.
- Short-term planning is very good.
- Lessons are taught in a positive, supportive atmosphere and all pupils are able to make progress.
- The department's documentation is very detailed, there has been an effective response to the previous inspection issues and there is a very strong culture of improvement
- Leadership is strong and effective

Areas for development

- The time available for music is well below average.
- The resources and provision for using ICT are underdeveloped.
- Pupils do less well in the GCSE listening paper (which requires them to apply their knowledge and understanding).
- There is a need for the department to be clearer about national expectations for Year 9 pupils and to improve the quality of singing.

149. GCSE results are well below the national average. However, this statistic is misleading, since it is based on all schools in the country, many of which will enter pupils who have relatively high levels of attainment when they start the course. Analysis of the progress made by pupils who take GCSE at this school shows that they make sound progress compared to their level of attainment when starting the course. They do well in the performing and composing aspects of the course but noticeably less well in the listening paper.

150. By the end of Year 9 pupils' achievement is sound. This takes into account the relatively high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and the very high numbers who use English as an additional language. Pupils can play melodies on a keyboard with a sense of phrase and expression. A few low attainers are starting to use two hands independently and most use correct fingering in order to help to work towards fluency. The pupils benefit from being taught in small groups (as part of a shared timetable with information technology). This gives them a relatively high level of individual attention from the teacher. This positive effect is offset by the fact that pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 receive about half the curriculum time normally found for this age group. This, coupled with the fact that they rotate between blocks of information technology lessons, causes them to lose momentum in their learning. Therefore, despite the good pace of learning in lessons, the attainment of Year 9 pupils is below the national average.

151. Teaching is good overall. No teaching was observed in Years 10 and 11 because during the inspection week pupils were involved in end-of-year examinations and therefore not available. The 2001 coursework tapes showed that they were able to perform quite fluently and many had composed imaginative and effective pieces of music. Teaching was observed in Years 7 to 9. There were many strengths. These included: effective use of classroom display, the focus on literacy skills and key vocabulary, detailed lesson planning, variety and pace of activities, very effective reference to the National Curriculum in planning and a very positive and supportive classroom ethos. All of these factors mean that pupils, especially in Years 7 and 8 make good progress. For example in a Year 7 lesson, pupils were able to play guitar chords quite fluently, had individual targets for progress and were able to think about

the idea of minor and major chords. Many were starting to hear the difference between these sounds. Some made very good progress. Although the pupils sing enthusiastically and some can sing in tune, others have insufficient control of the sound they make and are not able to sustain notes or pitch notes with a high level of accuracy.

152. Attitudes and behaviour are good. The pupils quickly settle when they arrive at lessons and concentrate very well. They want to improve and respond well to the tasks, especially as there is good pace and variety in the lessons.
153. Leadership and management are very good. There is extremely detailed planning and development plans are regularly monitored and evaluated. Results are analysed and there is a strong commitment to improvement. The numbers taking GCSE have shown a steady improvement. The accommodation is used well, with two distinct teaching areas set up. The amount of accommodation for music is inadequate. The small group size in Years 7 to 9 has a positive impact on the pupils' attainment. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities covering a broad range of musical styles and traditions, ranging from steel pans to African drumming. These activities contribute significantly to pupils' progress. Pupils have very good opportunities to take extra tuition on a range of instruments. The number of pupils taking extra instrumental tuition is very high; over 100 pupils take extra music lessons every week. The department has begun to address the need to improve performance in the listening part of the GCSE examination but this still requires further development. The limited resources for ICT do not enable the pupils to cover the full range of the national curriculum programmes of study.
154. The improvement since the last inspection has been good. The good teaching has been maintained, the amount of singing has increased, resources have improved and the numbers taking instrumental lessons have increased. The amount of time for teaching Years 7 - 9 is still well below average.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Teachers are committed to high quality provision, have good subject knowledge and manage pupils well.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant and the GCSE course is open to all.
- Good games skills are being developed, particularly in cricket.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to the subject.

Areas for development

- Standards of swimming and GCSE examination performance have room for further improvement.
- The health and safety guidance that requires an appropriately qualified lifesaver to be in attendance when the swimming pool is being used is not met.
- There is too little use of ICT as a tool to aid pupils' learning.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to learn through observation and evaluation of others' performance.

155. The school's policy is to provide pupils from all groups with the opportunity to take the subject at GCSE through the provision of a short course. Many pupils in Year 11, including some on the school's special educational needs register, take up this opportunity and this reflects well the department's open access policy. In 2000, of the

two short courses on offer, 30% of pupils overall gained the top grades of A*-C and all gained a pass grade. In 2001 there was a good improvement on these results with 39% gaining a top grade and all but one pupil gaining a pass grade. It is not possible to compare the school's results with national standards because there are no national figures published for short GCSE courses.

156. By the end of Year 9 the majority of pupils are working at a level that is typical for their age and many pupils have skills in cricket which are significantly above the national average. For example in a Year 9 cricket lesson the majority of pupils were able to perform a series of controlled strokes to a very good standard. There are many pupils who enter the school with swimming skills that are well below those typical for their age with many unable to swim 25 metres unaided. The school places a strong focus on the teaching of swimming and pupils make good progress in this area. However, by the end of Year 9 the overall standard of swimming is still below the national average. Pupils of all abilities make good progress as they go through the school and acquire a good knowledge, understanding and level of skill in the main areas of physical activity.
157. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 make good progress so that by the end of Year 11 most pupils are working at a level that is typical for their age. The school's policy of open access to the subject means that pupils of all ability levels, including those with special educational needs, are able to undertake the subject at GCSE. They are well supported by subject teachers and make good progress, although standards of written work show that pupils' knowledge of the theoretical element of the syllabus is an area which needs to be further developed in the teaching. Pupils are acquiring a good level of performance in the main games areas covered and many understand the effect of exercise on their bodies and the importance of taking part in sport for their future health and enjoyment.
158. Teaching is good overall and this leads to good learning. Teaching and learning in the subject is always at least satisfactory with a high proportion of good and some very good teaching. Teachers establish very positive working relationships with their pupils and take into account the needs of all pupils including those in the early stages of English acquisition. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of physical education is good and they make effective use of pupil questioning to ensure pupils have understood what they have been taught. Lessons are usually planned well and teachers make good use of methods to help pupils learn effectively. For example, in a Year 9 cricket lesson a very well thought out skills practice was used very effectively to improve pupils' attacking stroke play and this was then put into a small game situation which enabled all pupils to further improve and experience the role of batsman, feeder and fielder. Through good support in lessons and the department's links with local sports clubs, gifted and talented pupils in specific sports are guided and supported to achieve their full potential. Teachers know their pupils very well and those with special educational needs are set tasks appropriate to their abilities and given good support enabling them to make good progress. There is however a need to provide more opportunities within teaching to develop pupils' planning, observation and evaluation skills.
159. Pupils' standard of behaviour is usually good. They respond well to the demands the teaching makes upon them. They have positive attitudes to their work and are keen to do well, most listen carefully and follow instructions well and at the same time show good levels of effort and motivation. Working relationships are very positive, pupils show respect for each other, teachers and other adults and work hard to improve their standard of performance. They respond well when given the opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning, for example when leading warm-up activities, or observing and evaluating performances of others.

160. The head of department provides sound leadership and management and is supported well by other subject teachers. The curriculum is broad and balanced with a good range of activities, including extra-curricular activities, as well as opportunities for pupils to study the subject at GCSE. There is sufficient time overall for the subject and the school meets the recommended two hours entitlement of physical activity. Although the department is providing opportunities to help develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, planning for the use of ICT to aid pupils' learning in the subject needs to be addressed. Teacher assessment of pupils' performance in the subject is good. There has been some good work undertaken to match the National Curriculum levels of attainment with specific activities and these are effectively shared with pupils. However, marking of GCSE work is not thorough enough and often does not tell pupils what they need to do to improve further. The indoor accommodation is comprised of shared use, with the girls' school next door, of a sports hall and swimming pool, as well as a separate gymnasium. There is a need to ensure that the school's timetabling of PE lessons takes into account when these shared areas are available to the school in order to maximise their use. The lack of availability of a common set of classrooms for the teaching of GCSE theory lessons means that resources are not readily to hand and displays appropriate to the subject cannot be used to aid learning. The provision of playing field space is good. However, the outdoor hard court areas are worn, uneven and get quite slippery when wet. The imminent loss of an all-weather pitch will have an adverse effect on the provision for hockey.

161. There has been good progress made on the areas for development identified in the last inspection. For example, teaching is now sound or better in all lessons and the teaching of swimming is no longer unsatisfactory. Assessment of pupils' work is now better linked to the National Curriculum. Areas of the field and indoor spaces have been improved, although the all-weather surface, hard-play areas and one set of changing rooms are still in need of refurbishment. There are 'no diving' notices displayed in the swimming pool, but there is still a need to ensure that there is always an appropriately qualified lifesaver in attendance when the swimming pool is being used.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Standards in GCSE are good.
- Teaching is good.
- Pupils have a very positive attitude to the subject.
- The subject makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The departmental leadership creates a positive ethos amongst staff.

Areas for development

- Too little use is made of Year 9 assessment data to set and monitor GCSE targets.
- The scheme of work provides insufficient guidance on assessment objectives, key questions, teaching activities and resources

162. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 9 is in line with the national average with pupils showing slightly higher attainment in their knowledge and understanding of world faiths than their ability to explore their own and other people's viewpoints drawing on a range of religious traditions. The vast majority of pupils take the short course GCSE and the results over the past two years have been at or slightly above the national average for grades A*-C and very good in relation to the national results for boys. A small number of pupils take the full GCSE and their results over the past two years have been well

above the national average with pupils doing much better in this subject than in their other GCSEs. Their success is in part achieved because many pupils come from homes where religion is practised and therefore they have an inherent interest and aptitude for the subject. Teachers are also very good at enabling pupils to perform well in relation to their abilities, especially at GCSE level.

163. The progress pupils make in lessons is good. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 are developing a range of knowledge and understanding of the principal world religions. For instance, in a Year 7 lesson, pupils were able to recognise key words associated with the notion of God from the major religious traditions and some from non-religious stances. In a Year 10 GCSE lesson, pupils demonstrated very good knowledge and understanding of Islam but their ability to express viewpoints, argue a case, or evaluate opinions, was less well developed. It is clear that these skills take longer for the boys to develop and this was well illustrated in their ability to do this in the Year 11 GCSE coursework sampled.
164. The quality of teaching and learning is good in all years. The teaching is by two specialist teachers who are interested and committed to giving pupils positive and interesting experiences. The teaching is based on good subject knowledge, effective planning, high expectations, especially in Years 10 and 11, and good management of pupils in lessons so that they stay on task and work hard. Marking is thorough but teachers are not yet making sufficient use of assessment in Years 7 to 9 in order to set more challenging tasks. Whilst homework contributes to pupils' learning it is not yet set regularly enough to help foster a sense of independence in pupils' learning.
165. Pupils concentrate well and are clearly interested in the subject. Their attitude is extremely positive towards religion, but there were instances in lessons where they were less accepting of religious stances other than their own. Pupils work well on their own, in pairs and groups. They sustain written work for quite long periods and contribute to discussions and other oral work in a polite and positive manner.
166. This is a well-managed department based on long experience and positive relationships. A strong contribution is made to developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Departmental documentation is helpful, but the scheme of work does not yet give enough support to others, especially inexperienced and trainee teachers. The school has an established system for monitoring the work of departments but the department itself is not yet making sufficient use of data to monitor the progress of pupils and set them targets for further improvement.
167. The department has made good progress since the last inspection, especially in the development of a more reflective approach for pupils to learn from religion, extending the range of assessment tasks, improving the range and quality of resources and in beginning to develop a more robust scheme of work.

BUSINESS STUDIES

Overall, the quality of provision in business studies is **good**.

Strengths

- There is a positive work ethic in the department.
- The subject is led and managed very well.
- Teaching provides clear direction, with good support for individual pupils.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well catered for and make good progress.
- There are good relationships between staff and pupils.

Areas for Development

- The length of the teaching time for GCSE is below the recommended level.

168. Standards in business studies are satisfactory. In Year 11, attainment is broadly in line with national averages. When taking into account pupils' prior attainment at the end of Year 9, this represents good progress for many pupils. In 2000, 92% of the pupils entered gained A*-G grades. In 2001, the figures showed an improvement with 87% of the total Year 11 cohort being entered for business studies GCSE examination and 40% of those gaining A*-C grades.
169. Overall, the progress made in lessons is good. No Year 11 pupils were observed in classes. Scrutiny of their work indicated that standards are above average and achievement over the year has been good. Current Year 10 pupils, as observed in lessons and demonstrated in their written work, are in line with the average for this stage in their course. Standards are rising, particularly for the most capable pupils. They are making progress in recalling, understanding and explaining concepts at various levels. They are able to use technical vocabulary and give examples to illustrate their ideas; for example, the effect the product life cycle has on marketing strategies. Pupils with special educational needs, particularly those with English as a second language, enjoy an exceptionally good level of access to business studies and, through well targeted in-class support and specially made resources, are included well in most learning activities, although technical vocabulary is sometimes a barrier to learning.
170. Overall the teaching is good. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Pupils benefit from teachers who are experts in their subject knowledge, use a wide variety of teaching techniques and have high expectations of academic success and behaviour. Structured group work, paired discussions and investigations improve learning, such as in Year 10 class investigating methods of recruitment. However, current pathway arrangements result in GCSE classes being taught in half the time recommended and this has an adverse impact on learning for some pupils. ICT is used very well with a business studies Intranet enabling pupils to work independently on research tasks for their coursework.
171. Leadership and management are good. The head of department has set about ensuring clear educational direction and is aware of the need to promote high standards. There is a good system of monitoring progress on a regular basis using a comprehensive range of data. Targets are set for each pupil and under-achievement is identified and addressed. The development plan is thorough and fits well with school aims and priorities. The department promotes equal opportunities strongly and is generating and sustaining an ethos that is promoting open access to the course for all pupils. Teachers have reviewed curricular approaches to ensure that they are relevant to pupils.

172. Since the previous inspection, there has been further improvement. Resources have been improved with the Intranet provision. Data on pupils' achievement is now used well and target setting has become an important strategy for raising standards.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Adult learners have access to a good range of courses or programmes and, where appropriate, achieve relevant qualifications.
- The courses and programmes of work ensure equality of access and opportunities for all learners.
- Adult learners have the opportunity to broaden their experience and enhance their personal development through a suitable variety of enrichment activities.
- Multi-site provision and resources are effectively integrated to give a coherent programme of learning.

Areas for Improvement

- There are too few opportunities for students to gain accreditation.

173. Community education within the college is a strength. The high quality of community education has a positive impact upon mainstream school life. Governors are well informed and committed to providing high quality education for the wider community. Leadership is very good. The college provides a wide range of daytime and evening courses together with some activities at weekends and in the summer holiday. The range of courses, both vocational and recreational, has increased substantially to widen participation in learning for some of the most disadvantaged members of the community. The college offers a programme of 337 courses across the year. The Basic Skills and English as an additional language classes make up to 65% of the total vocational enrolment. Guidance and support is provided on an individual basis so the learners gain the confidence required to access the courses. A particular focus has been work with parents of younger children in the primary schools. There are formal and informal means of identifying the needs of the community, some of which the college has already implemented.

174. The management and organisation of community education can be clearly identified within the whole school structure with the manager of the provision being a member of the school's senior management team. This structure ensures that the main school and the college share a common ethos. The aims of Community Education clearly support the aims and values of the school. This extends to the integration of community aims within the school development plan. The provision gives pupils of the school some additional opportunities for development, particularly improving English, developing basic skills and involvement in recreational activities, including affiliated sports clubs. The presence in the school of adults from the wider community gives a positive view of continuing education. There are also some shared resources and financial support that benefits all pupils by enhancing the college provision. There is no Youth Award scheme organised in collaboration with the school so that students do not have the opportunity to gain accreditation.

175. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection varied, but overall was sound. Quality assurance mechanisms, including classroom observations, course evaluations and course reviews, are in place. Students are highly motivated and there is a high degree of satisfaction with the courses provided.

176. Accommodation is suitable for adult learning and allows for daytime provision as well as evening classes. There are currently 13 English as an additional language and two basic skills classes during the daytime.
177. Community education is provided within the commissioning agreement with the local education authority and is funded through LEA funding, Learning and Skills Council funding and fees from the pupils. In order to promote participation the college aims to keep these fees to a minimum. The college has 87% of vocational pupils and 63% of the total pupil cohort entitled to a remitted fee of some kind. Discussions with staff showed enthusiasm and commitment. There are good opportunities for staff development. Of the 72 part-time tutors, 10 were teachers from the Challney School.

ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

Overall the quality of provision for English as an additional language is **very good**.

Strengths:

- Support for pupils with English as an additional language within the curriculum is effective.
- Assessment information is used well to identify and address areas for improvement in the pupils' knowledge of English.
- Individual pupils are well supported in their learning of English and other subjects in the curriculum.
- A good range of opportunities is provided for pupils to improve their English skills, especially in listening and writing.
- Prepared resources are differentiated effectively and pupils' word processing skills are developed and used well.

Areas for development:

- There is no planned programme of liaison between support and subject teachers.
- Procedures for the assessment of pupils' proficiency in English as an additional language are not sufficiently clear.

178. The school is in receipt of additional funding to support the improvement of English. The grant has enabled the school to deploy 3.3 full time equivalent teachers to support the learning needs of ethnic minority pupils with English as an additional language. In addition the school draws on its own budget to deploy 1.5 full time equivalent teachers to enhance the level of support in this department. A small budget is earmarked for the purchase of resources. Cost of staff training is met through the standard budget.
179. The majority of pupils speak English as an additional language, with 18% at early stages of learning English. Support for these pupils is provided in a variety of styles including in-class, withdrawal groups and one-to-one tutorials addressing needs both in learning English and learning the curriculum.
180. Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is very good. Pupils exhibit well-developed confidence and high motivation. The co-ordinator has set priorities for supporting early stage English as an additional language learners, with a five year development plan for the department to make the best use of resources and meet the learning needs of the pupils. As a result, the progress of pupils in acquiring English is good. They learn vocabulary related to subjects of the curriculum, improve their spelling in English, punctuate their written work appropriately and are encouraged to express themselves in lessons.

181. Multilingual staff contribute significantly to the progress of early stage learners, as they are able to use a wide range of languages spoken by the pupils. They provide learning resources in different languages and are particularly supportive of the needs of newly arrived, early stage learners.
182. The rich data provided by the department and passed to subject departments on pupils' progress in English is updated regularly and relates to progress in English as an additional language as well as the curriculum. Many subject departments have specialised material to cater for pupils' needs. Useful guidelines are provided for teachers to ensure that they are aware of the best ways in which these pupils' needs may be met. Leadership of this aspect of learning is good.
183. The department has recognised the need to improve its assessment procedures. It also accepts the need for better structures to improve further the partnership between support staff and subject teachers.
184. An extensive programme of family learning is offered by the Community College. This opportunity provides a good context for forging links between the school and the parents. In order for the school to achieve its aims in raising attainment it would be important to enhance the focus in these links to enable parents to have a more active involvement in their children's learning.