

## ERRATUM

### WILLIAM LOVELL CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL

Unique reference number: 120664

Headteacher: Mr R Dring

Dates of inspection: 20<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2002

Inspection number: 191642

### ENGLISH

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

#### Strengths

- Pupils' attitudes to their work are very good.
- The progress made by lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs is good.

#### Areas for improvement

- The standards achieved by average and higher-attaining pupils are not high enough.
- The standards achieved by girls and their rates of progress are not good enough.
- The procedures for assessing, monitoring and improving pupils' attainment and progress are inadequate.

59. Overall, standards of work seen in English during the inspection are below average. These standards reflect the low attainment of pupils entering the school until recently. Standards are average in speaking and listening and in reading, but below average in writing. Pupils' achievement by the end of Year 9 is satisfactory in relation to their standards on entry to the school, which were well below average. In relation to standards of attainment at the beginning of Year 10, achievement at the end of Year 11 is unsatisfactory. Pupils' progress overall in writing is unsatisfactory. Pupils' attitudes are very good.

60. National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 9 and GCSE results are well below national averages. At age 14 and 16, the attainment of boys is higher in comparison with national levels than that of girls. The results over the past three years show that attainment has fallen in Years 7 - 9. It is close to the average for secondary modern schools nationally, but still well below average in comparison with all schools of a similar social background. There are signs that there will be further improvement as a result of the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy and the development of more structured schemes of work. At GCSE, A\*-C results over the last three years show improvement in English, but consistently very low outcomes in English literature. Results remain well below the national average in both subjects. Both boys and girls perform significantly worse in English literature than they do in their other examination subjects. The percentage of pupils gaining A\*-G grades in English and in English literature is higher than the national average. This is due to the good attainment of some lower attaining pupils. Lower attaining pupils make good progress throughout the school. All pupils on the special educational needs register make good progress. Pupils with statements are well supported and make good progress. The higher attaining pupils, of whom there is a relatively small number make unsatisfactory progress due to the lack of specifically planned activities to extend their learning. Average attaining boys make satisfactory progress in both key stages, whereas average attaining girls make unsatisfactory progress in Years 7 - 9 and poor progress in Years 10 - 11. Much of this under-achievement is due to insufficient, planned opportunities for pupils to practise extended writing in their English lessons, and an over-emphasis on the development of speaking, listening and reading skills.

61. By the age of 14, most pupils can express their opinions clearly and confidently to the rest of the class. They listen attentively and with interest to the views of others. They read a good range of texts, which are challenging for pupils of their ability, fluently and with enjoyment. Some pupils can write in a range of forms for different purposes, but most receive insufficient guidance on how to improve grammar and sentence structure. By the age of 16, pupils respond well to the constructive comments which teachers make about their speaking and listening. Many of them improve their grades for speaking and listening in Years 10 - 11. Pupils of all abilities respond with enthusiasm and understanding to a wide range of reading tasks, some of which are very challenging. Coursework files show that some pupils can write with engagement in response to challenging GCSE tasks, but many pupils are not consistently and rigorously taught how to improve their writing. Many pupils have good word-processing skills. Standards of spelling and presentation are good.

62. The quality of teaching in lessons observed is good and is effective in helping pupils to develop their speaking, listening and reading skills. However, the written work which pupils produce is unsatisfactory and below the standard of their other skills in the subject. In almost all lessons seen there was very little focus on writing. Teachers do not concentrate enough on the conscious manipulation of words for effect and on the use of grammatical understanding to create clear, concise, interesting writing. On the evidence of a scrutiny of pupils' work, insufficient opportunities are provided for them to practise and develop their writing skills. This aspect of English is not well taught as it is not given enough attention. Although the teaching of writing needs attention, the teaching in the subject overall is satisfactory, as the teaching of other literacy skills is good. The quality of learning reflects the quality of teaching. All pupils learn to develop their skills of speaking, listening and reading, but many pupils are not systematically learning the necessary skills of writing. In some Year 7 lessons, the National Literacy Strategy is beginning to have a positive impact on writing, but, as yet, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to do extended writing. All teachers have good relationships with their classes, have objectives for the lesson which they communicate clearly and have good knowledge of the individual strengths and weaknesses of their pupils. Teachers use a good variety of texts from different times and cultures. The quality of lesson plans is inconsistent, although the best plans have clear objectives that lead to good learning in lessons. Individual education plans identify the strategies to be followed in the teaching of pupils with special educational needs. Learning support assistants are used effectively to ensure that the pupils to whom they are assigned make progress and participate fully in the lessons. Teachers mark work regularly and use the school's assessment procedure consistently. However, the school's procedures are not rigorous enough to ensure that pupils are consistently aware of what they need to do next in order to improve their work. Teachers do not yet involve directly pupils in target setting. As a result, many pupils do not have a clear idea about their current standard of work and how to do better. Last year, teacher assessments of pupils' attainment in the Key Stage 3 tests and in GCSE exams were far above what the pupils actually achieved. Annual reports to parents comment on behaviour and effort, but do not focus clearly enough on what standards pupils are achieving and how they might do better.

63. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are at least good in all lessons. All English teachers apply the school's discipline policy consistently and all pupils respond positively to the discipline system. Pupils enjoy lessons and tackle with enthusiasm the tasks they are given. Their good behaviour has a considerable effect on the quality of their learning. Thus, pupils in all classes and of all abilities speak well, listen carefully to each other's views and respond in a measured way. For example, in a class of lower attaining pupils the issue emerged from their reading whether it is ever right to tell a lie. The teacher encouraged this spontaneous discussion and many pupils spoke in a frank, reasonable and sustained way. There is less opportunity for pupils to engage in sustained group discussion. All teachers devote careful attention to the teaching of reading, and the standards of reading of all pupils are high in relation to their ability. Pupils of all abilities read

aloud with determination and enthusiasm. In lessons where they are given the opportunity to do so, pupils make inferences from texts and talk about themes and style.

64. Overall, leadership and management of English are satisfactory. The head of English has created an atmosphere in which information is shared and all the teachers feel that they are part of a team. For example, newly qualified teachers and teachers new to the school have been supported and guided. The head of English is aware that the National Literacy Strategy, and the funding it brings into the school, offers the department an opportunity to reflect on its practice and to build on its strengths. The head of English monitors pupils' written work once a term in Years 7 to 9, and twice a term in Years 10 and 11. This provides an opportunity to gauge whether all pupils are progressing as quickly as they should, but it is not clear how this information influences the subject improvement plan. However, aspects of the leadership and management of English are not satisfactory. The subject improvement plan does not include strategies for improving teaching and learning and does not set measurable targets. The use of data to support target setting and the monitoring which will help to ensure that the targets are achieved, are not yet in place. Strategies to improve attainment have not yet been clearly identified and implemented. Examples of good practice within the department have not been systematically identified and integrated into schemes of work. Overall, improvement in English since the last inspection is satisfactory. Spelling in the department and across the school has improved. More challenging texts are now being used throughout the school to meet the needs of more able pupils. The school's learning enhancement teacher works in some English lessons with higher attaining pupils in Years 10 - 11. It is too early to evaluate the impact that she is having on attainment. Volunteer learning support assistants run lunchtime clubs for lower attaining pupils on reading, spelling and handwriting. The clubs contribute to the good standards observed in these areas and to the very good attitudes that lower attaining pupils have towards English. Resources are up to date, of good quality and available to all. Displays inside and outside the classrooms are an appropriate mixture of celebration and information. There is a strong link with the special needs department which enhances the learning of lower attaining pupils and with the resources centre which has helped to ensure that there is a good range of new and up to date fiction. The stock of non-fiction texts in the resources centre is unsatisfactory. Many of the books are old and out of date. ICT provision in English is unsatisfactory. Only the special needs room has access to computers. Nevertheless, work on display and in files shows that many pupils have satisfactory word processing skills.

65. Standards of literacy across the school are now satisfactory. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are good. There are planned opportunities for pupils to express their ideas in geography and music. The 'Talk' project in French ensures that most pupils are using the foreign language more readily and with enjoyment. Pupils give good responses to well-directed questions in mathematics, science and special educational needs classes. There is much less opportunity for focused group discussion across the curriculum. Reading is good. Keywords are being used effectively in geography, mathematics, music and science; teachers are beginning to use them in physical education. Teachers develop pupils' reading skills in imaginative ways in geography and science. Writing is generally satisfactory. However, some teachers use too many worksheets and pupils of all abilities are not given enough opportunity for extended writing. There is some evidence of extended word processing in ICT and in vocational subjects. The presentation of final drafts is generally good. The standard of spelling is satisfactory and has improved since the last inspection. The school's strategy for raising standards of literacy is clear, though the whole school plan lacks targets that can be measured precisely. The pace of implementation is too slow, and the date set for the integration of literacy targets into the planning of all Key Stage 3 lessons, July 2003, is too far away. The information given to teachers earlier in the year during National Literacy Strategy training is clear and concise. The actions that were agreed during the training, however, have not been carried out consistently across the whole school.

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **WILLIAM LOVELL CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL**

Stickney, Boston

LEA area: Lincolnshire

Unique reference number: 120664

Headteacher: Mr R Dring

Reporting inspector: Dr Andy Swallow  
12524

Dates of inspection: 20<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2002

Inspection number: 191642

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Secondary modern

School category: Voluntary controlled

Age range of pupils: 11 to 16

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Main Road  
Stickney  
Boston  
Lincolnshire

Postcode: PE22 8AA

Telephone number: 01205 480352

Fax number: 01205 480398

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr L Hartley

Date of previous inspection: 3<sup>rd</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> February 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
12524	A B Swallow	Registered inspector		Information about the school The school's results and pupils' achievements How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9176	G A P Barker	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
4551	L M Banks	Team inspector	Provision for pupils with special educational needs	How well does the school care for its pupils?
22531	D A Burbage	Team inspector	Science Equality of opportunity	
20611	P D Evans	Team inspector	English Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	
20287	D S Harris	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
12600	C L Hesketh	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology	
12183	P J Ingram	Team inspector	Mathematics	
30187	S Johnson	Team inspector	History	How well are pupils taught? How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
15280	D J Kennard	Team inspector	Geography Information and communication technology	
28429	C L Maynard	Team inspector	Music	
18755	R Whittaker	Team inspector	Physical education	

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

William Lovell Church of England is a mixed, secondary modern school, with 415 pupils on roll, which is smaller than most secondary schools. It seeks to exemplify Christian values in all of its work. The school is situated in the rural village of Stickney, but its pupils come from a much wider area of social disadvantage. This is largely due to the number of selective schools within the local education authority that offer places to an unusually high proportion of pupils. As a result, pupils' attainment on entry to the school is below average, although the most recent intake shows improvement. There are very few pupils of minority ethnic heritage and none from homes where English is not the first language. Less than one in ten pupils is entitled to free school meals. This number is well below the national average and has fallen since the last inspection. One in four pupils requires help with special educational needs. This is higher than the national figure and than at the last inspection. The local education authority has made statements of special educational needs on behalf of 18 pupils who receive support from a designated unit. The majority have general and moderate learning difficulties, although some experience emotional and behavioural problems. Pupils with learning difficulties are included fully in the life of the school. Many parents make a definite choice to send their children to the school and it is now oversubscribed.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

William Lovell is a successful school with many strengths. The outstanding leadership provided by the headteacher and the commitment of the governors create an environment in which every child is valued and encouraged to learn. Personal support and guidance are especially strong. Pupils enjoy very good relationships with their peers and teachers, and behave very well. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and is improving. GCSE results are average in comparison with other secondary modern schools, and well above average at grades A\*-G. Standards of work seen during the inspection were below the national average, although overall achievement is satisfactory. Parents can have confidence in the school's work. It provides satisfactory value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- The school's Christian values permeate all of its work and help to foster positive attitudes towards learning and school life; relationships and behaviour are very good. ?
- Provision for pupils' personal, social and moral development is very strong.
- Provision for and progress made by low attaining pupils and those with special educational needs, are good.
- Teaching and learning in geography are very good.
- The school has effective links with parents which encourage supportive relationships.
- Governors help to direct the work of the school; financial control and administration are very efficient.
- The outstanding leadership of the headteacher is at the centre of the school's work.

### What could be improved

- Overall standards are still not high enough in many subjects, particularly when compared with other secondary modern schools;
- Standards in English are not high enough as pupils do not achieve as well as they should do in relation to their previous attainment
- Curricular planning, assessment and the monitoring of teaching and learning by subject leaders are inconsistent and not sufficiently well developed.
- The monitoring of pupils' progress towards agreed targets lacks rigour and reports to parents lack sufficient detail about pupils' achievement.
- Pupils have inadequate access to information and communication technology (ICT) in all subjects.

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

### HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the school's last inspection in February 1997, it has made satisfactory progress overall in raising standards further. The school has improved the quality of teaching by increasing the range of teaching and learning strategies, and by improving the pace and challenge in lessons. Over half of lessons are now good and very few lessons are unsatisfactory. Particularly good progress has been made in the use of the foreign language in French lessons, in pupils' confidence in spelling and in the school's understanding of the proportion of the budget intended to meet special educational needs-related costs. The consistency with which policies, such as marking and assessment, have been implemented across the school, then monitored and evaluated, is unsatisfactory. Whilst some provision for ICT teaching and learning has improved, there is still a significant amount of outmoded hardware in place. This means that there are not yet sufficient numbers of computers to meet the needs of all pupils, and that access to the full programmes of study, in all subjects, is not being achieved.

### STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
GCSE examinations	D	E	D	C

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

Pupils come into the school with below average results. By the age of 14, pupils' results in mathematics, however, are above the national average. Results in English and science are below average compared with all schools and with those for secondary modern schools. In English, results have fallen for the past three years. Boys achieve better than girls in English, mathematics and science. Results are below average in all other subjects apart from geography where results are above average. Given Year 7 starting points, the school is building well on achievement in the primary schools and achievement is good in mathematics.

GCSE results where pupils gain one or more grades A\*- G is above the national average and results found in secondary modern schools. In 2001, all pupils attained at least three GCSE

qualifications. The performance of pupils obtaining five or more GCSE grades in the range A\* - G is broadly average and better than that found in other secondary modern schools. The proportion of pupils obtaining five or more A\* - C grades is below the national average; it is also below that found in secondary modern schools, although trends have improved since the last inspection. Results are well above average in religious education and above average in physical education. They are below average in science and well below average in all other subjects. Boys outperform girls in English, mathematics and science.

Standards in literacy and numeracy are satisfactory through the school. General standards of work seen during the inspection in Years 7 – 9 and 10 – 11 are below national expectations. Boys perform generally better than girls. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress across Years 7 - 11, but higher attaining pupils are less well challenged. The school's targets for improvement are both realistic and achievable.

### PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are keen to come to school and like their teachers. They are positive about the school and feel happy and secure in their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are punctual to lessons and settle to work quickly. They move around the school sensibly and are courteous to adults and each other.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on how their behaviour has an impact on others and show respect for other people's feelings, values and beliefs.
Attendance	Good. Overall school attendance is slightly above the national average and unauthorised absence is very low.

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is satisfactory overall, although the proportion of good and very good teaching is improving. In just over half of lessons, teaching is good or better. There is very little unsatisfactory teaching and no poor teaching. The teaching of religious education was inspected separately and outcomes are not recorded in this report. Much of the teaching in English, mathematics and science is good. It is very good in geography. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory across the curriculum. The planning for and teaching of ICT skills across all subjects remains unsatisfactory. The school has worked hard to improve the use of the foreign language in French lessons and pupils' general spelling skills. Teachers have

improved the range of teaching and learning styles. This is leading to more involvement of pupils in their learning. The matching of activities to pupils' levels of attainment has improved and is now satisfactory, although higher attaining pupils are still insufficiently challenged in many subjects. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs learn well. Across the vast majority of subjects marking is consistent, although insufficient information is shared with pupils about the progress that they make and used by teachers to promote even higher standards.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and range of learning opportunities are satisfactory. They are accessible to all pupils. Arrangements for extra-curricular activities are good. Sound approaches are in place to teach essential literacy and numeracy skills. Overall, the curriculum does not meet statutory requirements in that there are still insufficient, planned opportunities across all subjects for pupils to develop important ICT skills.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The matching of work to the needs of pupils with special educational needs, particular those with statements, is good. The work of the specialist unit is very good. The impact of learning support assistants in subjects is good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school's Christian ethos is very strong. However, with the exception of religious education, insufficient attention is paid by subjects across the curriculum to the provision for spiritual development. The personal and health education programme is good. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good. For pupils' cultural development, provision is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The environment is safe and orderly. Overall arrangements for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are good. Teachers know their pupils well and procedures for monitoring and promoting appropriate behaviour are very good. Relationships are very strong. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are not yet satisfactory throughout the school.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	The school works very effectively in partnership with parents. Links with parents are very good and include frequently planned opportunities to consult them. Parents make a good contribution to their children's learning. Overall, the information that they receive about their pupils' progress is unsatisfactory. ICT progress is not reported at the age of 14 and annual reports do not contain details of what pupils do well in their subjects and specific targets for improvement in key areas of their work.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides outstanding leadership for the work of the school. Whole school planning identifies clear priorities that are providing good direction for the school. Key subject staff manage departments well on a daily basis, but their leadership skills are insufficiently developed. They are not yet planning with sufficient rigour to improve further standards, monitoring all pupils' academic progress towards set targets, nor evaluating the quality of teaching and learning.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil their responsibilities well and receive information of sufficient quality for them to hold the school to account for the standard that it achieves. They understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school and monitor progress effectively. They are not yet ensuring that statutory ICT curriculum requirements are in place or that the content of annual reports of pupils' progress are sufficiently informative.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is using its performance management arrangements well to evaluate the quality of teaching. The overall monitoring of pupils' learning and achievement is unsatisfactory. Arrangements for the monitoring of teachers' planning are effective. Key members of staff, other than the headteacher and deputy headteacher, are not yet sufficiently involved in evaluating performance. This is a weakness.
The strategic use of resources	Financial control and administration are very efficient. Specific grants are used effectively. The school seeks best value in the use of finances. The number and expertise of staff are good. Learning resources are generally adequate, with the exception of the number of computers to pupils that do not meet the government's recommendations. Accommodation is just satisfactory, although there are serious concerns about the quality of indoor space for physical education.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents are pleased about the progress that their children make and about the information that they receive about their progress.</li> <li>• They like the ways that the schools helps their children to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• They think that the leadership of the school promotes high expectations.</li> <li>• The ways in which the school seeks to work with parents' makes them feel comfortable with questions and / or concerns.</li> <li>• Parents think that teaching and behaviour are good.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A small number of parents do not think that their children receive the right amount of homework.</li> <li>• A small number of parents do not think that there is a large range of activities outside of lessons.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with parents that the leadership of the school is good, that it promotes high expectations of pupils' attendance, behaviour and achievement. The school is effective in helping children to develop personally. It works hard to promote mutually beneficial links with parents. However, inspectors judge teaching overall to be satisfactory, although the proportion of good teaching is increasing. Overall, children make satisfactory progress in their learning, but information in annual reports of their progress to parents do not contain sufficient details about the subject specific skills that they are developing, nor are sufficiently specific targets set to help them to further improve further. Inspectors do not support parents' views that amount of homework requires improvement and find the range of activities outside of lessons to be good.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS ?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. Pupils come into the school in Year 7 with below average results from the Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science. Nevertheless, these results are beginning to improve, and in 2001 Key Stage 2 science results were at the national average. By the end of Year 9, results in English have fallen over the last three years, have improved slightly in science and significantly in mathematics. Improvement in mathematics is now faster than that seen nationally; it is below that seen nationally in English and science. GCSE results at five or more A\* - C grades are improving. They have improved at a rate similar to that seen nationally since the previous inspection. Results are in line with the national average at five or more A\* - G grades and above the national average at one or more A\* - G grades. The rates of improvement in both cases are faster than those seen nationally. Given the Year 7 starting points and the most recent end of Year 9 National Curriculum test results, the school is building adequately on achievement in the primary schools and is adding value in mathematics. Similar comparisons at the end of Year 11 show that pupils' achievement is generally satisfactory. However, achievement in English through the school is unsatisfactory. Overall, pupils learn effectively in the vast majority of lessons, but standards are below those seen nationally. They are higher in Years 7 - 9 than in Years 10 - 11. Preparation for lessons across the curriculum is still not meeting the needs of the higher attaining pupils.

2. At the end of Year 9, pupils' test results in English are well below national averages and below the averages for secondary modern schools. Results in science are below national averages, but in line with secondary modern schools. Results in mathematics are above national averages and pupils make very good progress across Years 7 - 9. Boys' achievement in relation to their previous attainment is better than girls in all three subjects, particularly in English. Attainment over the last three years is rising in science and mathematics, but not so in English. Here, teachers' assessments of pupils' standards far exceed their final results. Far fewer pupils attain higher National Curriculum levels in English than in the other two subjects. 2001 teachers' assessments show standards to be below average in all other subjects, apart from geography.

3. In 2001, pupils' average GCSE total points score and the proportion attaining five or more A\* - C grades, were below national averages for all schools and those for secondary modern schools. Boys attained higher than girls. Since the last inspection boys' results have closed significantly on the results of boys nationally, whereas the difference between girls' results and those seen nationally has remained. Overall trends at five or more A\* - C grades have improved since the last inspection at a rate in line with that seen nationally. Results at five or more A\* - G grades in 2001 were in line with the national average and amongst the top 25 per cent of secondary modern schools. Overall trends at five or more A\* - G grades have improved since the last inspection at over three times faster than that seen nationally. Results at one or more A\* - G grades in 2001 were above the national average and amongst the top 5 per cent of secondary modern schools. All pupils attained at least three GCSE or equivalent qualifications. Overall trends at one or more A\* - G grades have improved since the last inspection at a slightly higher rate than that seen nationally. In general, the small numbers of higher attaining pupils are not yet achieving consistently high enough standards.

4. In the 2001 GCSE examinations, A\* - C results were well below the national average in all subjects apart from religious education and physical education. A\* - G results were above average in all subjects apart from history and physical education. They were average in French.

5. The school's targets for further improvements are both realistic and achievable. There are good strategies in place for meeting the needs of lower attaining pupils and those at risk of failing to achieve potential. Specific actions to ensure that girls and all pupils capable of high attainment make good progress, are unsatisfactory. The school has set suitable challenging targets for GCSE for 2002 and 2003, at all levels, but has yet to adopt a formal approach to the setting of targets for the outcomes of the Key Stage 3 National Curriculum tests and teachers' assessments. At present, the school is not making sufficient use of internal assessment data to monitor the academic progress of pupils of all ages and attainment levels, across all subjects.

6. Although most pupils achieve satisfactorily, standards of work seen in the inspection are below the national average. Standards seen in Year 7 are much higher than in any other year and indicate higher potential future attainment. In English, overall standards of work are below average. Standards are average in speaking and listening and in reading, but below average in writing. Pupils' achievement by the end of Year 9 is unsatisfactory, even though teaching is good, in relation to standards of attainment on entry to the school. In relation to standards of attainment at the beginning of Year 10, achievement at the end of Year 11 is unsatisfactory, although teaching and learning are at least satisfactory.

7. Standards of literacy across the school are now average. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are above average. There is much less opportunity for focused group discussion across the curriculum. Reading is above average. Keywords are being used effectively and many teachers develop pupils' reading skills in imaginative ways. Writing is generally of an average standard. However, some teachers use too many worksheets, and pupils of all abilities are not given enough opportunity for extended writing. The standard of spelling is average, and has improved since the last inspection. The school's strategy for raising standards of literacy is clear, though the whole school plan lacks targets that can be measured precisely. The pace of implementation is too slow, and the date set for the integration of literacy targets into the planning of all Year 7 - 9 lessons, July 2003, is too far away. The information given to teachers earlier in the year during National Literacy Strategy training is clear and concise.

8. In mathematics, standards of work seen during the inspection are below average in Years 7 - 9 and in Years 10 and 11. These standards reflect standards of pupils on entry to the school that are well below average. Pupils' achievements by the end of Year 9 are good, in relation to standards of attainment on entry; they are satisfactory at the end of Year 11 in relation to standards of attainment at the beginning of Year 10.

9. The strategies for the teaching of numeracy skills across the curriculum are satisfactory. Mathematics has modified its approaches to teaching in line with the National Numeracy Strategy. Appropriate staff training has taken place and plans are in hand to carry out an audit of subject contributions in the autumn term 2002. The scheduled timescale for the introduction of a whole school policy in summer 2003 is too long.

10. Standards of work seen in science are below average in Years 7 - 11. These standards reflect satisfactory achievement, by the end of Year 9, in relation to their below average standards of attainment on entry to the school. In relation to their previous standards of attainment, achievement is satisfactory for Year 11 pupils. Pupils make progress because of good teaching, good attitudes and good behaviour.

11. Standards reached by pupils in ICT, at the age of 14, are below average and just below for similar schools. Nevertheless, results are improving over time. There was no relevant performance data in the 2001 GCSE results. The GNVQ course in ICT is recently introduced. Standards of the best work seen in lessons are average. Too many pupils, however, do not receive the full range of ICT activities, at the appropriate level, and overall standards are below average. Pupils' achievement by the end of Year 9 is satisfactory in aspects of information exchange and presentation. Overall, it is poor in relation to standards of attainment on entry to school. Their rates of achievement are hampered by the piecemeal provision of the other aspects of ICT capability. Year 10 and 11 pupils following ICT related courses achieve satisfactorily, although opportunities for those experiencing ICT across the curriculum are again limited. Achievement in relation to previous attainment, here, is again unsatisfactory.

12. Standards of work in art and design, and in design and technology, are below the national average. These standards reflect the inconsistent approach to the development of subject specific skills, the lack of involvement of pupils in evaluating their own and others' work, and low quality of planning for learning in schemes of work and daily lessons. Pupils' achievement in both subjects is unsatisfactory by the end of Year 9, in relation to their standards on entry. In relation to the standards of attainment at the beginning of Year 10, achievement at the end of Year 11 is unsatisfactory in both subjects. Although overall achievement is unsatisfactory in design and technology, it is satisfactory in food and textiles.

13. Standards of work in geography are broadly average. These standards reflect the good development of geographical skills within the appropriate range of places and themes. Pupils' achievement by the end of Year 9 is very good in relation to standards of attainment on entry to school, and the same very good rate of progress is seen from Year 10 to Year 11. Pupils' attitudes are very good. Standards of work in history are below average by the end of Year 9 and by the end of Year 11. Pupils' achievement by the end of Year 9 is satisfactory in relation to standards of achievement on entry to the school. In relation to standards of attainment in Year 10, achievement at the end of Year 11 is also satisfactory. The progress that pupils make between Years 7 and 9, and between Years 10 and 11, is directly related to their positive attitudes and to the very good relationships that exist between pupils and teachers.

14. Standards of work in French are well below average. They are closer to national averages at the end of Year 9 than at the end of Year 11. Overall, achievement is satisfactory through the school. This reflects the quality of teaching, although the department has adopted recently a new approach to teaching French which is resulting in improved learning in Years 7 - 9.

15. Standards of work in music are average. Pupils arrive at the school with a wide range of previous musical experiences and abilities, and by the end of Year 9, the majority are achieving well in comparison to their standards on entry. Pupils' achievement by the end of Year 11, in comparison to their standards at the beginning of Year 10, is good, with all pupils making progress in their abilities to compose and perform, from low starting points.

16. Overall, standards of work in physical education are average. These standards reflect satisfactory teaching with a satisfactory response from pupils. Pupils' achievement by the end of Year 9 is satisfactory in relation to standards on entry to the school. In relation to standards of attainment at the end of Year 9, achievement at the end of Year 11 is satisfactory. Higher grade GCSE results are in line with national averages.

17. In Years 10 and 11 the school offers a range of GNVQ courses and a work-related learning course, based on the pilot of the Lincolnshire Employability Graduation Award. Standards of work are below average by the end of Year 11. In relation to standards of attainment in Year 10, achievement at the end of Year 11 is satisfactory. The achievement that pupils make between Years 10 and 11 is directly related to their positive attitudes and the good relationships that exist between pupils and teachers. Achievement remains only satisfactory, despite good teaching. This is due to the limited number of opportunities for external visits to enhance the quality of pupils' learning experiences.

18. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Because of the carefully targeted support, they learn well in classes throughout the school despite their difficulties. Through the school pupils read, listen and discuss ideas confidently. They can work out what might happen next by reading the general outline about a book. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is very good. They are interested and are fully integrated in lessons. Subject teachers know how to help pupils with special educational needs, particularly those with statements, to make good progress. In 2001 every Year 11 pupil left with at least 3 GCSE A\*- G grades. Pupils also make good progress in English and mathematics where they are taught by teachers with specialist knowledge of their difficulties. Pupils experiencing problems with their behaviour make good progress as a result of skilled interventions from specialist staff, funded by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) 'schools facing challenging circumstances' grant. This provision encourages them to respond properly to school rules and to reflect on the consequences of their behaviour. Pupils in the special educational needs unit make particularly good progress. They are taught by specialist teachers with specialist knowledge of their difficulties and there is good support by services from outside the school for speech and language needs and for emotional and behavioural needs. Learning by pupils in the special educational needs Unit is good. By the age of 14 they can describe different triangles and can measure, using rulers and protractors. They know that the angles of a triangle always add up to 180 degrees. By the age of 16 they can organise their own work and present it individually. engaged with the tasks set. They are able to work independently and to sustain concentration. No pupils have English as an additional language. The numbers of pupils coming to the school in Year 7 with average and above results in the Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests, are beginning to rise. As yet, there is little systematic monitoring of the progress of these higher attaining pupils, nor specific provision made by subjects across the curriculum to ensure that the needs of these pupils are appropriately met.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

19. Pupils' attitudes to school are very good. They are keen to come to school and like their teachers and support staff. They are positive about the school and feel happy and secure. Attendance is good and slightly above national averages and the school has low levels of unauthorised absence.

20. Pupils work well independently and they work co-operatively and constructively in pairs and in small groups in many lessons. Some very good work was seen in sex and relationships education, with Year 9 pupils working readily and productively in mixed gender pairs and small groups. They listen with interest to staff and their peers. Many pupils are interested in and are regularly involved in a wide range of extra-curricula activities that the school provides at lunchtimes and after school. Pupils with special educational needs respond particularly well to a number of specific lunchtime activities. These support targets in their individual education plans, for example the reading club and spelling club. A number of pupils with special educational needs are also well integrated into whole school activities, for example computer club and Crusaders club.

21. The behaviour of pupils, both in lessons and around the school, is very good. In lessons, pupils usually arrive punctually and settle to work quickly. They move around the school sensibly, quietly and with purpose and they are courteous to staff, other adults and to each other. They are very trustworthy and show great respect for property and buildings. Many pupils use classrooms and specialist rooms at break and lunchtimes with minimal supervision. They are confident to leave bags and coats unattended in cloakroom areas during the school day, knowing that they will be safe. The vast majority of pupils respond positively to the school's merit and penalty systems. These encourage and develop good self-discipline in pupils. The school makes very few exclusions and uses its learning support unit effectively to keep pupils at risk of exclusion in full-time education. Staff monitor regularly the performance of pupils at risk of exclusion from targeted lessons and have maintained their continued presence in these lessons. Some pupils are withdrawn from lessons to the unit for specific support and are then gradually, but quickly, reintegrated into lessons.

22. The personal development of pupils in the school is very good. Pupils form constructive relationships with one another and with teachers and other staff, based on mutual respect. Visitors to the school are treated with great respect and courtesy. The school has established a 'zero tolerance' of all types of bullying behaviour, however small, and this is evident throughout the school during lessons and at other times. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on how their behaviour impacts on others and the vast majority of pupils show respect for other people's differences, including their feelings, values and beliefs. The school council and the prefect system allow pupils to show initiative and to exercise responsibility. Pupils respond well to these opportunities. Members of the school council sit on a number of working groups in the school and the council has regular contact with the governing body.

### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

23. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and has improved since the time of the previous inspection. One in nine lessons is now very good; one in two lessons is good, with almost an equal proportion of good or better teaching across the school. The occurrence of unsatisfactory teaching has significantly reduced and now accounts for only one in 25 lessons, as opposed to one in ten lessons at the time of the previous inspection. No poor lessons were observed. There is now consistency in the use of foreign language in modern foreign languages. Features of remaining unsatisfactory teaching include low level expectations and inappropriate learning activities which neither challenge nor inspire pupils. As a result pupils lose concentration and do not learn effectively. Although progress has been made in improving the proportion of good and better lessons, teaching overall remains satisfactory. Inspection findings do not yet support the views of parents that teaching is overall good.

24. The overall quality of teaching in geography is very good. In English, mathematics, science, music and vocational subjects, teaching is good. It is not yet having an overall positive impact on achievement in English and science, although learning is good. Achievement and learning are only satisfactory in vocational subjects due to limited opportunities for off-site learning experiences. Teaching in the remaining subjects is satisfactory. In art and design and in design and technology, teaching and learning are satisfactory, although achievement is unsatisfactory. This is largely due to inconsistencies in the teaching of the various subjects of design and technology and in the quality of schemes of work in art and design. Teachers' preparation for lessons is generally satisfactory across the school. In the best lessons, learning objectives are specific and pupils have an opportunity to use them to confirm the progress that they are making during, and at the close of, lessons. This practice, however, is not yet consistent. Teachers have good subject knowledge and understanding and use this to good effect to enhance pupils' learning.

25. The management of pupils is good in all year groups. Teachers aim to ensure that male dominant culture does not develop as a result of the imbalance of sexes in the school. They establish positive relationships with pupils based on their own, and the school's, high expectations. Teachers are firm, friendly and offer appropriate praise to pupils. In the majority of lessons, they establish a calm and purposeful working atmosphere in which most pupils settle quickly to study. The vast majority of pupils has positive attitudes towards learning and behaves well.

26. The range of teaching styles is developing, particularly across Years 7 - 9, in geography, science, modern foreign languages, music and history. In these subjects good opportunities are provided for all pupils to take part in group work, discussions and to undertake individual research. Year 7 pupils in one history lesson, for example, were given a range of source material and worked in groups to select the most appropriate leader for Stickney village following the plague. Pupils clearly enjoyed this style of learning and responded positively. In music, pupils are given opportunities to experiment and to create melodies, using their own initiative. In many lessons, however, the more able pupils are not provided with sufficiently challenging tasks that allow them to demonstrate attainment at the higher levels. Most subjects are now using homework satisfactorily to support and extend learning, confirming the views of parents. All of these factors are beginning to have a positive impact on learning.

27. The teaching of basic numeracy and literacy skills across the curriculum, is satisfactory. This is enabling all pupils to access well learning opportunities. Since the time of the previous inspection, satisfactory progress has been made in developing pupils' accuracy and confidence in spelling. The school has a literacy policy together with helpful guidance for staff on strategies for promoting the development of literacy across all subjects. Some subjects support this policy effectively through a range of structured classroom activities, for example, through focussing on speaking and listening, reinforcing key vocabulary and assisting pupils to write at length. Not all subjects, however, teach these skills in a consistent way. There are also good examples in geography and history of the teaching of numeracy skills. Systematic planning for the development of literacy and numeracy skills is not yet evident across the whole curriculum, nor is there an agreed whole school policy for the development of numeracy skills. Planning for, and the use of, ICT across the curriculum remain unsatisfactory. There has been little progress, here, since the time of the previous inspection.

28. Across the vast majority of departments marking is consistent, regular and according to school procedures. However, insufficient information is provided to pupils to enable them to understand what they are doing well, what they need to do to achieve better and how they are working in comparison to school and national expectations. The school has a range of prior attainment data that is used effectively to set individual targets for pupils in Years 10 - 11. It is clear that some departments are beginning to use this information to establish targets for pupils in Years 7 - 9. The quality and use of ongoing assessment to determine pupils' progress towards these targets, however, is not well developed. Overall, as at the time of the previous inspection, the use of assessment to inform teaching and curriculum planning, is unsatisfactory.

29. Pupils' learning is satisfactory, overall. The majority show interest in their work, and are able to sustain concentration and to think and learn for themselves. There are still too many lessons, however, where work is insufficiently demanding and where the pace of learning is only satisfactory. Few teachers challenge higher attaining pupils sufficiently through specially designed tasks to extend their skills and learning.

30. Pupils with special educational needs learn well as a result of good teaching, both in the school as a whole and in the special educational needs unit. In the majority of lessons, teachers know pupils' targets and use them effectively to include appropriate activities to meet their needs, intervene with good questioning and use structured tasks. Speaking and listening are particularly well developed for special needs pupils by teachers in English and French lessons. The use of learning support assistants is good and they are effectively deployed to provide access for pupils to potentially difficult learning tasks. In the special educational needs unit, teachers know their pupils well and have very good relationships with them. Lesson objectives are clear and lessons are well planned to meet these outcomes. Teachers use a good range of short, progressive activities to ensure that all pupils understand the task and different levels of challenge are required of different pupils, based on individual action plans. Key vocabulary is emphasised and constantly used in mathematics. Teachers conduct effective whole class discussions with the class to assess and to reinforce learning. Constant praise and encouragement ensure that pupils are confident to tackle the work set, offer suggestions and justify answers. Teachers ensure that all pupils participate in oral sessions by open and direct questions that encourage speculative thinking. They enable pupils to have access to the curriculum by providing them with appropriate challenge. At the same time they promote independence, whilst ensuring that pupils persevere with and complete pieces of work within agreed time scales. Learning support assistants are involved appropriately in planning and contributing to the assessment of pupils in the Unit.

31. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides good support to staff to enable them to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs. Clear guidance is provided on implementing individual education plans, pupils' files are well maintained and appropriate training is offered. On the whole, individual education plans are used appropriately by staff for pupils with statements and for those at stages 2 and above of the current Code of Practice. Teaching by specialist teachers is good. These teachers know pupils' barriers to learning and provide good support to overcome them. They challenge appropriately individual pupils to consolidate and extend their learning. Specialist lessons have clear expectations of what pupils will achieve and they are taught purposefully and briskly, using appropriate resources, with the teacher working hard to ensure that pupils learn at good pace. As a result, pupils learn well in these lessons, showing good levels of concentration and interest in their work. They respond well to appropriate praise and merits. Some good strategies are used by the special educational needs unit to promote reading by pupils with special needs.

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

32. Overall, the curriculum is broad, although in Years 7 - 9, as at the time of the previous inspection, time allocations for design and technology and modern foreign languages are below National Curriculum recommendations. There are insufficient planned opportunities across the all subjects for pupils to develop important ICT skills. This was a key concern at the time of the previous inspection and results in statutory requirements not being met. Issues identified by the previous inspection relating to the consistent use of foreign language in modern foreign language lessons and to improving pupils' accuracy and confidence in spelling, have been addressed. The quality and range of learning opportunities are satisfactory. The school continues to offer a range of vocational options in Years 10 – 11, including GNVQ courses at foundation and intermediate levels, and a work-related learning course piloted with the Local Education Authority. Current timetable arrangements, however, mean that pupils following hospitality and catering, and built environment courses, are not able to complete full awards, but achieve instead units of GNVQ. The general views of parents that certain areas of the curriculum are not well resourced, for example in art and design, and in physical education, are supported.

33. The curriculum is accessible to all pupils. Boys and girls can participate in all activities in the school, and all have equal opportunity to be elected to positions of responsibility. Teaching groups are organised to ensure that all pupils with special educational needs have access to a broad and balanced curriculum, with minimal withdrawal from subjects. The matching of work to the needs of pupils with learning difficulties, particularly those stated by the Local Education Authority, is good. There is effective use of support staff and liaison with specialist outside agencies. There are insufficient planned opportunities across all subjects to stretch higher attaining pupils. The school buildings are not user friendly for those with physical disability, but the school makes every effort to accommodate and support pupils with temporary disability. The specialist curriculum of the special educational needs unit is of very good quality. The good links with partner primary schools ensure that pupils with special educational needs transfer into the school successfully, with their needs known and planned for in advance. There are similarly good links with a variety of partner institutions to provide vocational GNVQ courses and suitable work-related programmes, with variety of appropriate accreditation, in Years 10 - 11. The newly established Learning Support Unit ensures that all pupils maintain good contact with the curriculum and are not excluded from school or classes for undue periods of time. There are few examples of planned links with the local community that enhance teaching and learning.

34. The school's approach to the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is satisfactory. The whole school literacy policy contains helpful guidance for staff about ways to promote the development of literacy across the curriculum, although not all subjects are yet teaching these skills in a consistent manner. Systematic planning for the development of pupils' numeracy skills across the curriculum is not yet evident, nor is there an agreed whole school policy. There are examples of good practice, however, in geography and history.

35. The school provides a good personal, social and health education programme which includes opportunities for drugs education and sex and relationships education. The Year 8 drugs programme is explained explicitly to parents at specially arranged evening. Overall the programme is well planned and supported by a range of appropriate resources. Satisfactory provision is made for the teaching of citizenship. All curriculum policies are linked closely to the

aims of the school, although some policies, for example the sex and relationships education policy, have not been updated to take account of recent guidance and legislation.

36. Provision for work experience and careers education and guidance is good. The careers programme is well structured to build on the 'Connexions' partnership agreement. Planning for work experience is thorough, with clear documentation to support pupils prior to, during and following, work placements. The programme is well supported by education business partners and leads to accreditation in preparing for employment. There is also a work-related learning programme for lower attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11. This operates effectively, in partnership with local businesses, to provide opportunities for extended work placements. Some subjects have effective links with the community to enhance pupils' learning. For example, the GNVQ science programme is supported by visits to a Sugar Beet Factory, a Cement Factory and British Gas; pupils studying geography carry out fieldwork in the community and Year 8 pupils studying history benefit from a visit by the 'Sealed Knot' society. The Rotary Club and Chamber of Commerce both support the careers programme and local businesses provide work experience placements for pupils.

37. Satisfactory links have been developed with partner institutions. There are strong links with the main partner primary schools to support pupils' across Years 6 and 7. Pupils transfer into the school successfully in Year 7, with their needs known. Specific curriculum areas, for example French and mathematics, have also made positive links with these schools. Links with the local post-16 college are being developed, particularly to provide support for the school's work-related learning programmes. There are good links with a variety of partner institutions to provide vocational courses in Years 10 - 11 for pupils with special educational needs and employment prospects are enhanced by the provision of a suitable work-related learning programme. A range of appropriate accreditation is also available.

38. The provision made for extra-curricular activities is good. There are many music and sporting activities; all pupils have the opportunity to become involved in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme and to participate in a range of off-site visits. In addition, there are different clubs, for example a gardening club, a 'Crusaders' club and a reading and spelling club. The resource and computer rooms are also accessible throughout lunch and break times to enable pupils to carry out individual research.

39. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. The school promotes well principles that help pupils to distinguish right from wrong. Teachers are good role models, have very good relationships with pupils and have high expectations of their behaviour. Sex education and drug awareness, as part of the personal, social and health education programme, also contribute well to pupils' moral development. Several subjects, for example geography and history, together with personal, social and health education, deal with environmental issues and a range of moral issues, such as the use and misuse of ICT. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. Many subjects promote social development through good relationships between staff and pupils and through structured opportunities for pupils to work cooperatively and collaboratively. The vast majority of pupils respond positively and treat each other, and each other's property, with respect. In English, these positive relationships contribute to the development of good speaking and listening skills.

40. Overall, provision for the cultural development of pupils is satisfactory. Current affairs lessons provide opportunities for pupils to discuss European news, whilst subjects such as music, art and design, food technology and English provide experiences of a variety of cultures

from around the world. Pupils studying science are also encouraged to appreciate the contribution to science of individuals from different cultures. The school's ethos promotes very good spiritual development. This is particularly effective through the planned programme of assemblies and visiting speakers. These areas are reported on more fully in a separate report by a specialist inspector. Planning to develop pupils' spiritual development across the vast majority of subjects is generally unsatisfactory. Nevertheless, in geography and history there are some opportunities for reflection on the wonders of the natural world and on the plight of mankind, and in art and design pupils are encouraged to study the meaning of images and ponder on space, form and shape.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

41. Teachers and support staff know all pupils very well, including those with special educational needs. Form teachers know individual pupils especially well. Pupils with special educational needs are particularly well known to the teaching staff in the special educational needs Unit and the learning support assistants. Teaching and non-teaching staff respond positively and supportively to pupils' personal and pastoral needs, including those highlighted in individual education plans. The environment of the school is a safe one and pupils are well supervised during work sessions and at breaks and lunchtimes. Prefects are clear about their role and are well supported by the school to carry out their duties. The welfare of pupils is ensured through appropriate arrangements for dealing with illness and accidents, effective child protection procedures and the awareness of health and safety hazards. Risk assessments are undertaken in line with the school's health and safety policy in science and on educational visits out of school, but they are not carried out with sufficient regularity in design and technology and in physical education. During the inspection week a number of health and safety issues were reported to the school, including trailing electrical leads in the music room and garage preparation room, and the need for extraction in the art and design room when the kiln is in use. Several major concerns were identified specific to design and technology.

42. The school promotes very good behaviour very effectively through its overt and shared Christian ethos. This permeates all aspects of the school's work. Policies and procedures to promote good behaviour are consistently and rigorously implemented, including very successful 'zero tolerance' practices. These minimise oppressive and bullying behaviour. The merit and penalty system, which promotes pupils' self-discipline, is well understood by all pupils and used effectively by all staff. The system ensures that the quiet unassertive pupil is positively recognised, as well as those who may misbehave. The Learning Support Unit is at an early stage of development, but it is well run and has a range of strategies, including pupil support plans to re-engage individual pupils with the learning process. Year 9 pupils are used effectively to mentor Year 7 pupils, both prior to their attendance at the school and during their first term. Pupils and parents value this sensitive and sympathetic support. The school monitors pupils' attendance efficiently, operating a first day telephone contact with parents of absentees and rewarding pupils regularly with certificates for 100 per cent attendance.

43. Form teachers have oversight of their tutor group for the full five years. This works well, enabling teachers to establish very good relationships with pupils, and is valued by teachers, pupils and parents. Registration periods are very short, but teachers are able to supplement these by withdrawing small groups of pupils, around five or six at a time, from assemblies and also from general studies in Years 10 - 11 to monitor individual pupils' attendance, work effort and behaviour. These arrangements work well. Form teachers challenge pupils by using school data on the number of merits and penalties that each pupil accrues, and this has a positive effect

on improving any poor behaviour and/or motivation in individual pupils. The number of merits/penalties that an individual pupil receives is available to teachers and pupils on a weekly basis and shared with parents each half-term. The headteacher and deputy headteacher total the merits/penalties of every pupil at the end of each day and this information is well used at daily staff briefings, and by staff in the Learning Support Unit, to challenge specific pupils and target support towards them. Whilst effective, it is not an efficient use of senior leadership time.

44. The school maintains records of pupils' achievements in English, mathematics and science, and individual education plans and personal support plans are in place and used for pupils with special educational needs to guide teaching and to monitor progress. However, procedures for and the use of assessment are unsatisfactory. The monitoring of pupils' academic progress across all subjects is insufficiently regular and too loosely linked to National Curriculum levels and GCSE criteria, to enable teachers to modify planning to secure improvement, to set appropriate targets for pupils, or for pupils to know what they must do to improve. The school and form teachers do not routinely identify potentially higher attaining pupils and challenge them to achieve at higher levels. Annual reports to parents about pupils' progress do not meet statutory requirements. ICT is not reported at the end of Key Stage 3, and there is generally insufficient detail about what pupils know, understand and can do, or what they should do to improve further, in all subjects.

45. The school cares very well for pupils with special educational needs and has the Basic Skills Quality Mark. The staff in the special educational needs Unit ensure that all teachers and learning support assistants have good information about the needs of pupils who have statements of special educational need and those at stage 2 and above of the current Code of Practice. The school has made good preparations for implementing the new special educational needs Code of Practice from September 2002 and is exploring criteria for transferring pupils currently at stages 1 to 3 of the register to the new School Action and School Action Plus categories. Individual education plans set out pupils' targets and the strategies by which they can be helped. As a result, teachers and support staff know their pupils well and work with them in positive and supportive ways. Provision, as outlined in pupils' statements, is made, including good access to the curriculum. Additional teaching and health support are provided where appropriate, with good support provided for speech and language development. Annual reviews of individual education plans involve parents and are used effectively to re-examine provision in the light of progress made and pupils' changing needs since the previous review. Appropriate opportunities exist for targets to be re-negotiated during the year with subject teachers at parents' consultation meetings and through informal contact with the special educational needs co-ordinator. Pupils identified as having behaviour difficulties are well supported in the recently established Learning Support Unit.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

46. The school works very well in partnership with parents. Parents' views of the school, expressed through the questionnaire, the parents' evening and an independent survey carried out by the school in 2001, are very favourable. They are pleased with the school because it provides an environment that enables their children to learn and to develop potential. A significant number of families choose specifically to send their children to the school. It has been over-subscribed for several years. Overall links with parents are very good. They are contacted immediately regarding matters of attendance or misbehaviour. These occasions are rare and parents are particularly pleased with school discipline, rewards and procedures to encourage

good attendance. There is a strong feeling of mutual support and respect. Parents feel welcomed into the school and know that their views will be taken seriously.

47. Aspects of communication with parents are generally good. The school brochure provides a range of useful information, emphasises the important role of parents in the education of their child and encourages parental involvement with the school. The pupils' homework diary, the monthly newsletter and half-termly effort reports keep parents regularly and well informed, particularly about the attitudes and behaviour of their son or daughter. They are well used by parents and staff as a means of simple two-way communication. However, annual reports to parents do not meet statutory requirements. Progress in ICT is not reported at the end of Year 9, and there is insufficient detail about what pupils know, understand and can do, or what they should do to improve further, in the subjects of the curriculum. The governors' annual report to parents is a very thorough document, but does not contain sufficient information about the professional development undertaken by teaching staff.

48. The school makes very good attempts to consult with parents about its work, using an independent market research organisation to carry out a survey of parental perceptions in 2001. The response rate of parents was 69 per cent, double the average rate indicated by the market research organisation. 80 per cent of respondents rated the school overall as good or very good. There was a high rate of unhappiness about extra-curricular activities and disorganised lunchtimes. These concerns are not supported by inspectors. Lunchtimes are very orderly, with a good range of activities available to pupils. The parents' questionnaire and meeting, organised as part of the inspection process, supported the positive findings of the independent survey. 95 per cent of respondents believe that the school works closely with parents; 96 per cent believe that the school is good at dealing with parents' concerns and 99 per cent feel well informed about their children's progress.

49. Parents make a good contribution to their children's learning. Attendance at evenings to discuss academic progress is high. Responses to newsletters, messages in pupils' homework diaries and telephone calls seeking assistance, are both immediate and positive. Parents are supportive of the half-termly interim reports on pupils' behaviour and progress. The work of the parents-teachers' association, *The William Lovell Link*, is very effective in raising additional funds for resources. The special educational needs co-ordinator uses a variety of strategies to communicate with the parents of pupils with special educational needs so that they know about and can contribute to their child's learning. These include a telephone hot line and e-mail service, meetings with parents of pupils with behaviour difficulties to write and review pupils' pastoral support plans, and home-school diaries. Annual reviews of individual education plans involve parents and are used effectively to re-examine provision in the light of progress made and pupils' changing needs. Parents are encouraged to re-negotiate targets with subject teachers, at parents consultation evenings, and at other times during the school year, as necessary.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

50. The outstanding leadership qualities of the headteacher help to create an atmosphere in which all pupils are valued and encouraged to achieve. He embodies the Christian values of the school and serves as an inspiration for all. Under his leadership, staff promote good standards of attendance, very good behaviour and satisfactory learning. There is a strong climate in which cooperation, collaboration and equality of opportunity thrive. In partnership with the governors, he directs clearly the work of the school, sharing an explicit vision that builds on current success and always places pupils first. Adequate preparation is in hand for a policy on racial equality. The

headteacher leads by example. He is readily accessible and at the heart of all of the school's work. However, the range of his roles and responsibilities is becoming increasingly challenging. Both the headteacher and governors recognise that current working practices leave the school over-dependent on one individual. This was so at the time of the last inspection. The leadership capacity of other key staff is unsatisfactory, although day-to-day management routines are very efficient.

51. The school's aims and values are explicit and are reflected in much of its work. Many pupils acquire a range of academic, practical and aesthetic knowledge, and are becoming young people capable of making positive contributions to society and of understanding the effect of their actions on others. There is equality of access and opportunity for all. The governing body plays an important part in ensuring the development of the school. Governors fulfil most of their statutory responsibilities well and are kept regularly informed about the school's progress in relation to key actions and targets. They have a good understanding of areas of strength and aspects for development. These include the improvement in provision for ICT in order to meet with statutory requirements. Governors are involved in establishing major priorities and in monitoring the impact of the school's long-term plans. The chair of governors is committed fully to the concept of continuous improvement. Appropriate targets are set for the performance of the headteacher and deputy headteacher, and there is an effective whole school system in place for performance management.

52. Key members of staff in the school take seriously their responsibilities and are fully supportive of the headteacher and the ethos of the school. They ensure that resources are well directed, that the learning environment is orderly at all times and that pupils value the contributions of their peers. They have responded positively to the challenge of the last inspection to improve the quality of teaching, but are not yet totally confident in their roles as leaders. Their contributions to whole school improvement planning are weak. Although subject plans relate loosely to whole school priorities, there is no common format and the majority lack the necessary focus and detail by which to evaluate progress. Schemes of work do not always reflect fully the revised National Curriculum Programmes of Study and take into account national priorities such as the development of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. Although the headteacher makes available a large amount of appropriate data on pupils' abilities and potential attainment levels, there is little regular and systematic use of this information by subject leaders to monitor the progress that pupils make towards end of Years 9 and 11 targets. Similarly, there is little analysis of the academic progress that pupils make over time in relation to their starting points, and little use of relevant information from external sources with which to make useful comparisons. On occasions, there is an over-emphasis of pupils' attitudes and efforts, at the expense of a focus on their aptitudes. The quality of daily assessment practice and the reporting to parents of pupils' academic progress, is unsatisfactory. Subject leaders are too infrequently involved in the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. At present, they are insufficiently involved in the whole school system, which, in turn, places too little emphasis on the evaluation of the progress that all pupils make in response to the quality of teaching.

53. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides good support to teachers to enable them to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs. Clear guidance is provided on implementing individual education plans and specific ideas are offered for certain lessons and activities. Pupils' files are well maintained and appropriate training is offered. The special educational needs co-ordinator has a good understanding of the requirements of the new Code of Practice and has made a positive start in implementing it, ready for September 2002. She is beginning to develop the necessary vision to lead the special educational needs Unit in

appropriate directions for the future to ensure its continued development. An improvement plan exists, but success criteria need to feature increased references to measurable impact on pupils' progress and achievement. Pupils' individual education plans are managed well and targets are re-negotiated during the year. The special educational needs co-ordinator has a good understanding about provision made in classrooms for pupils with special educational needs, via informal feedback from learning support assistants and requests for training. However, there are no scheduled opportunities to observe the quality of teaching of pupils with special educational needs across the school.

54. The teaching staff is experienced and teach to subject specialisms in the majority of cases. Staffing issues identified in the last inspection have been remedied and there is now improved technician support for the science, ICT, art and design and design and technology. Teaching and support staff in the special educational needs Unit are appropriately qualified and well deployed according to pupils' statements and additional funding. Some learning support assistants give their time voluntarily to run extra-curricular activities, targeted to the needs and individual education plans of special needs pupils. Arrangements for curriculum and professional development are satisfactory, although there is insufficient monitoring of the impact of training on learning. Procedures for the induction of newly qualified teachers and those new to the school are good, but the school does not have the capacity, at present, to offer initial teacher training. Administrative and support staff are suitably qualified and make an excellent contribution to the day-to-day organisation of the school. Equal opportunity legislation is adhered to when making an appointment to the staff.

55. The quality of the accommodation is satisfactory, overall. In physical education, the multi-use of the hall is still hindering pupils' progress and standards of attainment. This situation has not changed since the last inspection and is now preventing key aspects of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study from being taught effectively. Learning conditions in the textiles room are cramped. The quality of the accommodation is good in science, special educational needs, music, mathematics and ICT. Although they are not sited together, the rooms allocated to modern foreign languages are also of good quality. There are some good examples of display that enhance the learning environment in science, French and mathematics. Here, good use is made of key vocabulary and commercial posters to assist pupils with their learning, and pupils' attainment is celebrated openly.

56. The school has remedied most of the shortfall in resources raised by the last inspection. Overall provision is now satisfactory. Resources in mathematics and science are now good. Provision for ICT is improving, although the numbers of computers are still not sufficient for the numbers of pupils in the school. Some design and technology equipment is outmoded. The school's use of new technology across the curriculum is unsatisfactory, with only a few examples of data analysis, multi media composition, electronic mail, internet applications and ICT within subjects. The resources centre contains a good range of fiction and non-fiction, along with six computers and a range of materials to support careers education and guidance. All pupils belong to the library and several Year 7 girls act as librarians under the guidance of the resource centre manager and five Year 11 library prefects. The centre's resources to support learning are good in music, but generally unsatisfactory for the rest of the curriculum. The resource centre is well-used, particularly during lunchtimes.

57. The school administrator, chair of the governors' finance committee and headteacher ensure that educational priorities are supported through careful financial management. There is an identifiable link between the school's annual budget and improvement plan. Specific grants,

including the Department for Education & Skills (DfES) grant for schools facing challenging circumstances, are used effectively for designated purposes and regular, accurate information on income and expenditure is provided for the relevant committees of the governing body. There is now good understanding of the school's funding for special educational needs and governors have made clear plans for its effective use, including the provision of additional funding from the school budget. Procedures for financial control are very good. Proper accounting records are in place with traceable transactions. The most recent audit report indicates that the school complies with all regulations. Overall spending per pupil on staffing and resources is above average and the allocation of budgets to key staff is both fair and transparent. Spending is monitored regularly, but there is insufficient evaluation of the cost-effectiveness of decisions and their impact on learning. Governors and the school administrator apply best value principles in the securing of resources and services. The school consults regularly with parents and uses the outcomes of consultations and surveys to challenge its work. The school has a current under-spend of over £100,000. This is a very high proportion of its total budget and is the result of an unusually large number of pupils entering the school in one year. The school's 5-year plan projects the under-spend to reduce significantly over the next two years. Given the overall effectiveness of the school in improving standards, from an unfavourable intake, at above average costs, it provides satisfactory value for money.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

58. In order to sustain and improve further the school's standards of education, the governing body, in partnership with the headteacher and all staff, should:

- (1) Continue to raise standards in all subjects by:
  - ensuring that all teachers understand fully the potential of pupils with the highest academic abilities;
  - incorporating in preparation for lessons and schemes of work specifically planned activities and learning opportunities to challenge individual pupils with the potential to attain the highest results;
  - monitoring carefully the progress that potentially higher attaining pupils make in relation to individual targets for attainment.

(Paragraphs: 1, 3, 5, 17, 29, 33, 44, 60, 67, 71, 74, 81, 87, 91, 97, 99, 101, 108, 128)

- (2) Improve standards and levels of achievement in English by:
  - including more opportunities in schemes of work for pupils to practise extended writing tasks;
  - teaching key writing skills more regularly and in a more systematic manner;
  - developing through the school the good practice emerging from the National Literacy Strategy in Year 7;
  - improving preparation for lessons to include a more appropriate balance of writing, speaking, listening and reading skills.

(Paragraphs: 1, 2, 6, 24, 59, 60, 62, 64)

- (3) Improve curricular planning, assessment and the monitoring of teaching and learning by subject leaders by:
- ensuring that schemes of work reflect National Curriculum requirements in full;
  - ensuring that subject improvement plans contain appropriate action points to raise standards further and specific criteria with which to monitor and evaluate success;
  - ensuring that all teachers share regularly with pupils the standards that they are achieving and explain how they can improve further;
  - providing appropriate training that focuses on the monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching and learning.
- (Paragraphs: 28, 44, 52, 62, 64, 71, 76, 77, 81, 82, 87, 88, 94, 99, 100, 103, 114, 118, 123, 124, 128, 129)
- (4) Improve the monitoring of pupils' progress towards agreed targets with more rigour by:
- developing further the setting of targets for all pupils, specifically for their progress and learning;
  - including more information about the performance of subjects nationally in procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress;
  - refining existing procedures to ensure more regular assessment of pupils' progress against school and national targets;
  - ensuring that annual reports to parents contain clearer comments about pupils' progress in all subjects, more precise targets to help them to improve, and specific reference to the progress that they make in ICT by the end of Year 9.
- (Paragraphs: 28, 44, 47, 52, 62, 64, 71, 82, 89, 99, 100, 103, 114, 123, 124, 128)
- (5) Ensure that pupils have adequate access to ICT in all subjects by :
- implementing fully the programmes of study in all National Curriculum subjects;
  - providing guidance to teachers about the ICT level at which activities need to be pitched;
  - providing time to develop a system to collate and moderate assessments of pupils' work.
- (Paragraphs: 12, 27, 32, 56, 64, 71, 82, 89, 100, 106, 107, 114, 119, 124)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	103
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	39

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	11	45	43	4	0	0
Percentage	0	10.7	43.7	41.7	3.9	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	415
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	35

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	18
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	103

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

### Attendance

Authorised absence

%
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Unauthorised absence

%
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School data	8.4
National comparative data	8.1

School data	0.3
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 (Year 9)**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	43	41	84

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	25	34	30
	Girls	23	27	18
	Total	48	61	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	56 (52)	72 (58)	56 (53)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	8 (2)	28 (35)	21 (10)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	34 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	33	34	30
	Girls	36	25	19
	Total	69	59	49
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	80 (75)	69 (62)	58 (62)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	30 (30)	35 (30)	27 (18)
	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	66	44	110

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	21	59	66
	Girls	10	44	44
	Total	31	103	110
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	28.2 (16.2)	93.7 (93.1)	100 (95.8)
	National	48.4 (47.4)	90.9 (90.6)	94.5 (94.4)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	32.1 (29.4)
	National	39.0 (38.4)

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

Vocational qualifications	Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	81
	National	75.7

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	385
Any other minority ethnic group	0

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	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)	26.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.8

#### **Education support staff: Y7 – Y11**

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	242

#### **Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	78
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#### **Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11**

Key Stage 3	28.3
Key Stage 4	26.6

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	1 259 040
Total expenditure	1 202 240
Expenditure per pupil	2 771
Balance brought forward from previous year	61 680
Balance carried forward to next year	118 480

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	7
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0

Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	400
Number of questionnaires returned	104

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	45	43	11	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	46	50	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	48	46	3	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	57	13	0	0
The teaching is good.	47	47	5	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	71	28	1	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	28	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	73	25	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	54	41	3	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	74	23	1	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	41	2	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	44	37	11	1	8

## 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 **satisfactory**.

#### Strengths

- Pupils' attitudes to their work are very good.
- The progress made by lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs is good.

#### Areas for improvement

- The standards achieved by average and higher-attaining pupils are not high enough.
- The standards achieved by girls and their rates of progress are not good enough.
- The procedures for assessing, monitoring and improving pupils' attainment and progress are inadequate.

59. Overall, standards of work seen in English during the inspection are below average these standards reflect the low attainment of pupils entering the school until recently. Standards are average in speaking and listening and in reading, but below average in writing. Pupils' achievement by the end of Year 9 is unsatisfactory in relation to standards of attainment on entry to the school. In relation to standards of attainment at the beginning of Year 10, achievement at the end of Year 11 is unsatisfactory. Pupils' progress overall in writing is unsatisfactory. Pupils' attitudes are very good.

60. National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 and GCSE results are well below national averages. At age 14 and 16, the attainment of boys is higher in comparison with national levels than that of girls. The results over the past three years show that attainment is improving in Years 7 - 9. It is now close to the average for secondary modern schools nationally, but still well below average in comparison with all similar schools. There are signs that there will be further improvement as a result of the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy and the development of more structured schemes of work. At GCSE, A\*-C results over the last three years show improvement in English, but consistently very low outcomes in English literature. Results remain well below the national average in both subjects. Both boys and girls perform significantly worse in English literature than they do in their other examination subjects. The percentage of pupils gaining A\*-G grades in English and in English literature is higher than the national average. This is due to the good attainment of some lower attaining pupils. Lower attaining pupils make good progress throughout the school. All pupils on the special educational needs register make good progress. Pupils with statements are well supported and make good progress. Higher attaining pupils make unsatisfactory progress due to the lack of specifically planned activities to extend their learning. Boys make satisfactory progress in both key stages, whereas girls make unsatisfactory progress in Years 7 - 9 and poor progress in Years 10 - 11. Much of this under-achievement is due to insufficient, planned opportunities for pupils to practise extended writing across the school, and an over-emphasis on the development of speaking, listening and reading skills.

61. By the age of 14, most pupils can express their opinions clearly and confidently to the rest of the class. They listen attentively and with interest to the views of others. They read a good

range of challenging texts fluently and with enjoyment. They can write in a range of forms for different purposes, but they receive insufficient guidance on how to improve grammar and sentence structure. By the age of 16, pupils respond well to the constructive comments which teachers make about their speaking and listening. Many of them improve their grades for speaking and listening in Years 10 - 11. Pupils of all abilities respond with enthusiasm and understanding to a wide range of reading tasks, some of which are very challenging. Coursework files show that the majority of pupils can write with engagement in response to challenging GCSE tasks. Many pupils have good word-processing skills. Standards of spelling and presentation are good.

62. Overall, the quality of teaching in English is good. More than half of the lessons seen during the inspection were good or very good. The quality of learning reflects the quality of teaching. In almost all lessons observed, however, teaching and learning focused principally on the development of pupils' speaking, listening and reading skills. Little teaching of writing skills was seen. In general, teachers, do not concentrate enough on the conscious manipulation of words for effect and on the use of grammatical understanding to create clear, concise, interesting writing. In some Year 7 lessons, the National Literacy Strategy is beginning to have a positive impact on writing, but, as yet, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to do extended writing through the school. This is affecting adversely pupils' achievement and progress. This explains why the quality of teaching and learning during the inspection is judged higher than pupils' achievement and progress over time. All teachers have good relationships with their classes, have objectives for the lesson which they communicate clearly and have good knowledge of the individual strengths and weaknesses of their pupils. Teachers use a good variety of texts from different times and cultures. Pupils of all abilities read poems and a novel by Benjamin Zephaniah. Year 7 pupils study one of the most recent best selling novels from America. Year 8 pupils read dialect poems from around the world. A Jane Austen novel has recently been introduced to challenge more able pupils in Years 10 - 11. The quality of lesson plans is variable, although the best plans have clear objectives that lead to good learning in lessons. Individual education plans identify the strategies to be followed in the teaching of pupils with special educational needs. Learning support assistants are used effectively to ensure that the pupils to whom they are assigned make progress and participate fully in the lessons. Teachers mark work regularly and use the school's assessment procedure consistently. They make helpful comments that tell pupils what they need to do next in order to improve their work. Teachers do not yet involve directly pupils in target setting. As a result, many pupils do not have a clear idea about their current standard of work and how to do better. Last year, teacher assessments of pupils' attainment in the Key Stage 3 tests and in GCSE exams were far above what the pupils actually achieved. Annual reports to parents comment on behaviour and effort but do not focus clearly enough on what standards pupils are achieving and how they might do better.

63. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are at least good in all lessons. All English teachers apply the school's discipline policy consistently and all pupils respond positively to the discipline system. Pupils enjoy lessons and tackle with enthusiasm the tasks they are given. Their good behaviour has a considerable effect on the quality of their learning. Thus, pupils in all classes and of all abilities speak well, listen carefully to each other's views and respond in a measured way. For example, in a class of lower attaining pupils the issue emerged from their reading whether it is ever right to tell a lie. The teacher encouraged this spontaneous discussion and many pupils spoke in a frank, reasonable and sustained way. There is less opportunity for pupils to engage in sustained group discussion. All teachers devote careful attention to the teaching of reading, and the standards of reading of all pupils are high in relation to their ability. Pupils of all

abilities tackle the reading aloud of challenging texts with determination and enthusiasm. In lessons where they are given the opportunity to do so, pupils make inferences from texts and talk about themes and style.

64. The day-to-day management of English is good. Newly qualified teachers and teachers new to the school have been supported and guided. Information is shared, and all the teachers feel that they are part of a team. Displays inside and outside the classrooms are an appropriate mixture of celebration and information. Overall, improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Spelling in the department and across the school has improved. More challenging texts are now being used throughout the school to meet the needs of more able pupils. The head of English monitors achievement in exercise books once a term in Years 7 - 9, and in coursework folders twice a term in Years 10 - 11. The school's learning enhancement teacher works in some English lessons with higher attaining pupils in Years 10 - 11. It is too early to evaluate the impact that she is having on attainment. Volunteer learning support assistants run lunchtime clubs for lower attaining pupils on reading, spelling and handwriting. The clubs contribute to the good standards observed in these areas and to the very good attitudes that lower attaining pupils have towards English. Aspects of the leadership of English are not satisfactory. The subject improvement plan does not include strategies for improving teaching and learning and does not set measurable targets. The use of data to support target setting and the monitoring which will help to ensure that the targets are achieved, are not yet in place. Strategies to improve attainment have not yet been comprehensively identified. Examples of good practice within the department have not been systematically identified and integrated into schemes of work. The head of English is aware that the National Literacy Strategy and the funding it brings into the school offers the English department an opportunity to reflect on its practice and to build on its strengths. Resources are up to date, of good quality and available to all. There is a strong link with the special needs department which enhances the learning of lower attaining pupils and with the resources centre which has helped to ensure that there is a good range of new and up to date fiction. The stock of non-fiction texts in the resources centre is unsatisfactory. Many of the books are old and out of date. ICT provision in English is unsatisfactory. Only the special needs room has access to computers. Nevertheless, work on display and in files shows that many pupils have satisfactory word processing skills.

65. Standards of literacy across the school are now satisfactory. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are good. There are planned opportunities for pupils to express their ideas in geography and music. The 'Talk' project in French ensures that most pupils are using the foreign language more readily and with enjoyment. Pupils give good responses to well directed questions in mathematics, science and special educational needs classes. There is much less opportunity for focused group discussion across the curriculum. Reading is good. Keywords are being used effectively in geography, mathematics, music and science; teachers are beginning to use them in physical education. Teachers develop pupils' reading skills in imaginative ways in geography and science. Writing is generally satisfactory. However, some teachers use too many worksheets, and pupils of all abilities are not given enough opportunity for extended writing. There is some evidence of extended word processing in ICT and in vocational subjects. The presentation of final drafts is generally good. The standard of spelling is satisfactory, and has improved since the last inspection. The school's strategy for raising standards of literacy is clear, though the whole school plan lacks targets that can be measured precisely. The pace of implementation is too slow, and the date set for the integration of literacy targets into the planning of all Key Stage 3 lessons, July 2003, is too far away. The information given to teachers earlier in the year during National Literacy Strategy training is clear and concise. The actions which were

agreed during the training, however, have not been carried out consistently across the whole school.

## MATHEMATICS

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

### Strengths

- The quality of teaching is good overall.
- Arrangements for teaching the National Numeracy Strategy have started well.

### Areas for improvement

- Assessment procedures to inform pupils better about the progress that they are making are inadequate.
- Annual reports to parents do not adequately indicate the progress made by pupils.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning is inadequate and the best practice is not shared effectively.

66. Standards of work seen during the inspection are below average. These standards reflect standards of pupils on entry to the school that are well below national expectations in the present Years 8 to 11, and below national expectations in the present Year 7. Pupils' achievements by the end of Year 9 are good in relation to standards of attainment on entry; they are satisfactory at the end of Year 11 in relation to standards of attainment at the beginning of Year 10. However, pupils' achievements in Year 10 are good. Overall, pupils' achievements reflect the quality of overall teaching. Their attitudes to mathematics are good. It was not possible to observe teaching in Year 11 due to GCSE study leave and examinations.

67. National Curriculum test results in 2001 for pupils at the end of Year 9 are in line with the national average for all schools and in the top 25 per cent of secondary modern schools. The performance of boys is significantly higher than that of girls. Progress made by pupils with special educational needs is good in Years 7 - 9. Higher attaining pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 7 - 9. There has been a steady rise in test scores over the last five years. GCSE results for 2001 are well below the national average for all schools and those achieved by pupils in similar schools. The attainment of boys is higher than that of girls, but the difference is smaller in Year 11 GCSE results than in Year 9 National Curriculum tests. This is due to the achievement of girls being better than that of boys in Years 10 and 11. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in Years 10 and 11. All pupils are entered for GCSE mathematics and the proportion of pupils achieving a grade A\* - G is higher than the national average. Progress made by the small number of higher attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory overall. There has been a small and steady rise in GCSE scores over the last five years.

68. By the end of Year 9, pupils investigate the patterns produced when geometrical shapes are rotated. They note the differences between these patterns and those produced when shapes are reflected. Another class converts diagrams in two dimensions into three dimensional objects which will fit into certain spaces. Higher attaining pupils show a good gain in algebraic skills, being able to simplify expressions and factorise quadratic functions. They can apply decimal working to metric units. Number work for average and lower attaining pupils is not consistently accurate and the learning of number skills is not carried forward from earlier work. In all the geometrical investigations, weaknesses in pupils' manipulative skills make for slower progress. All pupils are able to draw line and bar graphs and pie charts and use them appropriately. Pupils' listening and speaking skills are good and pupils answer questions concisely, using correct

mathematical language. Not all pupils have access to computers in school, but when they do they make good progress, for example to reinforce knowledge of angles.

69. By the end of Year 11, the quality of pupils' number work shows considerable variation and is below average overall. Higher attaining pupils are competent in the use of decimals, percentages and are able to find equivalents of common fractions. Higher attaining pupils in Year 10 are able to express large value numbers in standard form and multiply and divide them. All pupils make good use of calculators when these are required. However, number skills for average and low attaining pupils are weak in test conditions, despite reinforcement lessons in decimal work for average pupils and for those with special educational needs. Observations and calculations for course work, where pupils have the opportunity to check, correct and redraft their work, are good. In general, results are presented tidily, but written work describing conclusions is only average for higher attaining pupils and below average for others. Higher attaining pupils interpret and display results graphically and use algebra competently.

70. Teaching is good overall. This represents improvement from the previous inspection when the proportion of good teaching was much lower. Pupils with special educational needs are given good specialist teaching and good in class support. Teaching is consistently good in Years 7, 9 and 10. No teaching was observed in Year 11 due to GCSE examinations. In the small number of classes where teaching is satisfactory, a minority of potentially challenging pupils has an adverse effect on learning. Good progress with the National Numeracy Strategy has been made in Years 7 - 9. Teachers start lessons with an exercise in mental number work, develop the main topic and summarise the work of the lesson at the end. Good questioning techniques are used to check on previous learning, in summarising the lesson and in individual discussions with pupils. This is improving learning in lessons is helping to raise achievement in Years 7 - 9, as measured by the National Curriculum tests in Year 9. Teachers support school policy in respect of pupils' moral and social development by being good role models themselves and by setting high standards for pupils' behaviour. Pupils listen carefully to other pupils' answers and books are kept tidy. Teachers are enthusiastic and pupils respond by persevering well throughout the 50-minute lessons. Homework is set on a regular basis and is related to learning during lessons. Pupils' work is marked regularly, using effort and attainment grades in keeping with school policy. In Years 7 - 9, work is graded in relation to National Curriculum levels and this is communicated to pupils. This is good practice. In Years 10 and 11, test work is given a GCSE grade, but there is an absence of frequent communication of progress to pupils to promote further the raising of standards.

71. Leadership and management of mathematics are satisfactory. Overall improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Teaching has improved and standards have risen significantly by the end of Year 9 and by a small amount in Year 11. Curriculum arrangements are satisfactory and resources are well managed and have been improved to meet the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy. Accommodation is good and rooms have good displays of pupils' work. Many displays are linked to patterns present in other cultures. Schemes of work are being revised and the school knows that this work is urgent. The department does not use assessment data as a basis for curriculum planning, for example, in considering the possible advantages of a modular course in Years 10 and 11 in raising standards at GCSE. Annual reports to parents of pupils' progress in all years of the school do not describe in sufficient detail the progress that pupils make. The planning of specific activities to extend the learning of the comparatively small, but increasing, number of gifted pupils, is unsatisfactory. The use of ICT to enhance mathematics learning is good, but not all teachers make use of ICT facilities. Informal links between the four experienced teachers of mathematics are good.

However, there is no scheduled time for the head of department to monitor the work of the department through classroom observation, particularly when non-specialist teachers are teaching mathematics. Mathematics has the capacity for further improvement by linking lesson plans and schemes of work to the assessment of pupils' attainment and progress.

72. The strategies for the teaching of numeracy skills across the school are satisfactory. Mathematics, science, art and design, design and technology, geography, history, and ICT make good contributions to the teaching of number. This work is taking place despite the lack of a whole school numeracy. Appropriate staff training has taken place and plans are in hand to carry out an audit of subject contributions in the autumn term 2002. The scheduled timescale for the introduction of a whole school policy in summer 2003 is too long. Mathematics has modified its approaches to teaching in line with the National Numeracy Strategy. There are good examples of ICT and mathematics linking together to improve pupils' understanding of angle properties; number work is included in the geography and science schemes of work and lesson plans. Correct mathematical vocabulary is used and time is given in lessons so that number processes are fully understood. Art and design makes effective use of scale and proportions; diagrams in design and technology make good use of proportion. In a lesson on the slave trade in history pupils had to cost all the transactions which took place as the slaves were traded for other commodities such as sugar.

## SCIENCE

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

### Strengths

- The quality of teaching is good.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good.

### Areas for improvement

- Insufficient use is made of national subject information to monitor pupils' academic progress, to assess pupils' progress against national expectations, and to assist them in setting realistic targets for improvement.
- The range of techniques used to support higher-attaining pupils is too narrow.

73. Standards of work seen in science during the inspection are below average in Years 7 - 10. Year 11 pupils were absent from the school during the inspection because of external examinations. These standards reflect satisfactory achievement by pupils, by the end of Year 9, in relation to their below average standards of attainment on entry to the school. In relation to their previous standards of attainment, achievement is satisfactory for Year 10 pupils. Attainment in science, on entry to the school, has shown significant improvement during the last two years. Pupils' attitudes to science are very good. They reflect the good teaching that is now in place. Significant improvements have been made recently in teaching. This is largely due to the impact of newly appointed teachers and a newly appointed subject leader. These improvements have not had sufficient time, as yet, to impact significantly on pupils' overall achievement.

74. National Curriculum test results in 2001, for pupils at the end of Year 9, using average points, were below the national average for all schools, very low in comparison to those achieved by pupils at similar schools, but broadly in line with other secondary modern schools. There was an increase in the number of pupils achieving the highest levels. Boys outperformed girls, more

than nationally, although girls showed marked improvement in their results, compared to the previous year. Boys obtain better results in science than in mathematics and English, and girls achieve better than in English, but not as well as in mathematics. Results since 1998 have been below the national trend. In 2001, at the end of Year 11, the majority of pupils in the year entered GCSE double award science. The proportion of pupils gaining A\*-C was below the national average but every pupil gained an A\*-G grade. Boys performed significantly better than girls. The number achieving A\*-C was significantly higher than in 2000, when girls outperformed boys. All other pupils in 2001 were entered for GCSE single award science. None achieved the highest grades, but all were awarded grade G or above.

75. In the scrutiny of pupils' work and in the lessons observed during the inspection, levels of attainment are below national expectations at the end of Year 9. Pupils are taught in mixed ability groups in Years 7, 8 and 9. Progress in lessons is mainly satisfactory. However, there are signs that this is improving with improving levels of teaching. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, on occasions with individual support or with the provision of appropriately targeted teaching materials. Pupils enjoy science. However, standards of presentation of both written and diagrammatic work are variable. Work is not always dated, sometimes is unfinished and rulers are not always used appropriately. By the end of Year 9, having just completed their National Curriculum tests, the majority of pupils are able to extract scientific information from the Internet as part of a school / industry link project. They work collaboratively in small groups, and are properly selective when deciding which information should be included in a presentation about, for example, such diverse topics as the causes of diabetes, or the workings of the water industry. Year 8 pupils become familiar with the life and times of the scientists Priestley and Lavoisier, as they study the history of the discovery of oxygen. In another group, the majority of pupils know the factors that affect friction and cause problems for road vehicles. Year 7 pupils show very mature attitudes as they discuss the human reproductive system and the menstrual cycle. Other pupils, very aware of health and safety issues, work co-operatively as they test hypotheses, related to simple electrical circuits. In Years 10 and 11 pupils work in ability groups. A limited amount of evidence, mainly investigative coursework, was available from Year 11 pupils. In Year 10, standards of work are broadly in line with examination results and are below national averages. Pupils are aware of the use of safety devices in domestic electrical circuits, and the majority understand and can describe the functions of a transformer, and earthwire. Lower attaining pupils, in their revision for an end of topic test, show understanding of the constituents of crude oil and fractional distillation. Building on previous learning, pupils apply the principles of fair testing as they test their hypothesis of the relationship between the size of an animal, and heat loss. They measure volumes of liquid accurately, aware of the meniscus, and work collaboratively, as they take readings of temperature over time. They maintain interest and concentration throughout their work.

76. Overall, teaching is good. The recently appointed head of department and newly appointed staff have made good contributions to the overall knowledge and understanding in the department and there are high expectations of pupils, often observed when teachers use challenging and probing questioning. The high quality of teaching is now having a positive impact on pupils' learning. In Years 10 - 11, teaching is good in two-thirds of the lessons observed and never less than satisfactory, In Years 7 - 9, teaching is good in nearly three-quarters of the lessons observed. In the one lesson where teaching and learning were not effective, the text was far too complex for a number of pupils in the mixed ability group, insufficient attention was given to pupils' understanding, and the plenary failed to re-emphasise the main points of learning. Features of good teaching include very good relationships with pupils, good classroom management skills, and a variety of activities within the lesson. In these lessons the setting,

sharing and displaying of clear learning objectives and a rigorous plenary prior to the end of the lesson, helped to ensure pupils' understanding, and teachers' awareness of pupils' learning. The day-to-day marking of pupils' work, especially in Years 7, 8 and 9, where marks or grades are not indicated in exercise books, does not always give pupils sufficient information of their learning, until they know the results of an end-of-module test. Pupils are not always familiar with their National Curriculum levels of working. Pupils and teachers are very conscious of health and safety issues in investigative lessons. The well-experienced laboratory technician gives efficient, unobtrusive support to teachers, and maintains resources to a high standard. Learning support assistants have individual education plans to hand and are familiar with their content. They plan well with teachers, and give good support to pupils. Homework is mainly set as required by the teacher, and not necessarily on the stated date in the homework timetable. Homework, when set, is appropriate and relevant. Opportunities are taken in all lessons to enhance literacy skills. Word lists for topics are displayed in exercise books and laboratories, and mis-spellings are often highlighted in pupils' written work. Year 8 pupils combine literacy and word processing skills when writing the obituaries of both Joseph Priestley and Lavoisier. Opportunities for pupils to develop key numeracy skills are being included in lesson plans. There is a limited amount of graphical presentation. A detailed audit of the use of ICT within the department has been carried out. Year 10 and Year 9 pupils keep to task and work independently, without direct supervision, as they word process their investigative work or access the Internet to aid their research into such areas as the causes and treatment of Parkinson's disease. Overall, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. They are never less than satisfactory. Pupils in all years show interest and concentration in their work and keep to task. There are good relationships between pupils, and they work collaboratively when performing an investigation, or planning a project. They handle equipment with care. Their teachers are good role models with whom they have very good relationships.

77. Improvement since the last inspection is good. The newly appointed head of department shows very sound management and leadership qualities and has already taken steps to raise attainment. All pupils have been provided with revision booklets, to support learning, and a two-day Easter revision school has recently been held for Year 9 pupils. A shared commitment to improvement within the department is illustrated in the contents of the minutes of the weekly departmental meetings. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are not yet satisfactory. At present, there is insufficient analysis of data to assist both curriculum planning and target setting, and to give pupils, especially in Years 7, 8 and 9, a greater understanding of their learning and attainment. Reports to parents do not indicate what pupils know and what they need to do better. Although curriculum time in Year 7 is being increased in the next academic year, the time allocation in Years 8 and 9 is lower than that recommended. Since the last inspection the accommodation has greatly improved. Three spacious laboratories, two with linked preparation rooms, form the science suite. They provide bright teaching areas, with good displays of pupils' work. A full-time technician is deployed well, but also performs many duties elsewhere in the school. The improved resources are well managed. The use of ICT has increased. The department possesses CD-ROM, sensors and interfaces but has insufficient hardware within the laboratory areas.

## ART AND DESIGN

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

### Strengths

- Teachers know their subject well.
- Pupils' use of sketchbooks is good.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

### Areas for improvement

- Leadership in the subject is poor.
- Planning for improvement is poor.
- Procedures for assessing, recording and reporting pupils' progress are insufficiently developed.
- The use of ICT is poor.

78. Standards of work seen during the inspection are below average. These standards reflect the inconsistent approach to the development of art and design skills and the lack of involvement of pupils in evaluating their own and others' work. Pupils' achievement by the end of Year 9 is unsatisfactory in relation to their standards on entry. In relation to the standards of attainment at the beginning of Year 10, achievement at the end of Year 11 is unsatisfactory. Pupils' attitudes to work in some classes are affected in a negative way by inconsistent relationships between the teacher and a small minority of pupils. Overall, progress in lessons is just satisfactory which reflects the overall quality of teaching seen during the inspection. This level of teaching, however, is not leading to expected rates of pupils' progress over time.

79. Teacher assessments for pupils in 2001 at the end of Year 9 are well below average. The attainment of boys is better than girls; this is not found nationally. GCSE results in 2001 are well below the national average for grades A\* - C, but above the national average for A\* - G grades. Results over the last three years have not shown improvement. Boys outperform girls, reversing the national picture. Overall, pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

80. By the end of Year 9 pupils develop a narrow range of investigative skills. These are limited in their current project to images of the immediate environment. Higher attaining pupils are developing good direct observation and drawing skills, but attention to the fine detail is not well represented by pupils with a range of abilities. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in Year 9 due to the impact of learning support assistants who help to structure work and challenge pupils' development of skills. Pupils enter the school with a low skills base and, although many make satisfactory progress in Years 7 and 8, their achievement by the end of the key stage is below average. This is due to inconsistent attention to investigation, experimentation and traditional key art and design skills. Progress was good in a Year 7 ceramics class, where a dynamic demonstration given by the teacher motivated and inspired pupils to create a monster. Pupils in Year 10 make satisfactory progress in composition, application of paint, and basic line work, compared with their attainment at the end of Year 9. Low and middle achieving pupils have not yet mastered sufficient accuracy in their final work, although sketchbooks show preparatory studies with well-drawn fine detail. Pupils' skills in investigation, research, experimentation and evaluation are limited throughout all years. The limited development of these skills is preventing many pupils from expressing themselves in a more creative and emotive manner. Through the school many pupils have difficulty in

manipulating equipment due to cramped classroom conditions. As a result, behaviour in some classes deteriorates and momentum is lost.

81. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory. Knowledge and expertise are good, particularly when working with clay. The teaching of two-dimensional skills is less focused and the final quality of work not as good. Classroom management and behaviour control are sometimes affected adversely by the cramped accommodation and the close proximity within which pupils are expected to work. When working individually with pupils, good relationships are established and sound learning takes place. The use of homework in sketchbooks is good and the teacher works very hard to ensure that all work is marked to date, with appropriate comments for improvement. National Curriculum levels and GCSE criteria, however, are not yet used with sufficient regularity so that pupils understand the progress that they are making and what they need to do next to further improve their work. Lesson planning comprises a range of activities, but does not yet consider what pupils need to learn. Support for pupils with special educational needs is well planned and organised. There is little similar planning for the needs of gifted and talented pupils. Pupils display a positive attitude towards art and design and enjoy much of the work taking place. They collaborate effectively and relationships are generally good. Many pupils return to the area at lunchtime to continue their work.

82. The management of art and design is satisfactory. Aspects of the leadership of the subject are poor. Schemes of work do not contain sufficiently planned opportunities for printing and the use of ICT applications. Schemes identify too few opportunities for pupils to investigate and experiment with media, and to engage in research activities. Assessment procedures, although well developed, do not refer sufficiently to National Curriculum levels of attainment. Annual reports of to parents do not communicate the progress that pupils are making, nor do they contain precise targets that will help pupils to improve further. The process of setting, monitoring and reviewing targets is not well established and many pupils remain unaware of their target grades in Year 10. There is no specific target setting in Years 7 - 9. Subject improvement planning to raise standards of attainment is poor. It lacks structure in identifying specific actions, rigorous criteria by which to judge success, and careful consideration of resources and their costs. Art and design resources are unsatisfactory. Although there is a good range of books, posters, postcards and videos that support individual projects, the use of ICT is poor, with no classroom access to CD-ROM or the Internet. The teacher has limited skills in this aspect of art and design and does not make use of the ICT suite, adjacent to the art and design room. The learning environment is unsatisfactory. The current accommodation does not provide sufficient space for pupils to work comfortably and contributes to low rates of progress. The operation of the kiln, whilst pupils are working in the room, is unsafe. General display of pupils' work, both within the classroom and around the school, is good. It adds much to the ethos of the school. Overall improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. The department has improved provision for ceramics and the wider opportunities for three dimensional work; understanding of composition, proportion and spatial awareness, and the quantity and quality of the use of sketchbooks, are now strengths. However, pupils' skills in direct observational drawing, art appreciation and history are still insufficiently developed. Teaching techniques are still narrow and a number of pupils continue to drift off task in a number of lessons. The use of ICT is poor.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

### Strengths

- Teachers know the subject well.
- The quality of teaching in Year 10 food technology is good.
- Classroom management is effective.

### Areas for improvement

- Leadership of design and technology is poor.
- Improvement planning, schemes of work and lesson planning are not sufficiently developed.
- Marking and assessment procedures through the school are inconsistent.
- Drawing and presentation skills through the school are poor.

83. Standards of work seen during the inspection are below average, particularly in resistant materials. These levels reflect the inconsistent approach adopted in the various aspects of the subject and the low quality of planning for learning in some schemes of work. Pupils' overall achievement by the end of Year 9 is unsatisfactory in relation to standards on entry. In relation to the standards of attainment at the beginning of Year 10, achievement at the end of Year 11 is unsatisfactory. These levels of achievement are chiefly due to the poor levels of work in resistant materials, with a significant number of pupils not submitting GCSE coursework in the systems and control element this year. However, pupils' attitudes to work in textiles and food technology are good. Here, overall teaching and learning are satisfactory. This is mainly due to the positive relationships that exist between teachers and pupils.

84. Teacher assessments for pupils' attainment in 2001, at the end of Year 9, are well below average. The attainment of boys is well below that of girls, but the difference is less than that found nationally. GCSE results in 2001 are well below the national average for grades A\* - C, and slightly above average for grades A\* - G. Girls outperform boys, but the difference is broadly in line with that found nationally. Progress made by pupils with special educational needs is good.

85. By the end of Year 9, most pupils have an understanding of the processes necessary to develop a successful project. However, Year 7 resistant materials folders show that pupils enter the school with poor drawing skills and little appears to be done to improve these standards. In food and textiles, most pupils are showing some success in using a structured approach to their coursework. In a Year 8 textiles group, pupils develop neatly drawn ideas. This is especially so with the girls' designs which are accurate and which use colour to give a high quality appearance. Nevertheless, progress in the practical work of this group of pupils is being severely hindered due to insufficient space to lay out and cut materials and to work safely on machines that are positioned too close together. In Year 9 food technology, pupils develop their understanding of food products and packaging. Through sampling and analysing the contents of a range of savoury dishes, pupils have become aware of the need for accurate information on the package of products. In all areas, pupils are slowly, but systematically, developing understanding of the materials they are using.

86. By the end of Year 11, pupils studying food produce a range of coursework that meets all the grade criteria, apart from the highest levels. At present, there is insufficient breadth in research, analysis, evaluation and industrial practice to achieve the higher grades. Presentation is also limited due to an insufficient range of ICT equipment available. This is particularly so in

resistant materials folder work. Assessment information for systems and control shows that many pupils are underachieving. Year 10 pupils are currently showing appropriate progress at all levels, apart from the higher attainers.

87. Overall, teaching and learning in textiles and food technology are satisfactory. It was not possible to observe teaching and learning in resistant materials due to staff absence. Learning is at its best where the teacher is well organised and the pace of the lesson is controlled by well-structured activities. Teachers show good levels of expertise, particularly when supporting individual pupils. Overall, the good relationships between teachers and pupils are particularly effective in helping to motivate lower attaining pupils. Whilst lesson planning is generally adequate, there is insufficient detail regarding the National Curriculum Programmes of Study and levels of attainment. Learning objectives are not shared regularly with pupils at the beginning of lessons, nor used to evaluate learning outcomes at the end of lessons. Teachers have produced a wide range of resources to support their work, although there is inconsistency in their matching to the needs of different ability groups. Pupils collaborate well in investigative, practical and evaluative work. They share resources sensibly and support and guide their peers when the teacher is otherwise engaged. They listen to each other and show good levels of patience and negotiating skills. Their use of specific subject vocabulary language and spelling skills are good. Pupils' work is marked regularly and, in food technology, written feedback is provided quickly to help pupils to understand what they need to do to further improve. Teachers of food and textiles use assessment procedures well to support Year 10 and 11 pupils to improve their coursework in line with target grades. There is no evidence of effective marking in resistant materials. Knowledge of, and support for, pupils with special educational needs by learning support staff, are good. There is little similarly targeted work for the higher attainers. No targets have been set for pupils in Years 7 - 9.

88. The leadership and management of design and technology are poor, although individual members of staff are conscientious and are fully committed to the subject. Very little common development has taken place in recent years. Schemes of work lack sufficient detail to challenge pupils of all ages and abilities. They do not contain regularly planned opportunities for pupils to improve or consolidate key literacy and numeracy skills, nor do they acknowledge aspects of work in which pupils can develop spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. Insufficient attention is being given to the new technologies in smart materials, electronics and control. At present, timetable arrangements lead to insufficient time in Years 7 - 9 to teach the National Curriculum Programmes of Study, and many pupils are therefore insufficiently prepared for Year 10 GCSE courses. GCSE option choices are narrow and there are currently no opportunities to study new technologies. The use of ICT through the school is unsatisfactory. There is little evidence in pupils' folder work of the use of appropriate hardware and software. Although the school has invested in a CNC Lathe, there is no evidence of its use. Assessment procedures in Years 7 - 9 are inappropriate and make no links to National Curriculum levels until the end of Year 9. Consequently, few pupils are aware of the progress that they are making. Procedures for recording information about pupils' progress lack co-ordination across the department. Annual reports to parents of pupils' progress are unhelpful in communicating the precise skills that pupils are developing in design and technology and what they need to do better to further improve. Good marking systems are being developed in both food and textiles in Years 10 - 11. Here, teachers are setting targets at the beginning of Year 10 using test data and teacher assessments from Year 9. This is good practice. However, the monitoring and review of targets is less rigorous and no collective records are kept within the department. There is no monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning taking place within the department, although teachers are keen to become involved in this process. The learning environment in all areas of design and

technology requires improvement. A number of machines in resistant materials do not comply with health and safety regulations, the textiles area is too small and pupils are at risk when using machines to complete practical activities. Perimeter work surfaces in food contravene health and hygiene standards. The overall provision of resources is unsatisfactory. There is a lack of ICT hardware to improve the quality of presentation at all levels. The amount of available technician support is also inadequate. Subject improvement planning is poor. Actions do not focus sufficiently on raising standards, criteria for success are too general, and resources are not fully costed. Some improvement has taken place since the last inspection, but the quality of drawing and presentation skills remains unsatisfactory, and there are unclear aims within much of the lesson planning.

## GEOGRAPHY

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

### Strengths

- Standards have improved since the previous inspection.
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- The use of investigations is a strength of the department.
- Very good relationships in most lessons enable pupils to be challenged.
- Effective use is made of the limited resources.

### Areas for improvement

- The planning of lessons does not incorporate fully the requirements of the National Curriculum.
- The quality of improvement planning is not good enough.
- The use of classroom display does not seek to tackle some key aspects of learning.

89. Standards of work seen during the inspection are broadly average. These standards reflect the very good development of pupils' geographical skills. Some pupils' written work is not well developed and higher attainers often struggle to demonstrate higher order analytical skills. Pupils' achievement by the end of Year 9 is very good in relation to standards of attainment on entry to school, and the same very good rate of progress is seen from Year 10 to Year 11. Pupils' attitudes are very good. These reflect the quality of teaching and relationships which are also very good.

90. National Curriculum teacher assessments in 2001 for pupils at the end of Year 9 were above the national average for all schools and well above for similar schools. Boys and girls achieved at similar rates, unlike the differences seen nationally. Overall results continue an upward trend and are a significant improvement on the figures for 2000. Results in the GCSE examination in 2001 were well below the national average for all schools and just below that for similar schools. However, these results consolidate an upward trend and demonstrate significant improvement since the last inspection.

91. The vast majority of pupils, including those with learning difficulties, make very good progress throughout the school. On entry to the school, their skills of mapwork, use of atlas and analysis of information are varied, and often below the expected standard. By the age of 14, the great majority of pupils can analyse land use in a local village, can use a range of resources to compare, contrast and explain the growth of urban areas in the United Kingdom and Japan, and can discuss the impact of physical processes, such as volcanic activity, on people who live

nearby. These skills are consolidated in Years 10 and 11, so that by the age of 16 most pupils can observe and explain patterns in farming and features of population. They can organise and conduct their own geographical investigations and they can present findings accurately in a wide range of styles, using varied techniques. Not enough pupils develop effective higher order skills, and the self-evaluation of their work is unsatisfactory. Speaking and listening work is often of a higher quality than written work.

92. Teaching and learning are very good. The strengths are in the variety of styles and techniques, and the inventive use of the limited quantity of resources. These aspects are contributing to higher standards. Lessons are planned to engage all learners and the use of resources and the experience of the teacher motivate the pupils and ensure effective learning. The well-planned fieldwork adds further variety. In a very small number of lessons, some pupils, often girls, are less well engaged. Where this is the case, behaviour is well managed and pupils are quickly brought to task.

93. Most pupils are therefore involved in their learning in many active ways and this ensures that very good progress is made. Learning aims are being more closely linked to the assessment requirements of the National Curriculum. However, there is as yet, a mismatch between the detail of the requirements and the judgements made. This results in some over-generous marking and some lessons that are less challenging than they might be. Pupils' attitudes to learning are generally very good. The great majority of pupils enjoy geography, they work well in groups and pairs when asked to do so, and there are instances where they show great pride in what they have achieved. There are planned opportunities for pupils to reflect upon and to develop awareness of world issues. The subject contributes a good deal to the development of pupils' numeracy and literacy skills and there are some planned lessons involving the use of ICT.

94. Since the last inspection, there has been good progress in geography. Standards have improved, all of the issues raised have been tackled, and strengths maintained. The subject is well managed, although development opportunities are limited because there is only one specialist teacher. Some of the emerging practices in the assessment and monitoring of progress are exemplary. Pupils know where they stand in geography and what they need to do to make progress. The curriculum is well planned, with a clear emphasis on investigative work. The good use of resources, and the addition of some inspirational "home-made" materials, help to engage pupils. The room in which the geography is taught is not large enough to accommodate all of the practical activities, but the adjacent ICT room is used well. Display contains good quantities of pupils' work, but is not always used to good effect to demonstrate key features of learning. Improvement planning is not yet sufficiently developed to enable progress to be evaluated against specific and measurable intended outcomes.

## HISTORY

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

### Strengths

- Teachers know their subject well.
- Support for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Pupils' attitudes towards learning are good.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good.

### Areas for improvement

- Standards, particularly in Years 10 – 11, are not high enough.
- Procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress are inadequate. ?
- Provision for higher attaining pupils is inadequate.
- There is insufficient use of ICT.
- Planning for improvement is not good enough.

95. Standards of work seen during the inspection are below average. Pupils' achievement by the end of Year 9 is satisfactory in relation to standards on entry to the school. In relation to standards of attainment in Year 10, achievement at the end of Year 11 is also satisfactory. The progress that pupils make between Years 7 and 9, and between Years 10 and 11, is directly related to their positive attitudes and to the very good relationships that exist between pupils and teachers.

96. National Curriculum teacher assessments in 2001, for pupils at the end of Year 9, were just below the national average for all schools. Boys' attainment is below that of girls, on average, although the difference is in line with that found nationally. However, boys outperform girls at the higher levels. This is the reverse of the national picture. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. 2001 GCSE A\*-C results were well below the national average for all schools. This represents a declining trend since 1999. Boys outperformed girls in contrast to the national picture. GCSE A\* -G results were above national averages for all schools, with girls outperforming boys.

97. By the end of Year 9, pupils' achievements in relation to standards on entry to the school are sound. They are able to place the events and periods that they study in a chronological framework, to organise their work, to communicate using appropriate historical terms, to make judgements, substantiate their views and are gaining an understanding of cause and motive. For example, in a Year 7 lesson pupils working in groups were presented with a range of characters and asked to reach a decision about the most appropriate person to lead 'Stickney' village following the plague of 1349. Skilful teacher intervention ensured that all groups reach a decision and justified their choice. By Year 8 pupils are beginning to consider in more depth the reliability of sources and are gaining confidence in considering a wider range of motives. By Year 9, they can describe the reasons for and the results of changes, such as those brought about by the rise of Hitler. Increasingly, pupils demonstrate the ability to extract information from a range of sources to reach conclusions, although their understanding of different historical interpretations is weaker. Higher attaining pupils are, on occasions, challenged insufficiently due to low level activities or tasks that are too highly structured.

98. By the end of Year 11, pupils' achievement in relation to their prior attainment, is satisfactory. They develop further their skills in answering source based questions, are more able to place people and events into a wider historical context, become more adept at using graphs / data, and at organising information to answer specific questions. For example, Year 10 pupils can plot accurately the rise in unemployment in Germany between 1928-1938 and correlate this effectively with the rising popularity of Hitler. Year 11 results indicate that the majority of pupils achieve higher marks on the source based paper, although analysis of work in pupils' books indicates that the interpretation of more complex written sources is generally weaker. Analysis of coursework shows that a higher proportion of pupils achieve higher marks on the Germany coursework than on that relating to America.

99. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, with some good features in Years 7 - 9. Teachers' subject knowledge is good. Most lessons are well structured with a range of tasks and resources to support learning. Broad objectives are planned, however, these are rarely shared with pupils or used to gauge the extent of their learning at the close of the lesson. In Years 7 - 9, there is evidence of a good range of teaching and learning styles that allow pupils to develop speaking and listening skills, to make decisions and to work well with others. This is less evident in Years 10 - 11 where many activities are teacher dominated. The pace of learning in some lessons is slow, and the match of task to pupils' needs is variable leading, on occasions, to higher attainers completing low level tasks and being insufficiently challenged. The department does not yet have specific targets for gifted and talented pupils or strategies for challenging the more able. Little progress has been made on this issue since the time of the previous inspection. Teachers have high expectations of pupils regarding behaviour and the vast majority respond positively and maturely in lessons. They listen well to their teacher, support each other in their work and tackle tasks equally well whether working independently or in small groups. Relationships are very good. Pupils' work is marked regularly using agreed school codes, but insufficient information is provided to enable them to understand what they are doing well, what they need to do to achieve better and how they are working in comparison to school and national expectations. Annual reports to parents are unsatisfactory. They contain insufficient information on the progress which pupils are making in the knowledge skills and understanding of history and do not identify specific areas for improvement. Across both key stages pupils are given opportunities to reflect upon moral issues and to develop an understanding of the traditions of people from other cultures. Opportunities to develop numeracy skills are also maximised. As at the time of the previous inspection, however, the use of ICT to support learning is unsatisfactory, and occasions for pupils to develop 'spiritual' understanding are infrequent. Neither key skills, nor opportunities for the development of pupils' social, moral, spiritual or cultural understanding, are planned for systematically within schemes of work. Knowledge of, and support for pupils with special educational needs, is good. Learning support assistants are well used and teachers intervene effectively to ensure good progress. Overall, good use is made of homework to develop and extend learning.

100. The management of the subject is satisfactory. Schemes of work are in place and provide a satisfactory framework for teaching the subject. They are now in need of review in light of national developments, the introduction of citizenship and the need to develop ICT and plan for the needs of higher attainers. The current organisation of the curriculum ensures equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. Pupils' learning at Key Stage 3 is well supported by a range of off-site visits. Assessment procedures in the department are weak. Attainment information about pupils on entry to the school is available, but is not used effectively in Years 7 - 9 to establish individual curriculum targets against which pupils' progress can be measured. Curriculum targets based on GCSE criteria are established for pupils in Years 10 - 11. However,

processes to monitor individual progress against these targets tend to be informal, and there is little evidence to suggest that the process overall influences teachers' planning. Resources to support learning are satisfactory, as is accommodation, although the main history classroom has little quality display work that can be used to stimulate pupils' learning and celebrate their achievements. Overall improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. Although progress has been made in improving the quality of pupils' written work, there has been insufficient progress in developing the use of ICT and in meeting the needs of higher attaining pupils. The department has an improvement plan that identifies priorities for development. Insufficient focus, however, has been placed on raising standards of achievement. Criteria for success lack specificity, costings are vague and monitoring and evaluation procedures are not evident.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

### Strengths

- The development of pupils' skills in specialist ICT lessons is good.
- Good relationships are a feature of most lessons, including the way in which pupils work together to solve problems.
- Some equipment, now available in the school, is of a high quality.

### Areas for improvement

- Standards achieved by the majority of pupils are not high enough.
- Provision is not made of the full range of ICT experiences.
- Overall assessment of pupils' work and progress across Years 7 – 9 is inadequate.
- The quality of the subject improvement plan is unsatisfactory.

101. Standards of the best work seen during the inspection are average. These are chiefly in specialist ICT lessons and reflect sound levels of teaching. However, across the school too many pupils do not receive the full range of ICT activities, at the appropriate level. As a result, overall standards are unsatisfactory. Pupils' achievement by the end of Year 9 is satisfactory in aspects of information exchange and presentation. Overall, it is poor in relation to standards of attainment on entry to school. This is due to rates of progress in lessons being hampered by the piecemeal provision of the other aspects of ICT capability and low levels of teaching outside of specialist lessons. Pupils following ICT related courses make satisfactory progress, although opportunities for those experiencing ICT across the curriculum are again limited to activities required for coursework in other subjects. Achievement, here, is unsatisfactory. Pupils' attitudes are good and often very good. This results in good levels of perseverance.

102. National Curriculum teacher assessments in 2001 for pupils at the end of Year 9 were below the national average for all schools and just below for similar schools. This overall result, however, continues an upward trend and is a significant improvement on the figure for 2000. There is no relevant performance data in the GCSE results for 2001. The GNVQ course for ICT has only been introduced recently.

103. Pupils' attainment levels in ICT on entering the school are improving. The Year 7 taught ICT programme develops satisfactorily pupils' ICT capability in most aspects of the prescribed curriculum. The school is only just beginning to detail the rest of the work for 11-14 year olds in order that their progress continues in at least the same manner. The ICT Co-ordinator has

produced an appropriate plan for this development, but is only just beginning to understand the need to direct cross-curricular tasks in greater detail to prevent them all being planned and completed at the same low level. Pupils are adept at accessing the facilities of available pieces of software. They move between applications with confidence and this ability grows through Years 10 and 11. Desk top publishing skills, research on the Internet and some aspects of data handling on spreadsheets, are strengths of their work, and in Year 7 some pupils work at good levels aspects of control. It is clear that they are capable of achieving higher standards across a greater variety of ICT skills and their applications. However, not all pupils use sensing and measuring technology to good effect and there is no evidence of all pupils preparing and presenting information in a variety of ways, for a range of audiences.

104. In all specific ICT lessons teaching is at least satisfactory and often good. The strengths are in the manner in which pupils of all abilities are supported and therefore make progress. No easy solutions are offered, but through a combination of questions and prompts pupils are drawn into solving problems and seeing ways forward. Specialist teachers have good knowledge for the tasks set, and the specialist teachers demonstrate extensive understanding of applications. Non-specialist teachers show less understanding of how pupils' ICT capability should be improved across the curriculum. Teaching is insufficiently demanding and this is hindering progress.

105. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good and often very good. The great majority of pupils enjoy learning with computers and treat equipment with respect. They work well together, often helping each other with problems of managing the systems as much as with the work in hand. This has a positive impact on their overall output.

106. Systems and equipment are well managed and the school is developing very good quality provision. The recent appointment of a temporary technician is having positive effect. The ICT co-ordinator has the makings of a very good curriculum plan, some of which has already been realised. The development of an informative monitoring system to ensure progress in all the required aspects of the subject, has been slow. This is resulting in the piecemeal and unsatisfactory use of the new equipment. The school is in the middle of a substantial programme of staff development for ICT which should help in bringing the whole plan to fruition. Overall, progress since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. Most of the issues identified at that time have yet to be fully tackled. End of Year 9 reports of pupils' progress do not meet statutory requirements in that they contain no information about this subject. Nevertheless, the high quality new equipment, albeit still slightly below the target for quantity, the good technical support and the newly developed strategic thinking of the ICT co-ordinator, demonstrate that there is the capacity in the school to bring about the necessary improvements.

107. Overall ICT curriculum arrangements fail to meet statutory requirements. Individual subjects are not incorporating sufficient opportunities, in preparation for lessons and in schemes of work, to reinforce and improve pupils' ICT skills, as detailed in National Curriculum Programmes of Study. Too many pupils do not receive the full range of ICT activities, at the appropriate level.

## MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

### Strengths

- All pupils entered for French at GCSE have gained a grade in the past three years.
- Lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well.
- Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 now make very good progress in speaking French.
- Most pupils have a positive attitude to learning French and behave very well.

### Areas for improvement

- Not enough pupils obtain GCSE French results at grades A\* to C.
- There is insufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils.
- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop skills in writing.
- Marking and assessment of pupils' work is inconsistent and insufficiently rigorous.
- The quality of teaching is not adequately checked and supported to ensure that good practice is evenly spread within the department.

108. Standards of work seen during the inspection are well below average. They are better at the end of Year 9 than in Years 10 and 11. Overall, achievement is satisfactory through the school. This reflects the quality of teaching, although the department has adopted recently a new approach to teaching French which has resulted in much more spoken communication from pupils in Years 7 - 9. This in turn has led to greater interest and keenness to learn. In achieving this outcome the school has responded positively to the key issue of the previous report. Teaching is particularly well suited to lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs who achieve well. Higher attainers are not achieving their potential because of insufficiently challenging teaching.

109. Over the past three years the number of pupils gaining grades A\* to C in the GCSE examination has been very low. The large majority of Year 11 pupils have been entered for French and they have all gained a pass grade. This represents good achievement for many pupils of low attainment. Boys' results have been below those of girls, but by a lower margin than occurs nationally. Most girls do not do as well in French at GCSE as in their other subjects.

110. By the age of 14, standards overall are below the national average, but not significantly so. Achievement is satisfactory. Teaching at this level demands more of the pupils and French is used much more as a means of communication in the classroom. As a result of this many pupils of all levels of attainment routinely ask for things in confident French. In a Year 9 class with lower-attaining pupils and some with special educational needs, for example, one boy was able spontaneously to say in French that tomatoes are not vegetables but fruit. Girls are not as ready to come forward and express themselves and, as a result, have less practice in speaking than boys who are generally more forthcoming. Listening skills are also well developed in all pupils. As in Years 10 and 11, however, pupils' capacity to write in French is well behind what is expected nationally.

111. By the age of 16, standards are well below average, although many pupils achieve satisfactorily. Most understand simple French spoken at a moderate pace. Higher attainers distinguish some subtleties of language. Listening skills are better developed than those of speaking where standards are well below those expected at this stage. Most pupils can give

basic information about themselves. They have very anglicised pronunciation, however, and cannot form full sentences using different verb tenses to describe actions in the past or plans for the future. Equally, pupils' capacity to write simple continuous French is unsatisfactory. Most are capable of very elementary tasks such as lists and messages in French, but higher attainers have little understanding of tenses and lack a grasp of some important basic words. Girls are better at writing in French than boys.

112. Teaching of French is satisfactory overall. In half of the lessons teaching is good or very good. It is better at Key Stage 3 than Key Stage 4 due to the fact that French is now used consistently in the classroom for instructions. The effect of this, coupled with the engaging methods teachers use to encourage pupils to speak, is that they learn naturally because they have the tools to express themselves and are rewarded for their successes. These improvements in teaching are beginning to have an impact on pupils' achievement. Teachers generally manage pupils with a blend of firmness and good humour that creates a pleasant environment for learning and promotes very good behaviour. Pupils are frequently encouraged to look up words in dictionaries and as a result many are becoming skilled in their use. In the best lessons, where these examples of good practice are present, pupils of all levels of attainment, girls and boys, learn effortlessly and achieve to their capacity. In a number of respects, however, the quality of teaching could be better. Some teaching, particularly of Year 10 pupils, lacks vigour and challenge, underestimating the amount of work pupils can successfully undertake. Sometimes, poor pronunciation is left uncorrected. At others, pupils are not given enough opportunity to practise and rehearse thoroughly new language, so that they remember it inaccurately and mispronounce it. In this context teachers do not make enough use of the overhead projector, or allow pupils to practise in pairs. Too little written homework is set so that pupils have insufficient opportunities to improve this aspect of their work. Marking is inconsistent and does not show pupils the level they are at or how they can improve.

113. The modern foreign languages department has been successful recently in adapting teaching methods to a more communicative style. The adoption of a new course book to support these methods is also showing benefits. The fruits of these changes are already apparent in pupils' strong motivation. The annual Year 8 trip to Boulogne is very popular and contributes well to pupils' social and cultural development. The department has good up-to-date resources that help pupils to learn. The majority of pupils have an appropriate amount of time to study French. Beginners in Year 7, however, have only two periods each week. This is one period less than the recommended time and is not enough to provide good continuity.

114. In a number of respects there has been a lack of unity and common purpose that has hindered progress in the department. Pupils' achievement has not been systematically recorded, tracked and compared with their previous attainment. Annual reports of pupils' progress do not contain sufficient information about pupils' linguistic skills and subject specific targets to improve their performance. ICT is used occasionally to supplement classroom work, but this is not co-ordinated or productive. As a result, many pupils are having less experience of ICT than is appropriate and are missing out on the benefits that it can bring to language learning. French classrooms are well appointed and have some very striking displays, but are far apart from each other. This prevents good communication between teachers. The department's handbook and schemes of work need updating. Its improvement plan does not adequately refer to the means by which its objectives can be achieved. Teaching in the department has not been monitored or supported so that the quality of teaching is uneven, and weaknesses have persisted unchecked. Teachers would benefit from opportunities to observe each other teaching and to share ideas and resources. The department has responded effectively to the issue in the previous report

about use of the foreign language in the classroom. The needs of pupils with special educational needs are now well looked after. Many pupils in the first three years speak French with greater confidence. However, the reservations expressed about poor writing skills and lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils still remain to be addressed. Provided the department finds a common purpose and unites in driving up standards, it is well placed to make further improvements.

## MUSIC

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

### Strengths

- The quality of leadership and management of the subject is good.
- The quality of teaching in music is good.
- Teachers have very good relationships with pupils.
- There is good support for higher attaining pupils and those with special educational needs.

### Areas for improvement

- Systems for assessing pupils' progress are unsatisfactory.
- Reporting progress to pupils and parents and setting targets linked to National Curriculum and GCSE levels are unsatisfactory.
- Insufficient use is made of ICT.

115. Standards of work seen during the inspection are generally good. Pupils arrive at the school with a wide range of previous musical experiences and abilities but, by the end of Year 9, the majority are achieving well in comparison to their standards on entry. Pupils' achievement by the end of Year 11, in comparison to their standards at the beginning of Year 10, is good, with all pupils making progress in their abilities to compose and perform. Attitudes to learning in music lessons are always good and often very good, with pupils engaged in their learning and enthusiastic about the subject.

116. Teacher assessments in 2001 indicate that pupils' levels in music at the end of Year 9 are below the national average. GCSE results in music at grades A\* - C have ranged between 16 per cent and 37 per cent in recent years. This is poor in comparison to national expectations, but comparisons with national averages at grades A\* - G are much more favourable. All pupils achieved a grade G or above in 2000, and in 2001, 90 per cent achieved at least a G grade. The achievement of pupils of all abilities is good, but is especially good for pupils with special educational needs.

117. By the end of Year 9, the majority of pupils have established a good grasp of the elements of music. They know how to read staff notation, can play simple melodies on keyboards and they can compose and perform interesting and effective pieces of music. Groups of pupils in one music lesson, for example, used keyboards and classroom percussion to produce imaginative and descriptive sound pictures of a boat journey to the Isle of Skye. Some pupils are able to play and compose sophisticated pieces of music and several are also able to play woodwind, brass or stringed instruments to a good standard. When describing their own and other's work, the majority of pupils use appropriate musical language and terminology, and they acquire a good knowledge of music from an appropriate range of periods, styles and cultures. Pupils enter Year 10 with a wide range of musical skills and abilities. They all make good progress especially those with special educational needs. By the end of Year 11, all pupils can recognise and describe music from different periods, they can listen and appraise using

correct musical language and terminology, and they compose and perform at a level commensurate with their musical skills and abilities.

118. The quality of the teaching and learning in music is good through the school. Lessons are well planned and learning objectives are clear and shared with pupils. Pupils are given a variety of linked tasks in their lessons and the balance of practical and theoretical activities, coupled with good pace and focused support, enable pupils to make good progress in their musical knowledge, skills and understanding. The teacher has high expectations and the work and activities are organised to meet the learning needs of all pupils. Pupils are given opportunities to experiment and create using their own initiatives. The organisation of the music classrooms means that some groups work unsupervised for short periods. This they manage without any difficulties or problems, reflecting the very good attitudes that pupils have to the subject. Although not formally planned, opportunities are taken to improve pupils' literacy skills through a variety of ways, including the spelling of key subject words, extended writing, note taking and guided writing for lower attainers. Opportunities to enhance pupils' numeracy skills are unsatisfactory. Assessment procedures are not yet embedded into the units of work studied during Years 7 - 9. Work is marked and grades are given for effort but National Curriculum levels are not used to indicate standards or progress made, until the end of Year 9. Marking in Years 10 - 11 is more diagnostic with comments included about how to improve the quality of the work. Again there are no indications of GCSE levels or specific use of targets to communicate to pupils the progress that they are making.

119. The head of music is committed to improving standards in the subject, however the continued lack of ICT in the department, identified in the last inspection, is hampering the quality of the work being achieved by pupils, especially in Years 10 and 11. Support for higher attaining pupils is provided by the County's Music Service in the form of instrumental lessons, and is good. The head of music is also able to offer voice and keyboard support for lower attaining pupils, as required. The accommodation for the department is good with two teaching spaces, one equipped with up-to-date keyboards. The quality of display is generally unsatisfactory, consisting for the most part of commercially produced materials, with very few examples of pupils' work from across the school, annotated to give indications of levels and expectations. The range of classroom instruments is limited to keyboards, some tuned instruments and a drum kit. There are very few un-tuned percussion instruments and insufficient Latin American and African instruments, and resources to support pupils' engagement in rock music. Extra-curricular activities are offered in the form of a good quality school orchestra, an annual school production and support at lunchtimes for instrumental and GCSE pupils. Music makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, they reflect on the birth of jazz music through the slave trade and consider the spiritual and cultural nature of Indian and African music; they are encouraged to work together in small groups, sharing instruments and ideas. Schemes of work and lesson plans do not, however, contain explicit references to how these opportunities may be maximised. There are no examples in schemes of work of music from a wider range of cultures such as Chinese, Japanese or Indonesian.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

### Strengths

- The proportion of pupils gaining GCSE A\*-C grades is good.
- Extra-curricular provision is very good.
- The promotion of pupils' moral and social development is effective.

### Areas for improvement

- The leadership and management of the department is unsatisfactory.
- The monitoring of pupils' performance is inadequate.
- There is insufficient use of assessment to ensure that teachers and pupils have a clear understanding of current strengths and areas for development.

120. Overall, standards of work are average. These standards reflect satisfactory teaching with a satisfactory response from pupils. Pupils' achievement by the end of Year 9 is satisfactory in relation to standards on entry to the school. In relation to standards of attainment at the end of Year 9, achievement at the end of Year 11 is satisfactory. Higher grade GCSE results are in line with national averages. Many pupils' attitudes contribute positively to standards. However, there is a significant minority of pupils whose attitudes are unsatisfactory. In general, teaching contributes effectively to pupils' learning.

121. Attainment in physical education at the end of Year 9 is average. Boys attain slightly higher standards than girls; this is consistent with differences that might be expected nationally. By the age of 14, pupils can measure and perform individual long jump run ups so that they take off on the board to complete a competent jump. They know the correct techniques of fielding in softball and understand the theory behind basic throwing skills. By the age of 16, attainment is in line with national expectations. The proportion of pupils following the GCSE course achieving A\*-C grades is in line with national averages. This is because they are developing the skills necessary to analyse their own performance and that of others. In a Year 11 athletics lesson, pupils developed an understanding of how to consistently hit the take off board in the long jump. They are able to observe others planning and performing the run up and to feedback strengths and weaknesses. Many pupils have good awareness of body positioning in order to catch the ball effectively in softball. Higher attaining pupils are challenged through tasks set, which enable them to compare their performances against national results. However, in several lessons many pupils lack consistency in their application and development of key skills. Many cannot perform basic techniques in team games and athletics. For example, they learn the correct techniques of fielding in softball, but a large number cannot use consistently what they have learned to achieve appropriate accuracy in throwing.

122. By the end of Year 9 the achievement of most pupils is satisfactory. Many develop basic tennis, athletics and rounders techniques. Some activities do not always allow pupils to develop their observation and assessment skills so that they can be clear about what they can do and of what they are capable. In some Year 7 - 9 lessons, their development of knowledge and understanding is restricted by the poor behaviour of a significant minority of pupils who disrupt pairs and small groups when developing basic techniques. By the end of Year 11 the achievement of pupils is satisfactory in relation to their prior attainment at the start of Year 10. Their improved learning skills help them to develop knowledge and understanding. For example, in Year 10 athletics they are able to review both their own and others' performance. However,

some pupils do not develop basic techniques to a level which enables them to perform well when under the pressure of competition. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

123. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Strengths include good knowledge of the subject, good organisational skills, positive relationships with most pupils and a commitment to pupils' moral and social development. This means that the vast majority of pupils are able to learn through appropriate activities, in an environment which encourages learning. Although there has been some improvement in procedures for monitoring pupils' progress, there is still insufficient use of assessment to ensure that teachers and pupils have a clear understanding of current strengths and areas for development. Teachers are not always clear about intended outcomes and do not always share and review them with pupils at the beginning and end of lessons. Some progress has been made since the last inspection to involve non-participants in lesson activities. Insufficient attention is still paid to the teaching of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. Many pupils enjoy physical education and their attitudes to learning are satisfactory. Many pupils are able to work effectively as individuals and also to co-operate well when working in pairs and small groups. Pupils usually develop good relationships with other pupils and their teacher. In the few instances where some pupils show unsatisfactory behaviour, this is mainly related to ineffective teaching methods that do not tell pupils what they are meant to learn or take sufficient account of their weak literacy skills.

124. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The head of department is relatively new to post. Some teachers are not specialist teachers of physical education. This means that the vision for the future development of the subject is not yet having a sharp focus on raising standards. Links to the leadership group are informal and not sufficiently challenging and supportive. There are too few planned opportunities for pupils to assess their own performance against agreed criteria and to develop key numeracy, literacy and ICT skills. Procedures to monitor the teaching and learning within the department are not yet formalised. Annual reports need to clearly convey to parents how pupils can make progress in physical education skills. The department has a strong philosophy of care for its pupils. However, there are insufficient risk assessments for all physical activities and facilities. Indoor facilities are inadequate to develop the breadth of the physical education curriculum. This situation has not improved since the last inspection. These facilities are now hindering pupils' progress. There are adequate outdoor facilities for most major team games. Resources and storage arrangements are satisfactory. The physical education curriculum meets statutory requirements. The department recognises the importance of extra-curricular activities that enhance learning. There is an open access policy to all clubs and a range of teams for inter-school matches and competitions. Teams and individuals have gained significant successes in local, area and national competitions.

## VOCATIONAL COURSES

Overall, the quality of provision in vocational courses is **satisfactory**.

### Strengths

- The quality of teaching is good.
- Pupil's attitudes towards learning are good.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are good.
- There is good support for pupils on extended work placements.

### Areas for improvement

- Standards of attainment are not high enough.
- There is insufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils.
- Planning for improvement is inadequate.
- The organisation of the timetable does not meet requirements for external visits.

125. In Years 10 - 11 the school offers a range of GNVQ courses, including health and social care and leisure and tourism part 1, at intermediate and foundation levels, full award science and units of hospitality and catering and the built environment. For a targeted group of lower attaining pupils, a work-related learning course, based on the pilot of the Lincolnshire Employability Graduation Award, is offered. Provision of a wide range of vocational courses, at a variety of levels, ensures equality of access to all pupils.

126. Standards of work seen during the inspection are below average by the end of Year 11. In relation to standards of attainment in Year 10, achievement at the end of Year 11 is satisfactory. The achievement of pupils between Years 10 and 11 is directly related to their positive attitudes and the good relationships that exist between pupils and teachers. Awards gained by pupils in part 1 GNVQ health and social care and leisure and tourism are below the national average. Due to timetable arrangements, pupils studying hospitality and catering and the built environment gain unit accreditations, as opposed to a full award. GNVQ science is being examined for the first time in 2002.

127. In all lessons pupils make clear gains in knowledge and understanding in relation to their starting points. Pupils in the hospitality and catering group, for example, develop confidence in researching and discussing the nutritional value of particular foods and relating this to appropriate menus for different age groups. Pupils in a work-related learning group develop their skills in researching, storing and retrieving information on the computer. Across all courses pupils are given the opportunity to develop skills of communication, numeracy, ICT and in working with others. Analysis of pupils' work across the range of courses, however, indicates variations in the quality of work presented and in the use of ICT to improve presentation and to develop and extend learning. Achievement over time, however, is limited due to insufficient curriculum time to enable some pupils to complete full awards, and for others to achieve more than a basic pass grade.

128. Overall, teaching is good in GNVQ and work-related learning courses, but learning is satisfactory. This is due to limited overall opportunities for external visits to enhance the quality of pupils' learning experiences. Most lessons are well planned with a range of tasks and resources to support learning. The majority of teachers set clear objectives and share grade criteria, so pupils know exactly what they must do in order to be successful. These criteria are rarely used, however, to gauge the extent of pupils' learning at the close of lessons. The pace of learning in

some lessons is slow and the match of task to pupils' needs is variable, leading to some intermediate students being set too low level tasks and being insufficiently challenged. Most teachers use a range of resources to support independent learning, are effective in discussions with individual pupils, and use questioning effectively to develop understanding and to encourage independent thought. Although there is a wider range of teaching and learning styles than at the time of the previous inspection, in some lessons activities are still too teacher dominated. This results in only satisfactory learning. Most teachers have high expectations of pupils, the vast majority of whom respond positively and maturely in lessons. They listen well to their teacher, support each other in their work and tackle tasks equally well whether the requirement is to work independently or collaboratively. Pupils with special educational needs are integrated well and in most instances additional support staff are used to good effect. Relationships are good. The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent. In most cases pupils' work is corrected, but there is insufficient guidance to indicate what they need to do to be able to improve their work and reach the next level. As at the time of the previous inspection, the use of action plans and feedback comment sheets, is inconsistent. Insufficient priority has been given to moderating standards of work across the various programmes and to the sharing of good practice. Annual reports to parents are unsatisfactory. They contain insufficient information about the progress that pupils are making in their knowledge, skills and understanding of the individual disciplines, and do not identify specific areas for improvement.

129. The management of vocational courses is satisfactory overall. However, current timetable arrangements mean that insufficient time has been allocated to some courses to allow pupils to achieve full accreditation, as opposed to units, following two years of study. This is having a negative impact on standards. Schemes of work for all programmes are in place and a range of industrial links have been formed to support various courses. For example, pupils studying leisure and tourism visit a local swimming pool, health and social care pupils visit doctors' surgeries and old peoples homes, whilst hospitality and catering pupils visit local hotels. Pupils completing the Employability Graduation Award benefit from links with a range of partners who provide extended work experience placements. Pupils on extended work placements are well supported by a range of quality resources. Communications with employers and parents are very good, as are systems for monitoring pupils' attendance, both in lessons and on work placements. Resources to support learning are satisfactory, as is accommodation. The pilot Employability Graduation Award is currently supported financially by the East Midlands Development Agency. The viability of this course, once the high level of funding has been withdrawn, will need to be kept under review. Improvement plans for both work-related and GNVQ courses are in place and reflect appropriate priorities. However, criteria for success are not sufficiently specific, costings are vague and monitoring and evaluation procedures are not evident.