

INSPECTION REPORT

KELVIN HALL SCHOOL

Kingston upon Hull

LEA area: City of Kingston upon Hull

Unique reference number: 118103

Headteacher: Mr M. R. Doolan

Reporting inspector: Ms J. M. Jones
12460

Dates of inspection: 8th – 12th October 2001

Inspection number: 192565

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

© Crown copyright 2001

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 to 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Bricknell Avenue Kingston upon Hull
Postcode:	HU5 4QH
Telephone number:	01482 342229
Fax number:	01482 346817
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J. Lockwood
Date of previous inspection:	27 th January 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
12460	J. M. Jones	Registered inspector	Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Information about the school The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19743	A. Taylor	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
4689	M. Christian	Team inspector	Art and design	
13734	H. Davies	Team inspector	Geography Religious education	
20336	E. Hailey	Team inspector	Physical education	
8756	P. Hanage	Team inspector	Mathematics	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
20287	D. S. Harris	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
19915	P. Hooton	Team inspector	History Equality of opportunity Achievement of boys	
3943	D. Innes	Team inspector	English Provision for pupils with special educational needs	
22524	S. Innes	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Design and technology	
27665	A. Lees	Team inspector	Music	

17799	A. Stoddart	Team inspector	Science	
-------	-------------	----------------	---------	--

The inspection contractor was:

Power House Inspections

Grasshoppers
1 Anglesey Close
Chasetown
Burntwood
Staffordshire
WS7 8XA

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

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

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	12
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?	17
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?	19
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	22
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	24
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	25
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	27
THE ACHIEVEMENT OF BOYS	28
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	29

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

33

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Kelvin Hall School is a mixed comprehensive school about two miles from the centre of the city of Hull. It is average in size with 967 pupils on roll. There are more boys than girls in all years and the difference is most marked in Year 10 where there are 113 boys and 81 girls. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is average. The proportion with special educational needs is above average, but the proportion of pupils with statements of educational need is below average. There are very few pupils from ethnic minorities, but there are a few, sometimes the children of overseas visitors to the universities, who are at an early stage of learning English. The school is part of Hull's 'Excellence in Cities' programme. In previous years the school has taken pupils from a wide geographical area but this is gradually changing and most pupils now come from closer to the school. This is affecting the range of pupils' attainment when they start in Year 7. The attainment of pupils in the current Year 7 was below average, whereas three and more years ago pupils' attainment when they started in Year 7 was well below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is effective, particularly in the way it makes appropriate provision for pupils with a wide range of different needs and circumstances. Good teaching ensures that pupils' achievement is good and standards are rising. Leadership is very good and backed up by successful management. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Leadership is very good.
- Test results at the end of Year 9 are rising faster than the national rate.
- Teaching, particularly in Years 7 to 9 is very good and leads to good achievement by all pupils.
- The school is very good at meeting the needs of all pupils.
- Provision for pupils' personal development is very good.
- Assessment in most subjects is good and used very well to make pupils aware of their progress.

What could be improved

- Information and communication technology (ICT) is not used widely enough in most subjects across the curriculum to meet statutory requirements fully in Years 10 and 11.
- Accommodation is inadequate and the lack of a library restricts pupils' opportunities for research.
- Standards of literacy are not high enough.
- Attendance in Years 10 and 11 is below average.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in January 1997. Improvement since then has been good. Teaching has improved. Examination results, which dipped after the previous

inspection, have recovered and attainment by the end of Year 9 is now close to the national average. The school has dealt well with most of the issues raised in the previous report. Planning for future development is now good, and linked to financial planning. Attendance has improved, and parents are given better information about their children's progress and curriculum. The requirements of the National Curriculum for ICT are now met in Years 7 to 9 but not yet fully met for all pupils in Years 10 and 11. Religious education is taught, as required, in all years and spiritual development has improved, but the school still does not provide a daily collective act of worship.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
GCSE examinations	E	E	E	D	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E

National test results and achievements of Year 9 pupils

Over the four-year period 1996- 1999, the results of national tests for pupils aged 14 were below average but improved at a greater rate than the national trend. In 2000, the results were above the national average in English, average in science and below average in mathematics. Taking all three subject together, the results were close to average. However, when compared with those of similar schools, the results in all three subjects were well above average. The standards of work of the present Year 9 pupils seen during the inspection, are close to average in most subjects, and achievement is good in view of their below average starting points at the beginning of Year 7. Standards are average in science and mathematics and above average in English, where achievement is very good. They are below average in history and religious education though pupils' achievement is good. Standards are average in modern languages, ICT and music, and above average in art and design, physical education and design and technology.

GCSE results and achievements of Year 11 pupils

GCSE results were below average throughout the period 1996-2000. Results improved in 1999 and 2000, and the unconfirmed 2001 results improved significantly. The governors' ambitious targets were achieved though the results were still below the national average. The highest GCSE results were in English literature and modern languages and history. In the work of the present Year 11, that was seen during the inspection, standards are generally below average for their age, but the achievement is good because standards are higher than predicted by their attainment when they started in Year 7. Standards are average in English but

below average in science and mathematics. Standards are above average in history and music, and close to average in art and design and design and technology. Standards are below average in modern languages, physical education, geography and religious education. Standards are below average overall in ICT, but above average for pupils taking GNVQ in the subject.

In all years, the achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good. Standards in literacy are close to average in Years 7 to 9, but not as good in other subjects as they are in English. In Years 10 and 11, pupils' literacy skills are below average, and pupils need more practice writing at length in other subjects. Numeracy skills are average and usually good enough for the needs of subjects. However, they are not always able to draw and interpret graphs in science and geography without help.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Most pupils are positive about the school and their work, though a minority require, and get, skilled teaching to overcome their reluctance to concentrate.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good overall. Behaviour in lessons is usually good. It is satisfactory around the school but there is some pushing in overcrowded corridors.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils get on very well with each other and their teachers. Older pupils in particular value the support of their teachers and other staff.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. The school works very hard to improve attendance and is succeeding well with younger pupils. However, the attendance, though improving, is below average in Years 10 and 11. The rate of unauthorised absence is above average in Year 11. Parents sometimes take children away on holiday during term time – against the school's wishes.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is good overall, and enables pupils to learn well in almost all their lessons. A high proportion of lessons in all years is very good. Just over a third of lessons seen during the inspection were judged to be very good. Teaching in English is very effective; in Years 7 to 9 nearly all the teaching was at least good, and two out of five lessons were very well taught. In Years 10 and 11, over half the English lessons seen were very good or excellent, but there was also a little unsatisfactory teaching. Mathematics lessons are well taught, and more good and very good teaching was seen in Years 7 to 9 than in higher years. Science teaching is also good across the school. Teachers have high expectations and manage pupils well. Pupils in all years enjoy learning because lessons are full of different activities. Teaching in humanities subjects, though good overall, is usually less lively and sometimes based too closely on textbooks for pupils to be able to explore ideas for themselves. Literacy is well taught through English, and teachers make sure pupils use and spell key words correctly in their subjects, but pupils are not given enough opportunity to write at length nor are they reminded to spell common words correctly. Numeracy is taught well in mathematics but there is no policy to guarantee a consistent approach to number work in other subjects.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good range of learning opportunities. The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 meets all statutory requirements and includes drama as a separate subject. In Years 10 and 11 there is a good choice of vocational and other subjects, and opportunities to take vocational courses and additional languages. However, the requirement for all pupils to follow the National Curriculum for ICT is not fully met. Personal, social and health education is good and includes sex and drug education and well-planned careers education. There are many well-run extra-curricular activities such as sport and music and ICT. Active and growing links with local universities and industry are widening pupils' experience and aspirations.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school makes good provision for pupils assessed as having special educational needs and very good provision for those in Years 7 and 8 who make very good progress. In other years, provision enables pupils to make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory overall. Pupils whose home language is not English usually make good progress, but there is no specific policy for the rare occasions when pupils arrive with little or no English. The school makes arrangements as appropriate and relies on local authority help, which is not always immediately available.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Pupils are involved in drawing up codes of conduct and are supported and respond well to the policy of rewarding good behaviour and hard work. There are many opportunities to cooperate and assume responsibility. Pupils' experience of their own and other cultures is broadened by the good provision for music, art and design and drama, and through the very good links the modern language department has with other European countries. Provision for spiritual education is good, although the school does not provide a daily act of collective worship.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school goes to great lengths to ensure that pupils are supported in their personal and academic life in a wide range of ways. Pupils are enabled to measure their own progress because they are closely involved in the frequent assessment of their work. Information from assessment is used well in a yearly review meeting with individual pupils and their parents. The school is a safe environment, and procedures for child protection are good.
How well does the school work in partnership with parents	Parents think very highly of the school and their links with the school are effective. Parents are consulted regularly and a high proportion attend meetings to review their children's progress. Reports and other information are of a high standard.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good leadership by the headteacher is well supported by deputies and senior managers. Heads of year and heads of departments are mostly effective leaders. However, in departments, such as physical education and geography, which are part of larger faculties, there is not enough opportunity for the heads of department to observe and support colleagues, or build a strong identity for the subject. There are enough well qualified teachers, but all subjects suffer from the lack of a library. Resources in some subjects are limited. Accommodation is crowded and there are insufficient science laboratories. The school is efficiently run and the senior managers seek the best value for all initiatives.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses and are active in shaping the school's future.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school consults widely and evaluates its work rigorously. All initiatives have measurable targets that are used to measure their effectiveness.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school makes very good use of funds for many initiatives, including 'Excellence in Cities' that provides opportunities such as visits and courses for gifted and talented pupils, and funding from Excellence in Cities and the Standards Fund to pay for the very effective unit for pupils who are at risk of permanent exclusion.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children are happy at school – parents feel their children are cared for and that teachers know them well. The school has high expectations. The school is improving. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no library, and pupils do not have lockers. Children do not have enough textbooks to take home. Parents do not always know enough about extra-curricular activities.

Inspectors agreed with all the things parents like and also feel pupils suffer from not having a library. They agree that lockers are desirable but recognise that there is not enough space. Information to parents is good and inspectors did not find evidence that the school does not keep them informed about extra-curricular activities. There are enough textbooks for work in school, but some teachers are reluctant to allow pupils to take them home. Inspectors agreed that pupils would benefit from being able to take more textbooks home.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

Results in tests and examinations

1. Test results at the age of 14 are rising faster than the national increase over the last three years, and in 2000 were close to the national average.

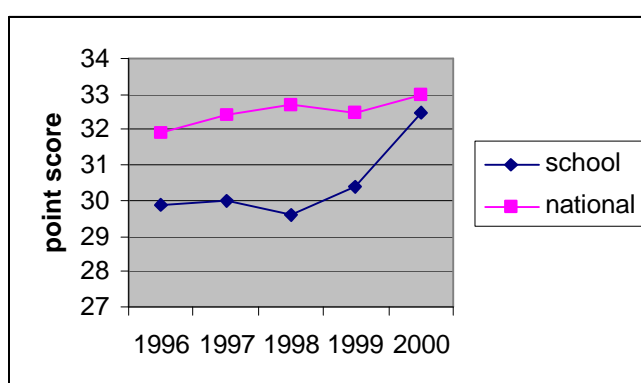


Figure 1

2. Figure 1 shows the average point scores, year by year since 1996 for all three core subjects of English, mathematics and science. There are some variations in the three subjects. English results were above average in 2000, science was close to average, and mathematics results were below average.

3. The improvement is partly the result of good planning and well-focused teaching. It is also due in part to pupils' improved attainment on entry to school in Year 7. In 1996 pupils' attainment on entry was well below average, and it is still below average.

4. Boys' results are better than the national picture. They do better than girls in science, by more than the national difference, and although girls do better than boys in English and mathematics, the difference is smaller than is seen nationally.

5. In GCSE in 2000, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher grades of A* to C and the average point score¹ were both well below average in all subjects except drama. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher grades of A* and A is also below average. Drama results have been consistently above average and rose still further in 2001. After drama the most successful subject is history. In 2000

¹ Where A*=8, A=7, B=6, C=5, D=4, E=3, F=2, G=1

results were just below the national average, mainly because boys did significantly better than girls.

6. Results in both English language and English literature were below average in 2000 but literature results were closer to the national figures. Since the school enters more pupils than average for the literature examination these results are higher than expected and indicate good achievement.

7. Mathematics results for 2000 are well below average and did not improve in 2001. The mathematics department is making strenuous attempts to continue the improved test results at age 14 into GCSE. The department has recently changed the course and textbooks GCSE grades. The percentage of pupils entered for the examination has increased. While this is a good move, it inevitably affects the percentage of pupils reaching higher grades adversely since most of the additional pupils achieve lower grades.

8. Science results were also well below average in 2000, but showed some improvement in 2001.

9. In all other subjects results at GCSE in 2000 were well below average, but all except geography improved in 2001.

10. Although girls' results are generally better than boys', the difference is less than seen nationally and in mathematics, science and history, boys out-performed girls. Boys do not do well in the short GCSE course religious education where, in 2000, only 6 per cent of boys gained a grade C or higher, compared with 36 per cent of girls. This was evidence of considerable underachievement. In 2001 there was some improvement; 16 per cent of boys and 34 per cent of girls obtained GCSE grade C or higher.

11. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minorities, or whose home language is not English is too small for a judgement to be made about the overall results of such a group.

Standards seen during the inspection

12. In most subjects the attainment in work and lessons seen during the inspection was close to average in Year 9 and higher than the levels achieved in tests and examinations in 2000. The higher standards in Year 11 are consistent with the improving results in 2001 and the predicted further improvement in 2002. Overall, standards are below average in Year 11.

13. Standards in English in Year 9 are average overall. Pupils use language with skill and pleasure and express themselves well, particularly in speech. The highest attainers are well above average in their ability to appreciate the layers of meaning in complex poems. In Year 11 standards are close to average. Pupils have made very good progress over the five years since they entered the school and overcome the initial low standards of English and reading. Even the lowest attainers can remember details of the texts they are studying, and identify appropriate evidence to support their ideas.

14. In Year 9 pupils are reaching average standards in mathematics. They have a good grasp of basic ideas and can apply knowledge of such techniques as probability to events in their own lives. They are not, however, so good at presenting ideas logically in their written work. Standards in Year 11 are below average but the

highest attainers are above average, for example, in their correct handling of formulae and ability to recognise patterns in results of investigations.

15. In science, standards in Year 9 are average overall but below average in Year 11. The lowest-attaining pupils, including many of those with special educational needs, can recognise and name simple scientific processes and work out simple scientific relationships, such as the connection between predators and prey in a familiar environment, and the way these form food-webs. Higher-attaining pupils carry out investigations independently and draw correct conclusions from their results.

16. Standards are below average in Year 9 in history, geography and religious education. However, standards in Year 11 in history have risen to being above average by Year 11, though they remain below average in geography and religious education.

17. In art and design and in design and technology pupils are working at above average levels in Year 9 and at average levels in Year 11. The lower attainment in Year 11 is largely a consequence of pupils' lower attainment on entry.

18. Standards seen in music are average in Year 9, and the good grounding is encouraging a growing number of pupils to take GCSE in Years 10 and 11. Standards in Year 11 vary across the group, but overall are above average.

19. Pupils learn well in the separate ICT lessons in Years 7 to 9 and attainment in Year 9 is average. However, less than a quarter of pupils in Years 10 and 11 have separate ICT lessons. The school relies on pupils acquiring the skills required by the National Curriculum through using ICT in other subjects. While this is enabling pupils to learn and reinforce basic skills such as word processing and use of the Internet, they do not meet all the aspects, such as control and using sensors with computers to measure and record quantities such as changes of temperature. Attainment across the ICT curriculum is therefore below average in Year 11.

20. In modern languages standards are average in Year 9 and below average in Year 11. The emphasis on speaking a modern language suits younger pupils well, particularly lower attainers and they make good progress in developing conversational skills and vocabulary. By Year 9 they can hold a simple conversation and describe everyday activities such as shopping. Standards are lower overall in Year 11 with only a small proportion achieving the expected levels for their age. The very small group who have been learning a second language for less than two years is making good progress and also reaching average levels.

21. In physical education pupils reach average standards in Year 9 and overall standards for most pupils are above average in Year 11. However, standards in the group taking GCSE are below average in Year 11. The weakest aspect of physical education in Year 11 is theory, which pupils do not find interesting.

22. Most of the few pupils for whom English is not their home language are making good progress. Pupils who arrived very recently have very little English and

the school is making provision for both to study a reduced timetable and giving additional help out of lessons. The pupils are settling well and their understanding of English is improving but it is too early to make a judgement about their progress.

Standards in literacy

23. Weaknesses in the expression and accuracy of written work reduce the levels of attainment of the majority of pupils including some who otherwise attain very good standards. Pupils often fail to organise and express their ideas clearly enough to communicate how much they know and understand. Pupils make too many mistakes in spelling, especially in words in every day use; for example, they confuse 'their' and 'there.' Usually they spell technical terms accurately. There is a need to identify methods of raising standards of literacy and to use them in all subjects rather than mostly in English, history and specialist lessons for pupils with special educational needs.

Standards in numeracy

24. Pupils, particularly those in Years 7 to 9 who have the benefit of the National Numeracy Strategy, handle number successfully in mathematics lessons. They can often cope with techniques such as measurement when they occur in other subjects. However, there is no common policy for the way mathematics is applied across the curriculum. This means that some topics, for example, graph drawing, have not been taught in mathematics by the time they are needed in science; this adversely affects the quality and presentation of pupils' work in science, geography and other subjects.

Pupils' achievement

25. Achievement in English, over Years 7 to 9 is very good, in science it is good, and in mathematics it is satisfactory. In view of the low standards on entry, the results indicate good achievement overall.

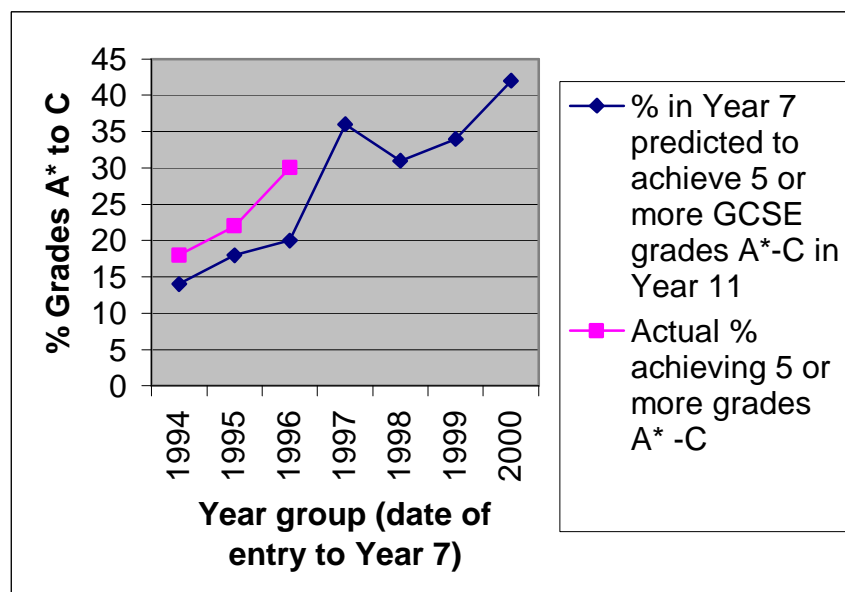


Figure 2

26. The lower line in figure 2 shows the percentage of pupils predicted to achieve five or more GCSE grades A* to C, based on recognised tests taken in Year 7, soon after they enter the school. The upper line shows the actual grade achieved in the last two years. From this it can be seen that pupils' attainment on entry is improving. Additionally it shows how the school is enabling pupils to do better than expected because the results are significantly higher than those predicted by their tests in Year 7. Results for 2001, though not yet validated, met the school's ambitious target and were an all-time-high for the school. The even more demanding target of 42 per cent of pupils achieving five or more grades A* to C in 2002 is realistic.

27. Results are well below those of schools where a similar proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals, but close to those who had similar results in tests at the age of 14.

28. Overall the figures show that the school's results in 2000 are better than predicted by pupils' attainment on entry. The greatest gain in learning happens in Years 7 to 9. In most subjects, results in GCSE in 2000 were in line with what could be expected from the test results at the end of Year 9. Evidence during the inspection supports the judgement that the achievement of many pupils is very good in Years 7 to 9. The achievement of pupils currently in Years 10 and 11 is better than results in 2000 indicate.

29. The improvement in the last two years is partly due to improved attendance in these years. The school's analysis of GCSE results pinpoints attendance as a key factor in success. A number of pupils who could have been expected to get better results had a high rate of absence in Years 10 and 11 and missed their expected grades. On the other hand, a few pupils whose attendance was very good achieved higher than expected grades.

30. Analysis of test scores and examination results shows that students with special educational needs achieve more highly than could reasonably be expected on the evidence available when they enter the school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

31. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and they usually enjoy lessons. Relationships in the school, particularly between pupils and adults, are very good. Pupils play a significant role in the life of the school and in the way it works. Behaviour is generally good although a minority of pupils, often, although not always boys, can be disruptive in lessons. The positive attitudes, relationships and behaviour seen during the previous inspection are still evident.

32. Overall boys at both stages show commitment and willingness to take part in lessons, reading aloud, answering questions, and working in groups. Where developing literacy skills is integral to lessons, boys' attitudes are positive and confident. Where the pace of lessons is slow or they sit too long without being

actively involved their interest flags and, at times, immature behaviour or restlessness occurs.

33. Parents who replied to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicated that their children enjoy coming to school. Pupils are generally keen to get involved in lessons, for example in volunteering to read aloud and answer questions in history - despite some pupils having reading difficulties. Attendance at the good number of extra-curricular clubs held at lunchtimes and after school is high and this is more evidence to support pupils' positive attitudes.

34. Pupils are polite and friendly; they respect their teachers and are happy to talk to visitors. Cramped conditions in corridors, caused by the excessive numbers of pupils using them, particularly at lesson changeover time, can occasionally cause too much pushing and shoving for comfort and safety. The quality of behaviour in lessons is noticeably weaker in Year 9. Here, some find it difficult to settle down and work productively. When lessons are not tightly managed, pupils will seize any advantage, for instance in becoming noisy while the teacher hands out work sheets and then refusing to work sensibly together in pairs. Teachers work very hard on these occasions to mitigate the disruption to learning, with some success.

35. The quality of relationships in the school is one of its strengths. In particular, the relationships between teachers and pupils are especially positive and there is two-way respect given and received on most occasions. Pupils with disabilities are fully included in school life, helped where appropriate and treated fairly. During unsupervised activities, pupils are reliable and trustworthy.

36. The rate of permanent exclusions from school is very low and rarely exceeds one per year. The number of times fixed term exclusions are used is rising and last year was used 55 times. The school explains this rise as the consequence of their philosophy for trying to keep more pupils in school who have significant emotional and behavioural problems. Fixed term exclusions are used when all else has been tried and they serve as a warning to parents about the seriousness of the situation. They work by bringing parents into school to discuss their child and the way forward when all other attempts to talk with parents have failed.

37. Pupils report that whilst some bullying does happen occasionally, they do not consider it a problem. This is supported by inspection evidence. Pupils take advantage of the different avenues for help when they need to and report favourably about the advice and assistance staff give them.

38. Pupils' involvement in school life is good and supports their personal development well. For example, several were enthusiastic about their chances of winning when they took part in a competition held at York Magistrates court. Pupils in Years 8 and 10 volunteered to act as teachers and helpers for the languages summer school. The school council is active and has recently been looking at the problem of litter in the community. They suggested the 'in confidence' box which pupils use to ask for help or make suggestions. Volunteers help compile the school's own 'Community News' and work with a local paper to produce 'Kelvin Hall News'. Pupils support others in need - a good sum of money was raised on Red Nose Day when pupils paid to come in their own clothes.

39. The school has made good progress on the key issue from the previous inspection, to raise attendance and it has risen steadily over the years. There is a clear divide between the attendance of younger pupils, which is now in line with secondary schools nationally and that for older pupils (especially in Year 11) where it remains below 90 per cent. Here, the levels of absence authorised by parents as being genuine but doubted by the school, remains high. Pupils' attendance is therefore judged as unsatisfactory overall.

40. The school feels that attitudes to attendance are slowly changing and can point to some family success stories where, as different brothers and sisters come into the school, the attendance for younger siblings is now considerably better.

41. However, parents taking holidays during term time is a growing problem, to which the school is responding. Last year, holidays accounted for 20 per cent of all time lost from school. There is little difference in the attendance of boys and girls, although more girls than boys play truant from lessons in Year 11.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

42. Teaching is very good overall. Over 80 per cent of lessons seen were good and over a third were very well taught. There was very little unsatisfactory or poor teaching, and in six lessons, spread across English (drama), history, art and design

and physical education, the teaching was excellent. Teaching is particularly successful in Years 7 to 9, and leads to very good learning.

43. The most significant quality of the good teaching is teachers' ability to interest pupils and sustain their concentration. Careful and thoughtful planning allows teachers to move swiftly from one challenging activity to another, taking the class with them all the time. Teachers are aware of the need to motivate all pupils, and boys in particular, and most have a good range of strategies to involve pupils in the lessons. In a Year 9 German lesson with a low-attaining group, the teacher engaged the class, which was showing signs of restlessness, by getting them to recite, as a whole class, a number of phrases associated with shopping. All pupils joined in the rhythmic repetition with enthusiasm, and listened attentively when a pupil and the teacher followed the repetition by holding a simple conversation in which the pupil played the shopper and the teacher played the shopkeeper. The teacher insisted on high standards of pronunciation, and gave the pupils a sense of satisfaction at the end of the lesson when she congratulated them and highlighted their achievement – "Well done – now you can go into a shop in Germany and ask for what you want!"

44. There is a significant minority of pupils who do not find it easy to conform to the school's reasonable requirements, but instances of unsatisfactory or poor behaviour are rare because teachers are quick to deal with lapses before they become problems. In some lessons teaching needs to be very good in order to maintain an atmosphere in which pupils can make satisfactory or good progress. In a few lessons the teaching was so effective that, although the attitudes of a few pupils were unsatisfactory, the teacher made sure all could learn, sometimes in spite of their reluctance.

45. Teachers frequently illustrate new ideas with examples that pupils understand. In a Year 8 mathematics lesson introducing the idea of probability the teacher used examples of results in football matches, and the chances of winning the national lottery that got both boys and girls talking and thinking about chance, possibility and likelihood. In a geography lesson with Year 8, all of whom had special educational needs, on physical and human features, pupils were interested to discuss local features that they knew, and were able to contribute their own ideas and experiences.

46. Teachers are very clear about what they want pupils to do. They explain well and frequently share the aims of the lesson with pupils. They also make sure pupils understand the sequence of work they are following and are good at linking the current lesson with what went before, without lengthy recapitulation. They are also very clear about what pupils should be able to do and how they will be assessed. Marking is usually thorough, helpful, and often based on National Curriculum levels or GCSE and GNVQ criteria to help pupils recognise both how they are doing, and what they need to do to improve.

47. In most lessons, teachers use questioning well to involve pupils and get them to think. They are very conscious of needing to keep boys involved and frequently direct questions at individuals. While this usually works well, sometimes teachers are unaware that boys, who are in the majority in many classes, take over the

discussion and girls become passive. For example, in an English lesson where only a quarter of the class were girls, the boys were so dominant that the girls became very quiet and contributed little to the lesson. A similar effect was seen in some modern language and mathematics lessons.

48. Teachers are effective at motivating boys and helping them learn well. There is good practice in all subjects but is most common in lower-attaining groups in Years 7 and 8, and in all years in modern foreign languages and English. Particular characteristics of this teaching are:

- lessons which move at a fast pace through a variety of activities,
- lessons where learning occurs step by step via short term goals,
- activities which give boys "hands-on" experience or involve them orally or performing simple tasks in front of the class successfully,
- colourful, visual resources, especially the interactive white-board,
- clear preparation for writing tasks,
- group tasks, which allow time for active reflection and putting themselves in others' shoes.

49. Sometimes the concentration on oral responses means that pupils do not get enough practice in expressing themselves in writing. This was seen in a number of subjects, including mathematics and science.

50. In the very few unsatisfactory lessons, either the teacher fails to manage the class well, and learning suffers because inattentive pupils distract others, or the teacher talks too much and directs the lesson to such an extent that pupils are not given enough opportunity to think for themselves.

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

Learning opportunities

51. The school's aim, to provide a broad and balanced range of learning opportunities that are accessible to all, successfully influences the design and organisation of the curriculum. The quality and range of learning opportunities is good. The requirements of the National Curriculum are met, with the exception of ICT in Years 10 and 11. There is a good extra-curricular programme, and a good, well-planned careers programme. The school's philosophy, of doing everything it can to meet the needs of all its pupils, leads to very good equality of access and opportunity to follow available courses. Good links with local colleges, and with Hull and Lincoln Universities, help the school to provide activities to encourage pupils to continue with their education post-16.

52. The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 meets statutory requirements. Drama is provided as a separate subject, and this has improved the range of the curriculum since the previous inspection. Some pupils have a chance to study two modern foreign languages in Year 9, although that does result in the loss of some time from science lessons, and the take-up of a second language in Years 10 and 11 is low.

Availability of some resources limits the breadth of the art and design curriculum; for example, there is no ceramics. Pupils have full access to ICT through separate lessons in the subject.

53. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 has many good features but does not fully meet requirements because there is an omission in ICT. Pupils use ICT in Years 10 and 11 in a number of subjects but these opportunities are not monitored closely enough to make sure all pupils receive their entitlement.

54. There are three main routes through the curriculum for Years 10 and 11. Pupils can follow courses that all lead to GCSE accreditation. They can combine GCSE courses with a GNVQ in one of three areas; leisure and tourism, art and design or ICT. A small number of pupils follows a life skills course. This course is now linked to external accreditation, at several levels, and the school is taking part in a national pilot with Hull College of Further Education, and the local education authority, to enable some pupils to gain a full level 1 NVQ in construction by the end of Year 11. Additional effective individual support for these pupils is provided in a range of subjects through their life skills classes.

55. Although two classes take a second modern foreign language in Year 9, only a small number of pupils choose to continue with this in Years 10 and 11. If pupils want to specialise further in languages, arrangements can be made to take Latin, or an additional foreign language, after school through links with the local colleges or with the university.

56. The programme of personal, social and health education is well planned and co-ordinated. There are no regular lessons in Year 9 but there is satisfactory provision through a series of planned days, for example a day on drugs issues. Pupils are well prepared to make choices, of options in Years 10 and 11, and routes post 16, by an effective careers programme. Pupils in Year 10 take part in two weeks' worthwhile work experience; the school uses its growing links with business to help to organise this.

57. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 who lack basic literacy and numeracy skills are placed in transitional groups. They study the same subjects as pupils in other classes but are taught by a smaller number of teachers including a class teacher who takes them for several subjects. The class teachers are very skilful in helping pupils to improve their skills and to develop positive attitudes to their work and each other. The school has received the Basic Skills Award Quality Mark as a recognition of the work it has done in helping to improve standards in this area.

58. Alternative provision is made in Years 10 and 11 for students for whom a full range of GCSE courses might be inappropriate. There are GNVQ courses at foundation and intermediate levels, courses in basic skills with qualifications awarded by Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) and the certificate of achievement in some subjects and work-related courses provided by the local college of further education. The range and quality of this provision benefits pupils and illustrates the determination of the school to make the best possible provision for those with special educational needs.

59. The school successfully adapts the curriculum to meet the needs of individuals and encourage older pupils, often those whose attendance is sporadic, back into school. Courses such as Level 1 construction at Hull College and a Life Skills course (combining work experience with basic life skills such as baby-sitting and First Aid) are good examples.

60. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection in curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs in all years. Transition classes are now provided in Years 7 and 8, an additional specialist has been appointed and there now is wider provision of choice of options in Years 10 and 11.

61. The provision for extra-curricular activities is good. A high proportion of pupils take part in sporting events, including representative teams for both girls and boys. There is a good programme of exchange visits and of musical events. Visits to museums, artists in residence, study trips abroad and a number of lunchtime and after-school ICT clubs all help to enrich the quality of education for pupils.

62. The issues raised in the previous inspection report have mostly been successfully addressed. There is now a good range of vocational courses. Assessment has improved. Requirements for religious education are now met, but ICT is still not meeting statutory requirements for all pupils in Years 10 and 11.

Personal development

63. Provision for spiritual development has improved since the previous inspection. The spiritual aspects of major world faiths are explored in religious education lessons and in some assemblies. Assemblies focus on spiritual aspects of life such as 'Who is my neighbour?' by comparing the writings from Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and Hinduism. Opportunities to look at ideas beyond everyday experience are written into teaching schemes and followed. For example, in art and design, pupils often marvel at the beautiful works of art shown to them, and, in music, pupils derive pleasure from listening and exploring mood. In geography, pupils consider the awesome power of nature in, for example, studies of tectonics and earthquakes. Contributions from the English departments, science and design and technology help pupils to become aware of poetry, astronomy and "amazing" electronics.

64. Registration time in the morning is well used, for example to help pupils improve their study skills but the school does not fully meet the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of worship for all pupils.

65. The school encourages pupils to develop a sense of social and moral responsibility by celebrating all forms of success and raising pupils' self esteem. In lessons, moral themes are discussed to help pupils make their own decisions about, for instance, the effect of technology on the environment, inequality between underdeveloped and developed countries. Issues that affect pupils' lives more directly, such as poverty, abuse, disability, old age, racial prejudice and discrimination are dealt with sensitively and ensure pupils find out about fair ways of dealing with problems and how to get help.

66. The Summer School has been a great success, both in supporting pupils' social skills and in extending their literacy and artistic skills. Pupils from Kelvin Hall helped children from local primary schools during the sessions. The quadrangle, newly painted and decorated with mosaics and wall paintings, sculptures and extracts from creative writings, is a lasting reminder of the week.

67. Provision for cultural development is very good and has improved since the previous inspection. Teaching plans in subjects include ways to enrich pupils' cultural development. In art and design, pupils learn about painting and sculpture from other countries and cultures such as African tribal and Aboriginal art, Islamic designs, French impressionists and portraiture through the ages. In history, pupils discover respect for the Mughol emperors and the lack of regard for peoples' cultures for example, at the time of the slave trade. In addition to the more usual Western classical music, pupils hear about the origins of 'blues' and listen to Chinese instruments. All these experiences help to prepare pupils properly for living in a multicultural society. In modern foreign languages, cultural development is excellent. Pupils have foreign national teachers from France and Germany, they have trips and exchanges, there is a pen pal scheme with Hungary and Russia and the school has regular contact with teachers from Russia and Sierra Leone. It is a Comenius Scheme member. Because of all these factors, this school is one of only 47 nationally that have received an international school award.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

68. The school cares very well for the needs of the individual and there is a very good range of systems, which are effectively supporting pupils' academic and personal development. The school goes to great lengths to ensure pupils are supported, in their personal and academic life, in a wide range of ways. There has been further improvement in this aspect of the school's work, described as being good in the previous inspection report.

69. There are very good procedures for promoting good behaviour and monitoring any challenging behaviour. A minority of pupils has the capacity for some very disruptive and anti-social behaviour and the school deals very well through a variety of different methods. Members of staff are experienced in handling behaviour through a non-confrontational and positive approach, which successfully averts many incidents that have the potential to escalate. Members of staff show they respect pupils and pupils usually respond in a similar vein. A system of 'time out' has recently started, operated by experienced staff, to remove pupils from the classroom who refuse to co-operate with teachers. This is preventing their behaviour from disrupting others and early signs are encouraging.

70. The highly effective social inclusion unit (SIU), operational for a year now and funded through the government sponsored Excellence in Cities programme, works with small numbers of pupils, mainly boys, who are at risk of exclusion through their challenging behaviour, often caused through their inability to cope with the work in class. An experienced team approach between teacher and teacher's aide, involves helping pupils to cope both socially and academically.

71. There is a strong focus in the unit on teaching literacy and numeracy in a way designed to keep pupils interested, for example through studying the Ancient Egyptians. Good teaching includes a consistent emphasis on the development of language and discussions about behaviour and ways it can be improved. As a result of the considerable amounts of individual help staff provide, the unit is very successful in helping pupils to gain the confidence, knowledge and skills to cope with the demands and pressures of learning in the classroom. This support is carefully continued as pupils gradually re-integrate back into their lessons, with many pupils maintaining a relationship with staff long after they have left the unit. The work in the SIU has had a dramatic effect on improving the attendance of some younger pupils where it was low. They now want to come to school and learn, because of the interesting work, good support and increased self-confidence in their abilities.

72. Procedures for monitoring attendance are thorough and there is a productive working relationship with the Educational Welfare Officer who supports the school well. Members of staff follow persistently those pupils who are absent for any length of time, including those who have odd days off here and there. The school has responded to the effect of parents taking holidays during term time by tightening up procedures and making parents more aware of their responsibilities.

73. The school deals swiftly and effectively with bullying and pupils interviewed by inspectors (who asked them about many aspects of school life) were full of praise for the help they receive from staff. Inspectors agree with pupils about the good levels of support provided. There are several avenues of help available, confidentially if need be. For example:

- 'befrienders' who are specially trained pupils able to help others,
- an 'in confidence' box for those who do not wish to approach a member of staff directly for help,
- drop-in sessions with the school nurse.

The school's records show that pupils use these for a variety of problems.

74. Learning mentors, funded through the Excellence in Cities initiative, are developing their role in school to have a greater impact on pupils whose problems are preventing them from learning effectively. This is additional to the mentoring provided by members of staff at the school who encourage pupils capable of higher achievement in their exams.

75. Child Protection procedures are very good and many senior members of staff have been specially trained. The school has dealt appropriately with the health and safety issues raised in the previous inspection report.

76. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress have improved since the previous inspection and are now good. The school tests pupils early in Year 7 and uses this and information from tests in primary schools to build up a clear picture of their attainment. Throughout the following three years these results are used to check whether individuals are doing as well as expected and to place them into appropriate groups. A particular strength is the way in which teachers in all subjects make pupils aware of the National Curriculum level they are reaching and what they need to do to get beyond that level.

77. Use of assessment is good because it is regular and systematic in English, modern foreign languages and design and technology. In religious education assessment is not yet well developed, and in ICT in Years 10 and 11 there is no procedure for checking whether all pupils are receiving the experience of computers to which they are entitled.

78. Good use is made of information from assessment to help plan and improve the curriculum. At the end of Year 7, for example, faculties use the information they have gathered, so far, to discuss pupils' attainment and decide on the most suitable groups in which to place pupils. Faculties build assessment tasks into their planning and are increasingly using the results of these assessments to modify work to suit pupils' needs. Teachers set realistic targets for pupils with special educational needs in well-constructed individual educational plans, which are reviewed regularly and frequently.

79. The school's assessment procedures are effective in raising boys' attainment. Specific groups have targets and mentors who monitor and record their progress.

80. The school has made very good strides since the previous inspection in checking on pupils' progress and lending support where individuals are not performing up to expectations. The good information held by the school is used to predict how well pupils can be expected to achieve and to set targets on the basis of that information. If, by the start of Year 11, pupils are not reaching the targets expected of them, and they are at risk of dropping below the threshold between grades C and D at GCSE, they join a very good programme of individual mentoring and have regular interviews with a member of staff to discuss their progress. The annual review day in November when parents and teachers meet to discuss individual pupils' progress is a recent and successful feature of the school's support and is much appreciated by parents.

81. Meeting individual needs and opening out the range of opportunities for the majority go hand-in-hand creating a climate of high aspiration and thinking about others. Wheelchair users who take part in sports days, pupils for whom school is sometimes too much of a challenge, girls who play rugby, high achievers who want to see inside a university, pupils uprooted from their homeland, and many others who have highly individual needs represent the reality of very good provision for equal opportunities at Kelvin Hall.

82. The support for pupils who are at an early stage of learning English is satisfactory. At the time of the inspection there were two such pupils in Year 11 who had recently joined the school. The school has devised individual programmes for these pupils, so that they follow a restricted timetable and are given additional help from pastoral and learning support teachers. The local education authority has assessed their needs and is to provide additional support.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

83. Parents are very supportive of the school and its popularity in the area and over subscription is testimony to this. They have had a significant impact on school life just recently. Proposals last year to close the school galvanised parents who campaigned vigorously to keep it open. Members of staff attribute the fact that the proposals were dropped to the hard work and determination of parents. The positive picture seen at the time of the previous inspection, concerning the relationship between school and parents, has been further improved.

84. As part of its undertaking, the school responds by having very good links with parents. The Home School Agreement, introduced some years before becoming a legal requirement, is a carefully considered document given due prominence when pupils start. The school is pleased that every single new parent and pupil signs the agreement in the presence of members of staff. Links with parents work very well in several ways. By regularly consulting parents using questionnaires, the school canvasses their opinion and responds by modifying its practice accordingly. For example, the school has changed times and arrangements for parents' evenings. A particularly noteworthy example of very good practice are the curriculum guides, sent to parents of younger pupils every half term and compiled into one booklet for older pupils. These explain to parents what exactly will be taught and more

importantly, suggests ways in which they can help at home. For example, parents can support their children by visiting particular places of interest or helping with specific areas of research, such as those for geography.

85. The good quality communications to parents include an informative newsletter called 'Community News' and 'Kelvin Hall News' which is delivered to 5000 homes locally. Pupils' annual reports are generally well written and give clear information to let parents know how well their child is doing. Most subjects include targets for pupils to focus on, to help them improve. The recent introduction of an academic review day is working well and parents at the meeting with inspectors said how helpful they found it. The school contacted parents who did not reply to the invitation and made home visits and arranged special early and late times to suit some. As a result of the school's hard work three-quarters of all parents attended.

86. The results of the parents' questionnaire before the inspection show that parents are pleased with nearly all aspects of school life. Indeed, there were more parents who strongly agreed than is often seen. They especially agree about children being happy at the school and teachers having high expectations. Parents feel the school is improving and inspectors agree with this. A small minority are not happy about homework, being kept informed about their child's progress, they do not feel the school is working closely with parents and they do not feel the school provides a good range of activities outside lessons. Inspectors do not agree with this minority view. With regard to the way homework is provided, inspectors judge it to be good and better than many other secondary schools. There is a good range of extra curricular activities, often linked to the curriculum, for example, clubs for art and design, languages and sport.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

87. The school is very well led. The headteacher has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. He commands the respect and loyalty of all the staff, both teaching and non-teaching. He is very well supported by effective deputies and other senior staff, and there is a powerful sense of teamwork throughout the school.

88. The school's development plan runs for three years and is very well laid out and easy to follow. Planning is closely linked to the school's budget and where difficult choices have to be made the management tries to keep the disadvantages to a minimum. For example, the decision to convert the library to an ICT suite was not made lightly. Plans ensured that the least harm was done to pupils' opportunities to choose books and read independently, by establishing banks of reference books in departments and a fiction section in the English department. Nevertheless, the lack of a library is a big weakness and the school has made strenuous, but so far unsuccessful, efforts to establish a community library in partnership with the local council.

89. Subject leaders, heads of year, and teachers with responsibility for particular aspects, such as gifted and talented pupils or the SIU, are effective, committed and enthusiastic.

90. Teaching is monitored well by the headteacher and senior managers. Heads of faculty and departments also monitor some lessons, but this is patchy, and not included in current job descriptions. A minor weakness is the effect of the faculty structure on some departments where the responsibility for monitoring the work of colleagues is not clear enough. For example, the physical education department meets only as part of the performing arts faculty, whereas there is a need for more interaction at subject level. Similarly, monitoring geography is the responsibility of the head of humanities, who is not a geographer, and the head of geography needs to be more closely involved in seeing how his department works.

91. Governors are very effective, both in supporting the work of the school, and in helping the school move forward. They understand how to use their influence in helping the school to take strategic decisions, for example about offering all pupils the opportunity to study two languages.

92. New initiatives, of which there have been many since the previous inspection, are chosen well to suit the particular needs of the school, and are having a favourable impact, both because of their suitability, and because they are introduced with skill and sensitivity. A good example is the initiative to encourage pupils to see university as a realistic goal, particularly when they may be the first from their families to take up higher education. The links with local universities that result in pupils becoming familiar with a university campus, and in a number being offered provisional places as early as in Year 8 are highly appropriate for this school.

93. The work of the learning support department benefits from very good leadership and from the strength of teamwork to which all the specialist staff contribute. The accommodation is adequate for the department's needs. The main teaching room is pleasant and helps pupils feel positive about their work.

94. The main recommendations of the Code of Practice for the identification and assessment of students with special needs have been implemented. Transition plans to help pupils aged 14, who have statements in their final years at school and into the next stage of their education or training, are held by the local education authority and were not available for inspection. Detailed records are kept of the progress of pupils on the register. Reviews of the progress of those at the higher stages of the register are held at appropriate intervals and almost always are attended by parents.

95. The school makes very good use of funds, for example for providing mentors, running the SIU and providing for pupils with special educational needs. Spending on resources is linked closely to the school's development plan.

96. The school is good at getting the best value from all its services and initiatives. With the help of information from the local education authority it compares its performance with other schools in a similar position locally, and with schools nationally. All initiatives are evaluated thoroughly by comparing their performance with targets that are both ambitious and easy to measure. For example, the initiative to raise the attainment of pupils identified as gifted and talented has targets based on GCSE results.

97. There are sufficient appropriately qualified teachers who are generally deployed effectively. There are a number of very effective support staff and teachers who support pupils with special educational needs. In-service training provision is effectively guided by the demands of national initiatives, the school and faculty development plans, and other perceived needs.

98. Staff development is good and training is closely matched to need. For example, some teachers are given help and support according to their individual professional needs. All teachers receive good quality training in initiatives, such as provision for gifted and talented pupils, that affect the whole school. Induction for newly qualified teachers is well planned and effective.

99. The quality of the work of learning support assistants is very good. The number of hours for which they are employed is insufficient to meet all needs. Other support staff, such as laboratory and ICT technicians, and those who take care of the premises are effective and efficient and contribute to the school's pleasant atmosphere.

100. The school has benefited from a programme of re-building and refurbishment that has improved the quality of the environment in ICT, design and technology, special educational needs, modern foreign languages and the dining area. Overcrowding remains a problem, particularly in science where some teaching has

to take place in classrooms because of a shortage of specialist facilities. The quality of the environment in the laboratories is unsatisfactory. The remaining accommodation is just satisfactory for the present curriculum to be taught but limits further curriculum development in some subjects. For example, there is a shortage of indoor facilities in physical education where cramped changing rooms and the need for alternative indoor space prevents the school from expanding the amount of gymnastics and dance. The buildings are well cared for and many subjects, particularly art and design and design and technology, encourage and help pupils by displaying good examples of their work.

101. Apart from the lack of a library, the other resources for learning are satisfactory overall. Departments have received additional funds to increase the number of textbooks in use, especially for Years 10 and 11, and there are four new interactive whiteboards. In religious education the provision for textbooks is improving but there is still a shortage of artefacts and videos. In art and design, the lack of space and resources prevent the department from teaching courses that traditionally are attractive to boys, such as ceramics, printing and photography.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

102. In order to raise the attainment of students, the governors and management should:

- (1) Ensure that pupils in Years 10 and 11 have full access to all aspects of the National Curriculum for ICT, either by providing separate lessons or by ensuring, through careful planning and record keeping, that where the ICT is covered in other subjects, the whole ICT curriculum is taught to all pupils.
(Paragraphs: 53, 77, 142, 147, 156, 168, 179, 190-192, 208)
- (2) Take all possible steps to improve the quality of accommodation, and re-institute a library as soon as possible.
(Paragraphs: 88, 101, 117, 161, 172, 190)
- (3) Raise the standards of literacy throughout the school, and particularly the accuracy and clarity of pupils' writing by:
 - increasing the amount of writing at length in subjects across the curriculum;
(Paragraphs: 14, 49, 116, 119, 126, 139, 141, 144, 158, 174, 231)
 - giving pupils more tasks involving research, from books as well as from electronic sources;
(Paragraphs: 114, 117, 144, 145, 176)
 - putting more emphasis on teaching pupils to spell words that are in common use;
(Paragraphs: 23, 112, 114, 120, 158, 161, 232)

- (4) Raise attendance in Years 10 and 11 by persisting with the school's already considerable efforts to persuade pupils and parents of the importance of regular attendance.
(Paragraphs: 29, 39, 41, 59)

In addition to the above key issues, the school should consider the following other lesser concerns for inclusion in its action plan:

- Extend monitoring of teaching to enable all heads of department to see their colleagues at work, so that departments can decide how to deal with the issues above in ways that are appropriate to their own subjects.
(Paragraphs: 90, 174, 235)
- Establish and implement a policy to improve accuracy in numeracy in all subjects. (Paragraphs: 135, 212)
- Improve the quality of resources in religious education, where there is at present too little audio-visual material, and in art and design, where some optional aspects of the subjects, such as ceramics and photography, cannot be studied at present.
(Paragraphs: 102, 156, 235)

THE ACHIEVEMENT OF BOYS

103. Boys do better at Kelvin Hall than in most other schools and achievement is good. This is due to a well-planned series of initiatives, overseen efficiently by a deputy head, to raise boys' motivation and attainment. At GCSE they lag behind girls in a number of subjects, but by a lesser amount than is usually found, and in geography, mathematics and science they did better than girls in 2000. Girls overtook boys in 2001.

104. Teachers have developed a culture of boys' achievement through:

- allowing boys to show what they can do,
- expectations that taking part is normal for both boys and girls,
- being patient, encouraging and non-confrontational,
- giving feedback to raise boys' self-esteem,
- building their confidence before expecting success,
- allowing them to make choices and take responsibility,
- being fair in the treatment of both boys and girls.

105. The equal opportunities policy recommends using seating arrangements and group tasks where boys and girls mix and share learning together. This is not standard, though there is good practice in languages, mathematics and English. There are some instances of "laddish" immature behaviour in Year 9 where these expectations are not systematically in place.

106. In Years 7 and 8, boys in the "transitional" groups of pupils with learning difficulties, where there are more boys than girls, are very enthusiastic and this helps to maintain their concentration for the whole 50 minute lesson. Sometimes boys are less confident and therefore take longer to work up to speed, as happened in a Year 11 art and design lesson and in a Year 9 drama when planning a role-play.

107. Boys' attitudes to writing seem to depend on how well they are guided beforehand. There was some perceptive writing in English by Year 9 boys as they prepared a storyboard. In Years 10 and 11 some very good, collaboration and imagination was evident in history where boys in groups organised knowledge about the Russian Civil War into a board game. This is an effective way of encouraging reflective learning. Where there are clear boundaries boys' enjoy the challenge and focus their energies.

108. A Year 10 all boys English group exists, to allow a more effective balance of boys and girls in the two remaining groups. This allows teachers to target boys specifically and compare performance across groups.

109. Additional references to boys' achievement are made within the body of the report.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	171
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	54

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	6	55	78	29	2	1	0
Percentage	4	32	45.5	17	1	0.5	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	969
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	174

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	22
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	190

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	10

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	14

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	8.9
National comparative data	7.7

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	2.4
National comparative data	1.1

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	106	83	189

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	60	64	75
	Girls	65	53	48
	Total	125	117	123
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	66 (49)	62 (48)	65 (48)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	34 (19)	33 (23)	23 (12)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	64	67	68
	Girls	59	58	53
	Total	123	125	121
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	65 (65)	66 (58)	64 (55)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	32 (25)	41 (30)	26 (18)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (28)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	98	91	189

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	20	85	93
	Girls	21	75	81
	Total	41	160	174
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	22 (18)	85 (84)	92 (90)
	National	47.4 (46.6)	90.6 (90.9)	95.6 (95.8)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	27
	National	38.4

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	3
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	959
Any other minority ethnic group	5

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	55	1
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)	54.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.7

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	491

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	77
---	----

Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	25.7
Key Stage 4	21.1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

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

	£
Total income	2 486 425
Total expenditure	2 446 216
Expenditure per pupil	2 517
Balance brought forward from previous year	(19 643)
Balance carried forward to next year	20 566

Figures in parentheses indicate negative values

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	10.5

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	969
Number of questionnaires returned	220

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	35	56	5	1	3
My child is making good progress in school.	32	55	3	0	10
Behaviour in the school is good.	30	54	6	0	10
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	26	47	13	4	9
The teaching is good.	36	53	1	0	10
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	30	45	12	2	11
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	54	32	7	1	8
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	30	3	0	5
The school works closely with parents.	39	40	12	2	7
The school is well led and managed.	48	43	1	0	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	42	43	2	0	13
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	22	46	12	2	18

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

ENGLISH

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

Strengths

- Rising standards of attainment.
- Good quality of teaching and learning.
- Meeting the needs of pupils at all levels of attainment.
- The quality of leadership and management.

Areas for improvement

- In collaboration with other subjects, improving the clarity and accuracy of pupils' written work.
- Absence of a school library restricts learning opportunities.

110. Results of national tests and examination results show significant improvement over the last three years. In 2000, results gained by pupils aged 14 were above the national averages for pupils gaining levels 5 and above, and also level 6 and above. These are evidence of very good achievement. Continuing improvement is shown by the results for 2001. The proportion of pupils gaining grades A* to C at GCSE in both English and English literature increased more markedly than the national trend but was still below the average for 2000. Most pupils gained better results in English than in other subjects in which they were examined. Provisional results for 2001 show further improvement but not enough to match the national average for the previous year. In tests taken at 14 and at GCSE girls gained better results than boys but by a narrower margin than the national difference.

111. Evidence of the inspection confirms that standards of attainment are continuing to improve. On entry to the school, the range of attainment is very wide and includes a significant number of pupils of high ability. Overall attainment, however, is below average because a larger number enter the school with poor skills in reading and writing. The attainment of pupils in Year 9 is above average. At this stage, pupils speak clearly and confidently and listen carefully to teachers and each other with good understanding. They work well in pairs or groups and make perceptive comments on how writers gain their effects and on characters and relationships in books they read. Standards of reading aloud improve from reading accurately to reading confidently and interpreting the sense. Pupils in all years enjoy highlighting text to select words and ideas that illustrate features under discussion and become skilful at identifying significant details.

112. Standards of written work are lower than those of oral work and are average overall. All pupils learn to write in recognisable sentences and paragraphs and most use widening vocabularies, including appropriate use of technical terms. Higher attainers write clearly and accurately and present opinions and judgements based upon evidence. They are confident in writing for a range of purposes such as storyboards for a film based upon a poem by Heaney, which they are studying. The quality of writing, even of pupils at this good level of attainment, is sometimes reduced by misspelling of words in common use, including confusion of words of similar sound such as 'there' and 'their'. Pupils in the middle range show the same kind of weakness in spelling and punctuation is less secure though they communicate clearly and many are ambitious in their choice of words. The writing and reading skills of the lowest attainers show very good improvement. In Years 7 and 8, these pupils benefit from being taught a number of subjects by the same teacher with a strong emphasis on developing confidence and basic skills. Most pupils show pride in the presentation of their work whether hand-written or word-processed.

113. Standards are average in Years 10 and 11 and higher than in recent years, but are better than predictions based on their attainment as assessed at the time of entry. Pupils are confident in speech. They gain knowledge and understanding because they listen to teachers and each other and they are willing to explore ideas for themselves. This quality was particularly evident in a Year 11 class studying 'A View from the Bridge'. Presentations on aspects of the play showed intelligent personal responses and imaginative styles such as filmed evidence of the presenters as actors and evaluators.

114. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in Years 7 to 9, particularly in Years 7 and 8 where the teaching in the transitional groups is very well suited to their needs. They make good progress in Years 10 and 11, using re-drafting and word processing to improve their written work. The quality of written work is reduced even more than in earlier years by inaccuracies such as misspelling. Many pupils are dependent upon teachers' advice on the organisation of essays and are unable to show clearly how much they know and understand.

115. Pupils have positive attitudes to their work. They collaborate well with teachers and each other. From Year 7, they respond to encouragement to consider how well they are learning and what they need to do to improve further. This is a significant strength especially when preparing for GCSE. Pupils respond well to challenge because they become confident in themselves, their teachers and fellow pupils. They maintain concentration in lessons because they enjoy the variety of their work and the rapid pace. They know that they are valued as individuals. Learning in one class was reduced by the disruptive behaviour of a small minority. Teachers are quick to deal with minor nuisance such as lack of courtesy and any wandering attention so that the predominantly positive atmosphere is preserved. Attitudes and behaviour are good in most lessons and were judged to be excellent in a class in Year 11 and another in Year 9.

116. Pupils' achievement is good in all years, and very good in Years 7 to 9, because the quality of teaching and learning is good. It was very good in nearly half

the lessons seen, good in most others and only rarely unsatisfactory. Teachers are enthusiastic, have very good subject knowledge including good understanding of how pupils' work is judged against national criteria, which they share with pupils. They have good understanding of individual strengths and needs and are careful to ensure that all are properly challenged and encouraged. They are quick to give praise but insist on high standards of attention and behaviour. In the best lessons, teachers link lessons to previous and future work so that pupils understand their relevance. They use questions both to confirm and extend pupils' understanding. They expect pupils to justify their opinions and to offer evidence to support their judgements. Lessons include a variety of activities, which hold pupils' interest. Especially in Years 7 to 9, lessons succeed because they are planned in ways familiar to pupils from their experience of the Literacy Hour in primary schools. Development of knowledge and understanding is especially evident when pupils are offered opportunities to discuss ideas in pairs or small groups and then report back to the class. The degree of independence that pupils achieve in making decisions for themselves indicates the quality of their learning and the high, but realistic, expectations that teachers have of them. Teaching is less successful when teaching styles are too rigid and pupils have too few opportunities to contribute to their learning. The quality of teaching and learning is occasionally reduced by the inappropriate behaviour of a few.

117. The department benefits from very good, clear-sighted and capable management, which is well supported by a strong team. There is appropriate sharing of responsibilities. Pupils are taught how to use computers for word-processing and research. The lack of a library prevents the teaching of library skills and restricts the teaching of research skills.

118. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. The difference in performance of boys compared with girls has been significantly reduced by changes in teaching style. Standards of attainment at the end of Year 9 are now above average rather than well below. The quality of writing continues to be reduced by lack of clarity and inaccuracy of expression.

Literacy across the curriculum

119. The school makes very good provision for pupils who enter the school with very low levels of literacy. This continues into Year 8. These pupils are taught as a class, and have one teacher for approximately half their lessons, with a strong emphasis on raising standards of literacy. Other pupils, with better but still below average skills, are taught as smaller classes to improve literacy and numeracy. The very good progress made by these pupils is evident in their successes in national tests and examinations at the end of Year 9 and Year 11. Although there is a literacy policy it does not have enough impact in all subjects, and pupils do not have enough practice in writing at length, or enough guidance about the way different forms of writing, such as descriptions or arguments, should be framed.

120. There is consistency in ensuring that pupils understand, use and correctly spell words including technical terms that are associated with work being done. There are lists of such key words and reminders about rules of spelling and punctuation, in most classrooms, corridors and staircases. In other areas of literacy development there is inconsistency. Only in design and technology, English, history and ICT are pupils given frequent opportunities to write at length, with guidance, on how to organise their material, such as use of writing frames or re-drafting. In only a minority of subjects are pupils expected to discuss ideas in small groups and report to the full class. Except in English and history, pupils have too few opportunities to read aloud or to hear their teachers read.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- There is good teaching, based on detailed planning, and secure subject knowledge.
- There is effective class management.
- Standards in Years 7, 8 and 9 are improving.
- Pupils' behaviour is good.
- The quality of oral work is good.

- The assessment of pupils' work and the way this information is used to track progress.

Areas for improvement

- Standards in Years 10 and 11.
- Written work in Years 10 and 11, especially for middle and lower attaining pupils.
- Accommodation.

121. Standards of work seen during the inspection are in line with national expectations in Year 9, and below in Year 11. Pupils make good progress in lessons due to good teaching and a well-planned curriculum. Their progress is also due to their good behaviour and hard work, particularly in Years 7 to 9. Pupils' achievement overall in relation to their standards when they started is good in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. In 2000, test results at the end of Year 9 were in line with national averages, and above those of similar schools. The trend in these tests is upwards, and unvalidated results for 2001 are close to those of 2000. Results confirm the standards of work seen in the inspection.

122. Pupils currently in Years 10 and 11 entered the school with a lower base of skills and knowledge in mathematics than those now in Years 7, 8 or 9. By the end of Year 11, these pupils are reaching standards below the national average. The 2000 GCSE results are below national averages and are well below for the percentage gaining A* to C grades. Comparison of the 2000 GCSE results to those of schools with similar prior attainment at the end of Year 9 (i.e. similar test results at the age of 14 in 1998) shows that results were average. Results in 2001 are similar to those in 2000.

123. There is little difference in the results of boys and girls in 2001, in comparison to 2000, when a higher proportion of boys than girls gained A* to C grades. The trend in the percentage of pupils gaining A* to C grades is downwards, but this is balanced by an increasing proportion of pupils entered for the examination. Work seen in Year 10 during the inspection, and these pupils' National Curriculum test results in Year 9 show that they are more likely to reach higher standards in GCSE at the end of Year 11 than those who took the examination in 2000 and 2001.

124. During the inspection, no difference was seen in the attainment or achievement of boys and girls, or of the few pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds. Standards are similar across all aspects of mathematics. Pupils are good at explaining what methods they use and why. These oral skills, particularly of middle and lower attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11, are often better than their skills in writing solutions to problems. Girls are not as willing as boys to volunteer answers or comments in class but their replies are of the same standard.

125. In Years 7 to 9, pupils' achievement is good. They increase their knowledge and skills across all aspects of mathematics. Their improvement in oral skills helps their progress, as they are learning why they use certain methods, not just how to apply them. For example, in one Year 8 lesson on probability, two pupils put forward conflicting ideas as to the solution of a problem. This was resolved through the skilled intervention of the teacher, who showed how different results could be arrived at when using experimental or theoretical approaches to a problem.

126. Achievement over time in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory, and is not as good as progress in lessons. One reason is that some pupils, especially middle and lower attainers, do not recall previously covered work quickly enough. Teachers have to spend too much time helping them to remember these techniques before they can move onto the next topic and level of difficulty. Some of the middle and lower

attainers make good progress in developing their oral skills, but are slower in developing written solutions. Boys in particular enjoy discussing, and explaining, their approach to problems, using technical vocabulary well. However, they do not take as much trouble with the method and presentation of written work. Increasing absence, particularly in Year 11, is also a factor in the satisfactory, but not good, achievement in Years 10 and 11. Teachers set homework regularly to help pupils consolidate classwork, but in spite of rigorous checking, have problems with some pupils in getting the work completed.

127. Progress in lessons for most pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good throughout the school. Good teaching, and most pupils' positive attitudes and good behaviour, are all factors in this progress. The organisation of pupils into prior attainment sets for teaching works well. In particular the smaller size of lower sets enables pupils with weak mathematics skills to be given more individual attention. This is particularly effective in Years 7, 8 and 9. Learning support assistants play a key role in the good progress of these pupils, both in class management and in helping and encouraging individuals when they find work difficult.

128. The quality of teaching and learning is good. It was very good in one in nine lessons seen, good in five in nine lessons, and satisfactory in the rest. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. The strengths of teaching include clear, structured explanations, and questions that carefully test pupils' previous understanding, then build on this step by step. These incremental stages are smaller with lower attainers, and much larger with higher ones, so that all learn well. Good lesson planning, based in the National Numeracy Framework in Years 7 and 8, helps teachers to pitch the work at the correct level for a particular group. Teachers use good examples, chosen to capture pupils' interest as well as to help them to understand new ideas, to illustrate their work.

129. Resources are well chosen to suit pupils' level of understanding. For example in a Year 8 lesson on probability with lower attaining pupils, counters and coloured cards were used to demonstrate the outcomes of events. In a high attaining class, diagrams and explanations were used, with a strong emphasis on the correct technical vocabulary. In a few instances, for short periods of time, some poorly motivated pupils made it difficult for others to learn. Teachers are good at dealing with this, and departmental support systems work well.

130. When teaching is very good, meticulous preparation of well-targeted resources and examples provides a basis for very swift progress – no time is wasted. When teaching is satisfactory, rather than good or very good, the transition from one set of activities to another can be too slow or the initial part of the lesson goes on for too long. Sometimes the teacher has to spend too much time with a small group of difficult pupils, making sure they don't disturb the work of the rest of the class.

131. Pupils' work is marked regularly, with good written feedback, linked to National Curriculum levels. Pupils understand what they are doing well and what they have to do to reach the next level. Teachers know their pupils' strengths and

weaknesses and are helped by good records tracking progress through internal and external assessments. The head of department analyses GCSE and National Curriculum test results and this information is used effectively to identify key areas for improvement.

132. The mathematics curriculum meets statutory requirements. Lesson plans contain a section showing how mathematics can be linked to spiritual and cultural events. The mathematics members of staff are appropriately qualified and work together well as a team. Good practice, for example, as seen by the head of department in lesson observations, is shared. Teachers have worked hard to get a mathematical environment inside classrooms. However, as most of the accommodation is in temporary buildings, there is no space to develop a general mathematics area, for example, with central displays of pupils' work, notices and competitions.

133. Good improvement has been made in tackling the issues raised at the previous inspection. There has been an improvement in the use of ICT, as shown in the plan to use spreadsheets in a Year 9 class, solving equations by the trial and improvement method. There is a wider range of teaching methods for the lower attainers. Assessment has improved. However, accommodation is still in mobile classrooms.

Numeracy across the curriculum

134. In general, pupils have the necessary skills and techniques to help them to make progress in other subjects. However, at times their lack of skills can slow them down. For example, in one geography lesson, the teacher had to spend some time making sure pupils had the necessary graphical skills for the current task. However in a Year 7 geography lesson, pupils had good measurement skills, which they used in an exercise on scales. In art and design, pupils could resize and rescale work in three dimensions, but some Year 9 pupils were not sure how to use ratios when planning work. In design and technology, pupils can measure reasonably accurately, for example, in textiles, and they can draw and interpret graphs to represent results of research.

135. There is a school numeracy policy, currently in draft form, agreed by the basic skills group. As yet this has not been uniformly implemented across the school.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- Test and examination results are improving.
- Teaching is good.

Areas for improvement

- There is insufficient use of ICT in the laboratories.
- The accommodation for teaching science is unsatisfactory.

136. Standards of work seen during the inspection are broadly average in Year 9 and below average in Year 11. Pupils in Year 11 entered the school with well below average attainment, and despite making steady progress, their attainment remains below the national average. Pupils in Year 9 had higher attainment – though still below average on entry. Achievement in all years is good.

137. There has been a steady improvement, for the last four years, in the science results in National Curriculum tests at the age of 14. In 1999 these results were below the national average but by 2000 were average. Unvalidated results for 2001 are close to average. Boys have gained slightly better results than girls for the last four years.

138. The results of GCSE exams for grades A* to C have improved since 1999 and unvalidated results showed a marked increase in 2001. Nevertheless these improved results are still about 20 per cent below the national average. For the last two years boys' results have been much better than those of girls. Results for grades A* to G are slightly below the national average and girls' results are lower than those of boys.

139. The standard of work seen in Year 9 is average. For example, most pupils have a sound understanding of basic biological processes and are beginning to understand that chemical reactions lead to the formation of new substances. They carry out investigations and collect and interpret results. While pupils enjoy practical work and carry it out sensibly, their written work is not done so well. Many pupils of all ages and levels of attainment set their work out neatly and thoughtfully but a number do not. Careful pupils use a ruler and pencil to draw diagrams or construct tables of practical results. A significant proportion of work is done less precisely with diagrams drawn freehand, sometimes in ink, and tables of results set out in an unsystematic way.

140. Standards of work seen in Year 11 are below average. Pupils apply knowledge to investigations but the work, particularly of the middle and lower attainers, often lacks detail and is frequently carelessly presented. Most can use chemical equations in words, but only a smaller number of higher attainers balance chemical equations in symbol form and calculate empirical formulae. Some pupils draw straight line graphs well, with clearly labelled axes and units and accurate graph lines, but a large number do not; they join plotted points one to the next instead of drawing a line of best fit. Higher attainers manipulate scientific equations, substitute numerical values and calculate results accurately.

141. Pupils in all years achieve well, making steady progress and building on their previous attainment. Lower attaining pupils are helped by the patience of their teachers who re-phrase statements or questions to help them understand what is being said or asked. These pupils show a good grasp of scientific terminology and use their knowledge well to explain orally what would happen in a novel situation. However, their written work rarely reaches as high a standard and they do not have many opportunities to write at length. Groups of higher attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11 work at a faster pace and consequently achieve more.

142. One lesson in every eight, in Years 10 and 11, takes place outside specialist laboratories. Although teachers provide work that can be done in a classroom this sometimes breaks the logical sequence needed when building up a body of scientific knowledge. The design of some laboratories means that experiments needing a mains gas supply can only be done on benches round the edge of the room. Because apparatus can only be approached from one side, pupils on the edge of larger groups take little part in experimental work and do not gain as much from these sessions as they should. There are no computers in normal use in the laboratories. Pupils have no opportunities to display practical results or print graphs of them, they cannot access further information at a suitably challenging level or watch simulations of experiments difficult to perform in the laboratory. Older pupils are unable to print out additional information to take home for further study.

143. Overall, teaching and learning are good in all age groups. Teaching in all lessons seen was at least satisfactory with more than three-quarters good or better and of those a quarter were very good. Pupils learn well because they listen attentively to their teachers, co-operate well in practical work and in school learn well as a consequence. Teachers give clear guidance about potential hazards and as a result of good behaviour and guidance pupils carry out practical work safely. Teaching is brisk and well planned and teachers show an expert knowledge of their subject. Where groups of pupils have been selected on the basis of their attainment progress is particularly good. Teachers help higher attaining pupils to learn well by providing sufficiently challenging work. They encourage those with special educational needs to discuss their ideas or use a range of questions and statements to extend their knowledge. A minority of pupils do not become fully involved in lessons and are reticent to answer questions, though when asked directly they do so correctly.

144. Pupils' work is marked regularly but comments made by teachers often do not give clear advice on how pupils might improve the quality of their work. Missing work is sometimes not copied up and poor work not corrected. As a result, what pupils are learning in school is not effectively reinforced in their subsequent work out of school. In addition, pupils are rarely given the opportunity to research a topic of scientific interest and write at length.

145. Though there are sufficient books for use in school, pupils do not have a good textbook to take home for reference or homework. Drawing skills are underdeveloped because pupils are often given printed diagrams of organs such as the eye or heart instead of drawing the diagram for themselves.

146. Leadership of the faculty is good. There are clearly delegated responsibilities and there is a new faculty development plan, which identifies priorities clearly. As a result new courses and textbooks have been introduced.

147. Since the previous inspection the National Curriculum test scores and the results in GCSE exams have improved. The lack of computers in the laboratories prevents a range of activities and hinders progress, similarly the lack of sufficient laboratories and poor design means that some pupils do not get the opportunity to be fully involved in practical work.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- The leadership and management of the department is excellent and there is a shared commitment to development and improvement.
- The quality of teaching is very good and leads to very good quality learning.
- Art makes a very good contribution to pupils' social, moral and cultural development.

Areas for improvement

- There are insufficient resources for ceramics, printing and photography to teach an extended curriculum.
- There is insufficient ICT related work, especially in computer-aided art.

148. Standards of work seen during the inspection are average overall and reflect good achievement in relation to the standards attained on entry to the school. The standards are attained because the teaching is very good and leads to very good quality learning. Pupils enjoy art and design, try hard and behave very well in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs do well in art and design and achieve at least as highly as other pupils.

149. The teaching scheme is largely based on practical skills where pupils experiment with tools and materials and studies of art and design and artists. In

work seen during the inspection, standards are above average in Year 9 which indicates very good achievement as pupils enter school in Year 7 with limited skills in painting, drawing and model-making and their understanding of art and design and artists is weak. Pupils in Year 9 are currently studying surrealism. Most know about the style of art and design and where real artists gain their inspiration. They use the language of art and design when describing distortion and placement within a given picture. They know about some of the famous artists such as Dali and Magritte, and the higher-attaining pupils speak confidently about the lives and works of these artists. Pupils' own pictures are reflective of the surrealist style, have good composition and colour and show confidence in experimenting with montage and collage. Pupils use sketchbooks well for homework, to practice mainly drawing from direct observation, which helps them later in free composition.

150. A few pupils, mainly boys, and not necessarily those who have learning difficulties, lack confidence in drawing shapes and draw primitively because they do not understand about proportion and placement. Most pupils, except the higher-attaining pupils, are very unsure of showing tone on their drawings. Results in the most recent end of Year 9 assessments show an unusually high proportion of pupils gaining level 5 and above. These assessments are based on drawing and painting and are not a full reflection of attainment in art and design across all areas, including knowledge of art and design, work in three dimensions and ICT-related art and design.

151. Results in GCSE examinations in art and design over the past four years show an upward trend and 54 per cent of pupils attained Grades A* to C in 2001 which is below, but near, the national average. Pupils usually gain at least a G grade and the percentage of pupils attaining grades A* to G is above the national average and equals the highest in school. As the range of options within art and design is limited at GCSE by the available equipment, some pupils, mainly boys, find the course too heavily based on painting and drawing and do not complete enough coursework.

152. In work seen in Year 11 during the inspection standards are average. Most pupils produce sufficient research before starting a project, develop their ideas and annotate their work clearly. Many pupils search the Internet and CD-ROM for information and use the word processor to present their findings. Pupils use materials imaginatively and speak confidently, using the language of art and design when criticising the work of established artists. Many pupils, however, lack skill in representing texture and tone in drawing, and the lower-attaining pupils rely heavily on the teachers for ideas and inspiration. In Year 11, the GCSE pupils are building on to their previously-learned skills and are developing self portraits in the style of chosen artists, showing understanding of impressionism. Pupils taking GNVQ art and design are creating interesting three-dimensional pieces, investigating distortion of computer images, experimenting with mask making and making artefacts inspired by Aboriginal art.

153. The quality of teaching is very good and leads to very good learning. In lessons seen during the inspection, the quality of teaching ranged from satisfactory to excellent and the majority of lessons were graded as very good. All the art and

design teachers are talented artists, enthusiastic about their subject and inspire the pupils. Planning is very good. Teachers make sure that the topics are interesting and that pupils have plenty of time for their own work. They select and use high quality resources to show pupils the techniques employed by real artists and how to analyse their own and the work of others. Pupils therefore learn well because they put the good advice into practice. Lessons are skilfully planned to include time for instruction, appraisal of ongoing work, pupils' practical work and question and answer sessions that clear up problems and encourage pupils to share their successes.

154. The use of assessment is a strong feature of the department as teachers make pupils aware of standards and how work can be improved. Pupils come to lessons cheerfully and behave very well, so teachers do not have to waste time in getting order and discipline. Pupils' cultural development benefits from the classical music played during lessons to create a calming atmosphere. Teachers set up prominent displays of high quality artwork throughout the school to promote the subject and raise pupils' cultural awareness and self-esteem.

155. Leadership is excellent. The head of department is seen as a strong leader, who is respected for her energy and teaching. She has overseen a number of improvements since her appointment, which have helped to raise standards and the profile of art and design in general. In particular, the monitoring of teaching has helped colleagues to review their strategies.

156. The department has made very good progress since the previous inspection. The department's targets have been exceeded. The qualities of teaching and learning and standards are higher throughout. The scheme of work is wider and pupils' knowledge of art and design and artists, criticised in the previous inspection, is now good. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 can now take GNVQ art and design, which has widened the curriculum for pupils, especially boys. Pupils can now visit galleries and museums and work alongside local artists to gain insight into art as a career. The Summer School initiative is successful in raising pupils' confidence to use different materials on a large scale. Storage and accommodation have been greatly improved, resulting in larger teaching and display spaces and safer areas for storage of pupils' work. In order to extend the curriculum, and to motivate boys in particular, the department needs resources and equipment for ceramics, printing and photography. The head of department is aware of the need to extend ICT work, especially in computer-created art.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Teaching and learning are good.
- Pupils' progress and setting targets to raise standards is monitored effectively.
- There is very good leadership and management of the subject.

- Teachers provide appropriately challenging and interesting work, suitable for all pupils.
- Accommodation is good.

Areas for improvement

- There is insufficient use of ICT to include computer-aided manufacture, computer-aided design and computer control.
- Theoretical work in electronics is not sufficiently well integrated into practical activities in Years 9 to 11.

157. Standards, based on teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9, have risen from below average to above average in recent years. However, the proportion of pupils gaining GCSE grades A* to C in 2000 was well below the national average. Standards achieved by boys were below those of girls and lower than found nationally. There was a significant improvement in GCSE results in 2001 although standards were still below average. The rising trend continues and, in work seen, current Year 11 pupils are achieving average standards. Standards have risen because of the good quality of teaching, the school's analysis of below average standards and the close monitoring of progress to maintain a high level of awareness. Pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

158. The standard of work seen in Year 9 is above average. It is highest in food technology. In all aspects of the subjects pupils have a good awareness of safety and they have a good working knowledge of the design process because they are effectively taught about these in relevant, practical situations. Pupils communicate their ideas well graphically which helps to compensate to some extent for their low literacy skills. They have a good knowledge of nutrition and the ingredients they use because they have opportunities to analyse the content of food products and learn, for example, to explore what makes a difference to the taste and texture of prepared food such as cakes. Because pupils are encouraged to work creatively, they design products, which are attractive and unique such as the 'fantasy boards' in electronics. Pupils have a good knowledge of mechanisms and identify appropriate ones to use when they are working with wood or modelling from graphics materials. Presentation of work is good but written work is below average and pupils often cannot express in words what they know and do in practical lessons. Pupils often spell commonly used words incorrectly but are more accurate with words they have recently learned in connection with their current projects.

159. In Years 7 to 9, pupils' achievement, in relation to their attainment when they began the course, is very good. Pupils enter the school with standards and experience of the subject that are below average and with weak literacy skills. In Year 7 they quickly learn to use a wide range of tools and materials and to do practical tasks using hand and machine tools safely and sensibly. They listen to teachers and follow guidance, which increases their rate of progress. Their positive attitudes and good behaviour are significant factors in their good progress. In food technology, pupils make very good progress with planning and make a range of sweet and savoury dishes, evaluating successes and suggesting how improvement might be made.

160. By Year 9, pupils confidently design and make products from wood, metal, plastics, food and textiles. They have a good awareness of consumer needs and wants and recognise products that are potentially dangerous such as poorly designed toys for young children. Pupils' special educational needs are well known to teachers who provide suitable tasks so that pupils make good progress and become increasingly confident about their work. Higher-attaining pupils are provided with appropriately challenging work and additional, optional homework tasks to enable them to make progress.

161. Standards of work seen in Year 11 are average. Pupils are meeting and often exceeding the target grades they have been set for GCSE, based on knowledge of their capability in previous tests. They have well-organised coursework and present work effectively using hand-drawn graphics and computer images to illustrate it. Pupils have good practical skills and are prepared to think for themselves, for example, when they plan food for special diets. Written work is of a lower standard and spelling of commonly used words is a difficulty. Pupils make a good effort to research their work well and to complete coursework tasks on time because they are keen to do well. The lack of library facilities in the school restricts the range of reference sources available to them but pupils make satisfactory use of the Internet.

162. In electronics, in all years, pupils follow instructions to assemble circuits for alarm systems but teachers do not explain clearly enough, so pupils do not fully understand how individual components work. Their ability to solve problems or modify systems is therefore restricted.

163. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is good. Pupils continue to make good progress with practical work and understanding of the subject. They do well in lessons to manage their projects over longer periods and meeting deadlines. This is largely because of effective monitoring of progress by teachers in lessons and over time to ensure that all pupils are achieving their potential. Similar progress is being made by boys and girls in lessons because teachers know their pupils' needs and use teaching methods that engage and challenge all pupils. Independent written work is below average and most pupils rely heavily on teachers to prompt them to produce work in more depth and length because they have not developed literacy skills well enough.

164. Pupils behave well in lessons and are attentive when new work is being explained. Their relationships with the teacher are good and they are co-operative when they work in groups. This contributes positively to the quality of learning.

165. The quality of teaching is good overall and often very good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and communicate it effectively, so the quality of learning is also good. Pupils are keen and interested because teachers provide them with motivating and challenging tasks. They expect high standards of work and behaviour and have established an atmosphere in the design and technology rooms, which leads to pupils working hard and with enjoyment. Teachers have considered how pupils learn best and are now putting their conclusions into practice. This was evident in a Year 9 graphics lesson in which boys and girls were encouraged to learn in ways appropriate to their individual needs. Teachers explain new work well so that pupils are interested, listen and understand. Pupils acquire good technical vocabulary with which to explain their work because new words are introduced when appropriate. They develop numeracy skills that support their learning in design and technology, as well as their general understanding of shape and measurement because teachers insist on high standards of accuracy of measurement and relate this to the quality of products.

166. In food technology and textiles, there is a good balance of practical and written tasks so that the relevance of industrial practice is successfully integrated into practical investigative work. Pupils are aware of their National Curriculum levels because work is regularly assessed at the end of each project. Progress is carefully monitored and pupils are encouraged to aim for higher levels through effective target-setting. In a small proportion of lessons, the introduction is too long for a few pupils who become restless.

167. Leadership and management of the subjects are very good. The shared enthusiasm to raise standards and the sharing of good practice is having a positive effect on standards. The good accommodation is also having a positive effect because it allows teachers to use their chosen and most effective teaching methods and is an uplifting environment for pupils. The department reflects on what is learned from monitoring performance in the subject to modify the curriculum teaching methods.

168. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. The standards of attainment for pupils have risen, the quality of teaching and learning

has improved and the accommodation is significantly better. There is not enough use of ICT, in particular computer-aided design, and computer aided manufacture.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Quality of teaching from an enthusiastic team.
- The upward trend in standards.
- Shared commitment to improvement in the subject.

Areas for improvement

- There is insufficient monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning by subject specialists.
- The range of textbooks is not wide enough.
- There are not enough opportunities for writing at length, particularly in Years 7 to 9.

169. Standards overall are currently just below the national average. This represents good achievement by pupils in relation to their attainment on entry to the school.

170. In the GCSE examinations in 2000, results for the higher A* to C grades were well below the national average and below for the overall A* to G grades. There has been an upward trend over the last three years and in 2001, results continued to improve. There is currently no 2001 national data for comparison and although there was an improvement standards were still well below national averages for 2000. This still, however, represents good achievement in learning, as the standard of attainment of these pupils on entry in Year 7, based on tests in Year 7, was well below average.

171. From evidence gathered during the inspection the upward trend in standards continues. Evidence from lessons observed in Years 10 and 11, from analysis of books and files and from teachers' assessment records show pupils' level of attainment to be below the national average, for both grades A* to C and grades A* to G. Boys' attainment is above that of many girls. Pupils' field study skills are at least satisfactory and those of higher attainers are good. They are able to gather, analyse, represent data and reach decisions about their findings. Most have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of factors influencing the location of industry and changing patterns in urban areas. The coursework element provides an opportunity for pupils to write at length. This skill is not so evident in other parts of the course.

172. In Year 9, attainment is just below average. As the standard of attainment on entry was clearly below average, this shows that pupils are achieving well and making good progress in lessons. Most pupils understand and employ mapping skills in a satisfactory way. In Year 9, many pupils found the use and interpretation of graphical techniques difficult. The teachers successfully returned to the topic in the next lesson, tackled it in a different way and pupils understanding improved. By

Year 9, they appreciate the important relationships between physical and human dimensions of the subject. This is particularly true in the case of studies of Italy and Japan. They carry out enquiry tasks but the extent to which this important skill can be developed is limited by the absence of a library. Pupils also show satisfactory understanding of the interdependence of states in the modern world. Some good enquiry work, frequently using computers to gather and present information, was observed on the 1995 Kobe earthquake. In all years pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their individual needs.

173. Teaching and learning are good and the department makes an effort to meet the needs of all pupils. All teaching observed was at least satisfactory and good in a high proportion of lessons. Lessons are well planned and contain a range of appropriate strategies to assist pupils to learn. Expectations are generally high and teachers' knowledge of their subject is good. This stimulates pupils' interest and understanding in the subject. Pupils are encouraged to think about the issues they are studying. This was seen in lessons exploring the population distribution and climatic variations in Japan and Italy. Computers are being increasingly used to enable pupils to gather, analyse and present information. Field study is being used well to develop pupils' practical skills. Marking is regular but the quality of comment, to help pupils improve their work, is inconsistent. There is still some over dependence on one series of textbooks and this narrow range of resources limits pupils' understanding of different approaches in geography. The quality of learning is also influenced by most pupils' positive attitudes and good behaviour.

174. The subject is taught in a humanities faculty framework and currently there is little delegated responsibility to the head of geography for the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. As the previous report recommended, opportunities to share good practice by mutual observation of lessons would be beneficial to learning. This is not happening currently. The subject is otherwise well-organised and good progress has been made since the previous inspection, particularly in the use of computers. Geography is now taught as a separate subject in Years 7 to 9 and the problems of progression and discontinuity, identified in the previous report, no longer exist. There has also been good improvement in the provision for learning basic skills. The opportunities for writing at length are however, still too limited.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- Good teaching throughout by calm, encouraging teachers generates commitment from students.
- Achievement of boys has improved.
- Opportunities for literacy development are integral to the history course in all years.
- Marking and target-setting help students to plot their own progress.

Areas for improvement

- There are not enough opportunities for historical enquiry and interpretation of a wider variety of source material through fieldwork and, especially in Years 10 and 11, through use of computers and the Internet.
- There are too few opportunities for history colleagues to share the detail of good practice.

175. Standards of work seen during the inspection are overall average because of good teaching. Pupils' willingness to be involved and improved resources, including the electronic white board, generate good learning in history in Years 7-9 and very good learning in Year 11 as exam preparation intensifies pupils' commitment. This is reflected in coursework. Consequently, pupils' achievement in relation to their standards when they began in Year 7 is good.

176. Standards based on assessments in Year 9 are below average although pupils achieve well because they have well-defined targets and know what they have to do to improve. Standards of work seen during the inspection reflect the same overall picture and pupils with special educational needs make good and impressive progress because they are challenged by lively teaching involving them minute-by-minute. This is particularly stimulating for boys and they learn fast. Expectations for higher attaining pupils are identified and usually met through extension work. By the end of Year 9 pupils explain, with good historical accuracy how rulers, politicians, artists, movements, and industrial change can bring prosperity, win rights and dignity and create misery and inhumanity. They are skilful at searching primary and secondary sources for information and using it to put themselves in others' shoes by writing a newspaper front page or a letter. Using computers for desktop publishing or seeking information is an important opportunity in history and is now built into schemes of work. Literacy development enriches pupils' understanding and experience. For example, Year 9 pupils felt the degradation of factory workers, and expressed their horror, as they read aloud accounts of poor housing conditions, speculated about what it would be like and shared words and phrases that a factory inspector might choose. Pupils at this stage are less skilled at interpreting a range of different types of evidence in order to develop the historian's critical mind.

177. GCSE results were below average although the proportion of pupils gaining the highest grades has risen in recent years. Boys' results in 2000 were near the national average, and their performance in history has improved in comparison with their performance in other subjects. Girls achieved well at grade A though not so well overall. Most pupils did better than or performed according to predictions. This proportion increased in the 2001 results and the achievement levels for boys and girls are closer together.

178. Standards of work seen during the inspection are above average for the current Year 11 who have already produced impressive coursework about "The General Strike" and "Votes for Women" as part of their studies of "20th century Europe. Their work reflects intensely focused teaching, which sharpens pupils' skills in analysing knowledge from a variety of sources, and in making judgements about events, behaviour and ideologies. This allows them to write substantiated conclusions. High-attaining pupils distinguish between immediate, long-term and short-term causes and effects; they interweave quotations and perceive subtlety in making comparisons. Practical writing guidance gives pupils' confidence and motivates them to commit adequate time to the final result. Pupils with special educational needs succeed because they are given simplified sources and questions.

179. Supporting pupils to do their best is a priority for the department. Pupils know their GCSE targets and their progress is monitored. Those on the C to D borderline have mentors. Pupils see exemplars of high level work, and have a topic by topic revision agenda for the Easter holiday. They have an advance timetable of revision planned for the final series of lessons. Well-chosen visually stimulating texts, an "Important Terms to Remember" glossary and challenging group tasks help pupils to tease out the complexities of conflict and change across Eastern Europe, Germany

and America. Teachers are aware of gaining the commitment of boys in this way. Many pupils use computers voluntarily for their coursework but ICT is not used systematically enough. The lack of fieldwork is also a significant omission.

180. History is fortunate in having an enthusiastic team of teachers, not all of whom are specialists, who contribute to good teaching provision. Teaching and learning in all lessons seen were at least satisfactory. Half of lessons were very good or excellent, both in Years 7 to 9 and 10 and 11. The best teaching in Years 7 to 9 exposed pupils to a variety of experiences that made them think (sometimes putting themselves in others' shoes) and learn from each other. These lessons moved at a rapid pace through a series of short-term goals and gave them opportunities to reflect on what they had learnt. For example, a Year 8 class, mostly boys with special educational needs showed their understanding of what it was like to be auctioned as a slave when together they produced words like "pessimistic", "negative" and commented that the slaves could be both angry and sad. Consequently, learning is good. Similarly in Years 10 and 11, where learning is very good because of the extra time pupils devote to homework and coursework, teachers devise lessons where the challenge gradually becomes more complex. Pupils move through activities where they have to make choices, take responsibility for organising knowledge and applying it, in order to reconcile alternative viewpoints through reasoning. Group tasks, in which several skills are employed, are an effective challenge. Year 11 pupils were well aware that collaborating in groups helped them to learn faster "because you check your ideas with others". Pupils said they were always well prepared for writing when it comes to synthesising knowledge with their own ideas into a personal, individual piece of work.

181. These improvements in the range of strategies represent a positive response to the previous report. Some less imaginative teaching still happens when straightforward recording of factual information squeezes out opportunities for discussion and extended interpretation of sources.

182. Leadership is satisfactory and there is good monitoring of pupils' progress and support for newly qualified teachers.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- There is good provision in Years 7 to 9.
- Teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 and in ICT lessons for GNVQ are good
- The accommodation and resources in specialist rooms is good.
- There is good, and sufficient, technical support.

Areas for improvement

- Provision for pupils in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory.
- Cross-curricular co-ordination of ICT is unsatisfactory.
- There is insufficient access to appropriate resources in some subjects.

183. Until last year, pupils did not follow ICT courses that led to public examinations at the end of Year 11. The current Year 11 will be the first year to take GNVQ examinations at intermediate level and because of improved provision in specialist ICT lessons in earlier years they are currently on target to obtain average results in these examinations.

184. Standards are average in work seen in the current Year 9. This matches expectations and has been possible because of improved provision in Years 7 to 9 and the good quality of teaching. It shows good achievement from pupils' standards when they entered the school in Year 7. In Year 7, pupils are introduced to a broad range of ICT skills and are taught to use specialist ICT software to prepare presentations about themselves. They develop ICT skills through word processing, editing text and combining graphics with text for desktop publishing. In Year 8, pupils extend their skills through editing web pages and have opportunities to create their own. By Year 9, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of spreadsheets and databases and achieve standards appropriate to their age for the recently begun unit of work on control. Pupils use flow charts and write a set of instructions to control events on screen using specialist software. Pupils at all levels of attainment achieve competence in basic research skills using ICT. At the end of Year 9, pupils use computers independently for presenting their work using desktop publishing. They use computers extensively to complete work for a range of subjects during lunch times and after school.

185. Standards of work in Years 10 and 11 are below average overall because most pupils do not fully cover the requirements of the National Curriculum. Pupils following the intermediate GNVQ course in ICT achieve well because they have regular, specialist lessons. They use a range of skills to process and present their coursework. Folders are well organised and, because pupils follow advice offered when work is assessed, they improve their knowledge of the subject and how to answer examination questions in end of unit tests.

186. Others have to rely on the ICT that is taught in other subjects, and this varies according to subjects studied. For example, in food technology, pupils use computers to analyse and present the results of surveys effectively as well as using desktop publishing methods to present information using text and graphics. They use the Internet to research information and extract images that they use to improve the presentation of work. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because teachers provide work that is suitably challenging for them and support them effectively in lessons. The emphasis on improving standards of reading and writing helps pupils to make good progress towards literacy targets. One pupil for whom English is an additional language is making good progress with language skills and coursework in other subjects because arrangements have been made to use computers frequently to catch up with work.

187. The quality of teaching is good in specialist teaching and by teachers who use ICT in their own subjects. Teachers plan lessons in which the work is inspiring and challenging for pupils. They have high expectations and insist on pupils working

accurately to communicate information effectively using resources such as networked computers to teach new work.

188. Because teachers have a good understanding of what is required for the examination syllabus being taught, they are preparing pupils well for formal assessments. Teachers are well organised and manage lessons efficiently to include a good range of activities, using effective teaching methods. This results in pupils being well behaved, interested and attentive. In computer control lessons, teaching methods are less inspiring and work is not always sufficiently well related to how computers are used in everyday life. Specialist teachers have very good subject knowledge and those teaching ICT in other subjects have a good working knowledge of the subject. The department benefits from the very good support of technicians who manage the network and are available and helpful to the smooth running of lessons.

189. Leadership and management of ICT as a separate subject are good, but the co-ordination of ICT across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. In the separate ICT lessons there are well-structured schemes of work to build skills and knowledge for pupils in Years 7 to 9 and GNVQ courses are an appropriate addition to the curriculum, pitched at the right level for pupils..

190. The curriculum does not meet statutory requirements because the work in other subjects is not monitored or the work of pupils assessed to ensure that all pupils cover the requirements of the National Curriculum and are reaching appropriate levels for their ability. Lack of a library disadvantages GNVQ pupils who are required to compare information sources, books and computers for a Unit of their course. In specialist lessons, assessment information is used well to plan lessons and modify the curriculum to meet the needs of pupils.

191. There has been satisfactory improvement to provision of ICT as a separate subject in Years 7 to 9 and pupils now have opportunities to follow Intermediate GNVQ courses. There is now good technician support. There has not been enough improvement to cross-curricular provision, in part because of inadequate resources for some subjects. There has been very little improvement to co-ordination of the subject across the curriculum. The subject still does not meet National Curriculum requirements.

ICT across the curriculum

192. There are good examples of ICT work being carried out in other subjects. For example in Year 7, pupils use CD-ROMs in history lessons to research information about rivals for the throne in 1066 and the department has a good range of work planned to enable pupils to practise and extend skills in presenting and researching information and using databases to sort information. Insufficient resources restrict the use of ICT in some subjects, for example, insufficient reliable resources for data logging in science, and control resources in design technology. In music, pupils use CD-ROMs to research information about jazz. Some pupils use ICT for composition but there are not enough resources for consistent use. In art and design, pupils in Year 7 use computers to create business cards and they use scanners and digital cameras for their GNVQ coursework. In English they use video cameras and presentation software when making presentation to the rest of the class. However, the use of ICT is not consistently applied across the curriculum and the work done in different subjects is not sufficiently monitored to ensure that all pupils have full access to the National Curriculum for ICT. Achievement overall in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- Leadership and management of the faculty are excellent.
- Teaching in French and German is good and GCSE results have risen in past years.
- The achievement of boys has improved.

Areas for improvement

- The motivation and behaviour of some pupils in Years 9 and 11 is unsatisfactory.
- Teachers sometimes lack the teaching skills needed to manage these pupils.

193. In both French and German, most pupils' achievement is good in relation to their attainment when they began in Year 7. This is largely due to good teaching, which promotes positive attitudes and good progress. As a result, standards, although below the national average overall, are on a rising trend, especially in Year 9 where standards are similar to the national average.

194. In 1999 and 2000 the number of pupils gaining grades A* to C in the GCSE French and German examinations was well below the national average. The trend, however, has been upwards and almost all pupils in Year 11 have been entered for the examination. All have gained at least a grade G and this represents good achievement for many pupils, given their below average attainment overall when they started in Year 7. In both languages girls did better than boys, but by no more than the national average.

195. Work seen during the inspection, both in class and from consideration of pupils' written work, shows that standards in German, which all pupils take in Year 9, are in line with the national average. This represents good achievement over Years 7 to 9. High-attaining pupils speak confidently in well-pronounced German and produce extended written pieces that show they have grasped difficult points of grammar such as the order of words and the use of different tenses. Pupils of average attainment hold simple dialogues in German to make arrangements and those of low attainment, including pupils with special educational needs, understand their teachers' basic instructions in the language. Pupils learning French in Year 8 and beginners of German in Year 7 are also attaining standards of work that are in line with expectations at these stages.

196. Standards seen in Year 11 are below the national average. Higher attainers in French and German, however, are doing much better than this and show, in their written work, a good understanding of the grammar and vocabulary needed to gain higher grades at GCSE. In French they understand native speakers on tape and speak in well-pronounced complete sentences. Some pupils of average attainment however, are not reaching standards expected of them and are underachieving significantly because a number of them are poorly behaved and are learning very little. In German lower attainers in Year 11 understand the language spoken slowly but struggle to produce full sentences. In the skills of speaking and listening boys do as well as girls, though in writing girls are generally more proficient at manipulating language accurately. Many pupils make good use of ICT for presenting their best work and this has improved the standards of writing, especially in the case of boys. Overall, achievement in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory.

197. Language teachers share ideas and good practice and this has led to good teaching overall in both languages. The best teaching is in Years 7 to 9. Of the lessons observed six out of ten were good or better and a third were satisfactory. In one lesson where disruptive pupils were not firmly managed teaching was poor and very little learning took place.

198. All lessons start in a brisk orderly way with a clear statement of what pupils will be learning. This sets the scene well and creates anticipation. Teachers are all very successful at making pupils aware of the National Curriculum levels they have reached and using these levels to coax them into trying harder. Learning benefits as a result. Pupils also benefit from the use of ICT in both languages and from an electronic whiteboard in one of the classrooms; the lively graphics and facility for pupils to make their own changes to the display are proving versatile tools for stimulating response. The teaching of German and French makes a good

contribution also to pupils' learning of basic skills, such as the use of dictionaries and the careful presentation of work using ICT.

199. German teaching is good overall. Teachers are proficient speakers of German even when it is not their principal foreign language. Where German is used consistently in the classroom pupils learn over time to listen carefully and reproduce accurately the sounds they hear. In the best lessons there is real challenge and rigour with insistence on accurate pronunciation and high standards of behaviour. This leads to a strong ethos for learning in which pupils are well motivated and make good progress. Teaching of low attaining pupils and those with special educational needs is often very good with firm management and methods that are well suited to the pupils' way of learning. In one very well taught lesson, for example, a group of low attaining boys in Year 10 learnt to say in German where they came from and their nationality. Teaching that celebrated small successes and challenged pupils to say more than they thought they were capable of encouraged this very good progress. As a result, these boys were enjoying German and achieving well.

200. French teaching is also good overall, with more good teaching in Years 7 to 9. Teachers make imaginative and often colourful use of methods, resources and materials to keep pupils interested and offer them good opportunities to rehearse new points of language. Role-plays and competitive games, for example, are often used to consolidate language recently introduced. The effect of this is to give pupils the chance to practise this language and thus learn it in an enjoyable context. In a Year 8 French lesson, for example, pupils made very good progress in describing the clothes they were wearing, and their colours, through a skilful use of ICT that allowed them to "paint" different colours onto the whiteboard. Teachers and support assistants work well together to help pupils with disabilities and special needs to learn and as a result these pupils achieve as well as others.

201. In Years 7 to 9 teachers generally manage pupils better and have higher expectations. In some lessons there is not enough consistent use of the foreign language in the classroom and an insistence that pupils themselves use it to make everyday requests such as asking for paper. The ends of lessons are not as orderly or well focussed as the beginnings. In some cases teachers are not rigorous enough in correcting poor pronunciation or insisting on pupils using full sentences. Although teachers are mostly effective in managing pupils' behaviour, a small amount of teaching is failing to reverse a decline in the attitudes of some pupils, many of them girls, and is not strong enough to control disruptive behaviour. As a result standards are well below those expected and all pupils, including those who want to learn, are achieving below their capabilities.

202. Most pupils respond positively to the teaching of German and French. They listen attentively, answer questions eagerly, concentrate well, and, when given the opportunity in such activities as pair work and role plays, they co-operate with each other and show they can be trusted to work independently. In Year 9 and above boys are more forthcoming and willing to volunteer answers than girls. The establishing of the independent learning centre in the foreign languages faculty has encouraged many pupils to work on their own to practise their language skills. Many

pupils show their keenness by taking part in the ICT clubs and enrolling on the trips to France and Germany. While behaviour in most lessons is good, behaviour overall is judged satisfactory, because of the lack of respect and the disruptiveness of a few pupils in Year 11, and the restless attitudes amongst some younger pupils.

203. Pupils in Year 9 who are beginning French in addition to the German they have done since Year 7 are not achieving as well as expected. They have only one period of French per week and in the case of average attaining pupils this is insufficient to allow good progress to be made. There is insufficient justification for offering a second language to a large group of pupils in Year 9 on a very low allocation of time, in view of the very small number who then choose to study for both languages to GCSE level.

204. The modern foreign languages faculty enjoys excellent clear-sighted leadership and strong efficient management, which has as its central vision the raising of standards and pupils' achievement. In this it is reflecting the aims of the school as a whole. The staff of five committed specialist teachers work as a team and share many tasks such as acting as mentors to pupils who are underachieving. Very good procedures for assessing pupils' work and helping them to improve have been agreed by all members of the faculty and are seen to be working in practice at all levels. The quality of teaching is rigorously checked and followed up, and teachers are encouraged to observe each other teach. The faculty is at the forefront of many initiatives. Through its efforts, for example, the school has received the International School Award and, together with the programme of trips and exchanges to Germany and France, the faculty makes very strong contributions to pupils' social and cultural development. The imaginative and effective use of ICT and the development of independent learning are helping to improve standards.

205. The faculty has made many good advances since the previous inspection. Attainment is on a rising trend and standards have improved overall. Pupils' speaking has improved and the use of pair work, criticised in the previous report, is contributing to this. Although boys are still lagging behind girls in examinations, their motivation and achievement have improved. The quality of specialist staffing, the well-appointed accommodation and the very good resources now at the faculty's disposal have all contributed to higher standards.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- There is very good teaching and learning in Years 7, 10 and 11.
- Good pace and challenge lead to hard work and effort in class.
- Behaviour is very good.
- There is enthusiasm for learning, particularly in Year 7.

Areas for improvement

- Boys do not sing in tune.

- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to make their own decisions about how they learn.
- There is not enough reflection and evaluation in every lesson for pupils to develop knowledge of their strengths and weaknesses fully.
- There are insufficient computers for use in composition in all years.

206. Standards of work seen during the inspection are average at the end of Year 9 and above average at the end of Year 11. These standards are achieved because the teaching is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. Pupils' attitudes are good overall and cause the quality of learning between Years 7 and 9 to be good and very good in Years 10 and 11. As a result, pupils' achievement overall, in relation to their standard when they began in Year 7, is good.

207. In the GCSE examination in 2000, 7 of the 8 pupils achieved a grade, but no pupil achieved a grade between A* and C. The results of the eight pupils who took the examination in 2001 were better than those in 2000. The low number of pupils taking the examination make comparisons with national averages unreliable.

208. Standards seen in Years 9 during the inspection are average. Pupils come from primary school with very mixed experiences of music, but respond at once with enthusiasm. In lessons pupils in Year 7 read and play simple rhythms. They respond promptly to the teachers clapping by echoing the rhythm correctly. They name and spell the rhythmic note values correctly. Girls sing particularly well in Year 7. The tone is good and they sing in tune. This was particularly evident when they sang a verse of the 'Streets of London'. Boys, however, do not as yet know where to place their voices to produce tuneful singing, as their own verse showed. Some remedial work is needed. At this stage pupils are very enthusiastic about music and enjoy the variety of activities provided by the teacher. They are attentive and concentrate well. In Year 8 pupils learn about scales and keys using the keyboard. Most of them recognise the need to alter certain notes to produce the sound of the major scale and understand the notation. At this stage they have not developed a good five-finger technique on the keyboard. By Year 9 though, pupils do and this includes pupils with special educational needs. They have made good progress. They play the melody and the bass part of 'Oh When the Saints'. In a sampled tape of this piece, the class played well together. Using a variety of instruments in addition to the keyboards, they were very aware of other players and maintained a good ensemble. Although they work hard in lessons, pupils appear not so keen on music at this stage. There are three reasons why this may be so. At present they are given insufficient opportunities to make decisions for their own learning. Also music technology is not playing an important enough role in the development of their composing skills because there are insufficient computers in the department. Lastly, the scheme of work, although well balanced in musical activities, could include more popular music in Year 9.

209. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 are assessed well. Their progress is monitored. They do not, however, have a strong grasp of their own strengths and weaknesses. This is because there is insufficient regular reflection and evaluation in class. Pupils are not involved enough in the assessment process and therefore not sufficiently aware

of their levels to set targets for improvement. In all, pupils' performing, listening and appraising standards are average. Sampled compositions, however, reveal that composing is the weakest element. The lack of computers has an adverse effect on standards.

210. Standards in Year 11 are above average and as such there is potential for examination results to be better this year. Numbers of pupils taking the examination differ from year to year as do the standards achieved because of the background of the small group. In lessons, pupils compose at the keyboard using melodies and chords. Those learning an instrument have greater confidence to develop composition work and one or two use music technology. As in Year 9, composing with a computer would enable all these pupils to hear and amend what they have composed. The majority of pupils at this stage have good control of the keyboard and use both hands confidently having made good progress through the school. There are not as many boys as girls opting to do music but there is no marked difference in standards of attainment.

211. Pupils behave very well in all lessons because they are expected to do so by the teacher. They work hard and make considerable effort because the pace of the teaching is fast and challenges them to try hard. Pupils build their skills progressively because of very good planning. The teacher knows her subject very well and through her practical ability she acts as a good role model. Demonstrations using voice or the piano enable pupils to learn quickly. Collaborative work is successfully done. Good relationships are evident in the orchestra and the pupils' enthusiasm has been a motivating force in its growth in the last three years. There is also a choir and regular concerts in school provide for good cultural development.

212. The department is well organised and managed. Music makes its contribution to the development of literacy by good use of key words spelt correctly. In an effort to contribute to the development of numeracy, pupils are sometimes given unmusical tasks to do. A clear numeracy policy would help here.

213. Since the previous inspection improvement has been satisfactory. Standards of attainment have been maintained. There is no non-specialist teachers teaching in the department now. The improved accommodation provides an appropriately sized room in which to work comfortably.

Drama

214. Drama is taught within the performing arts faculty that includes music and physical education.

215. The provision for drama in the school is very good. Standards of attainment in drama are average by the time pupils come to the end of Year 9. In Year 11 standards are well above average. This represents very good achievement at all levels. Pupils make very good progress throughout the school. This judgement is confirmed by a rising trend in the GCSE results over the last three years. The average points score for all pupils taking GCSE drama in 2001 was considerably better than the average for all other subjects in the school.

216. Pupils come to the school with few experiences of, or skills in, drama. They develop good knowledge of the dramatic process in the first three years. In Year 7 they build self-confidence by expressing themselves clearly, for example when making and receiving imaginary phone calls. In Year 8 lessons all pupils made a good start at speaking sentences in rhythm at the same time as others. In Year 9 they tell stories using narrative, dialogue and action. In Year 10 they improvise in role, think and respond quickly and build a character with credibility. Pupils in Year 11 work very well in character with good timing. The majority have good vocal control and many were conscious of presenting their work to an audience.

217. The reasons for these high standards are very good teaching and learning in the subject especially in Years 10 and 11. At this stage attitudes are mature. Pupils show considerable commitment to the subject, they love what they do and behave very well. This was evident in Year 10 and 11 lessons. Year 10 pupils entered the room and within three minutes were set up in place without instructions from the teacher. In Year 11, most groups of pupils worked unsupported at their scripted course work throughout the lesson while their teacher helped one particular group. Teaching is always very enthusiastic and entertaining and this enthralled the pupils. In a low-attaining Year 9 class with many pupils with special educational needs, they were skilfully handled by the teacher. Because of his perseverance he achieved several small successes as pupils were drawn out of themselves to act in role. In another lesson with a Year 8 transition class, progress was definite even though slow because the teacher moved determinedly in small steps throughout the lesson.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- The range and experience of the physical education team.
- The quality of teaching and learning through the planned and extra-curricular curriculum.
- Pupils make good progress from Year 7 to Year 11.
- Assessment is good, particularly during teaching activities.

Areas for improvement

- The range of strategies and teaching approaches used in GCSE theory lessons are too narrow.
- The current facilities do not allow the department to develop gymnastics and dance as fully as the teachers would like.

218. Attainment on entry is below the national averages for gymnastics and is broadly in line for games. Standards are average by the end of Year 9, and rise to above average for GCSE practical work. Standards in the basic course followed by all pupils in Years 10 and 11 are above expected levels by the end of Year 11.

219. Results in GCSE in 2000 were below the national average, but the trends over the last three years have been upwards. There was a significant improvement in results in 2001. These standards are achieved because the teaching in practical lessons is very good, although it is only satisfactory in GCSE theory lessons. Pupils' attitudes also lead to good learning in physical education because they are very good in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. As a result, pupils' achievement overall in relation to their standards when they began in Year 7 is good.

220. By Year 9 most pupils have acquired new skills and show control and fluency in movement, and a sound understanding of tactics and rules in the taught major games. This was demonstrated very well in a Year 9 extra-curricular rugby session. The independent warm-up procedures that are fostered in Year 7 and Year 8 games lessons came into effect when pupils prepared sensibly and safely for their activity. Ball-handling skills and tactical awareness are developing well enabling pupils to participate with increasing confidence.

221. In Year 11, most pupils take part in a wider range of activities with confidence at their own level of ability. Most devise personal exercise plans to improve strength and mobility, and develop small skills practices for their chosen activities. The best, as in a Year 11 GCSE soccer lesson, can assess their own performance critically and refine their activities to enable them to succeed, showing insight and maturity. By contrast, in a lower ability Year 10 fitness lesson, some pupils' limited understanding of the

principles of fitness training led to a lack of precision in the set programme of exercises that they were following.

222. In all lessons pupils of all levels of attainment make at least satisfactory and often very good progress as they develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in the subject. Over longer periods of time, achievement is good, in spite of the limited range of activities that the teaching team and facilities can support. A recent appointment of a sports co-ordinator has strengthened and extended the range of activities, especially for girls. In the core programme for Years 10 and 11, progress in lessons is often good as a result of very good teaching, enthusiastic pupils and the stimulus of new courses. In GCSE groups, the progress made in practical lessons is mostly very good with some instances of excellence. Best progress was seen when pupils worked with interest, enjoyment and motivation that was maintained by the good pace and a variety of challenging activities in teaching. Where progress is only satisfactory, particularly in theory lessons, it is linked to poorer motivation and less exciting teaching.

223. Behaviour is very good with a few isolated incidents of disruption and disaffection. This happened at the end of a Year 10 fitness lesson where rudeness and inappropriate behaviour by a small number of boys threatened to escalate. The skilful intervention by the teacher diffused the situation and also left those concerned with a clear message about expectations for behaviour.

224. In Years 7 to 9, teaching is consistently very good and leads to very good learning. When learning is at its best, pupils are interested, well motivated and enjoy their work. This is maintained by good pace and a variety of challenging activities in lessons. In a very good Year 8 gymnastics lesson pupils were given opportunities to plan, perform and evaluate their work on counter balance and counter tension. The high expectations and timely interventions by the teacher resulted in much improved body management and more graceful shapes by all. In a Year 7 soccer lesson, the good learning was due to perceptive intervention by the teacher with sharply focussed comments for improvement. In this way, individuals and the group were able to take the work forward.

225. In Years 10 and 11, theory teaching is satisfactory and for practical lessons it is often good with instances of excellence. In theory lessons, the pace is slower and activities are not so demanding or well matched to pupils' abilities. This leads to the lessons being undervalued by pupils and their motivation drops. By contrast, in a good Year 11 girls' basketball lesson, pupils worked independently and with enthusiasm when they were given opportunities to devise skills' practices for themselves, drawing on their prior learning. Pupils reviewed their work critically and, with the help of the teacher, made appropriate modifications to improve their performance. Special educational needs and pupils from ethnic minorities are well integrated and making progress that is as good as their peers.

226. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. Teaching, learning and achievement have all improved. Assessment is comprehensive and well used to plan changes to the way the physical education curriculum is taught. Day-to-day assessment, which is fed back to pupils during lessons, helps to steer them towards

greater success. The gymnasium floor has been replaced, teaching time is used well, and risk assessment is incorporated into all the plans for all lessons.

227. The provision of extra-curricular activities continues to be good and is well supported by pupils. The introduction of the Sports Co-ordinator post, to raise the profile of girls' sport is a very creative initiative and a number of important links with primary feeder schools and other organisations are well in hand. The team is very effective and well led, there is a clear commitment to work together to raise the quality of provision and this is happening. The lack of physical education departmental meetings restricts the opportunities to evaluate and plan for the extension of indoor activities such as dance.

228. The current accommodation is barely adequate and tired. With older pupils, certain areas such as changing rooms become very cramped. The team does exceptionally well despite these circumstances. The shortage of specialist indoor space is limiting the further development of the curriculum.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- The quality of some teaching.
- Contribution to pupils' personal development.

Areas for improvement

- The use of assessment data as a means of improving standards.
- The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning.
- The use of faith communities as a resource for visits and bringing visitors into school.
- The quantity and range of videos and religious artefacts.

229. Standards overall are below the national average for GCSE and the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus, but there has been a slow upward trend in attainment over the last three years.

230. In 2000, the short course GCSE results were well below the national average with girls attaining at a significantly higher level than boys. This however, does represent satisfactory achievement, as attainment on entry to the school was very low indeed. Results improved in 2001 but the numbers attaining higher A* to C grades was still well below the national figures for 2000. No national data is available for 2001 at the moment. Girls' results in 2001 were again better than those of the boys

231. From evidence in lessons and from analysis of pupils' exercise books, standards in Year 11 are below, but not well below, the national average. Most pupils are achieving well when standards on entry in Year 7 are taken into account.

In the very good lessons pupils are making very good progress. Very good progress was observed in a lesson on prejudice and discrimination. Pupils listen well to teachers and to their peers and some are prepared to offer comments and opinions on sensitive issues. They discuss topics in a satisfactory way but the quantity of good quality notes and extended pieces of writing is limited.

232. In Year 9 attainment is below the expectations of the agreed syllabus. But as in the Years 10 and 11, attainment on entry of these pupils was low and they are achieving well and making good progress in relation to prior attainment. Work in pupils' books is mainly based on factual knowledge and there is too little understanding of the influence of religions on people's lives. Spelling is sometimes weak and in class many pupils show that they do not remember the work they covered earlier. But in some lessons observed pupils did have a satisfactory knowledge of the importance of the Torah and the Ten Commandments within Judaism. In the very good lessons pupils respond well to enthusiastic and skilful teaching and progress is then very good. A good example was observed in a lesson on the image of Jesus in different cultures and across time. Pupils with special educational needs make equal progress and the department is addressing the needs of all pupils.

233. Overall teaching is good and in a few lessons there is some very good practice. There is a small percentage of unsatisfactory teaching but the quality of teaching and learning has improved considerably since the previous inspection in 1997. Most lessons are carefully planned with a range of appropriate strategies to help pupils increase their knowledge and understanding. In a small percentage however, teaching and learning are based too closely on one textbook and are too closely directed by the teacher. This narrow approach limits the range of resources open to pupils and also inhibits their ability to think and learn independently.

234. There is now a more effective contribution to pupils' personal development. In lessons on the ways God reveals Himself to mankind and on moral issues associated with abortion, teaching emphasised spiritual and moral issues well. Teachers' classroom management is good and most pupils' attitudes to lessons are positive.

235. The subject is managed within the humanities faculty. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory. The arrangements for fitting the subject into the curriculum and the time allocated are now satisfactory, although the time allocated in

Years 7 to 9 still results in some aspects of the subject being covered in less depth. The introduction of a short course GCSE for all pupils in Years 10 and 11 means the school is now meeting statutory requirements, and over use of work sheets has been discontinued. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection. This is also the case in the contribution into the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Other areas of management have not improved quickly enough. The department is only just beginning to tackle the assessment procedures that were identified as underdeveloped in 1997. There is still a lack of monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. Although considerable attention has been given to improving textbook resources, some are

still old. Videos and artefacts to widen pupils' experiences are very limited. No attempt has been made to use local faith communities as a resource for visits or to provide input into lessons. This denies pupils the opportunity to widen their knowledge and awareness of major faiths and, in particular, the influence of belief on individual followers of those religions.