

INSPECTION REPORT

KELMSCOTT SCHOOL

Walthamstow

LEA area: Waltham Forest

Unique reference number: 103105

Acting headteacher: Anton Francic

Reporting inspector: Martin Beale
19385

Dates of inspection: 11 - 14 February 2002

Inspection number: 194333

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11 to 16 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Markhouse Road
Walthamstow
London

Postcode: E17 8DN

Telephone number: 020 8521 2115

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Howard Morrall

Date of previous inspection: 4 November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
19385	Martin Beale	Registered inspector		<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>How high are standards?</p> <p>a) The school's results and achievements</p> <p>How well are pupils taught?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
9708	Sylvia Daintrey	Lay inspector		<p>How high are standards?</p> <p>b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
10759	Lynn Bappa	Team inspector	History	
8076	Terence Bendall	Team inspector	Design and technology	
20629	John Bryson	Team inspector	English	
11672	Peter Harle	Team inspector	Music	
13101	Michael Kell	Team inspector	Special educational needs	
8052	Kenneth McKenzie	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
12179	Laurence Moscrop	Team inspector	English as an additional language	
25748	Roger Moyle	Team inspector	Physical education	
20189	Jagat Singh Nagra	Team inspector	Urdu	
6044	Roger Perkins	Team inspector	Mathematics	
3793	John Ratcliffe	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
20420	Stuart Rawcliffe	Team inspector	Science	

31680	Phil Redican	Team inspector	Art and design	
30427	Felicity Shuffle-Botham	Team inspector	Equal opportunities Religious education	
10666	Patricia Wheeler	Team inspector	Geography	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is an average sized comprehensive for pupils from 11 to 16 years of age, which has expanded considerably since the last inspection. There are considerably more boys than girls. The school serves a culturally diverse community and a high proportion of the pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. Almost a third are pupils of Pakistani heritage, and there are also significant numbers of pupils from Indian, black-Caribbean and black-African families. As a consequence, a high proportion of the pupils has English as an additional language, although only 20 are at an early stage of learning English. The main languages spoken are Urdu, Punjabi, Turkish and Bengali. There are also 13 refugee children, mostly of Albanian backgrounds. Many pupils come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and almost 40 per cent are entitled to free school meals. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is well above average, although the number with statements is average. Moderate learning and emotional and behavioural difficulties are the main reasons for higher levels of need. The attainment of pupils on entry is well below average. The school receives funding through 'Excellence in Cities' for the employment of learning mentors, a co-ordinator for gifted and talented pupils and a home-school liaison officer. The school has been experiencing recent staff recruitment difficulties, particularly in science, design and technology, modern languages and music.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is providing a good education, meeting the needs of its diverse community well and giving good value for money. Pupils achieve well and make good progress during their time at Kelmscott School because much of the teaching is of a high quality, particularly in Years 10 and 11. As a consequence GCSE results are above those in similar schools. The strong leadership of the headteacher and senior managers has created a staff team that is committed to ensuring that all pupils can participate in all that the school has to offer with the goal of raising standards further.

What the school does well

- Much teaching is very good in Years 10 and 11 where pupils make good overall progress.
- Standards in drama are high and pupils achieve well in English, design and technology, history, geography and religious education.
- Strong leadership and management have been instrumental in the progress made in recent years.
- The progress of pupils is carefully monitored and targets set for their improvement.
- Good provision is made for the pupils' personal development and they are given good individual support and guidance, which they value considerably.
- Pupils mostly have good attitudes to school, behave well and establish productive relationships.

What could be improved

- Pupils are not achieving as well as they should in mathematics, science and Urdu because of shortcomings in teaching.
- The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 does not fulfil National Curriculum requirements that all pupils should study design and technology and a modern foreign language, and does not include sufficient vocational courses.
- The management arrangements for physical education are unsatisfactory and are having a detrimental effect on standards.
- Homework is not set and completed consistently and pupils are not provided with textbooks to support their studying outside school.
- The arrangements for the supervision of pupils at lunchtime are unsatisfactory.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The action taken to meet the aim of 'Putting Learning First' has resulted in better teaching, improving examination results and good progress since the last inspection in 1997. Higher expectations have resulted in increased challenge for higher-attaining pupils. Improved management has secured more

effective support for pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language. The arrangements for the teaching of information and communication technology (ICT) have improved considerably, although pupils do not have access to computers to support learning in all subjects. Staff recruitment difficulties and long-term absence have restricted developments in some areas. However, the commitment of the strong staff team to raising standards and its effective management place the school in a strong position to secure further improvements.

STANDARDS

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

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

Test and examination results have regularly been below average, but represent good progress for most pupils from their very low attainment on entry. National Curriculum test results for Year 9 pupils have risen at a faster rate than nationally since the last inspection. They were well below average in 2001 but close to results in similar schools. GCSE results are slightly higher than at the last inspection, but have fluctuated and are lower than the high point reached in 1998. Overall results were well below average in 2001 but above the average of results in similar schools. The school's GCSE targets were exceeded in both 2000 and 2001 and have been set higher for the next three years. Boys have achieved better results than girls in National Curriculum tests, although girls have caught up by GCSE. There has been some variation in results by ethnicity. Pupils of Indian background have achieved better results than the school average at GCSE, while pupils of black-Caribbean heritage have achieved lower results as is the case nationally. The school is aware of this and has introduced initiatives to raise the achievement of black-Caribbean pupils.

Most pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 7 to 9 from their low attainment on entry; however, the overall standard of work seen during the inspection reflects the well below average results in the most recent tests. Standards improve in Years 10 and 11 to be only below average because pupils achieve well and make good progress in most subjects as a result of much good teaching. High standards are achieved in drama, in particular. Where teaching is unsatisfactory pupils are not achieving as well as they should in mathematics, science, physical education and Urdu. Pupils have a good level of knowledge and understanding in many subjects but weaknesses in writing lower the standards that they achieve. The school is tackling this matter, although it is too early to judge the long-term effect of the action taken.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Most pupils have good attitudes, are proud of their school and want to be successful.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils mostly behave well, although some younger pupils can become silly when not supervised closely.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils in all age, ability, gender and ethnic groups work together harmoniously. Their personal development is satisfactory.

Attendance	Attendance has improved from being well below average but is still unsatisfactory. Many pupils have a casual attitude at the start of the day.
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Attendance and behaviour are very closely monitored and effective strategies are being developed to improve standards in both areas. There has been a high rate of exclusions, but this is now falling.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	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 and learning have improved since the last inspection. Teaching is now good overall, and accounts for the good progress made by pupils particularly in Years 10 and 11. There is a substantial proportion of high quality teaching in English, drama, geography, history and religious education, which results in pupils learning new skills rapidly. In contrast, there is a significant proportion of unsatisfactory teaching in mathematics, science and Urdu, which is associated with recruitment difficulties and long-term staff absence. The best lessons are carefully planned with tasks pitched at different levels of difficulty to meet the needs of all pupils. Teachers have high expectations to which the pupils respond by working hard and trying to give of their best. Much teaching is lively and generates enthusiasm amongst the pupils. English teaching is good throughout the school and literacy is promoted well, particularly through the successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. Mathematics teaching is satisfactory overall, but numeracy is not being effectively developed. The teaching of science is unsatisfactory overall throughout the school. Where lessons have shortcomings these are associated with poor discipline or a pedestrian pace to learning. Teaching is satisfactory for pupils with special educational needs and is good for pupils with English as an additional language. The support for gifted and talented pupils is well planned and challenges them so that their skills and thinking are extended well. One major shortcoming is the inconsistent and inadequate use made of homework to support and extend learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Unsatisfactory. There are some shortcomings in the curriculum in Years 10 and 11 because National Curriculum requirements are not met; there is limited provision for the less academic.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory overall, but teaching and support staff are not always deployed to the best effect.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Pupils' needs are carefully identified and they are supported well in mainstream classes.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The school promotes the pupils' moral, social and cultural development well, although more could be done to draw on the richness of the cultures represented in the school. Spiritual provision is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for ensuring the pupils' welfare, health and safety are thorough, except that procedures for ensuring that pupils only leave the

	site at lunchtime with parental permission are inadequate.
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Heads of year and their teams play a significant role in the implementation of the good systems for supporting, guiding and monitoring the progress of pupils as they move through the school. Parents and pupils are confident that any incidents of bullying, which have occurred in the past, are dealt with quickly. National Curriculum requirements that all pupils should study a foreign language and design and technology in Years 10 and 11 are not being met, and pupils do not have the opportunity to use ICT to support learning in all subjects. The school has not developed a constructive partnership with parents, who are not given enough information to enable them to support their children's learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The focus on raising standards has been promoted very effectively by the previous headteacher and the acting head, ably supported by an effective team of senior staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors monitor the work of the school effectively and have a good understanding of what needs to be done to improve, but they have not ensured that all National Curriculum requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The senior leadership team gains a clear picture of the school's strengths and areas for development through the rigorous monitoring of the work of staff, and the thorough analysis of data.
The strategic use of resources	Funding has been used well to support the main priorities for development and the drive for higher standards.

The drive from senior management to improve teaching and learning, backed by their high expectations of staff, has very effectively supported the drive to raise standards. The role of the subject leaders has developed considerably in reviewing and evaluating the work of their area and in taking steps to meet challenging targets set by senior management. Staffing levels are high, but have suffered from difficulties in recruitment in some areas. Learning resources are good and the accommodation satisfactory. Good use is made of the principles of best value when purchasing goods and services.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like coming to school. • They find staff approachable. • Staff have high expectations of work and behaviour. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The setting of regular homework. • The behaviour of some pupils. • Teaching in some subjects such as science. • The lack of lockers for pupils' books.

The inspection team supports the parents' favourable views of the school and also agrees with them over the areas that some would like to see improved.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is low. The overall National Curriculum test results taken in Year 6 in their primary schools by the current intake were well below the national average. Only just over a half of pupils entered the school having reached the expected standards for their age in English and mathematics, with many well below this level. Standards, as demonstrated by both National Curriculum test and GCSE examination results, are well below average but improving. Overall National Curriculum test results for pupils in Year 9 have improved at a faster rate than nationally, while GCSE results have improved only slightly since the last inspection, and have failed to keep pace with improvements nationally. However, these results indicate that most pupils make good progress while at Kelmscott School from their low attainment on entry. The pupils' work seen and lessons observed during the inspection indicate that most pupils achieve well and make good progress in most subjects, this progress being most marked in Years 10 and 11. In spite of this, standards in most subjects remain below the national average.
2. Improvements in National Curriculum test results for Year 9 pupils in English have been erratic. They reached a high point in 2000 from which they fell in 2001, when they were well below average and below results in similar schools. Results in mathematics fell slightly in 2001, following a steady improvement since the last inspection. Science results have improved steadily, but at a slower rate than in English and mathematics. Results in both mathematics and science were well below average in 2001 but close to results in similar schools.
3. The proportion of pupils achieving at least five grades A*-C and the average points score at GCSE were both well below average in 2001 but were above results in similar schools. Eight per cent of the last Year 11 group left without achieving any GCSE pass grades A*-G, a figure that is double the national average. Results in drama in 2001 exceeded the national average, and those in English language and geography were significantly better than the pupils' results in other subjects. By contrast, pupils achieved lower results in English literature, mathematics, art, business studies, graphics and physical education than in their other subjects.
4. There has been some variation in attainment by gender in National Curriculum tests, with boys achieving slightly better results than girls. Any advantage that boys had at Year 9 has been eliminated and reversed by Year 11. Nationally, boys achieve lower results than girls at GCSE, a picture replicated at Kelmscott School. The high proportion of boys in each recent Year 11 group has a considerable impact and affects overall GCSE results adversely. The school has identified this factor as a priority for further attention.
5. There has also been some variation in results by ethnic background. An analysis in 2001 showed that pupils of Indian background achieved better results than other pupils in Year 9, while pupils of Pakistani and boys of black-Caribbean heritage achieved lower results on average. The picture of Indian pupils achieving better results and black-Caribbean boys achieving lower results was also repeated at GCSE. The school has undertaken a careful analysis of its own assessment data to establish any variation in attainment by ethnicity. This largely confirms national test and examination data that pupils of Pakistani and black-Caribbean backgrounds fare less well than pupils from other backgrounds in most, but not all, subjects. The steps taken by the school to tackle this are in the early stages of implementation and have not had sufficient time to make a significant impact on the standards achieved by these groups of pupils.
6. The work seen during the inspection indicates that standards are improving in English and are now only below average as opposed to the well below average test and examination results of recent years. One reason for this is the focus placed on the development of literacy within English, through the successful implementation of the National Strategy in Years 7 and 8. One

impact has been the improvement in both reading and spelling. From a low base on entry, pupils' skills develop well. Their speaking and listening is good and reading is satisfactory but writing is a weakness. The latter also adversely affects the standards that pupils achieve in other subjects where written responses form a vital part of examination courses. One strength of current arrangements is that all staff are involved in a whole-school approach to the promotion of literacy.

7. Inspection evidence confirms test and examination data that attainment in mathematics is well below average throughout the school. Most pupils make satisfactory progress, although this is not sufficiently rapid to raise standards at the rate needed to achieve national expected standards. The National Strategy for the development of Numeracy in Years 7 and 8 has not been effectively implemented. In addition, there is no programme to enable the large number of pupils who are below the national expected level on entry to catch up. As a result, many pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Some improvements in the pupils' mental arithmetic skills have occurred where teachers have introduced activities to support their development. A further shortcoming is that there is no whole-school approach to the promotion and development of numeracy in other subjects.
8. The quality of the work seen during the inspection confirms the picture of recent test and examination results that standards improve at a faster than average rate as pupils move through the school. From a low base on entry to the school standards improve by Year 9, although remaining below average in most subjects. Further improvements take place in Years 10 and 11 where pupils achieve well because teaching is good overall, and most pupils are committed to working hard and trying to be successful. Pupils achieve particularly well in drama because much of the teaching is high quality. Standards are high throughout the school. Pupils also achieve well in design and technology, history, geography and religious education. In the latter, standards are close to the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus throughout the school. Standards in design and technology are above average in Years 10 and 11. Recent staff recruitment difficulties and some long-term staff absence have affected overall standards in physical education and Urdu, and in science where attainment is well below average. Pupils are not consistently achieving as well as they should in these subjects. Progress has improved considerably in ICT now that all pupils are taught the subject on a regular weekly basis. Standards are below average by Year 9, but are close to the national average by Year 11, particularly for pupils on the GNVQ course who are achieving well. The use of ICT to support learning in other subjects remains a weakness, but the situation is improving as the facilities become more accessible to other departments.
9. Pupils with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily in mainstream lessons. They make satisfactory progress but their levels of attainment remain well below national expectations. Pupils in Year 7 who are withdrawn for reading recovery sessions also achieve satisfactorily and make satisfactory progress. Pupils achieve well when mainstream lessons are carefully structured, when learning support assistants are available to maximise learning opportunities, and when behaviour management is of a high standard. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress in developing English language skills and make similar progress to their peers in other subjects.
10. The school has identified several pupils who are talented in particular subjects. They are then provided with specific, additional programmes funded through the 'Excellence in Cities' initiative. These pupils make good progress and achieve well. For example, a group of able mathematicians were entered successfully for GCSE in Year 10 and have now embarked on AS-level in Year 11 where they are making very good progress as a result of some challenging teaching.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships are generally good. This is a similar picture to that described in the last inspection report when the school was considerably smaller. The pupils' willingness to learn and the harmonious atmosphere in the school make a significant contribution to the good progress that pupils make as they move through the school.

12. Pupils' attitudes to school and to learning are good. They improve as pupils become older and respond to the good teaching in many lessons. Some very good and excellent attitudes were seen in subjects when the teaching was brisk and stimulating and pupils were fully involved in their learning. For example, pupils in English were well motivated and responded very well to the variety of opportunities to examine social and moral questions through analysing the play *An Inspector Calls* or the shower scene in the film *Psycho*. Most pupils are proud of their work and loyal to the school. The sample of pupils interviewed by inspectors were positive about their experiences. Pupils across the school are friendly, courteous and happy to contribute their views and ideas. They enjoy taking part in the extra-curricular activities available, with older pupils particularly appreciating the subject clubs and revision sessions offered. Parents indicate that there is a small core of pupils who do not like school. This is reflected in the high absence rates and in the occasional casual attitude to learning which result in a lack of effort and focus in some lessons. Some pupils find it difficult to maintain their motivation and concentration towards the end of the hour-long lessons.
13. Behaviour seen during the inspection was good. It was very good in many lessons with pupils showing a good level of respect for the teacher and for each other. However, it was unsatisfactory in a minority of lessons in physical education and Urdu when taught by temporary teachers. Pupils were mostly well behaved around the school, for example when they moved between lessons along some narrow corridors and at lunchtime, even on a wet day when they were not able to make full use of the good quality recreational spaces outside. There have been some bullying problems in the past but pupils and parents are confident that the situation is much improved and that any incidents are now tackled swiftly and effectively. Some of the parents who attended the meeting with inspectors were concerned about vandalism in the school, but the inspection team found little evidence of this. Behaviour deteriorated slightly towards the end of the inspection when some pupils became a little over-excited and inconsiderate. Boys and girls in all years, but especially in the younger age groups, sometimes display restless, immature and silly behaviour in lessons and tutor periods, which hinders their progress in learning. The rate of permanent exclusions has fallen considerably since the last inspection and so far this school year is below average. The rate of fixed period exclusions has risen since the last inspection as the school population has grown, and reflects persistent defiance and disruption by small but significant groups of boys and girls. Pupils from all black ethnic backgrounds, but especially those of black-Caribbean heritage, are over-represented in the numbers of pupils excluded.
14. Personal development and relationships are satisfactory overall. Relationships are good. A strong feature in many lessons is the way in which pupils work together in groups and help and support each other. This was seen, for example, in a Year 11 course designed mainly for pupils with special educational needs, leading to the City and Guilds 'Skillpower' qualification. These pupils worked excellently together and with two pupils on an integration programme from a special school, in making model cars out of pre-prepared card that would withstand a simulated crash test. Pupils are responding well to the school's increasing efforts to give them responsibility and a voice in the school. The pupil councils have made a good start in considering issues such as bullying and the environment. Year 8 pupil receptionists provide good support to office staff and some pupils help the librarian. Older pupils can become prefects, although their contribution is not yet making a strong impact in the school. Pupils across the school are not skilled in taking the initiative in their learning, in developing self-discipline when unsupervised and in taking responsibility for their actions. For example, pupils in Year 7 have been slow to get into the habit of showing their journals recording homework tasks and other information to their parents. Some pupils have behaved irresponsibly when changing for physical education without supervision. There is an unsatisfactory amount of litter around the buildings and site because pupils do not clear up after themselves and put their rubbish in the bins provided.
15. Attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory. This disrupts the continuity of the pupils' education and hence the progress which they are able to make. Attendance rates have fluctuated since the last inspection, but are usually hovering below the national average. Last year they fell to well below the national average. The school has implemented a rigorous action plan to raise attendance to a target of 93 per cent. These efforts achieved a considerable improvement in the first third of the current school year. Attendance up to the week of the inspection averaged 91.2

per cent. The rate of unauthorised absence has fallen since last year as the school has successfully obtained valid reasons for absence that can be recorded in the registers. However, absences have risen again since December due to religious holidays, sickness and family responsibilities. These affect the attendance rates, and therefore the progress, of all pupils but especially those from ethnic minority groups and refugees. During the week of the inspection there were high rates of absence in many classes. Punctuality has improved to some extent since the last inspection, but there are still too many pupils who do not put enough effort into arriving promptly at the start of the school day and into moving quickly to their lessons.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. The school has successfully focused on improving teaching and learning since the last inspection. The monitoring of lessons and carefully planned support and guidance have been necessary because of the increase in teachers as the school has expanded, the comparatively high staff turnover and the recent difficulties in recruiting staff. Teaching is good overall. As a result pupils learn well and make good progress. The proportion of very good and excellent teaching has increased since the last inspection to almost a quarter of lessons observed. A greater proportion of this high quality teaching occurs in Years 10 and 11, accounting for results at GCSE that are much better than would have been expected from the pupils' National Curriculum test results in Year 9. There is much high quality teaching in English, geography, history, religious education and drama.
17. Where teaching is best, lessons are well planned and carefully structured, usually starting with reference to previous work undertaken. This focuses the pupils' attention on what they are to learn, ensures that they consolidate their knowledge and understanding and develops skills systematically. The brisk start to a Year 7 literacy lesson, coupled with skilful questioning, elicited a good response from the pupils as they learnt how to gain an understanding of meaning from text. Similarly, excellent planning and preparation and lively teaching engaged all pupils in a Year 10 drama lesson and provided them with opportunities to be successful. As in both of these lessons, many teachers employ a variety of interesting and stimulating activities to generate enthusiasm and help the pupils to maintain concentration, thus maximising the potential for learning. The variety of activities adopted in a Year 11 religious education lesson, supported by clear time allocations, generated a sense of purpose as pupils discussed the benefits of living in a multi-cultural society. The smooth transition between activities, as in a Year 10 English lesson on essay writing, generates pace to learning and an enthusiasm amongst the pupils.
18. Teachers, in lessons such as these, communicate their high expectations to their classes and present work that is challenging, to which the pupils were observed to respond well. High expectations and challenge were evident in an excellent Year 11 mathematics lesson reviewing Pythagoras' theorem and trigonometry. The teacher skilfully involved all pupils in the lesson, including the eight girls who were considerably outnumbered. Teaching was related well to a real-life example of a boat rescue, with very good explanations and justifications given of the best method of solution. Good challenge was also provided for all pupils in a Year 8 geography lesson preparing the pupils for an oral presentation about the Bangladesh flood action plan. This lesson was also well planned with good support to ensure that all pupils could make progress. High expectations communicated through very clear targets and supported by excellent relationships in a Year 8 music lesson resulted in very good behaviour and pupils responding to the challenge. Teachers use their high level of subject expertise to provide stimulating and interesting direct teaching, whether this is through skilful questioning or explanations to classes or groups. Teaching is often brisk, although at times teachers' explanations are brief and unclear or can last too long and lose the pupils' interest and concentration.
19. Many staff have successfully developed an atmosphere in their lessons in which pupils can learn and make progress, often working co-operatively as in a Year 7 dance session where pupils worked very effectively in small groups. The warm relationships between teachers and pupils are built on mutual respect. The activities chosen to consolidate learning and extend pupils' thinking are often provided at different levels of difficulty to meet the identified needs of pupils. This was

seen to good effect in a well taught Year 11 French class where a brisk pace was also generated through rapid questioning and high expectations of the pupils' responses. There are occasions, however, when teaching and tasks are not adapted sufficiently to meet the wide range of attainment and aptitudes of pupils, particularly in mixed-ability classes. Learning suffers as a result with higher-attaining pupils being insufficiently extended and lower-attaining pupils not suitably supported.

20. The successful introduction of the Literacy Strategy has had a beneficial impact on English teaching in Years 7 and 8. Year 7 classes, for example, undertake starter activities in two lessons each week to improve their basic literacy skills. In a 'catch-up' lesson the pupils concentrated hard when given carefully targeted practice in writing. Good learning took place. The Numeracy Strategy has not been successfully introduced into Year 7 and 8 classes. Some teachers use starter activities in each lesson to improve the mental recall of basic number facts, but these activities lack variety and are mainly an oral mental test. This does little to develop skills or to give confidence to the less able. Teachers also do not use the end of lessons effectively to establish what pupils have learnt.
21. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. Pupils who are withdrawn for reading sessions make satisfactory progress. Teaching is satisfactory on these occasions because relationships are generally good and this promotes pupils' confidence. However, not all sessions have this quality. Pupil management is frequently insecure so that far too much time is lost in maintaining pupils' focus and attention. However, the unsatisfactory quality and nature of the teaching resources used is a significant factor in pupils' inconsistent attention. The department uses an outdated commercial scheme and its content is not appropriate to the pupils' age and interests. In subjects such as mathematics and geography learning support staff make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. They have detailed knowledge of pupils and this enables them to focus effectively on their individual needs. The music curriculum is based on individual pupils' development and therefore teachers match activities well to individual pupils' skills and experience. On other occasions teachers are not aware of pupils' needs, or do not recognise their learning targets in lesson planning, and therefore they do not provide activities that result in positive learning experiences.
22. The teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is generally good, mostly through support in mainstream classes. This support is largely effective as subject lessons are planned in advance so that support staff can adapt materials and activities. This is not always undertaken effectively and important concepts and vocabulary are not consistently explained to pupils.
23. In spite of the increase in the proportion of very good and excellent teaching, over a tenth of lessons observed were judged to be less than satisfactory. Much of this was directly associated with difficulties experienced by the school in recruiting permanent staff or from long-term staff illness. The former has resulted in much unsatisfactory teaching in science, as overseas teachers who are qualified in their own country come to terms with the demands and rigours of the National Curriculum. The school has invested considerable support, training and guidance for these teachers, which has already paid dividends as their teaching is improving. This is clearly evident from an analysis of the pupils' work, which shows that they are now making better progress than at the start of the year. Shortcomings in the teaching of Urdu, in the absence of the regular teacher, contributed disproportionately to the amount of unsatisfactory teaching observed during the inspection. Again, an analysis of the pupils' work shows that at least satisfactory progress was being made last term under the teaching of the regular teacher, who is to return to the school shortly. The long-term absence of two female physical education teachers also contributed to some unsatisfactory teaching.
24. One further shortcoming, highlighted by parents and confirmed by the inspection, is that homework is not being used effectively to support learning. The setting of homework by teachers and its regular completion by pupils is inconsistent, and often work is not sufficiently challenging. Furthermore, it is the practice of many departments not to issue pupils with textbooks because they fear that they will be lost. The message that this gives to pupils is of low expectations in contrast to the high expectations often seen in the classroom.

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

25. Overall, although there are some strengths in the curriculum offered by the school, there are also some shortcomings, particularly in Years 10 and 11. The curriculum in Years 7, 8 and 9 is broadly satisfactory in the range of subjects offered and the quality of the content in the various subjects. However, staffing constraints mean that a second modern foreign language cannot be introduced until Year 9. There remain weaknesses in the curriculum offered in Years 10 and 11. The school has responded to a key issue to provide greater breadth by producing a new option scheme, but in doing so has disregarded the requirement for all pupils to study a modern foreign language and a course in design and technology. The school has had a long-standing difficulty in recruiting modern language staff, which partly explains why the taught curriculum does not meet requirements. Staffing difficulties have also contributed to a lack of breadth and balance in the physical education provision for girls. The school has also not sufficiently tackled the problem of providing an alternative curriculum for the least able, and those who are disaffected with the current provision. Although the school offers an integrated studies course leading to a City and Guilds qualification, this is only for a small number of pupils. The recently introduced GNVQ intermediate course in ICT is not appropriate for their needs and the school's solution is to send some pupils to the local further education college to study work-related vocational courses. There is no school provision for GNVQ courses other than in ICT.
26. The school now meets National Curriculum requirements for the teaching of ICT. Pupils throughout the school now have the opportunity to study an ICT course. However, ICT provision in music and design and technology does not yet fully comply with requirements for those particular subjects. A new ICT co-ordinator was appointed in September who is now working with departments to ensure that all requirements are met. The time allocation for subjects is largely appropriate but time is tight for geography in Years 7 to 9 and physical education in Years 10 and 11. One hour lessons create inflexibility in curriculum organisation and for some subjects one hour is too long for a lesson.
27. The school is successful in promoting equality of opportunity and in enabling all pupils to benefit from the curriculum provided, with some exceptions. The school makes satisfactory curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs. Year 7, 8 and 9 pupils follow the same curriculum as their peers and have access to the same learning opportunities, but in practice the reading recovery withdrawal arrangements restrict the curriculum entitlement of some Year 7 pupils. A group of pupils with special educational needs has the opportunity to follow an additional vocational option in Years 10 and 11. This is a relevant option for these pupils as it extends the breadth of their curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs have the opportunity to follow GCSE courses but the school does not provide a sufficiently wide range of alternative externally accredited courses. An unsatisfactory feature of the curriculum lies in the school's decision to place some pupils on reduced timetables or to offer provision that is alternative to the normal school curriculum. These arrangements in Years 7, 8 and 9 are not organised in a way which ensures that the pupils' curriculum entitlement is maintained and they are also not effectively monitored. In contrast, the arrangements for Year 10 and 11 pupils who spend part of their week on courses at the local further education college are appropriate and better monitored and managed. The school has identified pupils with talents in particular subjects and provides them with well-planned programmes to extend and enrich their studies, funded through the 'Excellence in Cities' initiative. The arrangements for pupils with English as an additional language are well organised, largely through support in mainstream classes.
28. The provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is good, and, together with the teaching of careers education, contributes effectively to the pupils' personal development. The programme is well taught by a team of twelve teachers with the help of a community police officer and other outside visitors. It covers a wide range of topics including drug and alcohol abuse, bullying, sex education and personal relationships, study skills, citizenship and money management. Careers education is satisfactory and in Year 10 all pupils have work experience for two weeks.

29. The school has satisfactory links with the main feeder primary schools and there are some links with the local special school. The head of Year 7 and a few other teachers visit these primaries and there is a transitional project on citizenship led by the local education authority which promotes links. There are also satisfactory links with the local 6th form and further education colleges. Some of the school's pupils regularly attend the latter on a part-time basis.
30. The provision of extra-curricular activities is just satisfactory. It is good in some areas such as boys' sport where parents support cricket and football matches. The English department has a good range of extra-curricular activities. Some clubs take place at lunchtime and after school, but many of these are for extra revision or guidance in subject areas rather than for other activities which extend and enhance the curriculum. Some visits to theatres and museums are undertaken, but there are very few visits in history or geography and little of an extra-curricular nature in music.
31. The school provides good opportunities for the moral, social and cultural development of pupils. Provision for their spiritual development is satisfactory. Assemblies occasionally respond to their spiritual needs, but generally they are used to reinforce the school code of conduct and to celebrate success. They do not contain an act of worship or reflection and as such do not fulfil statutory requirements. Religious education provides very good opportunities for pupils to reflect on their beliefs and to ponder ultimate questions such as what happens after death. They consider the various ways people have tried to explain the creation of the world, and they are encouraged to make their own responses to spiritual concepts such as tranquil environments for spiritual growth. In drama pupils are encouraged to think about the spiritual dimensions of human life, and pupils use the media of art and music to develop their self-awareness and as expressions of their identities. The world's religions have been used as a stimulus for the mosaic project currently under development. Visits by speakers who hold other beliefs enable pupils to gain first hand experience of the adults whose lives have been affected by their beliefs. The school has not identified where opportunities for spiritual development are offered, however, and in many areas opportunities are missed or undeveloped.
32. Support for the moral development of pupils is good. The school has a clear code of conduct and teachers have high expectations of behaviour in classrooms. Pupils have the opportunity to discuss contemporary moral issues in several subjects; for example, in science they consider the significance of genetic engineering, and in English and drama pupils consider the behaviour of the characters they study and draw conclusions about moral choices and appropriate behaviour. PSHE lessons enable them to become informed about the dangers of the misuse of drugs and consider the responsible use of contraception in a structured and informed environment. Pupils have the opportunity to develop their responses to moral dilemmas, as was seen in religious education when they considered the concept of the sanctity of life. In their consideration of euthanasia and abortion they begin to recognise that choices are often difficult.
33. Pupils work harmoniously together and the use of group work in many areas enables them to develop their skills of co-operation and support. Pupils are encouraged to present their views and to listen to the views of others with tolerance. Although there are few opportunities for younger pupils to take responsibility, the paired reading scheme enables pupils to offer support with sensitivity. Prefects are chosen from Year 11 and they gain experience in school responsibility and as 'buddies' for the rest of the school. Pupils are very aware of the school's policy with regard to bullying and in PSHE lessons they are encouraged to discuss the problem of bullying and to consider the effects of it. The school council has recently been re-established. The school has made a link with the local police who have met with the school council members in order to set up communication between them. The school successfully took part in a dance festival, and the 'Young Enterprise' group hosted a most successful party for a local primary school. Pupils gain confidence from work experience and from the mock interviews held for pupils in Year 11, which prepare them for the experience of a formal interview.
34. Pupils have good opportunities to learn about the many cultures that are represented in the school. They are encouraged to learn from one another in religious education when comparing

rites of passage, such as marriage, and Year 11 pupils are aware of the many benefits of living in a multi-cultural society. Pupils have opportunities to mark the key festivals of the world's religions and the celebration prepared by Muslim pupils, to which other pupils were invited, provided a very good example of cultural exchange. There is little evidence of multi-cultural art around the school that would reflect the diversity of the school populations. However, in the library the Chinese New Year provides the stimulus for a colourful display. History celebrates the cultural diversity represented through the school in its choice of world history topics. Drama provides excellent provision for pupils to develop their interest in British and foreign plays, and the theatre club enables them to experience it at first hand. The visit to school by an actor and a poet gave pupils valuable experiences of working with and listening to the performances of professional artists. Pupils study the European traditions of art with the support of a visiting artist, and some use is made of the availability of great art in London. There is little evidence, however, of multi-cultural art around the school that would reflect the diversity of the school population. World music is reflected in the syllabus, but pupils seldom perform outside lessons and there is no use of the community to extend the experiences of the pupils. There are few opportunities for pupils to travel outside their local area for fieldwork to develop their understanding of the history and geography of England. Pupils respond well when given the opportunity to travel, and clearly appreciated the recent visits to France and Barcelona.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. The school has successfully overcome the pressures of serving a rapidly growing school population and continues to provide good care for its pupils. There have been improvements in several areas of care and guidance since the last inspection. A significant feature is the consistent way in which all aspects of pupils' progress and development are closely monitored. Effective strategies are put in place to enable most groups to achieve their potential.
36. Systems for ensuring pupils' welfare are satisfactory overall. They are good in many respects. Arrangements for child protection are secure. Good care is taken of pupils who are ill or injured during the school day with office staff playing a valuable role in liaising with staff and parents. The health and safety policy is thorough and detailed and has been reviewed recently. The health and safety co-ordinator and site services manager work closely together to check on and deal with potential hazards. However, the health and safety co-ordinator has not received training in his role. Subject departments implement their own procedures effectively. The school had a positive health and safety audit report last year and responded well to the few recommendations made. Very good records are kept of pupils' whereabouts throughout the school day with the notable exception of lunchtime. Some parents at the meeting with inspectors were concerned about levels of supervision at lunchtime. The inspection team found that appropriate numbers of staff are on duty and suitable arrangements are in place to ensure the security of the site. However, no checks are made to ensure that only those pupils whose parents have given written permission leave the site during the lunch hour.
37. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance have been very successful over the last few months, both in raising attendance from a rate that was well below the national average and also in reducing the level of unauthorised absence. The school is aware that its action plan is only the start of a process to challenge a culture amongst many pupils and their families, which tolerates too much absence and lateness. The school is using funding from the 'Excellence in Cities' initiative very well to improve attendance by employing a home-school liaison officer and attendance clerk to support heads of year, form tutors and office staff in recording, monitoring and following up absences. All staff are vigilant and challenging about pupils' absence and lateness. Parents of pupils of concern are telephoned on the first day of absence. Incidents of truancy are picked up very quickly. There is a high degree of consistency in registration procedures and detailed records are kept. Attendance is analysed weekly and home visits are used well to follow up unexplained absence. The home-school liaison officer is starting to point out to parents of pupils with unsatisfactory attendance that there is a link between absence and underachievement. Tutor groups have targets for attendance and punctuality and pupils are rewarded for achieving 100 per cent. Punctuality is monitored and followed up through use of a late detention system,

although it is not clear that this is effective in deterring pupils from arriving late to school and some lessons.

38. Procedures for monitoring and improving behaviour are good. There is an effective code of conduct displayed in all classrooms which lists a range of rules and explains the rationale behind each. The reward system of merit and achievement slips works well in motivating pupils in all year groups. Sanctions are applied fairly and the school adheres closely to local education authority guidance when excluding pupils. Most staff manage pupils' behaviour in lessons well. Incidents of racism are monitored and dealt with very effectively. For example, a new pupil's habit of making racist remarks was swiftly challenged and ceased after a fixed period exclusion. The school is responding very appropriately to an identified need to review its anti-bullying policy. It is consulting pupils through the pupil councils system, working with the 'Childline' agency and considering training pupils as peer mentors. Heads of year monitor all aspects of pupils' behaviour very carefully, for example by analysing the 'on-call' system when senior staff withdraw disruptive pupils from lessons.
39. Arrangements for supporting and guiding pupils' personal development and academic progress are good, with many very good features. Heads of year play a key role here, which they fulfil to a very high standard. They know their pupils very well and move up with them through the school, as far as possible. They gather all the academic and personal information required on the individual pupils in their care, in a manageable form. They are highly skilled in identifying pupils of any ability who are underachieving for whatever reason. They then put in place a range of effective strategies, in liaison with other staff and outside agencies, to meet their needs. For example, the two learning mentors employed under the 'Excellence in Cities' initiative make a very valuable contribution to the support of older pupils at risk of dropping out of school altogether. They hold mentoring sessions and find alternative packages of education, training and experience through their links with external projects. These include a project to raise the achievements of black-Caribbean pupils, both those who are gifted and talented and those who are disaffected. The school has very usefully set up a 'pupils of concern' forum so that efficient use can be made of the wide range of support that is available.
40. Assessment procedures are good and have improved since the last inspection. Although there are problems with the central holding of data because of computer incompatibility, tracking procedures on a whole-school basis are good. Almost all subject departments set key assessment tasks or tests on a regular basis and upgrade records accordingly. Whilst good procedures exist in most subjects, assessment and marking are unsatisfactory in physical education. Most teachers provide pupils with good feedback by means of written or verbal comments. In several subjects, such as history, teachers share the National Curriculum or examination course assessment criteria with pupils. In religious education, however, there are no regular day-to-day marking grades to support the monitoring of progress. The use of assessment information to guide curricular planning is good. In English, for example, assessment information is used to plan and teach lessons that help pupils to meet their targets and achieve appropriate results.
41. Procedures for the monitoring and assessment of pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory overall. In order to become more fully effective these procedures need to be more consistently integrated and co-ordinated. Annual reviews should set agreed annual targets. Teachers, when planning work to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs, should show more recognition of their needs as identified in their individual education plans.
42. The school works hard on managing the transition of pupils from primary school to secondary education. For example, it took part in a local education authority project designed to make staff and pupils aware of the big change involved and what can be done to bridge the gap. This has only been partially successful, as many Year 7 pupils are still struggling to acquire the organisational and behavioural skills required for life in a secondary school. The school sometimes has difficulty in obtaining the necessary attainment data in good time before new pupils start. Good work is being done to identify gifted and talented pupils and to devise projects and other activities to stretch and challenge them further. The PSHE programme makes a good

contribution to the support and guidance of pupils as they move through the school. Celebration assemblies are held termly to reward pupils for their achievements. The school has started a system of academic review, which involves all pupils in evaluating their progress twice a year with form tutors and setting targets to raise their attainment, in consultation with parents. This is resulting in a developing awareness among pupils of what they need to do to reach the next level in their work. A good range of revision sessions is available to pupils preparing for examinations, particularly GCSEs, and many Year 11 pupils benefit from academic mentors.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43. Parents are broadly satisfied with the school. The few parents responding to the inspection questionnaire are pleased with the school's expectations for their children and the progress that their children are making. They also feel that staff and the school are approachable. The inspection team supports these positive views. A minority of parents have concerns about behaviour and teaching. The inspection team found that both these areas are good overall, although there are problems in recruiting suitable staff in some subjects which can result in behaviour difficulties in some classes. A major concern of parents responding to the questionnaire and attending the pre-inspection meeting is the school's arrangements for homework. The inspection team agrees that these do not promote a productive partnership with parents.
44. The school's links with parents are not good enough and parents make an insufficient impact on their children's learning and the life of the school. This represents unsatisfactory progress since the last inspection. There are some good features in the school's efforts to inform and involve parents. The annual reports on pupils' progress provide good information in most subjects about the strengths and weaknesses of pupils' work, the levels they have reached and are predicted to get, and what they need to do to improve. The newsletters over the past few months have kept parents in touch with the main features of school life at a time when the school has been without a permanent headteacher. The prospectus and governors' annual report are informative and meet statutory requirements. The booklet for parents of pupils joining the school is very useful, but parents of older pupils do not feel as well informed. Office staff provide a good point of contact between home and school, with one member able to speak to parents in a community language. Heads of year and the home-school liaison officer make frequent contact with parents by telephone and letter, not only when things go wrong but also to report when improvements have been made. Some departments, for example history and religious education, have additional arrangements for informing and involving parents in their children's work. Parents are starting to get involved in setting and reviewing their children's targets through the pilot system of 'academic review days' which are held twice a year. There was good attendance at the last review day, especially in the younger year groups, but parents are confused about the lack of opportunity to meet subject teachers and to collect a written report. This was confirmed in a survey which the school conducted into parents' views about the review day and its future development.
45. Parents who wish to support their children's learning at home are frustrated by the lack of regular information in their child's home-school journals about what their child should be doing. They feel that homework is often not set according to the timetable, and that the school is unwilling to supply pupils with textbooks and revision books that they can bring home. Other parents do not always support their child's learning as much as they could. For example, only 50 per cent of parents of children transferring from primary schools took part in the opportunity to share information about their child and discuss the home-school agreement. Some parents do not support the school sufficiently in ensuring that their children attend regularly and on time. The parent-teacher association runs occasional events and is consulted about the development of some policies such as equal opportunities. However, it is not always well supported by parents. Similarly, the school has had to work hard to find some parents willing to stand for a vacancy on the governing body. The governing body is aware that it needs to improve the school's partnership with parents but has no action plan for this.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

46. The aim of 'Putting Learning First' has provided a sharp focus for the school since the last inspection and has resulted in good progress being made. The clear direction, based on challenging low expectations and striving for higher standards, has been successfully promoted by the recently departed headteacher and continued effectively by the acting headteacher. Both strong leadership and re-defined senior management roles have supported the development of an atmosphere in which staff reflect on their practice and search for improvements in the quality of

the education that they provide. Middle managers are increasingly effective in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities, although some are new in post and have had less time in which to have a significant impact. Improvements have been secured in the management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language, previously identified as a major weakness. The arrangements for the management of physical education during the long-term absence of the subject leader are unsatisfactory and need attention.

47. Lines of accountability from middle to senior management are clear. These are used to ensure that departments and year teams take a greater responsibility for the standards achieved by pupils, and identify the steps necessary to bring about sustained improvements. Some have accepted this challenge more readily than others. Overall the school benefits from a strong team of staff who recognise that their performance can make a difference, and who share the commitment to seeking the goal of raising pupil achievement. This has successfully provided continuity for the school during the period of two terms before the appointment of a new headteacher.
48. The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy has been successfully managed. All members of the English department have been involved in adapting schemes of work and in evaluating their effectiveness. The same cannot be said of the introduction of the Numeracy Strategy. Only three members of the mathematics department have received suitable training and schemes of work are only now in the process of being modified. Timetable arrangements and split classes in Year 7 militate against progress and any viable catch-up programme.
49. Improvements have been secured in many areas since the last inspection. This has been in the face of considerable staff recruitment difficulties that have held back some planned developments. The processes introduced to identify areas for development, plan for their improvement and evaluate their effectiveness have had a significant bearing on the progress made by the school. The work of staff and departments is carefully monitored and reviewed, and individual performance managed to support the focus on improving teaching and learning. This has enabled senior staff to identify strengths and to take rigorous action to secure improvements where needed. The evaluation of data is used very effectively to identify any variation in performance and to set realistic but challenging targets for departments. These then underpin plans for each department and area of the school and are used to evaluate the effectiveness of action taken.
50. The school improvement plan and the process of its construction is a valuable and effective mechanism for tackling the school's aims. Clear and appropriate priorities for action are identified to which departments are expected to respond through their own development plans. These are agreed and monitored by senior management. Test and examination targets for each department are then used as an indicator of the success of action taken. Financial planning to support the school's improvement is secure. Funds are allocated to meet the priorities for action and to maintain high staffing levels. Governors are in a good position to evaluate the success of the spending decisions that they have made. One area that they and senior staff need to consider is the likely financial implications of the reduction in pupil numbers when the large current Year 9 eventually leaves. There is only a small carry-forward at present and there will be a considerable reduction in revenue, the impact of which has not been evaluated.
51. Governors fulfil their responsibilities satisfactorily. Structural changes and the clarification of roles and responsibilities have enabled the governing body to increase the effectiveness with which it carries out its duties. Governors monitor the work of the school thoroughly through the well-organised committee structure and regular visits to view the school at work. They now meet all statutory requirements, with the exception of ensuring that all pupils study a foreign language and design and technology in Years 10 and 11, and that the school provides a daily act of collective worship for all pupils. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and recognise where improvements are needed. Their involvement in strategic planning for the long-term future of the school has not been as effective. However, governors have taken the opportunity provided by the process of appointing a new headteacher to clarify their thoughts about the school's future direction.

52. The school is doing its best to provide well-qualified and experienced staff, in difficult circumstances. There have been significant difficulties in recruitment for some years, and some recent long-term absence. The school has also expanded considerably, and staff turnover has been high, with large numbers of new staff joining the school in the last two years. This has made it difficult to match the qualifications and experience of staff to the demands of the curriculum. The school has very thorough recruitment systems, and takes steps to get the right staff for the job. These include carefully prepared interview structures, and observing all prospective staff teaching, before appointments are made. Induction procedures are good, and thoroughly planned. There is a comprehensive programme of meetings for new staff, who feel well supported. The induction system is flexible and includes newly qualified teachers, staff new to the school, those on supply contracts and those staff who have trained overseas. In spite of the great effort made by the school, and the range of actions taken to support staff, significant problems remain. Long-term absence in physical education has affected the management of the subject. Recruitment problems in music have meant that a permanent appointment for the management of the subject could not be made. The management of the school, however, is giving extra support in this area. The use of temporary staff in mathematics has meant a lack of continuity in the teaching. In addition recruitment problems in science have meant that not all staff are suitably qualified, and there are not enough teachers of physics. These factors are hindering progress in the subject.
53. The school is housed in two separate buildings of high quality and shares an attractive site with the local leisure centre. Arrangements are in place for shared use of leisure centre facilities, such as the fitness suite. Outdoor facilities are good and include an all-weather pitch, although in this urban area there is no space for a grass pitch. Two mobile classrooms offer adequate accommodation to provide for additional numbers, as there are two classes currently in Year 9 over and above the standard number. The accommodation is sufficiently spacious for most needs and is effectively used. In all subject areas it is good despite minor shortcomings, such as inadequate lighting in the art department. Display of pupils' work improves the atmosphere and contributes to learning, for example by celebrating the local culture. One display explains the link between the school's name and the Victorian artist and craftsman William Morris. The school is free from graffiti, but litter is a problem, which could be better managed.
54. Overall resources for learning are satisfactory, and have significantly improved. They are very good in English, and good in design and technology, drama, geography, history, physical education and in the library and learning resource centre. They are inadequate in ICT both as a specific subject and in many other areas of the curriculum. There are insufficient textbooks for pupils to take home for study purposes even at GCSE level.
55. Challenges remain for the school and the new headteacher. Not the least of these is raising standards from the pupils' low attainment on entry while coping with the difficulties in staff recruitment and retention faced by many schools. Changes in senior management provide an opportunity to consolidate the progress made in recent years. The structure and processes in place for managing the school and establishing its effectiveness are becoming increasingly successful and place the school in a strong position to secure further improvements.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

56. To continue the good progress made since the last inspection under the leadership of the previous headteacher and the acting head, the school should
- (1) Raise achievement in mathematics*, science* and Urdu by improving the quality of teaching in each subject and developing an effective strategy for the promotion of numeracy* (*paragraphs 7, 8, 20, 23, 73, 74, 77, 78, 79, 114 and 117*)
 - (2) Broaden the curriculum in Years 10 and 11 to include more vocational elements and ensure compliance with National Curriculum requirements for all pupils to follow courses in design and technology and a modern foreign language (*paragraphs 25, 92 and 111*)

- (3) Improve the management of physical education by ensuring that an effective development plan is written and implemented to tackle the weaknesses identified that reduce standards in the subject (*paragraphs 46 and 128*)
- (4) Monitor the quality and completion of homework so that it is set regularly and used to raise standards*, and ensure that pupils are provided with textbooks to support their study outside school (*paragraph 24*)
- (5) Ensure that all pupils are carefully supervised at lunchtime and that they do not leave the site unless with the written permission of their parents (*paragraphs 36*)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

- (6) In addition to the items above, the governors may wish to consider the inclusion of the following points in their action plan
 - Ensure that all pupils have access to ICT to support their learning in all subjects* (*paragraphs 26, 84, 93, 107, 110, 123, 124, 126 and 127*)
 - Strengthen the partnership with parents (*paragraphs 44 and 45*)
 - Improve the effectiveness of the deployment of staff for the support of pupils with special educational needs* (*paragraph 21*)
 - Evaluate the impact of recently introduced procedures and initiatives to improve attendance and punctuality* (*paragraph 37*)
 - Ensure that the school's arrangements for the daily act of collective worship are implemented for all pupils. (*paragraphs 31 and 51*)

* The items have been identified as priorities for development in the school improvement plan.

THE PROVISION FOR AND STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS WITH ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

The provision for English as additional language is **good**.

Strengths

- The pupils are making good progress.
- The department is well organised.
- The department has very detailed documentation to support the progress of the pupils.

Areas for improvement

- Some aspects of the teaching could be stronger.
- Additional simple materials could be produced by the department for use in the classroom.
- Monitoring of the teaching would ensure that good practice is consistent across the department.

57. About 420 pupils in the school have English as an additional language. Only eight, however, are at an early stage of acquisition. The provision for the pupils is well organised and there is very detailed documentation, including development plans and schemes of work. The pupils who need support are helped mostly in the regular subject classes and they follow a normal timetable. Consequently there is little or no withdrawal from classes. Pupils who need help also get support from designated friends or 'buddies'. There is also a number of homework clubs, which operate at various times and places in the school. These give particular help to pupils who have English as an additional language. All heads of year and heads of department receive information about the language needs of the pupils. This is passed on to the individual teachers and the information placed in the registers. The department uses information from various sources to determine the

language needs of the pupils. An individual education plan is then drawn up with targets for particular skills. Regular monitoring and assessment ensure good progress.

58. The teaching team comprises one full-time head of department and one part-time teacher. A language support assistant also works in the department at various times. Overall the teaching is satisfactory and good in about equal proportion. All lessons are planned ahead, and so the teachers of English as an additional language can intelligently support the pupils in individual subject areas. At times best use is not made of the information which they have, and so often things like simplified work sheets and vocabulary lists are not prepared in advance. This sort of preparation would be of significant benefit to the pupils' learning. Some teaching is quite energetic with the teacher moving around the room and actively helping a wide range of pupils. Other teaching is too static with the teacher not moving from a designated place and care not being taken to see that important words and concepts are being written into the pupils' books. Wider use could also be made of the board to write down and explain the difficult words and phrases that are being used by the classroom teacher. Clearly there is some good teaching ability in the department. More monitoring of the teaching would ensure that this good practice is more consistently being put into practice across the department. Overall the pupils are making good progress. Most of them are keen to learn and they make the most of the opportunities presented to them and so they are well behaved and attentive. Progress since the last inspection is good, particularly in the establishment of a clear direction, which the department now has. The department has a very good capacity to develop further.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	163
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	46

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	11	27	59	48	16	1	1
Percentage	7	17	36	29	10	1	1

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	938
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	380

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	25
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	380

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	420

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	22
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	46

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.3
National comparative data	8.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	3.1
National comparative data	1.1

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage (Year 9)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	110	68	178

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	34	47	44
	Girls	28	29	27
	Total	62	76	71
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	35 (63)	44 (48)	40 (44)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	14 (15)	23 (25)	12 (12)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	34 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	45	33	32
	Girls	34	21	25
	Total	79	54	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	44 (37)	30 (51)	32 (42)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	15 (10)	9 (18)	3 (11)
	National	31 (31)	42 (39)	33 (29)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	114	63	177

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	26	94	104
	Girls	25	56	59
	Total	51	150	163
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	29 (34)	85 (91)	92 (94)
	National	48 (47)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score	School	29.8

per pupil	National	39.0
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Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	63
Black – African heritage	42
Black – other	92
Indian	73
Pakistani	276
Bangladeshi	11
Chinese	4
White	355
Any other minority ethnic group	22

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	23	4
Black – African heritage	7	0
Black – other	16	1
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	21	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	32	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)	52.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.9

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	233

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	72.3
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	23.2
Key Stage 4	18.6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-01
	£
Total income	2,877,466
Total expenditure	2,948,800
Expenditure per pupil	3,183
Balance brought forward from previous year	130,668
Balance carried forward to next year	59334

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	36.0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	52.0
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	6.0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	8.0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	8.0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	938
Number of questionnaires returned	54

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	38	51	9	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	28	65	4	2	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	20	52	19	2	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	24	41	20	13	2
The teaching is good.	26	43	19	2	11
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	30	52	13	6	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	44	48	6	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	44	2	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	31	59	6	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	28	56	2	6	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	35	50	7	2	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	28	39	6	11	17

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

- The teaching of English is very good and frequently excellent.
- English teachers have developed excellent schemes of work.
- The management of the department is effective and efficient, with a clear sense of direction.
- Formal monitoring of teaching and learning provides guidance on how to improve.

Areas for improvement

- The department needs to develop strategies to increase the number of pupils who reach nationally expected standards by the end of Year 9.
- The department needs to develop strategies to improve pupils' results in GCSE English language and English literature.

59. When pupils join the school their literacy skills are very weak. National Curriculum test results for Year 9 pupils in 2001 were well below the national average and below results in similar schools. These results indicate that standards have improved since the previous inspection. GCSE English language and English literature results were well below the national average in 2001, although results have improved steadily since the last inspection. This is because teaching is very good and often excellent, teachers hold examination surgeries and the department runs after-school and weekend revision classes for pupils who need extra help. Most pupils made good progress from their earlier test results in Year 9. The performance of pupils at GCSE in English was better than in most other subjects. Since the last inspection, the performance of girls has been better than that of boys. All members of the department have attended training designed to help them to improve boys' examination performance. Teachers are also monitoring the performance of boys. They are setting realistic, but challenging, targets to encourage boys to improve.
60. Overall, pupils' achievement in Years 7 to 9 is good in relation to their attainment at the start of Year 7. The work seen in pupils' books in Years 7 to 9 shows that they steadily acquire literacy skills but that attainment is below average by Year 9. Higher-attaining pupils spell single-syllable words and common polysyllabic words accurately. They use full stops, capital letters and question marks correctly and they organise simple and complex sentences into paragraphs. Teachers' marking shows that there is a strong emphasis on the need to improve punctuation and spelling. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make good progress. The overall standard of work seen in Years 10 and 11 was also below the national average, but most pupils achieve well and make good progress.
61. Pupils achieve well throughout the school because teaching is very good and frequently excellent. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils' work and behaviour, and make these very clear. Teachers use constructive spoken comments very skilfully to motivate pupils and to help them improve. Lessons are very well managed. As a consequence, most pupils are very well motivated, behave well and co-operate with each other. The department has also developed well-balanced schemes of work that provide stimulating lessons. The overall effectiveness of teachers' planning is very good, particularly the planning for individual lessons and sequences of lessons. Teachers consistently identify the learning objectives for lessons and make them clear to the pupils. In a Year 7 lesson designed to enable pupils to express a view of a text supported by evidence, the teacher made sure that learning objectives were clear and that pupils wrote them in their books. She also linked the learning objectives to what pupils needed to do to gain a Level 5 in the tests at the end of Year 9. This resulted in the pupils reading fluently, identifying facts in the text, and presenting their opinions to the whole class. Teachers have a very good knowledge of both language and literature. They also recognise that pupils need to be motivated,

encouraged and provided with opportunities to succeed. In one lesson where teaching was unsatisfactory, behaviour management was unsatisfactory, and there were too few opportunities for pupils to participate in the lesson.

62. Standards in speaking and listening are good. By the end of Year 11 the majority of pupils listen attentively. They are keen to answer questions. This is because they are highly motivated and respond to their teachers' very helpful spoken comments. They make sophisticated contributions when they are well prepared for discussions and maintain a dialogue at a high level. In a well-planned lesson in Year 10, for example, a group of pupils arrived at the view that the poem *Presents From My Aunts* was full of conflict. Their spokesperson argued that the writer liked the Asian clothes that her aunts gave her, but she could not wear them because of peer group pressure.
63. The standard of pupils' reading is satisfactory. A majority of pupils read aloud with confidence, fluency and expression. Below average pupils are encouraged to improve the quality of their reading by reading aloud. A shared reading and discussion of J. B. Priestley's *An Inspector Calls* by a Year 11 class showed that pupils could understand significant ideas and events and make moral judgements based on their understanding of the text. For example, a girl explained, 'Inspector Goole represents justice and conscience. He makes characters such as Sheila and Mrs Birling reflect on their behaviour and their contribution to Eva's death.'
64. The standard of pupils' written work is unsatisfactory. The writing of girls is generally of a higher standard than that of boys. Pupils write for a suitable range of purposes. They produce an interesting range of extended writing, although much lacks the clarity produced by appropriate punctuation. Good oral work prior to writing often helped pupils to write more extensively. For example, in a Year 11 lesson a group preparing to write an analysis of *The Thought Fox* collected and sorted ideas about writer's block. One boy explained that: 'The Thought Fox is a predator. He steals the writer's ideas.' Most pupils were able to improve the fluency and accuracy of their writing with re-drafting. Pupils are encouraged to use their ICT skills effectively for drafting their written work. For example, in the coursework folders of Year 10 and 11 pupils there are some very good examples of word-processed essays, stories and newspaper articles.
65. There have been some major improvements since the previous inspection. The overall standards attained by pupils in Years 7 to 11 have risen. The ability of pupils to speak clearly and with confidence has improved. The teaching of English is now very good and frequently excellent. Teachers have developed excellent schemes of work and assessment information is used effectively to guide planning. Leadership and management of the department are excellent. The formal monitoring of teaching and learning provides guidance for teachers and pupils on how to improve. Teachers set realistic, but challenging, targets to encourage pupils to improve. The departmental policy documents are clear and well focused on raising pupils' attainment in English and performance in public examinations. All members of the department share a very strong commitment to the school's aims.

DRAMA

Overall, the quality of provision in drama is **excellent**.

Strengths

- The quality of drama teaching is excellent.
- The leadership and management of drama are excellent.
- Drama teachers have developed excellent schemes of work.
- Drama makes a very positive contribution to the overall ethos of the school.

Areas for improvement

- A second studio would enhance the teaching of drama and support the introduction of a performing arts course.

66. Standards of attainment throughout the school are very high. Pupils have a clear understanding of the skills that they require. They work very hard to attain high standards. Opportunities are provided for them to express themselves freely and to develop their individual interests and strengths, though always within clearly understood boundaries. Pupils are developing their imagination and using vocabulary effectively. They respond to a range of texts from different times and cultures. They shape ideas and select forms to structure work and evaluate others. They are developing performance, devising and improvisational skills. They are developing and realising ideas and communicating. Individual, pair and small group presentations are constructed carefully. Pupils' use of language and voice projection is very good. Pupils are developing attitudes, skills and techniques that have a positive effect on other areas of learning. The quality of work is particularly good in Years 10 and 11, with much original and exciting work being undertaken. This is reflected in the consistently superb GCSE examination results.
67. The quality of teaching is excellent. The teachers have excellent subject knowledge. Their enthusiasm inspires the pupils and as a consequence the majority of pupils in the school enjoy drama. This is reflected in their attitude during lessons. Pupils are attentive and enthusiastic. They quickly become immersed in their work and the quality of discussion is frequently very good. Many pupils make perceptive and encouraging remarks. For example, in a Year 10 lesson pupils worked in pairs and small groups to create a sequence and make a presentation to the whole class. The class analysed and evaluated the presentations before offering constructive criticism. Drama teachers are excellent behaviour managers. Pupils trust their judgements and respond very positively. Progress in lessons is always very good with pupils of all abilities being able to integrate fully into the process of creating and presenting work. Units of work have been produced which ensure continuity and progression in the teaching of the subject. The careful use of time during lessons ensures that pupils are kept on target so that they can focus on the preparation of performances for presentation and evaluation at the end of the lesson. The overall effectiveness of teachers' planning is excellent. The planning for individual lessons and sequences of lessons is excellent. Lessons contain varied activities that are carefully timed and well spaced. Excellent technical advice is given to the GCSE pupils.
68. The management of drama is excellent. Many drama topics contribute immensely to the pupils' personal development, and they are encouraged to explore a range of issues and ideas. For example, pupils in a Year 8 class exploring environmental issues through public meetings, were able to make links to important issues in their own lives. As a result the subject makes a significant contribution to the curriculum aims of the school. Accommodation is very good. A second studio would enhance delivery of the subject and facilitate the introduction of dance and performing arts.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- Attainment of more able pupils in Year 11 is very high.
- Staff are committed to better achievement for all pupils.
- Leadership is in place to improve the department.

Areas for improvement

- Overall GCSE attainment is well below the national average.
- Implementation of aspects of the Key Stage 3 strategy is unsatisfactory.
- Arrangements for Year 7 mathematics are unsatisfactory.

69. When they come to the school pupils' standards in mathematics are well below the national average. Most pupils make steady progress as they move through the school because the overall quality of teaching is satisfactory; however, a significant proportion of pupils do not achieve as

well as they should particularly in Year 7 where the national strategy for mathematics has not been effectively implemented. Pupils' attainment in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 in 2001 was well below the national average, but close to that of similar schools. Results have improved since 1997 with a slight dip in 2001 because of staffing difficulties. The test results in 2001 are a little below those in English and science. Boys performed better than girls in 2001 but the difference was less marked in earlier years. The percentage of pupils achieving GCSE grades A*-C is well below the national average but improving. A small group of more able pupils enter GCSE mathematics in Year 10 and make excellent headway to begin studying on the AS-level course in Year 11. There is little difference between boys' and girls' GCSE results. Results are below those in several other subjects.

70. Inspection evidence shows that overall attainment by the end of Year 9 is well below the national average. More able pupils have sound algebraic skills that help them generalise results after investigating a pattern of tiles. They determine the mean, mode, median and inter-quartile range of a set of data. They use calculators competently to calculate the lengths of sides of a right-angled triangle, using Pythagoras' theorem. For example, in a brisk and well taught Year 9 lesson the teacher's attention to detail in using the calculator enabled pupils to consolidate their skills effectively, gaining confidence to complete tasks successfully. Middle ability pupils are less secure in interpreting decimals and solving basic algebraic equations. They can draw some straight-line graphs and complete an investigation of the area of triangles using squared paper. Lower ability pupils struggle with very basic mental questions on number, such as 80×30 . They can complete simple number sequences and some can interpret pie charts.
71. By the end of Year 11 pupils' attainment overall is well below the national average. More able pupils achieve particularly well and some reach a very high level beyond the GCSE course. In an excellent Year 11 lesson the teacher's very secure subject knowledge, involvement of pupils and organisational skills enabled all pupils to progress at a rapid rate on diverse tasks. The GCSE group worked successfully on examples involving trigonometric ratios and Pythagoras' theorem while the AS-level group tackled tasks on mechanics together, gaining considerably from each other's ideas. Middle ability pupils convert numbers to standard form and construct pie charts. They lack confidence in mental calculations, confuse addition and multiplication of fractions in algebra and are unclear about how to calculate the median in a practical example. Lower ability pupils know about the sum of angles on a straight line and in a triangle. Their skills of mental recall are weak and they find the manipulation of positive and negative numbers difficult. They lack confidence in calculations involving a change of units from metres to centimetres.
72. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall in both key stages but with strengths and weaknesses. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they have high expectations of their pupils. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well when there are support staff in the class to help and encourage them. In the best lessons teachers highlight key objectives, manage pupils' behaviour effectively and fully involve pupils in questions and discussion. For example, in a well-taught Year 7 lesson the teacher encouraged pupils to come to the front to present their methods to the rest of the class. This led to a useful whole-class discussion from which all pupils benefited from the different approaches to various calculations. In a successful Year 11 lesson the teacher's friendly yet firm relationship with pupils and involvement of pupils in explaining their own approaches to calculating percentage increases and decreases led to much improved learning. In some cases teachers are unable to cope successfully with the Year 7 classes where there is a wide range of ability and diverse needs. This is exacerbated because four of the six classes have shared teaching. This leads to a lack of continuity and impaired learning. The pace of some lessons across the age range dips towards the end when pupils' concentration and interest decline. The setting and marking of homework is of uneven quality partly because there are insufficient textbooks available for pupils to have their own copy to take home.
73. Implementation of the Key Stage 3 strategy for mathematics is unsatisfactory. There is no catch-up programme for the eighty pupils below expected national standards in Year 7. In addition, some of these pupils miss occasional mathematics lessons to participate in reading recovery sessions so that, although their reading skills are improved, they can miss vital mathematics sessions. The department has not yet carried out an audit of provision because the school has

only recently appointed a head of mathematics to supervise this task. The department is starting to develop three-part lessons, as outlined in the school action plan, to meet national numeracy requirements but is at an early stage. Teachers routinely begin lessons with an oral test of ten, or so, mental questions followed by the answers and checking of pupils' scores. Although in some cases the activity is brisk and purposeful in others there is either too little whole-class discussion of the methods used or the starter activity takes too long. In the latter cases pupils' learning is limited and they achieve too little. There is insufficient variety in the type of activity. Teachers are not yet using investigative tasks or a more individual approach to interest and challenge pupils more. The use of plenary sessions to summarise and review what has taken place in lessons is also underdeveloped. In the best lessons teachers allow time towards the end to re-visit the stated aims of the lesson so that pupils gain a more rounded appreciation of what they have learnt. In others either too little time is allocated or the pupils themselves play too small a part in the proceedings.

74. The use of numeracy across the curriculum is a priority in the school action plan. A whole staff training day is planned. Subject departments, such as geography and art, are beginning to provide feedback on their needs and potential contributions. One constructive idea that has been mooted is to use afternoon registration periods for general numeracy sessions taught by form tutors. At present the use of numeracy across the curriculum is patchy. Pupils calculate averages and handle data effectively in geography. They use the 24-hour clock and construct bar graphs in modern foreign languages. Pupils estimate proportions in observational work in art and compile repeating patterns in printing. They lack fluency in handling number and measurement in design and technology.
75. The department has been in limbo for a significant period but, following the recent leadership appointment, it is now managed effectively. Other staffing gaps have exacerbated the situation. Teachers in the department work together constructively and they share a commitment to high achievement for all pupils. Staff are making a considerable effort to bring the department up from a low base by reviewing procedures, preparing schemes of work and drafting policies. For example, pupils are starting to complete helpful newly compiled self-assessment sheets kept in the front of their exercise books. A positive structure is in place for tracking and reviewing pupils' test performance to determine appropriate GCSE targets for them. The inexperienced teachers in the department receive suitable help to improve their teaching. Staff are keen to make more use of ICT but are held back by the current lack of resources. The department has made satisfactory progress overall since the previous inspection, given that it reached a low point and is now recovering.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- The department has good facilities.
- There is new and effective leadership of the department.
- There are good relationships between pupils and teachers.

Areas for improvement

- Teaching is unsatisfactory overall and as a result many pupils are not achieving as well as they should.
- There should be more opportunities for the use of ICT to support learning.
- The use of homework, its marking, and recording should be improved as a means of monitoring pupils' effort, learning and progress.

76. The provision for science is unsatisfactory, but has improved since the recent appointment of the new head of department. There are still weaknesses in teaching caused by staff recruitment difficulties, but the school is aware of the situation and is making strenuous efforts to improve.

The department now has a full complement of teachers. Difficulties in recruitment mean the department has had to employ a significant number of inexperienced teachers, some of whom are training in school to gain qualified teacher status. These teachers have received good support from the school; however, there is a need to target background knowledge in non-specialist areas and skills related to the teaching of science, especially practical work. There is a preponderance of biologists in the team. The lack of experience and expertise is currently affecting teaching and standards.

77. Pupils enter the school with standards that are well below the national average in science. National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 9 have been improving but were still well below average in 2001. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are currently at a similar level in Years 7, 8 and 9. GCSE results were also well below average in 2001 and boys achieved significantly lower results than girls. Current standards in Years 10 and 11 are also well below average. Overall, pupils are not achieving as well as they should because of shortcomings in teaching. Pupils with special educational needs or whose first language is not English make satisfactory progress. Gifted and talented pupils make satisfactory progress but strategies for extending the learning for these pupils should be identified and implemented.
78. Teaching in Years 7, 8 and 9 is unsatisfactory overall. This, coupled with the low attainment of pupils on entry, is reflected in the pupils' unsatisfactory achievement. The work seen in pupils' books shows that teaching had a logical progression of ideas but some pupils had work missing or incomplete, making revision difficult. The pupils' achievement is adversely affected by these gaps in their learning. From Year 7 to 9 pupils' books show an improvement in quality of content and presentation. Where teaching is good, questions and subsequent answers from pupils are used to good effect to remind pupils of earlier learning and to encourage them to provide explanations. Good relationships between pupils and their teachers allow pupils to respond in a relaxed and supportive environment. Teachers make good efforts to plan lessons using the schemes of work and identify learning objectives, which are conveyed to pupils. Where teaching could be improved, teacher knowledge is insecure and therefore the line of questions, explanations and answers to pupils' questions are insufficiently scientifically sound. Pupils learning about the structure of the human intestine were not able to relate diagrams they were drawing to the whole gut because teaching had not related one with the other clearly, thus pupils were working on material they did not really understand, rendering learning superficial and incomplete.
79. Pupils are not achieving as well as they should be in Years 10 and 11 because a high proportion of the teaching is unsatisfactory. Evidence shows, however, that improvements in teaching and the progress made by pupils have taken place since the start of the year. Where teaching showed strengths, lessons were well planned and appropriate resources used. The time available was well used, pupils being given time limits and encouraged to meet them. Videotaped material was used to good effect to illustrate ideas that could not be demonstrated in the laboratory, such as the problems caused by static electricity for helicopter personnel. Learning was consolidated using notes and examination questions to link theory, science in the real world and examination success. The attitudes of staff to pupils are a strength; teachers are well mannered and calm, creating very good role models for the pupils. This encourages pupils to respond similarly, creating a positive learning environment in most classes. Where teaching could be improved, there is a need for greater challenge and pace to establish more clearly where pupils are in their learning and to move them forward. The lack of experience of some staff resulted in their undertaking practical work that they had not done before, and providing incorrect or insufficient information for pupils to carry it out effectively. Hence time was not well used and learning ineffective.
80. The department has yet to develop its own strategies for literacy and numeracy. However, pupils make use of their numerical skills in science, and key words and mother tongue posters, giving names of scientific apparatus, help the pupils' literacy development. Pupils are encouraged to use computers for word-processing and other presentations.

81. A database has been established to record pupils' test and examination results. The use of this data is in its early stages. One shortcoming is that staff do not make best use of homework. This could be more challenging and marking more informative, letting pupils know what they should do to improve. Schemes of work have been developed but there is a need to support these throughout the department with sufficient, appropriate textbooks for all pupils in order to allow access to learning and to raise standards.
82. There have been many changes since the last inspection and until the appointment of the new head of science, progress was unsatisfactory. Improvements are now taking place. The science department is now well managed. The curriculum meets National Curriculum and GCSE requirements although the lack of appropriate hardware prevents pupils gaining full access to the use of computers in science for sensing conditions and other factors. The new head of department has identified appropriate areas for development and the department is now making progress.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- Colour work is bright and bold.
- The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' cultural development.
- Three-dimensional work is bright and exciting.

Areas for improvement

- Results at GCSE, which fell in 2001.
- The use of ICT to extend and support the pupils' work.
- The pace in some lessons, which can be slow.

83. GCSE results in the 2001 examinations were well below average, and fell sharply below those of the previous two years. This was a result of difficulties in understanding the assessment systems of the examination, and changes in staffing halfway through the course. In the present Year 11, standards are below average. This indicates an improvement on the examination results in 2001.
84. When pupils come to the school in Year 7 their work is below average. They achieve satisfactorily and make steady gains in their skills, knowledge and understanding of the subject, because the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. However, by Year 9, standards are still below average. Strengths of the teaching include good lesson preparation, and the use of clear examples to set high standards. In a lesson on collage, the teacher circulated around the class showing a prepared finished piece. This produced good levels of interest and positive attitudes in the lesson. Pupils tried their best and as a result learning was good. Teachers also have good subject knowledge and are very encouraging. This means that all pupils apply themselves and make sound progress. This includes pupils with special educational needs and with English as an additional language. However, at times teachers have difficulty in gaining the attention of the whole class at the beginning of the lesson, and pupils do not listen carefully to instructions. This limits learning to a level that is no better than satisfactory. Pupils' colour work in Years 7, 8 and 9 is bold and bright, and paintings are lively and vigorous. Three-dimensional work is bright and exciting, and large group masks made from papier-mâché show a good grasp of the shapes and forms of the human face. The pupils also learn to use ink washes freely to produce interesting pictures based on the study of mythological creatures. However, their brushwork is crude and there is not enough use of ICT to support and extend their own artwork.
85. Achievement is now satisfactory in Years 10 and 11, and pupils make sound gains in their skills, knowledge and understanding of the subject. This is because the quality of teaching is satisfactory. In the best lessons, there is a good match of materials and methods to the interest and attainment levels of pupils. For example, in a lesson on printing, lino blocks were used, and pupils enjoyed cutting into the materials vigorously. This produced good levels of engagement,

and of physical and creative effort. As a result, they made good gains in their skills, and this produced good learning. Other strengths of the teaching in Years 10 and 11 include the good individual advice which the pupils receive. Teachers often go from pupil to pupil showing good levels of interest in their work, and explaining how to improve. For example, in one lesson, pupils were shown how to achieve a good range of colours using overprinting techniques. This produced good learning. At times, however, pupils begin to chatter and their concentration fades, because they are not excited or inspired by the materials and methods used. The pace of the lesson then slows, and learning is restricted to a barely satisfactory level as a result. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 learn to use paint vigorously and as a result they produce some large-scale work, which is richly textured and coloured. They also learn to make monoprints, which show an increasing confidence in the use of line to create lively portraits. However, their research lacks depth and does not have enough effect on their own work in painting and drawing. In addition, when drawing from observation, their work is tentative and lacks the vigour and excitement seen in their paintings.

86. Improvement since the previous inspection has been unsatisfactory, and standards have fallen. However, the leadership and management of the subject are now focused on raising standards, and improving the quality of teaching and learning. This is beginning to have an impact on the work in the school, which shows an improvement in standards when compared to last year's GCSE results. However, more time is needed for this to be fully effective and to be reflected in examination results. The subject also makes a good contribution to the pupils' cultural development, and pupils visit galleries and study a wide range of artists and art movements. This includes the art of other cultures, for example African and Indian art, which is used to add variety to the pupils' work.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Good teamwork amongst staff who are well led and managed.
- A good system for the monitoring and assessment of the progress which pupils make.
- Teaching rooms which are well equipped and used to good advantage.

Areas for improvement

- The department needs to make further progress in raising attainment in all age groups.
- There should be greater use of ICT, including computer control, to support designing and making in Years 7 - 9.

87. GCSE results in 2001 were below the national average. Girls attained considerably better results than boys. Results in the various specialist options offered by the department were variable. Good results were obtained in the textiles and food technology courses. Results were not as good in the graphics course or in the resistant materials course. The differences in the standards of attainment are due to the fact that the graphics and resistant materials courses included a significant number of lower-attaining pupils.
88. Pupils come into the school with fairly low levels of attainment in design and technology. There is, however, clear evidence of an improvement in attainment between entry to the school in Year 7 and the end of Year 9. Progress in these years is good and attainment is close to nationally expected standards. This is because the quality of teaching and learning is good. Some particularly pleasing work in textiles produced by Year 9 pupils was seen, but achievement in other areas is also good. In Years 10 and 11 the quality of teaching and learning were good overall. The majority of pupils in both Years 10 and 11 were producing work of a high standard, especially in food and textiles. Work in graphics and resistant materials represents an improvement on the previous year, and most pupils are making good progress in these areas.

89. In all year groups the vast majority of pupils respond well to the teaching and produce good results. The features of good teaching are good planning, a mix of teaching styles and work planned to meet the needs of all the pupils in the group. Teachers regularly assess the work which pupils produce and the standards of teacher assessment are accurate. These assessments are used to inform future planning. Where learning is good, pupils respond well to the teaching, they are able to explain with confidence the nature of the work that they are doing, and the work produced is of a high quality. Some pupils, especially those in Years 10 and 11, are able to work independently and plan their coursework carefully. However, the progress of some pupils with coursework is slow. The progress of pupils identified as having special educational needs is generally good. The vast majority of these pupils are able to understand what is required from them and their attainment is in line with their ability. There were no significant differences in the attainment of pupils from different ethnic groups.
90. Many pupils in Years 10 and 11 make use of ICT in their coursework folders. Although often of good quality, the majority of this work involves word-processing and presentation of text and research using the Internet. Examples of the use of spreadsheets, databases and computer-aided drawing are limited. In Years 7 to 9 the use of generic ICT skills such as word-processing, spreadsheets, databases and multi-media software are rare. The use of computer aided drawing and design is at an early stage of development, and is mainly confined to Years 10 and 11. The department should plan to make more extensive use of ICT to support the designing and making process in all years and also needs to include the statutory component of computer control at some stage in Years 7 to 9. The scheme of work needs to include mention of where spiritual, moral, social and cultural matters are covered. Whilst some aspects of culture and moral values are covered, including a very effective piece of work in food technology in Year 9, other aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural matters are currently not developed sufficiently.
91. Leadership and management of the department are effective. The staff in charge of the three contributing subjects work well together and share the responsibilities of running the department. A good system of assessment and record keeping has been developed and staff make effective use of assessment information when planning future work. Pupils are kept well informed about their progress and good use is made of assessment to set targets for pupils to achieve. The monitoring of the department by members of the senior management team is effective and aids the development of the subject. Appropriate targets for development have been set.
92. The department and the school have made good progress in dealing with most of the points that needed attention since the last inspection, although some work still needs to be done. The quality of design work is now much better and the presentation of design work is much improved.
93. Resources are good, although more textbooks could be provided. The new computers in the graphics area are being used to good effect, but there is a need for computers to be readily available in other rooms if the use of ICT is to be embedded into teaching and learning. Teaching rooms are bright and cheerful and are maintained in good order. The displays of work and teaching information are of a high standard. The technician support is good and these staff make a very effective contribution to the work of the department. Standards of health and safety are good but many teaching groups exceed 20 pupils. This represents a significant health and safety hazard. The department has suffered from a shortage of staff. This has affected standards and the range of work seen, and will continue to do so if the vacancy continues.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- There is strong leadership and management of the subject.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Regular assessment together with the tracking of pupil progress is raising achievement.

Areas for improvement

- The department should provide more opportunities for pupils to undertake fieldwork studies outside school.
- The time allocated to Year 9 is minimal and slows down the progress that the pupils have made in Year 8 where teaching time is double.

94. GCSE results in 2001 were below the national average and were lower than in the previous year. Even so, these results were a great improvement on those reported in the last inspection when GCSE results were reported as being very low. In both of the past two years all pupils who were entered for their geography examination were awarded a pass grade, which is above the national average. Moreover, the pupils who took GCSE geography in 2001 did better in geography than in all their other subjects by approximately half a grade. In work seen in the current Year 11 standards are similar, being below the national average but by a fairly small margin.
95. Standards of work at the end of Year 9 are below average, although some pupils in Year 8 are attaining in line with the national average. Most pupils acquire basic geographical skills in Year 7. For example, they can locate places on maps, draw sketch maps and diagrams using the correct symbols and use scales and coordinates. Teachers encourage pupils to become independent learners. They are given enquiry and research tasks involving finding information from a variety of sources, including the Internet. Most are able to find what they need and a few, mainly the higher-attainers, know how to process their information rather than simply download it from their computers or copy from the books. Fieldwork and investigation skills are taught and all pupils learn to collect and process data using simple graphs. However, pupils are not given the opportunity to undertake fieldwork outside school and have few opportunities to collect primary data for themselves. Most pupils have a basic knowledge and understanding of the patterns and processes that they have studied because teachers constantly reinforce learning. Overall though, pupils have a better knowledge of geographical facts than an understanding of geographical concepts.
96. Pupils arrive at the school with low levels of literacy and few skills in the subject. In Years 7 to 9, particularly up to the end of Year 8, pupils make good progress over time largely as a result of good teaching of the subject and of basic skills, and the setting of achievable and challenging targets by their teachers. Lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs and English as an additional language make similar rates of progress as their peers. This is because they receive well-focused classroom support with materials developed to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities. More able pupils and those identified as gifted and talented are also appropriately challenged to ensure they do as well as they can. Although spelling is poor and sentence construction insecure for most pupils, by the end of Year 9 most can write in simple sentences to describe geographical places or process using the correct geographical vocabulary. Higher-attainers can write more extensively as was seen in a Year 9 essay on life in Jakarta. Teachers put an emphasis upon the development of oral skills. Pupils are given many opportunities to present their work to their classmates, as was seen in a Year 8 lesson on the designing of a flood action plan in Bangladesh. Here very good teaching was observed where pupils were challenged to think for themselves, negotiate with each other and make decisions based upon considered alternatives. Detailed planning of lessons with tasks carefully structured to the needs of all pupils ensures good learning.
97. Geography is growing in popularity with the pupils and around one-third opt to continue their study of geography to GCSE. Good teaching, regular assessment and target-setting for individual pupils results in very good achievement by pupils at the end of Year 11. Part of the coursework assessment has been changed to an oral one so that pupils can benefit from their better facility with speaking rather than writing. Teachers provide considerable support through extra-curricular revision classes in Year 11. Pupils continue to improve their literacy skills, though writing is still not fluent for most. However, writing is more analytical and most pupils can now explain as well as describe. Fieldwork skills are further developed so that by the end of Year 11 all pupils can collect, record and analyse data. Pupils continue to develop their research skills and there were

many examples of enquiry work, for example into rivers and flooding where case studies of Kielder, St Louis and Bangladesh were seen in samples of the pupils' work.

98. Geography is a strong department. It is very well managed by its head of department assisted by a hard working team of teachers. Leadership shows a clear educational direction, which reflects the school's aims and is committed to improving attainment. There are regular departmental meetings where the geography team work together in the development of resources and evaluation of the curriculum. Schemes of work are detailed and incorporate ICT and key skills as part of the teaching programmes. Assessment procedures and target-setting for pupils are very well developed and are having a considerable positive effect upon achievement. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection and almost all of the matters raised then have been tackled successfully.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching is very good and pupils therefore gain in confidence, enjoy their history lessons and want to work hard.
- Opportunities for historical investigation are good.
- Management of the subject is excellent.

Areas for improvement

- The department needs to consider strategies for reducing the number of pupils in Year 11 who are not entered for the examination because of poor attendance or lack of coursework.

99. The percentage of pupils attaining grades A*-C in the GCSE examination taken at the end of Year 11 in 2001 was just below average. All pupils who sat the examination achieved a pass grade.
100. An inspection of pupils' work indicates that standards are average by the end of Year 9. There is also evidence to show that standards have improved since last year when, according to teachers' assessments, standards were just below average. Pupils of all levels of ability achieve well because they are well motivated by their teachers. They make good progress in developing a range of history skills. Year 7 pupils, for example, acquire skills of investigation when they undertake a challenging task based on motte and bailey castles. By the end of Year 9 pupils have a good knowledge of the past, can deduce information from a range of historical sources and understand some of the causes and consequences of events. This is because lessons are methodical, purposeful and imaginative. Pupils in Year 8, for example, understand some of the reasons why Charles I was unpopular. The work of average and higher ability pupils is accurately written and well presented. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make similar rates of progress as those of their classmates, especially when they benefit from in-class support.
101. Teachers have high expectations for their pupils and are secure with the subject material. Their enthusiasm is a significant factor in motivating pupils of all abilities. This was evident in a Year 7 lesson when a pupil with special educational needs and below average writing skills made an impressive model of a Norman castle and was able to talk with some confidence about its specific features. There is a clear purpose to each lesson. Very good use is made of time limits to move lessons along at a suitable pace. All pupils respond well to their history lessons.
102. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 achieve standards that are in line with national averages. By the end of Year 11 pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of historical events, situations and characters. Pupils in Year 10, for example, understand German reactions to the Treaty of Versailles. This is because the teacher worked hard to develop an imaginative strategy to demonstrate Germany's frustration with the Treaty. Teachers make very good use of questions to check pupils' understanding and reinforce previous learning. They are enthusiastic, committed and work well as a team. History is presented to pupils as a relevant and exciting subject. Teachers ensure that all pupils feel valued and, as a result of this, they enjoy their lessons, gain in confidence and want to work hard. Lessons have clear objectives that support pupils' learning so that they are clear about what they have to learn and why.
103. Leadership and management of history are excellent. Teachers work very effectively as a team and have a clear commitment to their subject. The department has a very clear sense of purpose and direction. Every aspect of the department's work is regularly reviewed and monitored and it is clear that teachers work extremely hard to raise standards. Assessment procedures are thorough and help pupils to understand what they have done well and what they need to do in order to improve. Classrooms are spacious and bright; displays of pupils' work and other materials enhance the learning environment. Resources are well used and the department is beginning to make good use of ICT to support its work. All issues mentioned in the previous

inspection report have been dealt with successfully. The department needs to consider strategies for reducing the number of pupils who are not entered for the examination in Year 11 because of poor attendance or lack of coursework. Pupils at Kelmscott School are provided with a rich diet of historical experience.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- The discrete provision of ICT for all pupils in all years.
- Teaching in timetabled ICT lessons in all years.
- The assessment of ICT capability for all pupils in Years 10 and 11.

Areas for improvement

- ICT needs to be used more consistently in other subjects to enhance teaching and learning.
- The number of computers needs to be increased to improve access for pupils in other subjects.
- Greater use should be made of ICT equipment to measure, record, control and automate events, particularly for data logging in science.

104. Overall improvement since the last inspection, when there were major shortcomings in provision and standards, has been good. Provision is now good in relation to ICT courses but needs to be developed further to support learning within other subjects.
105. Standards in ICT by Year 9 have been below national expectations but they have recently shown a significant improvement and most pupils are achieving well in Years 7 to 9. More permanent staff and new schemes of work have ensured that standards seen in lessons are now mostly in line with expectations. The attainment of girls is better than that of boys; a strategy is in place to improve the attainment of boys. Achievement is satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Attainment by Year 11 is also improving because all pupils now follow ICT examination courses. The courses have not yet been fully examined. A small group of pupils took a pilot GNVQ course in after-school lessons last year and results were good. In short course GCSE ICT lessons, which are now taken by all pupils in Years 10 and 11, attainment overall is generally in line with expectations, although some candidates are still catching up from previous years when the ICT department experienced significant staffing difficulties. The attainment of the pupils who have chosen the Intermediate GNVQ course in Year 10 is good.
106. The good teaching and positive response from most pupils in all ICT lessons seen ensured that pupils were making good progress in the development of skills and knowledge. Pupils on the GNVQ course were particularly diligent. Lessons are well planned, aims are clear and challenging tasks were available for all levels of ability. In a Year 8 class, pupils were manipulating photo-editing software to good effect, images were then pasted into a word-processor where comments were added and captions attached using text boxes. In a Year 11 short course GCSE group, despite some problems with literacy skills, pupils were able to import pictures and combine images from several pieces of software to illustrate user guides which they were preparing. All were developing an appropriate understanding of spreadsheet and database applications. Good support was seen in some lessons for pupils in developing their language skills, sometimes from a low level. The most able pupils in a Year 10 GNVQ lesson were using programming language to good effect in their coursework. Assessment is used effectively in all years and is a particular strength on the GNVQ course.
107. Good management of ICT has ensured that significant improvements have been made since the last inspection. The ICT curriculum has been extended, providing more opportunities for all pupils. The monitoring procedures, which are now in place, are helping to raise standards. Planning has improved. The ICT department is working successfully with other subjects to encourage the use of ICT and to ensure that pupils' ICT skills are used more widely. Cross-curricular use has

improved recently; however, there is still considerable variation between departments in the use of ICT to enhance teaching and learning. In science, the use of ICT to measure, record and analyse events needs to be developed. In design and technology there is insufficient use of ICT in Years 7 to 9 particularly to control and automate events. There is much work to do in the music department to ensure it exploits the potential of ICT in the music curriculum. All computer rooms are heavily booked, making it difficult for some departments to move ahead as quickly as they would like. New machines in some subject areas, and in the well-equipped learning resource centre, are having a positive impact on teaching and learning. Some lessons would have benefited from the use of projection equipment with larger classes. There are plans to match the national average number of computers for a school of this size in the near future.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- Pupils are very well taught in Years 10 and 11.
- The department is well led.

Areas for improvement

- Standards should be higher in the first three years.
- Pupils need to become more self-reliant by having course books to take home.
- More specific planning for pupils with special educational needs is required.

French

108. GCSE results in French in 2001 were well below the national average and below the levels reached in 1999 and 2000. A higher than average proportion failed to achieve a pass grade because they did not meet all of the requirements of the modular course. French was taken by about two-thirds of the year group, the rest taking Urdu, in which results were similar. These results were below the school averages but French was not the lowest-attaining subject. The difference between boys' performance and that of girls was slightly greater than it is nationally, and pupils' achievement in French in comparison with their other subjects is significantly worse than is the case nationally.
109. These results were to a considerable extent the consequence of the school's inability to recruit and retain suitably qualified teachers of French, which has gone on over a period of some years and which continues to have an effect on pupils' attitudes and therefore achievement. However, there has been stability since the beginning of this school year, and the subject leader has had three years to lay sound foundations for raising standards. Leadership and management are now beginning to make an impact. In particular, the work in supporting teachers new to the school is ensuring that teaching for Years 7 to 9 is at least satisfactory. It is sometimes good or very good, which was the case in almost half the lessons seen. Careful evaluation of pupils' work leads to the setting of appropriate targets, which could raise pupils' expectations over the longer term.
110. Pupils speak and understand French well for their age because they hear and respond to teaching in French; they are not so good at writing things down. Pupils in one Year 8 class, for example, listened with enthusiasm to a video presentation about sporting activities in France and then struggled to record the vocabulary, much of it resembling current Anglo-American idiom. They are able to read satisfactorily, and opportunities are now being found for them to word-process some of their writing. Planning to use ICT is satisfactory, but there is insufficient access to computers. By the end of Year 9 their standards are still well below average, but they achieve satisfactorily and make sound progress. Good behaviour management is a major focus of teachers' work and leads to good relationships and a harmonious working atmosphere.

111. Because of staffing difficulties referred to above, the school has in the last two years made a foreign language optional in Years 10 and 11. Only 36 pupils in Year 11 and 17 in Year 10 now take French, whilst in addition a small number take up Spanish as a new language and a larger number take Urdu. This means that the National Curriculum requirement of a language for all is not being met. However, the pupils who are studying a language are very well motivated, teaching is very good, and achievement is very good, so that standards rise from well below average in Year 9 to below average in Year 10 and to the average standard expected nationally in Year 11. In one Year 10 lesson, team teaching of exceptional quality drew a round of applause from the pupils, who then went on to act the part of the aggrieved hotel guest with great vigour. Pupils' ability to speak the foreign language is better than usually encountered. Classes include pupils from the whole range of attainment. All pupils, including those with special needs, make very good progress.
112. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory, after a period of decline and recovery. Staffing is now satisfactory, an additional language has been introduced, and standards are rising. Four Year 11 pupils now intend to continue French to A-level compared with one the previous year.

Spanish

113. Five pupils in Year 10 and 11 in Year 11 take Spanish, which they began at the start of Year 10. Six of the Year 11 pupils also take French. No GCSE results are yet to hand; standards seen are approaching the national average in terms of grades A*-C. Teaching, learning and achievement are very good.

Urdu

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

Strengths

- GCSE examination results are below the national average but better than many other subjects in school.
- The teacher is a native speaker.

Areas for improvement

- Many pupils are not achieving as well as they should at present as only one lesson out of six observed was satisfactory and others were unsatisfactory.
- Some boys disrupt learning in lessons.
- There is no provision for the use of ICT to support learning in Urdu.

114. GCSE results in Urdu were below the national average in 2001, having fallen slightly from the previous year. Standards of work seen during the inspection were below average at the end of Year 9 and at the end of Year 11. The long-term absence of the permanent Urdu teacher has affected pupils' achievement and their attitude to learning the subject. However, an analysis of pupils' work shows that achievement was satisfactory when the permanent teacher was present.
115. When pupils join Year 9 Urdu classes they have quite different levels of literacy skills. Some have already learnt the script by attending weekend schools and also from their parents at home, while others start with no literacy skills. Pupils' listening and speaking skills are more developed than their reading and writing skills as they have opportunities to practise the language at other times. The pronunciation of most pupils is good. Considering that pupils have to learn a new script, their progress in reading and writing is satisfactory. Most pupils in Year 9 can recognise letters of the alphabet and can read and write simple words and phrases. Some pupils can read and write short paragraphs using present, past and future tenses. For example, some pupils were able to write five sentences about 'likes and dislikes about food and drink' in one Year 9 lesson while others could only copy sentences from the board. In reading some pupils need the teacher's help while others can read without support. For example, in one Year 10 class some pupils could read

a text on games and sports, and answer questions while others needed help. Their written work ranges from simply copying to writing short sentences and paragraphs.

116. Standards are below average overall for most pupils by Year 11, but are close to average for those who learnt Urdu before joining classes in Year 9. As in Year 9, pupils are more competent in listening and speaking than in reading and writing. Most pupils can take part in short and long conversations and can express their opinions and attitudes. For example, in one Year 10 class pupils could give their opinion about different types of exercise showing good understanding. In another Year 11 class some pupils were able to explain how different types of food are prepared showing fluency and good pronunciation.
117. The overall quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory at present. The teacher is a native speaker and has good knowledge and understanding of the subject, but is not successful in managing and motivating the pupils and creating a good learning atmosphere in the class. Several boys in each class do not show much interest in their learning and this has a negative influence on the rate at which they learn. In some cases boys lost their concentration and became noisy in lessons either because the tasks were not fully explained to them or the activities did not match their abilities. Expectations are not generally high especially for more able pupils. Methods used in lessons do not always help pupils to learn effectively. For example, the use in two Year 9 lessons of an overhead projector was ineffective because the poor quality of the transparency did not help the pupils to concentrate. The pupils' work is marked but teachers' comments are very brief and do not give any indication for improvement.
118. Urdu is a part of the modern foreign languages department and is managed and led well by the head of department, although there has only been limited improvement since the last inspection. The scheme of work has been improved but other issues remain unresolved. Resources are still not used to the best advantage and work is not matched well to the pupils' ability.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- There is much good teaching leading to good learning.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are constructive.
- The attitudes and behaviour of pupils are good and they respond well to challenge.
- The department is being well led in the absence of a permanent head of department.

Areas for improvement

- The completion of curriculum and assessment development in Years 7, 8 and 9.
- Pupils do not use ICT to support learning in Years 7, 8 and 9.
- Extra-curricular provision is limited.

119. School records indicate that the percentage of pupils gaining Level 5 and above by Year 9 in 2001 was at the national average; however, inspection evidence does not support this. Achievement is satisfactory and pupils make sound progress in Years 7 to 9, but attainment is below national expectations in Year 9. GCSE results have been consistently below the national average over the last four years. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils continue to achieve satisfactorily and make sound progress in Years 10 and 11 but that standards are below average. This reflects the ability of the pupils taking the course and the small uptake of instrumental lessons.
120. The attainment of the Year 7 pupils is very low, and few have any specific music skills. The weakness in musical ensemble experience exists right up to the Year 11 GCSE group, for whom playing together is a competitive rather than a co-operative experience, and the sense of musical ensemble is almost entirely missing. In individual and pair skills some pupils make good progress, as with two Year 9 girls playing their version of the *Pachelbel Canon* including

rhythmically based variations and complex melodic ornamentation. Two boys working on the Year 8 chromaticism project were effectively using syncopated rhythms. Many Year 7 pupils had no concept at all of the difference between sound effects and music. Pupils with special educational needs attain at least as well as their peers, and the basing of lessons on individual development gives full access to all in terms of both attainment and progress. Extra-curricular music is having to be totally re-developed, and does not yet offer a significant extension to the music curriculum. Less than two per cent of pupils have instrumental lessons, and the lack of a remissions policy means that many pupils cannot afford lessons.

121. Teaching and learning are both good at all levels, and are consequently having a positive impact on the pupils' attitudes and progress. Relationships are good, with pupil strengths and weaknesses well known, and pupils work at their own level to underpin individual progress. Planning is good, and clear targets are set and shared in all lessons. Pupils know what is expected of them and how they are to proceed; this is most effective with the Year 9 Pachelbel project and least effective with the Year 7 soundscapes project. Targets are refined through very effective teacher feedback, which takes full account of low pupil skill levels. Pupil management and control are excellent, producing a calm and orderly atmosphere, and a good learning environment. Learning was seen through teacher expertise, listening and analysis, selection and rejection, and by doing and refining both the skills and the work being done. Pupils assess their own work informally as they are doing it, and improve its quality as a consequence.
122. The response of the pupils is good at all levels, and although many groups arrive restless, they readily settle well. Many pupils are keen and enthusiastic, but their often narrow musical horizons limit their access to musical experiences. There are some potentially very difficult groups who need very firm management, and who have difficulty with listening skills and maintaining concentration. However, the majority of pupils have very positive attitudes and will each other to succeed.
123. Both the music curriculum and assessment are under intensive development. The modules already in place fully satisfy National Curriculum requirements, and the assessment procedures allied to each module form a good foundation for overall practices, including pupil self-assessment. Multi-cultural issues are included in all modules, but ICT is not yet part of the Year 7, 8 and 9 curriculum. The school has had major difficulty in recruiting music staff over the last year, but the appointment of an experienced teacher from Australia until the summer has proved an excellent strategy in resolving current problems. The school has provided excellent support for the acting head of department, who only qualified last year, in this challenging role.
124. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The matter concerning poor accommodation has been resolved, and teaching is still good. Resources have significantly improved, although resources for ICT are still unsatisfactory both in terms of hardware and software.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Teaching and learning are good in two-thirds of lessons seen.
- The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The good extra-curricular programme provides opportunities for all pupils to extend their learning.
- Strong curricular links with partner primary schools aid transition from Year 6 to Year 7.
- The quality of indoor sports accommodation enhances pupils' learning.

Areas for improvement

- GCSE results are too low.

- Current arrangements for the management of the department are unsatisfactory and there is no suitable plan to support developments in physical education.
- Schemes of work have not been updated to meet the requirements of changes to the National Curriculum.
- Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9.
- Pupils have few opportunities to develop their ICT skills in physical education.

125. In the GCSE 2001 sports studies examination, the proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-C was very low. The trend in results during the last three years is well below the national average. Pupils perform worse in physical education than in a high proportion of their other examination subjects. High-attaining pupils, including the talented, achieve well at inter-school, borough and sometimes national levels – particularly in football, cricket and netball.
126. Standards in lessons and work seen by Year 9 pupils matched national expectations and showed good improvement from work in Year 7; most pupils are achieving well. They can judge performance, use satisfactory individual and team skills in game situations and understand the importance of warm-ups. Most teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject are good, which enables pupils to make considerable gains in their knowledge of technique, tactics, rules and fitness. This was very evident in a Year 9 volleyball lesson where pupils of all different groups made good progress, because the teacher planned work that was appropriate for all levels of attainment. Lower-attaining pupils and those learning to speak English progressed well, because the teacher simplified instructions, modified tasks and used demonstrations. The standards of a significant minority are below average. They often show satisfactory individual skills in isolated practice, but cannot use them effectively under the pressure of a game; below average hand-eye co-ordination hinders their progress in net games. Higher-attainers use well-refined skills and tactics to consistently out-manoeuvre opponents; their learning is accelerated by extension tasks in lessons and through the opportunities provided by the good range of extra-curricular activities that are available. Learning and the achievement of pupils were unsatisfactory in a significant minority of lessons, because teaching was more prescriptive and pupils were given fewer opportunities to explore their own ideas. Pupils do not achieve as well as they should in these lessons. One lesson was judged unsatisfactory because of the teacher's insufficient planning and poor management of pupils. Pupils in all years improve their numerical skills through opportunities to measure and record performance and by using scoring systems. Most teachers emphasise key words and are adept in their use of questioning. These strategies improve the technical vocabulary, speaking skills and listening ability of pupils across the attainment levels, including those learning to speak English. The subject provides few opportunities for pupils to develop their ICT skills.
127. Standards in lessons and work seen by Year 11 pupils are average. Pupils achieve well because of good teaching. All lessons seen in Years 10 and 11 were good, because of thorough planning, mainly specialist teaching and good pupil management. This was very evident in a Year 11 basketball lesson, where the pupils made good progress in developing independent learning skills. The teacher provided opportunities for pupils to plan defensive drills, judge performance and help officiate. Higher-attaining pupils successfully apply attacking and defensive principles in game situations and analyse technique well. Most pupils can plan improvement, understand what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and show satisfactory tactical awareness. A significant minority lacks the necessary fitness and use of tactics and space to be effective in match situations. The teachers' management of pupils in Years 10 and 11 is good overall and reflects good teacher-pupil relationships that are, in turn, conducive to good quality learning. Year 11 GCSE pupils (mainly boys) are on target to achieve well below the national average in this summer's examination. They do not achieve as well as they should in theory work because there is no learning support. There are few opportunities for pupils to enhance their learning through ICT. No significant differences were observed in the standards achieved by pupils of different gender or ethnic background. Pupils with special educational needs, those with English as an additional language and those who are talented, make good progress.
128. Despite good teaching by individual staff, the department is unsatisfactorily managed. Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. Two long-term absences have

resulted in a high proportion of lessons being taken by temporary teachers. Two inexperienced, young teachers are temporarily sharing departmental management responsibilities. They need considerable support and release from some of their non-physical education curricular commitments if standards of behaviour and performance are not to slip. There is no department development plan in place; schemes of work are not updated to meet the requirements of recent changes to the National Curriculum and procedures for monitoring and assessing pupils are inadequate.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Teaching has clear aims and well thought out strategies are employed.
- Pupils respond well because teachers involve them actively in their lessons.
- Pupils have good opportunities to develop their own beliefs and values whilst becoming aware of the beliefs of others.
- The department makes a very good contribution to the social harmony of the school.

Areas for improvement

- Marking is not yet consistent across the department.
- There are too few opportunities for teachers to meet together as a team to plan and share good practice.
- There is no opportunity for pupils to complete a full GCSE course.
- Assessment is unsatisfactory.

129. Results in the 2001 GCSE examinations were broadly in line with the national average. This represented very good achievement by the pupils. Results have risen steadily since the course was introduced three years ago, and in 2001 almost all pupils who sat the examination achieved a pass grade. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher grades is rising. There is no significant difference between the results of any particular group.

130. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. Some excellent teaching was also observed. At its best, teaching was inspirational and pupils became enthusiastic learners. Lessons had a clear focus and the active involvement of pupils in the work lifted their understanding. Teachers are generally well prepared, although the lack of specialist knowledge of some teachers reduces their confidence and results in missed opportunities to develop ideas. Teachers expect good behaviour and pupils respond well. As a result, teachers are able to develop the pupils' speaking and listening skills and use methods that require them to work actively in groups. An interesting lesson in Year 8 required pupils to consider the emotions of King David and his remorse over his wrongdoing, and then act out the story that they had studied. In all cases teachers treat the views and opinions of their pupils with respect, and the pupils gain confidence in the subject. The standard of attainment at the end of Year 9 is average in oral work and lessons seen. The pupils' written work does not always meet this level. Teachers are enabling pupils to develop a secure knowledge of the key features of the world faiths that they study, and pupils are using them to consider their own beliefs and values. They are developing a respect for the beliefs of others, and many are willing to reflect on the significance of the rituals and beliefs they study. Their oral work, encouraged by the teachers, achieves a higher standard than their written work. Most written responses tend to be brief and contain simple explanations. Higher-attaining pupils who complete the class tasks have the opportunity to develop their ideas further. Pupils with higher than average attainment in religious education develop their ideas in writing, supporting their beliefs with sensitivity and reason. A good example was in work that required pupils to consider their own thoughts about life after death and their response to the creation of life.

131. The standard of attainment at the end of Year 11 is average. Pupils are well supported in their learning. The choice of the topics enables them to consider contemporary moral dilemmas in the light of secular and religious belief. The pupils have a good understanding of the purpose of marriage and can suggest reasons for the rise in the divorce rate. Pupils compare the different attitudes to divorce and to such issues as euthanasia. Those with higher ability are able to demonstrate the effects of belief in their understanding of the decisions that people make. In extended writing, they present their own opinions and give reasons to support their judgements. The module on social harmony challenges pupils' preconceptions, and provides good opportunities for them to reflect on the possible effects of a variety of prejudices. Pupils have an understanding of the variety of beliefs and cultures in Britain today, and can discuss in a mature

fashion the benefits of life in a multi-ethnic and faith community. Teachers encourage the use of specialist words and pupils have a sound understanding of them.

132. Achievement is good in all year groups, and for many pupils it is very good. Their active involvement in the work lifts their achievement in class higher than might be expected. For a significant number of pupils, however, the lack of continuity in their work that is due to absence or unfinished tasks, and insufficient opportunity to develop their responses independently in homework, reduce the progress that they make. In a minority of classes low expectations of written work by teachers and limited marking results in a decline in standards. The use of group activities and oral work enables pupils with special educational needs to make satisfactory progress and they are well supported by teachers and their classmates. Their incomplete written work, however, results in a lack of continuity that reduces pupils' confidence in their own ability. Although pupils with English as an additional language receive little additional support in religious education, their progress is generally satisfactory.
133. The leadership and management of the department are very good. The development plan identifies a clear and accurate set of priorities, and the work of the department is reviewed annually. The GCSE short course has been successfully introduced and a system of assessment tasks has been designed that will enable teachers to monitor the progress of pupils more accurately. There is a lack of consistency across the department, however, resulting from a lack of time for teachers to meet as a group to develop strategies and to share good practice. Work has begun on the department's handbook, and schemes of work are being re-designed. The completion of these tasks will support greater consistency. At present there is no opportunity for pupils to extend their short course GCSE into a full course.
134. Progress since the last report has been very good. Standards, teaching and attitudes have all improved and most lessons are now taught in bright stimulating environments where pupils' work is celebrated in the display. The complete introduction of assessment tasks is still outstanding; however, work is well underway.