

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **THE MEADOWS COMMUNITY SCHOOL**

Chesterfield

LEA area: Derbyshire

Unique reference number: 112958

Headteacher: Mrs Lynn Asquith

Reporting inspector: Mr John Ashton  
4492

Dates of inspection: 4 – 8 March 2002

Inspection number: 194513

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11 to 16

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: High Street  
Old Whittington  
Chesterfield  
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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr S Lismore

Date of previous inspection: May 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
4492	J Ashton	Registered inspector	Equal opportunities	<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p> <p>The school's results and achievements?</p> <p>How well are pupils taught?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p>
31713	Selwyn Roberts	Lay inspector	Personal, social and health education	<p>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well does the school care for it pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
27984	Alan Whitehall	Team inspector	Mathematics	Numeracy
10361	Frank Evans	Team inspector	English	Literacy
20380	Neville Pinkney	Team inspector	Science	
23492	Helen Chadwick	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Special educational needs	
31129	Jeff Pickering	Team inspector	Art and design	
20327	Frank Whiteman	Team inspector	Design and technology	
1994	Helen Olds	Team inspector	Geography	

4243	Tony Freeman	Team inspector	History	
23512	Pat Fisher	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
20490	Paul Wilson	Team inspector	Music	Assessment
12985	Shirley Jeffray	Team inspector	Physical education	
7602	Ethel Milroy	Team inspector	Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?  Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development

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<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The Meadows Community School is an average sized, mixed, 11 to 16 comprehensive school, situated in the village of Old Whittington, two miles north of Chesterfield in Derbyshire. There are 857 pupils on roll, 60 more than at the time of the last inspection, with more boys than girls in every year group except Year 9. A broadly average proportion of the pupils is eligible for free school meals. The school's intake at age eleven contains pupils with a wide range of levels of attainment, but a larger proportion are below average attainment than are above average. Fewer than one per cent of pupils are of a minority ethnic background, almost all of whom are fluent English speakers. There are 112 pupils on the school's register for special educational needs, including 55 at the higher stages (stages 3 to 5) of the special needs code of practice. Their needs in the main are either specific or moderate learning difficulties, plus a small number have emotional and behavioural or physical needs. The school is an enhanced resource school for deaf and hearing impaired pupils.

## HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The Meadows Community School is a lively, well led and now over subscribed school, providing good value for money for the monies it receives. Pupils are well taught and make good progress during their time in the school. Very few leave without any GCSE qualifications and almost all achieve at least five A\* to G pass grades. It is a very inclusive school, catering well for pupils from different backgrounds and those with special educational needs, including the small number of deaf and hearing-impaired pupils who play a very full part in the life of the school.

### What the school does well

- Above average proportions of pupils consistently attain at least five A\* to G grades at GCSE each year.
- Pupils make good progress and achieve well in most subjects.
- There is good teaching and learning in every subject area.
- The school is well led and managed.
- The professional development of teachers is good.
- Provision for deaf and hearing impaired pupils is good.
- Pupils are well cared for. Both their academic performance and their personal development are well monitored.
- Provision for pupils' social, moral and cultural development is good.
- Positive attitudes and good relationships are strong features of the school.
- The school has a very positive, supportive and inclusive ethos. Individuals are valued and staff are highly committed.

### What could be improved

- The development of pupils' literacy is not as effective as it should be.
- Provision for drama is weak.
- The provision for religious education in Years 10 and 11 is not good enough to do justice to the Local Agreed Syllabus.
- The arrangements in Years 8 and 9 for the study of a second modern foreign language are unsatisfactory.
- Higher attaining pupils are not stretched sufficiently in some lessons.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good improvement overall since its last inspection in May 1997.

Planning in order that work in lessons is more carefully matched to the learning needs of all pupils is improved in many if not all subjects. In some curriculum areas, higher attaining pupils should be stretched further than they are. The monitoring of pupils' attainment across the full range of subjects is much improved. The challenging behaviour of some pupils is well managed, on the whole. Tutors use the time with their forms more productively than they used to do. The personal, social and health education programme is much improved. Pupils' levels of attainment have improved overall. The quality of teaching and learning is even better than it was at the last inspection.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 14 and 16 year olds based on average point scores in end of Year 9 tests and GCSE examinations.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
End of Key Stage 3 tests	D	D	C	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
GCSE examinations	D	D	C	C	

**Average levels of attainment** on entry are consistently below average.

**By the end of Year 9** in the Year 2001, the proportions of pupils attaining the expected level 5 and above in the national tests improved to match the national average in each of English, mathematics and science.

**Overall GCSE results** have improved over the last three years in line with results nationally. When the national differences between the results of boys and girls are taken into account, boys were seen to have outperformed girls overall in 2001, though not in all subjects.

**Achievement** is good throughout the school in most subjects.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' good attitudes to school and to their work are strengths of the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Generally good. Managed well on the whole by well-organised teachers and the constant vigilance of senior staff.
Personal development and relationships	The personal development of pupils is good. Relationships within the school are positive and another strength of the school.
Attendance	Slightly below the national average. Punctuality has improved recently.



## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 11-14 years	aged 14-16 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teaching is satisfactory overall in English. It is good in mathematics although noticeably better in Years 10 and 11 than in years 7 to 9. It is good across all year groups in science. The skills of numeracy are taught well across a number of subject areas. Those of literacy are taught satisfactorily but need re-invigorating and re-focusing across the school as a whole.

Almost every lesson seen during the inspection was at least satisfactory. Just under seven in every ten were at least good. One in six lessons were very good, occasionally excellent. Of the 122 lessons seen, only two were unsatisfactory and no lessons were poor. The two excellent lessons were both in art and design, one lesson at each key stage. The very good lessons were mainly in mathematics in Years 10 and 11, in science in Years 7 and 9 and in music in Years 7, 9 and 10. Other very good lessons were seen in ICT, geography, physical education, religious education and personal, social and health education. Good lessons were seen in every subject area without exception.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. Relatively broad and balanced. An emerging strength is the provision of vocational and work related courses for a small number of pupils who are at risk of disengaging with their school experience. The second modern language in Years 8 and 9 and religious education in Years 10 and 11 do not receive sufficient time.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory overall, although personal development targets should be sharper.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory overall. Good weekly support from the local education authority for the very few pupils at a relatively early stage of mastering English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' social, moral and cultural development is good. Provision for their spiritual development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school continues to provide the caring, supportive community, which was the subject of favourable comment in the previous inspection.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The school is well led and managed by a lively and effective headteacher, ably supported by a strong and active leadership team. Good pastoral leadership. Effective subject leadership.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governing body supports the school well through its regular meetings and the work of its committees, and is more in touch with the strengths and weaknesses of the school than many governing bodies elsewhere. Legal duties have been satisfactorily fulfilled except for ensuring that every pupil receives a daily act of collective worship.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school is very aware of its relative performance from year to year, compared to other schools. The relative subject strengths within the school are also thoroughly analysed.
The strategic use of resources	Good overall. An ever-improving learning environment, and strategic targeting of the remaining areas for improvement in turn. Good practice of the principles of 'best value' in the use of resources.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>Large majorities of parents think that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the school expects their children to work hard,</li> <li>• the teaching is good,</li> <li>• the school is helping pupils to mature,</li> <li>• their children are making good progress.</li> </ul>	<p>Much smaller majorities think that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• their children get the right amount of homework,</li> <li>• the school works closely with parents,</li> <li>• they are kept well informed about how their children are getting on,</li> <li>• pupils' behaviour is good.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive comments. A broad and balanced amount of homework was observed being given to all year groups during the inspection week. The school works very hard to involve parents as much as possible in the life of the school, and informs of them of their children's progress as often as do similar schools. Some report comments about progress in particular subjects, however, are not specific enough about what pupils need to do to improve in those particular subjects. Pupils' behaviour is well controlled by a positive staff approach and a very good level of senior management alertness.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Average levels of attainment on entry to the school are consistently below average. The local education authority's county wide analysis shows The Meadows in the lowest quarter of schools in Derbyshire in terms of average verbal reasoning, numeracy and non verbal reasoning scores. Literacy and numeracy skills, in particular, are low. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected National Curriculum Level 4 or higher at the end of Year 6 in the primary school is below average in all three of the core subjects English, mathematics and science.
2. By the end of Year 9, however, in the Year 2001, the proportions of pupils attaining the expected level 5 and above in the national tests improved such that they matched the national average in each of English, mathematics and science, compared both to schools nationally and to similar schools. Similar schools are those with equally high proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals. Girls outperformed boys in all three of the core subjects in 2001, though not always in previous years. This equates to good progress in Years 7 to 9, for this particular year group of pupils.
3. Average GCSE point scores in 2001 were close to the national average compared to all schools and also to similar schools. The proportion of pupils gaining at least five A\* to G grades exceeded the national average for all schools. Overall GCSE results have improved over the past three years faster than results nationally improved (good progress again). When the national differences between the results of boys and girls are taken into account, boys were seen to have outperformed girls overall, though not in all subjects.
4. In terms of average GCSE point scores in 2001, standards are below the national average in English, just below the national average in mathematics and close to average in science. The proportion of grades A\* to C in science matched the national average whilst those for English and mathematics were both below average. In all three subjects, the proportion of grades A\* to G exceeded the national average. Girls achieved better A\* to C grades than boys in both English and Mathematics, but there was little difference between their results in science.
5. Average GCSE point scores in other subjects in 2001 exceeded the national average in design and technology, geography and physical education, matched the average in German and art and design and were below average in history, information and communication technology, music and Spanish.
6. Standards seen generally match the test and examinations results. In most subjects this means that average proportions of pupils near the end of Years 9 and 11 are reaching standards broadly in line with national expectation for this age group. However, higher attaining and gifted and talented pupils perform better in some subjects than they do in others. For example, they do particularly well in GCSE art and design, with well above average numbers gaining the highest GCSE grades (A\*). They also do well in physical education where high standards are achieved in extra-curricular sport, and an extensive programme offers very good opportunities for all pupils, but particularly the gifted and talented, to excel. On the other hand, some higher attaining Year 11 pupils in English achieve less well than they might, due to a shortage of extension work. In science, higher attaining pupils are not consistently

challenged to extend their learning and the amount of written work required of most pupils is often low. Geography worksheets do not always challenge higher attaining pupils to work independently and the short spaces provided on the worksheet limit the opportunities for extended writing in class. Higher attaining pupils in history are given insufficient opportunity to fully extend themselves and, in music, gifted-and-talented pupils are not always given work specifically designed to present a challenge to their capabilities in class, although they are challenged in extra-curricular performance.

7. Pupils enter the school with weak literacy skills. Standards in literacy are still below the expected level by the end of Year 9 in 2001, but they are closer to national levels than they were in recent years. There is a lack of cohesion at subject level. Speaking and listening are good in English but not as good elsewhere. For example, in religious education, while pupils speak audibly and there are structured opportunities for discussion, many pupil responses are not clear enough. In science, pupils use the opportunities to speak but are not always coherent and do not use scientific terminology correctly. In mathematics, while pupils are keen to respond, their levels of communication are weak. Pupils are encouraged to join in discussion in history and do so profitably. Listening skills are generally better than speaking skills in the subjects of the curriculum.
8. Reading skills are good in English and are satisfactory in most subjects. Pupils can usually read books and other texts skilfully enough for learning. In history, pupils read accurately and without hesitation, coping with and using specialist historical vocabulary. In information and communication technology (ICT) and science, pupils use the Internet for research, to good effect. In English, pupils are encouraged to read for pleasure through the library lessons and the book clubs.
9. Writing skills in English are weak but improving and this is reflected in some other subjects of the curriculum. For instance, in history, pupils' writing improves considerably by Year 9. In art, pupils write an account of the activity in a Chinese drawing. In religious education there is some in-depth work, use of writing frames and use of material adapted for pupils of differing levels of attainment. The writing by the girls in GCSE physical education is of good quality. In ICT, higher attaining pupils can write standard, grammatically correct prose when evaluating a project.
10. Standards in numeracy across the school as a whole are close to the national average and are rising in line with standards nationally. As well as the good work taking place in mathematics there are significant contributions to the development of pupils' numeracy from for example, science, art, geography, physical education, ICT and design and technology. For example, in science, many routine calculations are competently carried out in terms of percentages, the plotting of graphs and the collection and analysis of data in scientific investigations. In geography, there is plenty of number work to a good standard in, for instance, the plotting of pie charts and in work on population trends.
11. In 2001, the school exceeded by a significant amount its performance targets for average GCSE points score and for the proportion of pupils gaining at least five

GCSE grades A\* to C. This represents good achievement across the school as a whole.

12. Throughout Years 7 to 9, most pupils of both genders, and those few pupils for whom English is an additional language, achieve satisfactorily in English, history and ICT, and religious education. They achieve well in mathematics, science, art and design, design and technology, geography, modern foreign languages, music and physical education. They do this by making better progress than might be expected compared to their prior attainment levels when they entered the school at the beginning of Year 7.
13. Throughout Years 10 and 11, pupil achievement compared to their prior attainment is as might be expected, and therefore satisfactory, in English, mathematics, science, history and ICT. It is better than expected in art and design, design and technology, geography, modern foreign languages, music and in GCSE PE. It is, however, less than expected, therefore unsatisfactory in religious education, due mainly to insufficient time to do justice to the Local Agreed Syllabus.
14. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. By the end of Key Stage 4, they make good progress, achieving results, which bear comparison with those of other pupils in the school.

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

15. Pupil's good attitudes to school and their work are continued strengths of the school since the last inspection. Over 80 per cent of the parents and carers who returned the questionnaire agreed that their children like school. The pupils are keen to come to school, they enjoy school life and are eager to play a full part, including in extra-curricular activities.
16. Most pupils respond well in lessons and are generally attentive, confident and motivated learners. Teachers work hard to gain an understanding of the personal requirements of pupils and respond accordingly to their everyday needs. As a result, pupils maintain concentration well in lessons and during discussions are enthusiastic and willing participants. This is most evident in their response to good teaching or when the topic taught stimulates their interest.
17. Overall the standard of behaviour throughout the school is good. The school has a clear policy for achieving good standards of behaviour and this has been successfully implemented to incorporate all aspects of school life and receives the full support of parents. Pupils are clear about what is expected of them and most respond well to class and school rules. In a number of classes, a few pupils are sufficiently restless to focus the teachers' attention on them and away from the rest of the class for a portion of each lesson. This has an adverse effect on their own and other's attainment and progress and seems to exemplify parents' perception that there is some misbehaviour in the school. The behaviour of the large majority of pupils, however, is well controlled and orderly, in lessons, in the dining hall and around the school.
18. The personal development of pupils is good. They distinguish right from wrong and understand the importance of rules in a social environment. The school provides a range of opportunities such as Year 7 residential courses and pupils display a keenness to assume responsibility. A student evaluators' group, recently established in the school, has been particularly effective in building pupil confidence through

consultation and relationships with others. The group consists of representatives from Years 7 to 11 and they evaluate and report on school related issues such as the provision of a vending machine or replacing dining room tables and chairs. In addition, a wide range of extra-curricular activities is available during lunchtime and after school hours. The guidance team of year and key stage co-ordinators constantly review all aspects of personal development and appropriate records are maintained.

19. Relationships within the school are good and are one of the strengths of the school. Pupils respect their teachers and learn from them to be kind and respectful. During lunchtime, conversations with pupils of all ages resulted in lengthy and interesting discussions about their interests and the community and those spoken to were noticeably friendly and forthright in their opinions. It is evident that they respect the feelings, values and beliefs of others.
20. Pupils with special educational needs have generally good relationships with their teachers and support workers. They show determination to succeed and value the support they receive from the learning support department and from members of outside agencies, for example, the careers service who attend transition reviews.
21. Attendance during the last three completed terms is 90 per cent, which is slightly below the national average. The level of unauthorised absence at 1.3 per cent is relatively high, reflecting the school's determination to be scrupulously honest in its classification of the reasons for non-attendance, and to reject many excuses as not good enough. Some form groups in Years 10 and 11 fail to achieve 87 per cent attendance and this is having a detrimental effect on pupils' attainment and progress. Despite stringent efforts by the school to improve whole school attendance by sending out letters, and including relevant references in the newsletter, the school continues to experience difficulty in gaining the full co-operation of certain parents. Liaison arrangements currently in place with the Education Social Worker for supporting this effort are not fully effective.
22. The school complies with the legal requirements for form registration which is completed timely and efficiently. Although records are computerised the data is not collated regularly enough in order to monitor individual and group trends of absence. Close monitoring of lateness has significantly improved the punctuality of pupils and facilitates a prompt start to the day. However, the beginnings of some lessons are still sometimes delayed because of late arrivals.

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

23. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, at both key stages. Teaching has improved since the previous inspection, reflecting the stress upon improving teaching and learning strategies which has been at the forefront of the school's development plans in recent years. Many teachers work over and beyond their timetabled hours to provide additional revision, catch-up and consolidation lessons after school.
24. Almost every lesson seen during the inspection was at least satisfactory. Just under seven in every ten were at least good. One in six lessons were very good, occasionally excellent. Of the 122 lessons seen, only two were unsatisfactory and no lessons were poor. The two excellent lessons were both in art and design, one lesson at each key stage. The very good lessons were mainly in mathematics in years 10 and 11, science in Years 7 and 9 and music in Years 7, 9 and 10. Other very good lessons were seen in ICT, geography, physical education, religious education and personal, social and health education. There were good lessons in every subject

area without exception.

25. The better teaching is notable for the teachers' secure command of their subjects, their good class management and confident leadership of learning in their teaching areas. English teachers, for example, know their subject well and have good relationships with pupils. The effective use of individual white boards is a notable feature of mathematics lessons. The boards provided instant feedback, allowing the teacher to adjust the activity according to the accuracy of the pupils' response. Science teachers plan their lessons particularly well. All design and technology staff display good knowledge and skills in their particular specialism. Geography teachers demonstrate their secure command of their subject by adding significant detail when explaining new concepts to their pupils. Lesson presentation is always lively in modern foreign languages. It incorporates a variety of activities, including games, which not only keep the pupils' attention but also reinforce learning. Teachers are skilled in knowing when to use the foreign language and when to use English; consequently the use of the foreign language never becomes a barrier to learning. Work is well matched to most pupils' abilities in music lessons, and the balance in work is usually good. The physical education (PE) teachers' management of pupils and class organisation is very good. In the best PE lessons, pupils are challenged intellectually as well as physically, and skilful questioning probes pupils' knowledge and understanding and makes them think.
26. The very best teaching seen has all of the above characteristics but that something extra as well, usually the infectious enthusiasm of the teaching. The work is made so interesting that every pupil's attention is gripped and they are positively inspired. Pupils are organised to be actively involved in the lesson. The work is such that everyone is stretched. No one is allowed to daydream, to relax and leave others to do all the work. For instance, in a Year 9 science lesson there was a high degree of challenge, and pupils were fully involved in the work in a practical experiment where carbon was heated with metal ores to determine where in the reactivity list of metals carbon would fit. Afterwards pupils were able to go on to construct word and chemical equations for the reactions, ending up being able to 'balance' the equations, a relatively high level skill for pupils in Year 9. High expectations are the key to the success of the very best art and design lessons. Pupils in these lessons are comfortable working with computers. In fact they begin to develop their ICT skills in art from Year 7 onwards. In an excellent lesson, the teacher's outstanding planning and subject knowledge introduced these youngest pupils to the iGrafx computer programme. His refined methods of presenting his subject allowed access to the software and some of its many applications. Soon every pupil was able to select an image generated in a home-made, tin-box camera, then mask and fill areas with colours and textures of their choice. Very good use of repetition allowed the whole class to learn. The teacher demonstrated more complex aspects of the software to allow higher attaining, ambitious pupils to make quicker progress. Any pupil, "who discovers a move," in the programme, is asked to teach three others how to do it. The enthusiasm of the pupils and the teacher was infectious, the learning very secure, and individual to each particular pupil. In these good, very good and excellent lessons, pupils make tangible progress, their interest is captured and held well and their productivity is high.
27. There were only two completely unsatisfactory lessons, one in each of science and religious education. The problem in each case was failure to capture and hold pupils' attention. For instance in the Year 8 science lesson about how shadows form, the questioning was too vague, and not well enough phrased or directed to involve all the pupils. The result was that pupils floundered and learning in this instance was less

than it should have been.

28. In otherwise satisfactory lessons in a number of subjects, there are some areas for definite improvement if pupils' learning is to improve even further. In English, too limited a range of teaching and learning styles is used at present. Mathematics teaching at Key Stage 4 is noticeably better than at Key Stage 3, where the problems of classes with mixed levels of attainment have not yet been solved fully. In science, clear learning objectives are identified but not consistently shared with pupils or reviewed at the end of lessons. In art and design, there are occasions when pupils using potentially damaging materials do not wear protective clothing. In some geography lessons the teacher poses the questions and then too readily provides the answers before the pupils have sufficient opportunity to contribute meaningfully. Strategies for learning in history are narrow and over-dependant upon teacher direction and the pupils' memory and powers of concentration. Note taking is not encouraged. The slightest lapse of concentration can therefore threaten pupil progress, given that teacher delivery and explanation are so economically tuned and finely pared.
29. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is seen to be more effective where it concentrates on short activities and small targets in the lesson, giving the pupils a deserved sense of achievement. When the pace of activities and explanations is too fast, pupils find it difficult to sustain concentration and to make progress. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory for those few pupils for whom English is an additional language and for the very small number at a relatively early stage of English acquisition.
30. Literacy skills are taught satisfactorily in English, and are re-inforced in various ways with mixed levels success in many other areas of the school. This is an area for further and continuing development in the school.
31. The skills of numeracy are taught well in mathematics, reinforced by sterling work in a number of other subject areas, notably in science, design and technology and geography.

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

32. In Years 7 to 9 the school provides a satisfactory curriculum which meets legal requirements. All subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education and PSHE (personal, social and health education) are included. However, there are too few opportunities for drama although dance is included. Since the last inspection, better provision has been made for information and communication technology (ICT). Better provision of computers is having a positive effect on pupils' learning especially in the art technology lessons. All subjects are taught in mixed attainment groups except for modern foreign languages, science and mathematics, which is grouped by pupil attainment in Year 9. The time allocated for the second modern foreign language is at the expense of half the time given to the first language, an unsatisfactory situation for both languages.
33. All pupils take a core of English, mathematics, dual award science, a design and technology subject and PSHE in the years from 14-16. Some pupils are disapplied from a modern foreign language. Although none are disapplied from religious education the courses of only six one hour lessons in Year 10 and four in Year 11 mean that pupils other than the small number taking GCSE do not receive their full



entitlement to cover the Local Agreed Syllabus. An emerging strength of the curriculum is the provision of vocational and work related courses for a small number of pupils who are at risk of disengaging with their school experience. Good quality short courses lead to qualifications and certificates in aspects such as First Aid, Basic Hygiene, and Manual Handling. With the extended work experience placements available to these pupils they are being offered relevant and good preparation for adult life and employment.

34. Pupils with special educational needs have good and full access to the whole curriculum. More of these pupils are now entered for GCSE than at the time of the last inspection and more gain qualifications. The Youth Award scheme makes a valuable contribution for pupils who work towards specific and achievable targets in undertaking specific challenges focussing on features such as home management, sport, expressive arts or community. At Key Stage 4, the optional course in British Sign Language is very successful. Additional provision for gifted and talented pupils, both in lessons and outside the regular curriculum, is building on the work previously done with 'more able' pupils before the recent national initiative. Many of these pupils' needs are identified and their progress is monitored well. Several subjects provide extension work and extended homework. One summer school enabled pupils to work at enriched levels common in post-16 education in topics such as photography and forensic science. There is room for development in some lessons, however, where some higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently stretched. The few minority ethnic pupils for whom English is an additional language are fully integrated into the classes.
35. Approaches to literacy vary between subjects. Some subjects which depend heavily on pupils' abilities to read, write and speak competently such as religious education make a very good contribution to pupils' literacy development. Overall, the National Literacy Strategy in The Meadows is not as effective across the subjects of the curriculum as it should be and recently, due to key staff changes, it was not clear which person was responsible for leading and co-ordinating this important initiative. This lack of cohesion means that the kind of learning promoted by the Strategy, so important for raising standards, is not being promoted in this school as effectively as it should be.
36. Personal, social and health education has improved since the last inspection and provision is now good overall. It is now taught by a team of dedicated volunteers who specialise in the different areas of, for example, sex education, equal opportunities, careers and, at Key Stage 4, religious education. This replaces and is an improvement on the previous arrangement, criticised at the last inspection, when form teachers taught their own classes (with varying degrees of effectiveness).
37. Provision for careers education is good. Teachers prepare pupils well for work experience. A well structured programme of lessons, a good careers library and the supportive intervention of careers officers helps pupils to move on the next stage of their education or employment with greater confidence.
38. Links with the community are good. The school works very closely with its educational partners. Good links with contributory primary schools help pupils to settle quickly into their secondary experience. Work with the universities in Sheffield opens pupils' eyes to the possibility of higher education and helps them to raise their aspirations and seek more ambitious goals. The links with the local further education college are very productive. Several pupils do more advanced work in art and design and the school is planning further curriculum development to make best use of local

opportunities, for example, in its ability to offer a wider range of vocational subjects such as leisure and tourism. About 90 adults are well served by the school in evening classes, in part to develop their employability skills and also in requested subjects such as psychology, art and ICT. The school's provision for extra-curricular activities is good and comprehensive. Many pupils benefit from a range of experiences, sporting activities, a gym club, a dance club and many competitive team games' fixtures. Learning clubs after schools boost the progress of pupils in Years 7 and 8 particularly. Revision classes for those about to take the National Tests (SATs) at the end of Year 9, or GCSE in Year 11, are well attended. The library is accessible in lunch hours and after school every day, as is the careers library, and its proximity to the main ICT suite enhances opportunities. A lunchtime signing club helps pupils to practise their signing skills and to increase their ability to communicate with each other.

### **SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL EDUCATION**

39. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory but limited within and across curriculum areas and there is very restricted provision for any Acts of Collective worship, either in class or in the weekly assemblies. Some teaching of values and moral precepts occurs in these instances and, on a few occasions, there is time for pupil reflection. Within the curriculum, the humanities subjects have thought through their contribution very carefully and make available very good opportunities. For example, in religious education, pupils consider Christian teaching on the central concept of forgiveness and the response of the parents of a young student murdered in South Africa. The impact of the Truth and Reconciliation commission is considered. The forgiveness of the murderers by the parents and their subsequent development of many educational memorial projects challenges pupils spiritually. In its day-to-day work the school helps pupils with behavioural difficulties to reflect on the impact on themselves and others and the need for forgiveness and a new start. Many teachers try hard to teach respect for the uniqueness of individuals and to lift the human spirit. In art, pupils are given the opportunity to consider the way images of spiritual leaders, such as the image of the Pope, impact on believers through art history and painting. Such spiritual ideas are embodied in the ethos of the school.
40. Provision for moral development is good. Pupils learn to consider difficult ethical decisions for example, about old age and the response of the young. They have good teaching on how to tell the difference between right and wrong, to consider the importance of honesty and truthfulness. In history, pupils consider the impact of the civil rights movement and the unfairness to black people in the Southern United States as well as the impact of white people on the black peoples of the Americas who lost their spiritual relationship with the land. In physical education they learn to obey the rules of fair play and competition, in PSHE to care for themselves and take responsible roles in society. The school has parents' and pupils' evaluation groups, who consider aspects of school life, make suggestions and help to order the life of the community. Pupils are generous in their response to need and give well to both animal and human charities, and especially to those less fortunate than themselves.
41. Provision for pupils' social development is good. Pupils have many opportunities to develop socially. Good residential visits in outdoor education help pupils to understand how to live in the community. Day visits to York and Derby help pupils to encounter aspects with which they are unfamiliar and extend pupils understanding of modern British society. Pupils help and clear up sensibly and safely in practical situations in science and technology, for example. They work co-operatively in pairs and larger groups in lessons as in modern foreign languages, science and physical

education. In religious education particularly they learn to appreciate the viewpoints of others and form and defend their own. Within the pupil evaluators' group they help to create the kind of society they want within school.

42. Provision for cultural development is good. The provision for aesthetic development in art is outstanding. Many more pupils than is usual take music for GCSE. Although the school does not have a strong tradition in large-scale productions in the performing arts, pupils are given the opportunity to participate in concerts, bands and smaller scale events. There is less take-up of instrumental tuition than in most schools of this size. History, geography and religious education make a significant contribution to pupils' personal, cultural development. Pupils have the opportunity to study world faiths and the cultures from which they evolved. In history, a study is made of the black peoples of the Americas. In music, pupils encounter world music, for example, Gamelan bands as well as western European traditions. Pupils also have the opportunity to study three modern languages, French, German and Spanish helping a majority of them to develop a broad understanding of their European roots. Closer to home, pupils study their local geography in Whittington, Walton and Chesterfield, for example. Some very carefully planned visits to Derby enable pupils to visit places of worship such as a mosque and a gurwara and to increase their knowledge of the diverse cultures present in modern British society. A visit to York helps them to appreciate the beauty of the architecture of the Minster and the story of developing society in Northern England.

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

43. The provision for ensuring pupils' health and safety is good. The school continues to provide the caring, supportive community, which was the subject of favourable comment in the previous inspection. Teachers are very sensitive to the needs of those in their charge and work hard to ensure their welfare. The trusting relationships which most pupils enjoy with their teachers give them the confidence to share any concerns and help them to cope with the problems that arise in everyday life.
44. The school has good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and for eliminating oppressive behaviour. Whilst these are very effective in most areas of the school the behaviour of some pupils who have not developed the high level of self-discipline expected of them shows that continuous vigilance will continue to be necessary. Positive behaviour is rewarded through praise and encouragement and the headteacher ensures her presence is seen in all areas of the school, taking the lead in discussing with pupils what is acceptable and unacceptable conduct and in dealing swiftly with incidents of harassment and misbehaviour.
45. The school complies fully with the statutory local child protection procedures, and members of staff have received training in identifying indicators of possible abuse or unexplained changes of behaviour. A deputy headteacher, who has overall responsibility for child protection in the school, receives commendable support from the student services manager, inclusion project manager, the learning mentor and the guidance team. Liaison arrangements with outside support agencies are documented well and known to all staff.
46. The governing body has taken a responsible attitude to health and safety but some aspects of its procedures require a review. Potential hazards have been listed and the level of risk in each case has been assessed and prioritised. The administration manager and the nominated health and safety representative carry out weekly routine checks of the premises, record details and ensure that appropriate action is taken.

However, the scrutiny of inspection needs to be more rigorous and also to ensure that similar assessments are carried out for out-of-school activities and in different subject activities.

47. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good, as they were judged in the last inspection. Form teachers assess progress through observation and record appropriate details. Parents value these comments in the annual progress report. The school uses presentation assemblies to celebrate pupils' achievements both in and out of school, and also displays individual and group awards. This does much to raise pupils' self-esteem and awareness of others' talents and skills.
48. Procedures for improving attendance are satisfactory. The school is constantly striving to improve attendance through conversations with individual parents, endeavouring to support them more in a joint drive to improve their children's punctuality and attendance. Whole school attendance records are collated daily, and the data is used to chase up individual pupil lateness. It is not yet used effectively enough, however, to identify trends and patterns of lateness over a longer period of time.
49. Since the last inspection there has been improvement in the school's procedures for monitoring pupils' academic performance and progress, and these are now good overall. The school has a clear assessment policy with guidance for teachers as to how the policy should be applied. The use of assessment information to guide curricular planning is satisfactory. In many subjects the application of assessment data to curriculum planning is part of administrative routines. However, as yet, not all departments formally use such information about pupils' attainment and progress to plan the next stages of learning. The procedures for assessing pupils' performance are satisfactory or better in all departments and are particularly good in, for instance, history and science. Assessments are accurately based on National Curriculum levels and pupils' progress is recurrently reviewed. Regular information to parents includes an annual report that provides detailed information on pupil progress. Subject comments are occasionally rather general, however, and do not always give subject-specific advice on what pupils need to do to improve. Suitable arrangements are in place for assessing and recording pupils' attainment when they enter the school. Information from the end of Key Stage 2 tests taken at the end of primary school is recorded and shared with teachers. Teachers track pupils' progress and maintain appropriate records. In Years 10 and 11, pupils' progress is regularly monitored and targets are set for GCSE grades. The school uses assessment data from the end of primary school and subsequent tests well to predict GCSE grades and checks progress against such indicators. GCSE results are compared subject by subject to analyse comparative performance between subjects and this helps to pinpoint any underachievement. Regularly updated assessment histories are now readily available to all teachers on a CD ROM. This allows assessment information to be accessed in a variety of ways to aid teacher planning and target setting.
50. Learning support assistants diligently record pupils' progress in the curriculum. Pupils enjoy the best opportunities to succeed in those curriculum areas where teachers use the information from the special educational needs register and individual education plans to manage pupils' access to the curriculum.

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

51. Partnership with parents is generally good, but work remains to be done to encourage

all parents to have positive attitudes towards their child's education. Parents do, however, play a vital role in supporting and affirming the work of the learning support department. They are fully involved in the annual review of the statement process.

52. Most parents are very supportive of the school and their contribution has had a beneficial effect on the pupils' learning. They provide help with the 'better reading partnership', give ICT support and assist with the 'success maker' project. The parents who answered the pre-inspection questionnaire indicated that their children are making good progress through hard work and being helped to mature.
53. The school has established a 'parent evaluators' group which, through various projects, including special needs and anti-bullying support is involved in evaluating practical situations, and through the best practice process makes decisions which are recommended to the school's management for consideration. Other parents attend workshops, which support student study initiatives.
54. To encourage further parent involvement, 'family learning' sessions are held in the school for which an increasing number of parents attend. Currently the total is about ninety with further interest being shown. It has raised parents' and carers' self-esteem and many have appreciated the opportunity to be involved in school life and to gain new skills in the process. A very good relationship with Chesterfield College has been established and the college provides the tutors for this new and successful initiative.
55. Parents receive regular newsletters, which contain details of school activities and progress reports relating to the school's development plan. Useful information on the curriculum is provided prior to the beginning of a new school year and is appreciated by parents. The annual progress report to parents is effective in providing suitable information about pupils' achievement in various subjects. Some comments about particular subjects, however, are not specific enough about what pupils need to do to improve in those particular subjects. Homework is an area of concern for many parents with 30 per cent of those returning the questionnaire disagreeing that their child gets the right amount. This opinion was not supported during the inspection when a broad and balanced amount of homework was observed for all year groups.

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

56. The school is well led and managed by a lively and effective headteacher, ably supported by a strong and active leadership team, all of whom are fully involved in every aspect of the school's life, including continuous interaction with pupils throughout the school day. The tone and ethos of the school benefits enormously from this first-hand management.
57. The governing body supports the school well through its regular meetings and the work of its committees, and is more in touch with the strengths and weaknesses of the school than many governing bodies elsewhere. Legal duties have been satisfactorily fulfilled except for ensuring that every pupil receives a daily act of collective worship.
58. The school's aims stress the creation of an atmosphere and community in which effective learning can take place, and this the school certainly achieves. Whole school improvement planning is clear and detailed and documents well the school's present and future priorities. Links with departmental planning are strong.

59. Good pastoral leadership is via key stage co-ordinators in partnership with assistant co-ordinators who operate effectively as 'heads of year'. There is good continuity of form tutor care and tutors play a major role, including responsibility for the effective use of the valuable 15 minute time slots on four out the five days each week, when their tutor groups are not in assembly. These they fill well with a mixture of useful tasks, such as checking homework diaries, and general pastoral duties, setting the tone for the school day. On at least one morning each week, tutors use the time to improve pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills. There is a wide range of effectiveness in the carrying out of these tutor roles, one of the things the school is continuously trying to improve as part of its current school improvement planning.
60. The leadership and management of subject areas are always at least satisfactory and in most cases are good. The leadership of art and design is very good. The monitoring of teaching and learning and the professional development of teachers of art and design has significantly improved the quality of provision in that area since the last inspection.
61. Specific grant is used effectively for its designated purposes. In particular, the legal requirements for the provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) are met. More 'able' and 'gifted and talented' pupils are identified separately and are increasingly well monitored. The learning support department is led and managed with care and commitment, but there is some lack of cohesion between it and other curriculum areas which means that sometimes pupils' personal targets are not shared effectively. Learning support staff are skilled and well-qualified. The importance of their role is reflected not only in the daily routines of supporting pupils in class but in helping pupils to set personal targets linked to their statement of special educational need. The learning support suite of rooms provides a safe and supportive environment for pupils with a range of needs. This is a very inclusive school which values all its pupils and staff. The success of inclusive strategies is shown clearly in the outcome of annual reviews where support is slowly being reduced for certain pupils.
62. The teaching staff are well-qualified and, except in the case of religious education, numbers are such that the needs of the curriculum are met. There is a healthy mixture of experienced and younger staff and a good sense of teamwork both within departments and across the school as a whole. The occasional problems in the recruitment of supply staff have had an adverse effect on standards in science this year. The inadequacies in the amount of technical support for ICT, design and technology and science, highlighted at the last inspection, have been rectified. The support staff complement the work of the teaching staff and have a positive effect on standards. Provision for pupils' special educational needs is good with a particularly effective contribution from the communication support workers.
63. Professional development is good and the separate strands of performance management, school self-evaluation and initial teacher training mentoring, all come together to have a positive effect on learning. Teachers are appreciative of the time allocated to them to share good practice. Induction of newly qualified teachers and of teachers new to the school is good. The school meets well the criteria to support the training of new teachers and helps train Associate Teachers from Sheffield Hallam, Nottingham and the Open University.
64. Resources to support learning are good. Academic departments submit bids to the headteacher for sufficient capitation to support their programmes of study and development plans. The school has an above average ratio of computers to pupils.

There are three computer suites well stocked with appropriate computers and software for delivery of discrete information technology courses. The art, design and technology, information technology and music departments are particularly well resourced for ICT in the courses they offer. The new computer suite used extensively by these departments enjoys state-of-the-art hardware and access to good quality, specialist software. The mathematics department has a good supply of new textbooks and is to replace its present software with a more up-to-date version. The music department has sufficient keyboards to stock two rooms and a range of other good quality percussion instruments, as well as four computers with the necessary music software. Design and technology has very good quality machinery, materials and equipment to support the courses on offer, although it lacks computer aided design and manufacture equipment. Physical education has a shortage of information technology equipment and books. Modern foreign languages have good quality appropriate ICT resources, tape recorders and overhead projectors.

65. The library also provides pupils with access to a small number of Internet connected computers. The book stock provides satisfactory support for the curriculum although there are limited supplies for some academic departments. There is good provision of large scale, recent publications for the geography department and good provision also for children with special educational needs. Books to support the mathematics courses are of good quality but in limited numbers. The art department keeps most of the books in its own very comprehensive reference library. The large stock of books for the English department linked to the librarian's thoughtful, well-presented book displays, promotes reading well. The library is a popular after-school venue for the Homework Club and the Reading Club. There are plans to convert the library into a learning resource centre as part of the Literacy Support Initiative.
66. The school is housed in a variety of buildings on a sloping site. Views of the surrounding countryside and some planting near the school give the location a pleasant aspect. Accommodation allows the curriculum to be taught effectively in most subjects and there has been a history of new building and refurbishment in a number of areas including those for art, humanities, languages and music. The classrooms and corridors are clean and bright and good displays of pupils' work enhance every display space in the school, to very good effect. A suitable room is set aside as a medical room. The library is a pleasant area, conducive to learning.
67. Accommodation for some performance subjects, however, is less good. The school has unsatisfactory facilities for physical education (PE). There is no large indoor space for games and this reduces the range of indoor sports activities available to pupils. This effects adversely both the quality of learning and the curriculum balance within the subject. Limited PE accommodation was referred to in the previous report. There is no area for drama, now that the room has been converted to a technology room.
68. Overall, with the exception of space for physical education, some overcrowding in smaller classrooms, and aspects of the provision for design and technology, accommodation is satisfactory and the site well kept. The site managers and their staff take a pride in their work and their efforts are valued by all members of the school community.
69. Financial control and management are sound. Senior administrators, headteacher and other senior staff are vigilant in monitoring school and departmental expenditure and ensuring best value. The governing body and governors' finance committee receive regular reports of up-to-date expenditure. Administrative staff make good use

of new technology to support the financial systems.

70. The governing body has oversight of strategic spending decisions and whenever possible there has been major expenditure on refurbishment and remodelling areas of the school to improve the learning environment. The school's educational priorities are supported through effective financial planning and there is a match of expenditure to the priorities, although the existing school management plan lacks detail on cost implications. At departmental level the school allocates funds on the basis of departments making detailed bids for what they need to deliver their sections of the curriculum. There is tight control of departmental expenditure and expenditure under other budget headings.
  
71. The principles of best value are well applied by the school. There is regular review of services used by the school. For example, the cleaning contract was recently renegotiated, resulting in a more efficient and cheaper service for which the school has more control. The school's results are regularly compared with those of similar schools. Parents are consulted via the parent evaluator group, which is chaired by a deputy headteacher. The headteacher reviews the delegated budget and assesses cost effectiveness in each area of spending, closely liaising with the Governing Body. Other factors, than just direct comparison are taken into consideration when considering the quality and standards at other schools to ensure a fair and balanced assessment.



## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

72. In order to improve the quality of education and to raise standards further, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

### **(1) Improve pupils' literacy skills further, by:-**

- Improving the co-ordination of literacy across the school,
- Identifying those subject areas where pupils' literacy skills are being strengthened the most effectively and spreading this better practice to other subjects.

*(Paragraphs 7, 9, 35)*

### **(2) Raise the profile of drama in order to strengthen pupils' speaking and listening skills, by:-**

- Building in more time for the teaching of drama, beginning with Years 7 to 9, either as a constituent of English or as part of an expressive arts provision.

*(Paragraphs 7, 32, 83)*

### **(3) Improve the provision for religious education in Years 10 and 11, by:-**

- Increasing the time allocated to teaching it until it is sufficient to do justice to the Local Agreed syllabus.

*(Paragraphs 33, 176)*

### **(4) Improve the arrangements for the study of a second modern foreign language, by:-**

- Allowing sufficient time for its study in Years 8 and 9,
- without substantially penalising the time given to the teaching and learning of the first modern language.

*(Paragraphs 32, 146, 149)*

### **(5) Ensure that all pupils, but particularly higher attaining pupils, are challenged sufficiently in all subject areas by, for example:-**

- Providing them with more open-ended extension work where necessary,
- Requiring more extended writing from them, on more occasions,
- Giving them more opportunities to take responsibility for organising their own work.

*(Paragraphs 6, 80, 95, 120, 12)*

## **PROVISION FOR DEAF AND HEARING IMPAIRED PUPILS**

73. Deaf and hearing-impaired pupils achieve well at both key stages and attain in line with others of their age group. Achievement in the British Sign Language course at the end of Key Stage 4 is particularly good.
74. The pupils have very good relationships with their teachers and with the communication support workers. Very few pupils outside the British Sign Language class are able to communicate freely with signing pupils. However, the attitude of most non-signing pupils is positive towards including deaf and hearing impaired pupils in the full life of the school.
75. Teaching is always good, although sometimes opportunities for providing visual cues are missed, for example, informing the pupils of the objectives of the lesson. New learning and revision are supported by clear signing and the use of visual resources, for example, flash cards. Understanding is checked regularly throughout the lesson ensuring that objectives are met. Signing support for deaf and hearing-impaired pupils is very good.
76. Pupils follow the National Curriculum but may be disapplied from a modern foreign language. They have a high level of support from communication support workers. At Key Stage 4, there is an option for a British Sign Language accredited course which is very successful both with hearing and hearing-impaired pupils.
77. A lunchtime signing club enables all pupils to practise their signing skills. Year 11 pupils without hearing impairment may act as signers for their peers. This helps to overcome communication barriers, allowing pupils to develop meaningful and appropriate social groups.
78. Parents play a vital role in supporting and affirming the work of the department. They are fully involved in the annual review of statement process and receive advice from a range of external agencies including a social worker for the deaf.
79. Pupils with hearing-impairment each have an individual education plan which is reviewed at least at the end of every term. Communication support workers record pupils' progress diligently. Pupils enjoy the best opportunities to succeed in those curriculum areas where teachers use the information from the special educational needs register to plan for pupils' access to the curriculum.
80. The deaf and hearing-impaired provision is led and managed by the learning support co-ordinator who is also a teacher for the deaf. The learning support suite of rooms provides a safe and supportive environment for the pupils. Rooms in this area and in other areas throughout the school are carpeted and curtained to provide good acoustics. The provision gives good value for money.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	122
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	34

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	14	51	32	2	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Y7 to 11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	857	n/a
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	156	n/a

#### Special educational needs

	Y7 to 11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	48	n/a
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	112	n/a

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	18

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	24
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	22

## Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.7
National comparative data	8.1

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.3
National comparative data	1.1

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2001	77	71	148

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	32	43	47
	Girls	54	51	47
	Total	86	94	94
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	58 (37)	64 (61)	64 (52)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	25 (10)	36 (34)	26 (17)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	34 (30)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	12	45	44
	Girls	20	40	43
	Total	32	85	87
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	22 (36)	57 (60)	59 (52)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	4 (12)	26 (31)	33 (21)
	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 (Year11)

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	75	96	171

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	29	69	71
	Girls	46	92	95
	Total	75	161	166
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	44 (39)	94 (92)	97 (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 per pupil	School	35.8
	National	39.0

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

Vocational qualifications	Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	0
	National	n/a

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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	4
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	6
Indian	3
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	839
Any other minority ethnic group	3

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

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	1	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	23	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 - Y11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	50.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.1

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

Total number of education support staff	16.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	400

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

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	78.4
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#### **Average teaching group size: Y7 - Y11**

Key Stage 3	27.4
Key Stage 4	19.2

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000-01
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	£
Total income	2,161,521
Total expenditure	2,345,324
Expenditure per pupil	2,819
Balance brought forward from previous year	80,845
Balance carried forward to next year	-102,958

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

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	4.0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	3.2

Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0.8
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out

857

Number of questionnaires returned

76

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	22	57	14	7	0
My child is making good progress in school.	29	63	8	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	16	53	16	4	12
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	14	54	22	7	3
The teaching is good.	21	66	5	0	8
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	32	43	20	5	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	41	42	13	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	33	4	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	26	43	14	11	5
The school is well led and managed.	22	51	14	1	11
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	29	57	8	1	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	32	41	16	5	7

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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision for English is **satisfactory**.

#### **Strengths.**

- Standards have improved greatly recently.
- Teaching has improved.
- Relationships are good.

#### **Areas for improvement**

- Writing skills are relatively weak.
- The drive to improve literacy across the school needs reinvigorating.
- Provision for drama is weak.
- Some higher attaining and some lower attaining pupils are not progressing as well as they could do.

### **Standards and Achievement**

73. The average attainment of pupils at the age of 14 is below national expectations for English as measured by performances in the 2001 national tests. Pupils enter the school with standards which, on average, are well below national expectations but improve steadily as they progress through Years 7 to 9. The proportion of pupils attaining level five and level six in the 2001 tests is below the national average but significantly improved on the results for 2000. The performance of both boys and girls improved in 2001 but the gap between their relative attainment widened. Girls achieved results close to the average for girls nationally, while boys were below the national boys' average. In science and mathematics, pupils achieved better results than in English. Over a three-year period, boys show a steady rate of improvement, while for girls the difference is more dramatic between 2000 and 2001. Over the same three-year period, although results are below national averages, there is little significant difference in the results of English, science and mathematics. Given the low attainment of pupils on entry to the school, these results point to steady and sustained improvement.
74. Standards reached by the age of 16 are below the national average in English Language. The proportions of pupils gaining grades A\*-C are well below average. Girls achieve significantly better than boys do. At grades A\*-G, results are just above the national average. Standards reached in English Literature are close to the national average at grades A\*-C and above average at grades A\*-G. The girls' results at grades A\*-C are very close to the average for girls nationally. The boys' results are below the average achieved by boys nationally. The results at grades A\*-G show that nearly all pupils are successful in gaining a grade and the boys do particularly well here.
75. Standards of work seen confirm this pattern of steady improvement. In Years 7 to 9, speaking and listening skills are good. Pupils of all levels of attainment speak with confidence in a variety of situations. For example, Year 7 pupils talk confidently about the books they are reading, giving reasons for their choice of book. Pupils in Year 8 ask sensible and searching questions of two pupils who are acting as characters in a



playscript. The pupils 'hot-seating' the characters, in other words, answering questions about the character in role, adapt their speech to the demands and style of each character. In lessons, teachers ensure that pupils have opportunities to speak in discussion and encourage pupils to develop their answers. This valuing of the pupils' contribution increases pupil confidence.

76. Pupils' reading skills are good. In class, pupils read aloud with clarity and confidence and some pupils can give a real sense of character in their reading of a text. Reading is strongly encouraged in English through the book weeks, the book club and the library lessons. The regular analysis of reading ages shows that pupils make significant gains in reading as they move through Years 7 to 9.
77. Pupils' writing skills are weaker than their speaking and listening and reading skills. They are improving because the English department makes this a priority. Higher attaining pupils improve throughout Years 7 to 9. There is growing confidence in the structure of their written work, in the use of a varied vocabulary and in writing for audience and effect. For example, there is some good writing from higher attaining pupils in Year 9 in their work on creating fear and tension. Pupils of average attainment show growing confidence in sentence structure and in the use of paragraphs but their spelling is less secure. Lower attaining pupils make progress but still need support. In Year 7, the booster lessons, which are part of the National Literacy Strategy, are helping these pupils to improve.
78. Given their attainment on entry, all pupils make satisfactory progress in these basic skills. Their writing skills do improve as does the quality and length of their written work. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress because of the quality of teaching in English and the good relationships between pupils and teachers, which leads to a real engagement in learning. The few minority ethnic pupils for whom English is an additional language are fully integrated into the classes. Those very few at a relatively early stage of mastering English are making good progress due to the good support received from both the school and the local education authority.
79. In years 10 and 11, the structured approach to teaching builds well on earlier learning and helps pupils to achieve higher standards. In the work seen, pupils can write at a reasonable length and in various styles. Creative and personal writing is a strength of most pupils. There are examples of good extended writing for a particular effect. Autobiographical writing is another strength. The weakness in pupils' writing is in the non-literary and media assignments, where many pupils have not yet developed this skill sufficiently.

### **Quality of education**

80. Teaching is satisfactory overall and half the lessons seen are good. This is an improvement on the previous inspection. The English staff are a hardworking and committed team who are steadily raising standards in the subject. Teachers know their subject well and have good relationships with pupils. This creates a very positive teaching environment in which pupils can flourish. The basic skills of speaking and listening, reading and writing are all encouraged. Good use of drafting and editing by pupils enables them to improve their written skills. Lessons are well structured and reflect the approach of the national literacy framework. Oral and written evaluations by pupils are often good. For example, pupils in Year 11, revising for their forthcoming GCSE examinations, evaluate the characters in 'Of Mice and Men' very well. There is a limited range of teaching and learning styles at present and insufficient extension

work for higher attaining pupils. As all learning is measured by its results, this means that some higher attaining pupils and some lower attaining pupils are not progressing as well as they could do.

81. Learning is satisfactory overall because the teaching makes sure that pupils learn and improve steadily. Pupils of all levels of attainment do know the texts being studied very well. They can speak about plot and character well. They remember what they have learned in earlier lessons very well and this reflects the way in which English lessons are structured and taught. This emphasis on knowing what had been taught gives all pupils a secure base and teachers build on this to help pupils improve. Pupils enjoy English lessons. They concentrate and work hard in them. This is a particular strength in Years 10 and 11. Marking of pupils' work is careful and conscientious. It helps pupils to improve their work but there is some inconsistency in the approach to marking in Years 7 to 9.

### **Leadership and management**

82. The leadership and management of English are satisfactory. All the strengths mentioned at the previous inspection remain evident. Teaching has improved and standards are rising steadily. The English staff are skilled in engaging all pupils in learning. Planning has improved but is not yet clear enough on the match of content and learning objectives to teaching and learning styles. The National Literacy Strategy is having an effect on the subject but lacks the drive and impetus that it now has in most schools, either in English or across the curriculum. The department had a good approach to literacy, following the criticisms of the previous inspection and used the new Literacy framework to improve this provision. Evidence of this is to be seen in the displays in the department and in the improving writing skills of most pupils. The National Literacy Strategy seeks to promote a specific style of teaching and learning. Some aspects of this are evident in the way teaching is structured but the direct, explicit and interactive teaching styles are not yet embedded in the department's approach. Information and communication technology (ICT) skills are encouraged but the present arrangements for access to the ICT rooms limits development of these skills.
83. Drama is taught through English but this is limited to using role-play and 'hot seating' in order to improve speaking and listening skills. This certainly works but it is not drama. There are no opportunities for pupils to make and craft drama, develop character and situation. The drama entitlement of pupils is, therefore, unsatisfactory.
84. The department has made satisfactory progress since the previous inspection in 1997. Resources are adequate and staff morale is high. Accommodation is spacious and pleasant. The department now faces the challenge of building on what has been achieved to raise standards further. It has the capacity to do so.

## MATHEMATICS

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

### Strengths

- Teaching and learning are good overall, but especially at Key Stage 4.
- Pupils' achievement is good at Key Stage 3.
- Leadership and management are good. There is a shared commitment to raise standards.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are very good.

### Areas for improvement

- The presentation of pupils' work to produce a more useful record of ideas learned.
- Strategies for mental mathematics need sharpening up at Key Stage 4.

### Standards and achievement

85. Pupils enter the school in Year 7 with average levels of attainment in mathematics of below the national average. By the end of Year 9 in 2001, standards had risen to close to the national average for all schools and close to the average for similar schools. There is no significant difference in the results of boys and girls. The performance of pupils in mathematics is similar to that in English and science in 2001. The trend in results since the last inspection is rising significantly faster than the national trend. Achievement by pupils across the key stage is good. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 3.
86. The results of the 2001 GCSE examinations in mathematics are below the national average, slightly further behind than in 2000. There is no significant difference in the results of boys and girls in terms of average GCSE point scores but girls do achieve better A\*-C grades. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily by making satisfactory progress at Key Stage 4 and generally achieve the GCSE grade at least in line with that predicted from their earlier test results.
87. Standards of work seen in Years 7, 8 and 9 are as would be expected from the examination results, in other words, close to national standards. Higher attaining pupils in Year 9 demonstrate a good understanding of the basic techniques of algebra leading to the multiplication of terms and the simplification of expressions. Lower attaining pupils can, with a little prompting, describe an equation relating the number of cubes required to make a cross to the size of the actual cross. The standards of work seen in Years 10 and 11 are better than standards based on the results of the 2001 examination. Higher attaining pupils in Year 11 use scientific calculators well to find the sine, cosine and tangent of acute and obtuse angles and perform the reverse operation. This work is extended further during a voluntary lunchtime revision and extension activity that requires the pupils to draw graphs of these trigonometrical functions to 360 degrees and beyond. This work is defined as exceptional performance in the National Curriculum. Graphical interpretation is also good with lower attaining pupils in Year 11 who are able to draw and use linear graphs to find the time taken to travel a specific distance. Strategies for attempting mental calculations are not as well developed at Key Stage 4 as they are at Key Stage 3. For example, pupils in Year 8 show a good knowledge of multiplication facts and apply them to problems. Pupils in Year 10 and 11 find difficulty in multiplying two-digit numbers. Learning support assistants are used well to enable pupils with special educational needs to match the achievement of other pupils in the class. Pupils for whom English

is an additional language are fully integrated into the classes and achieve as well as their classmates.

### **Quality of Education**

88. Teaching is good overall. A third of lessons were satisfactory, a quarter (all at key stage 4) were very good and none were unsatisfactory. This is an improvement since the last inspection but with teaching at Key Stage 4 noticeably better than at Key Stage 3. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and deliver information clearly, with lessons usually well structured and involving all pupils. A satisfactory range of teaching techniques was observed, including effective use of individual white boards. Sound class management is a feature of all teaching. For example, pupils in Year 10 following an introduction consolidating their understanding of plan and elevation of solid geometrical figures used their white boards to sketch views of objects shown to them by the teacher. The boards provided instant feedback, allowing the teacher to adjust the activity according to the accuracy of the pupils' response. The use of ICT to support teaching has improved since the last inspection but progress in this area could still be improved by better use of available software.
89. Assessment procedures have improved since the last inspection. A database recording pupil progress has been set up and its use has begun to inform teachers of the prior attainment of their pupils. In most cases there is a close match between this prior attainment and the lesson material. The progress of pupils is identified, allowing realistic targets to be set. The grid used to analyse pupils' answers to examination questions produces much very useful information. It shows pupils their weakness in understanding and shows the teacher the areas of the curriculum needing review. The curriculum is broad and balanced with a satisfactory emphasis on mathematical investigations but the development of mental strategies at Key Stage 4 needs to be addressed. The course work provided for GCSE assessment is of a good standard.

### **Leadership and management**

90. The leadership and management of the department are good. Teaching staff are well deployed and there is a shared commitment to improve standards. The staffing structure is now stable following instability of staffing last year. The department has undertaken a thorough curriculum review and produced a satisfactory action plan. Responsibility for each section is devolved to specific members of the department but responsibility is not clearly defined in the plan. The match of work to the needs of pupils of different attainment is satisfactory, enabling all pupils to have full access to the curriculum. Learning support assistants are used well and make a significant contribution to the progress of pupils with special educational needs, but teachers are not using individual education plans to inform change. The staff work well as a team and the standard of teaching is monitored well by the head of department. The mathematics team meet regularly throughout the week. They provide valuable review and extension sessions for Year 11 pupils and spend much time assisting individuals to overcome specific difficulties. The accommodation is satisfactory, with four new rooms in two blocks of two each linked by a small room designated for the use of ICT, and a fifth room in the main school. Resources are satisfactory and are used well. There is an urgent need to provide the additional computers in the ICT rooms attached to the mathematics rooms and to expand the software compatible with these machines. There are a few mathematics books in the library, which are of good quality but little used.

### **SCIENCE**

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

#### **Strengths**

- The overall quality of teaching is good.
- Schemes of work are very good and provide a very effective basis for lesson planning.
- Procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' attainment and progress are very good.
- Leadership of the subject is good.
- There is a strong and shared commitment by staff to raise standards further.
- The provision of booster classes for pupils in Years 9 and 11 is very good.

#### **Areas for improvement**

- Pupils' ICT skills are not well developed in science.
- Higher attaining pupils are not challenged sufficiently with a consistent approach in order to achieve their full potential.
- Pupils are not provided with sufficient opportunities to develop extended writing.
- Systems for sharing good practice in teaching are underdeveloped.

#### **Standards and Achievement**

91. Pupils enter the school in Year 7 with average standards of attainment in science below the national average. By the end of Year 9 in 2001, results in the national tests show that average standards have risen to close to the national average and are above average in comparison with similar schools. There is no difference in the results of boys and girls. Achievement by pupils across the key stage is good.
92. The results of the 2001 GCSE examinations in double award science are broadly in line with the national average. Very few pupils failed to gain a grade, and the results in recent years have shown a steady improvement. Boys and girls performed equally well in the examination. Pupils make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 4 and generally achieve the GCSE grade at least in line with that predicted from their Key Stage 2 result.
93. Standards of work seen reflect this pattern of achievement. Pupils near the end of Key Stage 3 are reaching standards broadly in line with national expectation. For example, pupils in Year 9 understood electrical circuit diagrams and successfully constructed the circuits using appropriate components. Higher attaining pupils in Year 9 have good understanding of the reactivity series of metals and link this well with processes for extracting metals from their oxides. Pupils in Year 10 have sound understanding of the basic structure of the earth and how the movement of tectonic plates has changed the earth's surface over geological time. Higher attaining pupils in Year 11 display good understanding of how light is refracted and how light can be internally reflected in prisms. Coursework investigations are well carried out and results are generally well presented, although occasionally units are omitted from data tables and some inappropriate graphs are drawn. Pupils' ICT skills are not well developed in science as access to an adequate number of computers is limited.
94. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress at both key stages. Year 9 pupils identified key structural features of wind- and insect-pollinated flowers. Pupils with hearing impairment are given particularly good support to ensure that they have full access to the lessons. The few minority ethnic pupils for whom English is an additional language are fully integrated into the classes and make satisfactory

progress.

### **Quality of Education**

95. Teaching overall is good at both key stages. It was at least good in one-half the lessons observed and very good in almost one-third. A very small amount of unsatisfactory teaching was observed in Year 8. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. Teachers have good subject knowledge, are confident in their leadership and plan lessons well to meet the needs of all pupils. Clear learning objectives are identified but not consistently shared with pupils or reviewed at the end of lessons. Questions are well used to assess pupils' knowledge and progress in lessons. Pupils are managed well and lessons proceed at good pace. Teachers generally have high expectations but gifted and talented pupils are not consistently challenged to extend their learning and the amount of written work required of most pupils is often low. The best learning occurs when there is a high level of challenge, pupils are fully involved in the development of the topic and the pace is brisk. For example, Year 9 pupils drew accurate conclusions from their experiments of heating metal oxides with carbon to place carbon in the reactivity series, and then proceeded to construct word and chemical equations for the reactions. Strategies for teaching pupils with special educational needs are effective. Suitably modified tasks are planned and pupils are given good support to achieve sound learning. For example, in their early work on genetics, pupils in Year 11 collected a range of data from fellow pupils to illustrate the variation of personal characteristics.
96. Procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress have improved since the last inspection. All unit tests are referenced to National Curriculum levels and a comprehensive system is in place for recording all assessment data and using it effectively to set targets for pupils and to monitor their progress. Pupils near the end of key stages are given ample support in revision classes to prepare for the national tests and to achieve their set target. The department makes good use of the data to review curriculum planning.

### **Leadership and Management**

97. The department is well led and managed. The departmental handbook is thorough and comprehensive. Curriculum planning is very good and the schemes of work are of a high standard generally, although they lack the integration of ICT skills at present. In the current year, staffing difficulties have had some effect on the progression of pupils' learning in some classes. Monitoring of the work of the department is good but the arrangements for sharing good practice in teaching to raise standards are not yet fully developed. There is a good team spirit and teachers give generously of their time to provide very good support to pupils preparing for the national tests in Years 9 and 11.
98. Accommodation overall is satisfactory. The new laboratories provide very good accommodation, whereas the older ones are in need of redecoration and some refurbishment. The current level of technical support is improved since the last inspection and is now adequate. Pupils' work is used well to produce attractive and informative displays in all the laboratories. The department has its own respected system of reward certificates covering a range of achievements. A weekly science quiz stimulates a high level of response through the school and is very effective in raising the profile of science.

## ART AND DESIGN

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

### Strengths

- Standards are rising.
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Good relationships and teamwork throughout the department.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good.

### Areas for improvement

- There are occasions when pupils using potentially damaging materials do not wear protective clothing.
- Procedures for assessment are thorough but do not provide an accurate picture of pupils' work relative to national standards in Year 9.

## Standards and Achievement

99. Teacher assessments for pupils aged 14 show that a well below average proportion of pupils met or exceeded national expectations in 2001. GCSE results gained by pupils in 2001 were in line with the national average. Girls outperformed the boys by a difference greater than the national average. Every pupil was awarded a pass between A\* and G. This level of success at A\* to G is above the national average. These results are better than those in 2000 and better also than those at the last inspection.
100. Standards in the present Year 9 are close to national expectations. Pupils are given a sketchbook when they arrive in Year 7, for experimentation and investigation. Although the standard of investigation is well above average, there is some lack of sensitivity in the use of line. These early experiments are often forgotten and seldom lead to drawings that capture space or light or texture. Pupils also receive guidance on exploring colour and consider the use of colour to create interpretations of good days and bad days. Standards of investigation into composition are above average. Pupils compare Velazquez's "Portrait of Pope Innocent X" with Francis Bacon's version, highlighting changes in mood between the two. Sketchbooks contain notes and images of artists' work, including Henry Moore and Picasso, downloaded from the Internet but the pupils often lack a personal view of this work. Study of local architecture has led to the innovative, good quality ceramic panels on the exterior of the building. In spite of the teachers' insistence on research and development work there are still occasions when small numbers of pupils, usually boys, feel their sketchbooks are better under the table in their bags, rather than alongside them while they work. Recognising that pupils arrive in school with standards of attainment well below average their achievement by the end of Year 9 is good.
101. Standards by the age of 16 are above average. Research and investigation in sketchbooks is of good quality. Topics such as Cubism have a title page, followed by investigations and an evaluation of the work. Annotation of the work is descriptive rather than evaluative and lacks any personal insight. Higher attaining pupils produce good observational drawings but lower attaining pupils' drawings lack sensitivity. They have more success using charcoal or pastel, to create shape rather than line.

There is good investigation into pattern-making when digital images are reproduced on the photocopier, repeated by inversion and reversal and developed into effective lino prints. The pupils go on to refine their ideas into paintings, prints and sculpture, often making reference to famous artists or contemporary icons such as David Beckham. The quality of the pupils' research and development work, together with their paintings and sculptures represents good achievement. While they recognise the basics of Aboriginal Art and can recognise the differences between modern Aboriginal Art and the original, traditional art, they have little understanding of the spiritual message behind it. They are equally familiar with a vast range of European, Egyptian, Chinese and Japanese Art, but they seldom consider the emotions behind the artists' images.

102. The few minority ethnic pupils for whom English is an additional language are fully integrated into art and design classes. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in art. Potentially difficult pupils settle to their work with enthusiasm. They are proud of their work and pleased to explain how they made it and how they intend to improve it. Those who are gifted and talented do particularly well in GCSE art with well above average numbers gaining the highest GCSE grades A\*.

### **Quality of Education**

103. Teaching and learning in art are very good overall. Lessons seen in Years 7, 8 and 9 were always at least satisfactory, sometimes good, and occasionally excellent. In Years 10 and 11 they were never less than very good and occasionally excellent. High expectations are at the centre of both the pupils' and teachers' work. Pupils are comfortable working with computers and begin to develop their ICT skills from Year 7. In an excellent lesson the teacher's outstanding planning and subject knowledge introduced these youngest pupils to the iGrafx computer programme. His refined methods of presenting his subject allowed good access to the software and some of its many applications. Soon every pupil was able to select an image generated in a home-made, tin-box camera, then mask and fill areas with colours and textures of their choice. Very good use of repetition allowed the whole class to learn. The teacher demonstrated more complex aspects of the software to allow higher attaining, ambitious pupils to make quicker progress. Any pupil, "who discovers a move," in the programme, was asked to teach three others how to do it. The enthusiasm of the pupils and the teacher was infectious.
104. Teachers make good use of words such as stretching, twisting and pulling to make pupils think hard when they are considering ways of carrying their work forwards. Speaking and listening skills are less well developed than is usual and pupils sometimes have difficulty describing their work or discussing other's work. There are occasions when pupils using potentially damaging materials do not wear protective clothing.
105. Teachers have good knowledge of their needs and where appropriate, modify the work accordingly, without any lowering of expectations. Teachers speak to their pupils in a mature, dignified manner, encouraging co-operation. Relationships between teachers and their pupils are good. The pupils recognise their teachers' genuine feel for their subject and respond with sustained concentration and good creative energy. A learning support assistant was seen to provide good support for a profoundly deaf boy.
106. The processes available in the department and the extra time the teachers make themselves available after school allow many opportunities for improvement.



Initiatives such as the annual Sketchbook Prize also stimulate pupils. The department's policy of displaying the work of every pupil in Years 7, 8 and 9 in the public areas of the school, generates respect for the subject. It is a measure of the pupils' attitudes and the department's status that the work remains undamaged.

### **Leadership and Management**

107. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The curriculum co-ordinator was appointed after the last inspection and the changes he introduced have been extremely well supported by the other members of the department. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning and the professional development of teachers have significantly improved the quality of education provided. The technician provides an especially valuable service to pupils and teachers alike and is also responsible for the excellent displays around the school which celebrate so well pupils' work. Links with local industry bring a range of benefits, including work experience placements, improved resources and an annual competition with input from professional designers. Accommodation for art and design is good, except for the kiln room extractor fan requiring attention. Resources for learning are very good and provide opportunities for pupils to work with traditional processes and state-of-the-art ICT. The department has a very good reference library which is used well. The head of department has designed a very useful website providing a showcase for pupils' work, access to resource packs and step-by-step guidance to understanding and using the methods of famous artists.
108. The curriculum in art has improved since the last inspection and is now very good. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 receive more of the timetabled time than is usual, providing ample opportunities to work with a variety of processes in both two and three dimensions. Wherever possible the work is related to the methods of famous artists or the culture of the day. The department arranges visits to the London galleries so that pupils might see at first-hand, the work they refer to in books. There are many opportunities for pupils to work with computers, digital cameras and to manipulate imagery with specialist software. Pupils record their work and store it in an electronic sketchbook. There are moves to raise boys' attainment by tracking their progress and arranging time after school for those identified by teachers, or volunteered by parents, as underachievers. The content of the curriculum has been changed to allow boys more access to "doing" with computers and cameras. The arrangements for removing groups of Year 7 and 8 pupils from their art lessons for four or five weeks to receive ICT tuition makes continuity of learning difficult when they return. Procedures for assessment are thorough but do not provide an accurate picture of pupils' work relative to national standards in Year 9. Although Year 10 and Year 11 pupils have GCSE target grades, they do not have short-term targets. Assessment data is not always used to recognise weaknesses in the curriculum.
109. The department has made very good improvement since the last inspection and is moving forwards with increasing impetus. Standards of attainment have risen steadily since the last inspection and continue to rise. Teaching and learning have improved from satisfactory to very good and pupils make good progress. Planning for progressive learning is now excellent although there are no links with partner primary schools to allow progression from Year 6. Pupils' understanding of the work of a range of art and artists is much improved although there are still occasions when they fail to develop a personal view of the artist's work or have difficulty making connections with their own work. Behaviour has radically improved from poor to good. There is increasing evidence of pupils learning from each other and for themselves. Teamwork is at the centre of the art department and staff and pupils are working together well to succeed.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

### Strengths

- GCSE results are above national standards.
- Teaching is good at both key stages.
- The use of ICT by pupils to support project work is a growing strength.
- Performance data is used well to monitor pupil progress.
- Leadership is good.

### Areas for improvement

- Lack of continuity and progression at Key Stage 3.
- Limited range of materials used in the Key Stage 4 resistant materials course.
- Limited opportunity for pupils to develop design capability.
- Work in systems and control and computer assisted design and manufacture is underdeveloped.

## Standards and Achievement

110. At the end of Key Stage 3, teacher assessment in 2001 showed that pupils were achieving below the national average. Levels of attainment in designing and making skills on entry are low and pupils make good progress in their learning during the key stage. In lessons and work seen during the inspection standards overall are in line with national expectations but the potential of many pupils is not fully realised due to their limited experience of some elements of the subject within the rotational arrangements across years 7-9. Pupils show good understanding of the topics and projects being followed but have limited opportunity to develop or progress year-on-year as some aspects such as food are only covered once in the key stage. Practical skills are being well developed and pupils use the equipment with confidence and competence as well as demonstrating good knowledge of health and safety aspects. Good examples were observed in the preparation of food and the production of working models in resistant materials. Pupils are enthusiastic about their work in graphics and this is enhanced by good access to recently upgraded ICT facilities adjacent to the department.

111. Standards at GCSE were above the national average in 2001 with 54.9 per cent of pupils attaining A\*-C grades, showing a significant improvement since the previous inspection. There has been particular improvement in the last three years in aspects such as food, textiles and resistant materials. Compared with other subjects pupils achieve higher levels in design and technology with girls gaining better results than boys.
112. In lessons and work seen, attainment in Years 10 and 11 is in line with national expectations. Pupils produce well-prepared design folders with a good range of research evidence on which to base their solutions to problems. In food, graphics and textiles this evidence is well used to support the proposed outcomes but in the resistant materials option there is insufficient consideration of alternative materials in the final designs with an undue emphasis on the use of wood and the production of furniture. Given the range of experiences at Key Stage 3, pupils are not developing their ideas sufficiently across aspects such as electronics and control or other product outcomes. The quality of the practical work produced is good and pupils use appropriate constructional methods but their design ideas are insufficiently developed. In all areas there is good use of ICT and the work of pupils with special needs is enhanced by access to a range of resources for the presentation of their work.

### **Quality of Education**

113. Nine of the eleven lessons seen were good and the other two were satisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. In all lessons staff work to well-prepared schemes of work. The lessons seen were all well prepared and proceeded at a good pace. Interest is sustained throughout and good relationships are evident between staff and pupils. Expectations are high and pupils are well supported by staff in their project development. At Key Stage 3 the work is often very focussed on the development of practical skills via prescribed outcomes and gives very limited scope for pupils to develop independence and initiative. Some alternative and more developmental teaching and learning styles are being applied in the graphics and ICT lessons at Key Stage 3 as well as in food technology where pupils can produce more innovative solutions. In addition, gifted and talented pupils attend additional classes to extend their understanding of systems, control and robotics. At Key Stage 4, the teaching arrangements for pupils in Year 11 to receive additional teaching, and support for the completion of coursework is also a particular strength within the subject.

### **Leadership and Management**

114. The department is well led and all staff display good knowledge and skills in their particular specialism. The development of the design and technology curriculum has gained momentum in the past three years with revised schemes of work and an extended range of activities at Key Stage 3. The development of work embracing systems and control and CAD/CAM is underway and some new building is earmarked to provide for this aspect of the subject. Meanwhile good links have been established with the local college of further education to provide Year 11 pupils with CAD/CAM (computer aided design and manufacturing) experience. The organisation of the rotational course at Key Stage 3 is unsatisfactory as it fails to provide adequate continuity and progression across the different aspects of the subject. Assessment procedures are good and there is good monitoring and tracking of teaching and pupils across the year groups. All pupils are also well informed about their progress and their levels of attainment.

115. Since the last inspection there have been significant improvements in attainment, particularly so in the GCSE results. The range of provision in resources has improved and a wider range of options is available at Key Stage 4. The use of ICT as a tool for both teaching and learning is being developed and the school recognises the shortcomings in some of its present facilities. The planned remodelling of one workshop will alleviate the unsatisfactory conditions referred to in the last inspection.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

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

- **Strengths**
- GCSE results are above average and the results of boys have improved.
- Good teaching promotes consistently good learning.
- Extended homework tasks are of a high quality.
  
- **Areas for improvement**
- Pupils have too few opportunities for independent learning in class.
- Too little involvement of pupils in whole class discussion because teachers pose and answer their own questions.
- Classroom assistant support is not always used to best effect.

### **Standards and Achievement**

116. Pupils enter the school with below average standards in Year 7 and by Year 9 the teacher assessments of standards in geography have risen to be nearer the national average. By the end of Year 11 standards are above average.
117. Results in the 2001 GCSE examination were above average. Overall, 71 per cent of the pupils entered for the examination gained A\*-C grades, with girls outperforming boys, although the difference has narrowed over the last three years, with a rising trend from the national average in the last inspection. All pupils who began the course gained a GCSE grade. Geography is one of the strongest GCSE subjects in the school and standards are better than those found in similar schools.
118. Pupils achieve well in Years 7 to 9. From the age of eleven they gain a good knowledge and understanding of geographical concepts and acquire a competent and often high level of geographical skills. Pupils in a Year 7 class, for example, study basic map reading skills and by Year 9, pupils had recorded the daily weather patterns for October. They used this statistical information as a basis for drawing graphs and explained the patterns in writing. Extended homework illustrated their competent use of information and communication technology and of extended writing. However, whilst the work in exercise books and the use of worksheets provide good opportunities for lower attaining pupils to attain higher standards, it also restricts higher attaining pupils from writing at greater length in class. Most pupils are competent in the use of number.
119. Pupils achieve well in Years 10 and 11. In a Year 11 class, for example, pupils demonstrate a clear and detailed knowledge and understanding of river deltas. They consider the problems of flooding in Bangladesh. When given the opportunity, they respond readily to oral questioning and explain clearly the causes and the possible solutions to flooding in Bangladesh.

120. In Years 10 and 11, the work recorded in GCSE exercise books is often of a high standard. Worksheets provide a good basis of geographical knowledge and understanding but too often these tasks are at too low a level. These are insufficiently challenging to extend further the geographical thinking and application of skills for the more able or gifted and talented pupils. Pupils have too few opportunities to extend their knowledge and understanding of geography through individual writing and in the practice of skills during the lesson. However, where they have more time for homework tasks, standards are higher. The quality of GCSE coursework is high and the majority of candidates hypothesise and express their opinions very clearly with a very competent use of desk top publishing. The few minority ethnic pupils are fully integrated into the classes. In Years 7 to 9 and in Years 10 and 11 pupils with special needs read aloud competently and make satisfactory progress, some with additional classroom support.

### **Quality of Education**

121. In lessons seen, two thirds of the teaching was good and one third very good. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. There is a similar pattern for learning. In the better lessons, learning is very effective. The teaching promotes a calm and pleasant environment for learning. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject and add significant detail when explaining new concepts. For example, in a Year 10 lesson, pupils drew a scatter graph to compare the type of housing occupied and the economic status of people in Leicester. Lesson objectives are explained clearly and the thorough planning of tasks reflects the high expectations of the teacher for a quantity of work to be covered. Where pupils are encouraged to recall what they have learned through question and answer techniques they make very good progress. For example, video excerpts promoted much empathy with the poverty of rural migrants on the streets of Mumbai (Bombay). However, in some lessons the teacher poses the questions and then too readily provides the answers before the pupils have sufficient opportunity to contribute meaningfully. Worksheets do not always challenge the higher attaining and gifted and talented pupils to work independently and the short spaces provided on the worksheet limit the opportunities for extended writing in class. Learning support assistants are very helpful towards individual pupils with special educational needs but there are too few opportunities within the lesson for independent learning. With better planning for the support assistant's role in class more pupils should benefit from the support.

### **Leadership and management**

122. The leadership and management of the subject are good and there are positive relationships between the teachers and with the pupils. Schemes of work are being revised to meet the changing demands of the National Curriculum although these would be improved further with references to the availability of resources to match better the needs of individual pupils. Assessment and self-evaluation techniques are well considered and exemplar work is retained for cross moderation. The issues

raised in the last report have been tackled and opportunities for urban fieldwork are now a strength of the department.

123. Standards have risen from average to above average in GCSE examinations following a careful analysis of pupils' results at the age of 11 and 14. GCSE marks in 2000 showed that boys performed significantly less well in coursework than did girls. With the support of continual assessment and revision classes candidates who are borderline grade C/D and other pupils were able to raise their standards in the 2001 examination. These techniques were shared with colleagues to raise overall standards.

## HISTORY

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

### Strengths

- Planning is good and is implemented satisfactorily.
- Pupils' progress is well monitored.
- The department has a clear vision of the subject and enjoys committed leadership.

### Areas for improvement

- Building upon Key Stage 3 success, to improve the GCSE take-up and performance.
- Information technology is not well integrated into the teaching of history.
- Higher attaining pupils are given insufficient opportunity to extend themselves fully.
- Classroom management is not always tight enough to ensure that poor behaviour by some pupils does not impede learning. Nor is it sufficiently monitored.

## Standards and Achievement

124. Average levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 have advanced during the past three years and broadly match national expectations. The rate of progress through Key Stage 3 is good in relation to pupils' attainment on entry to the school, although the rate of improvement is slower for boys than girls.
125. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 ranges from average to below average, as was the case at the time of the previous inspection, but is above predicted performance. Few pupils are reaching the higher levels. Although the department's GCSE results are generally below the national average, the trend, across the range of grades, has been upward for the past six years. In 2000, average results surpassed national performance in the subject and in 2001 A\* grades were awarded for the first time to its candidates.
126. Overall, achievement is satisfactory at both key stages. The few pupils for whom English is an additional language are fully integrated into the classes. In Years 7 to 9 and in Years 10 and 11 pupils with special needs also make satisfactory progress.

## Quality of Education

127. Teaching is mostly satisfactory and one third of it is good, overall. Teachers demonstrate a good knowledge of the subject. All history classes are of mixed attainment. The wide ability range is usually addressed by directing some oral

questions to individuals and by setting written work of progressive difficulty. Such written work is usually offered to all rather than differentiated work being set to pupils according to their level of attainment. Teaching throughout Key Stage 3 is sharply focused on National Curriculum key elements and at Key Stage 4 on GCSE criteria. Most lessons observed followed an identical format: recapitulation; introductory delivery, lasting up to half the lesson, in which the teacher takes the class through source materials, explaining the specific historical background and asking questions. This is followed by written work in response to a work sheet, teacher-led consolidation and extension and the setting of homework at the end. This led to some good teaching, which carefully identified the needs of individual pupils. Links with other subjects and across the history curriculum are clearly made but are rarely fully exploited. Teachers seldom ask supplementary questions in the classroom. Higher attaining pupils are given insufficient opportunity to fully extend themselves. For some lower attaining pupils progress is too slow. Effective strategies for teaching pupils with special needs are in place.

128. Teaching centres upon historical enquiry and interpretations of history. Throughout Key Stage 3 and, as appropriate at Key Stage 4, pupils' competence in these fields is built up securely but more should be done to develop the range and depth of historical knowledge and understanding. Enhancement in this area would assist in raising GCSE performance. Strategies for learning are narrow and over-dependant upon teacher direction and the pupils' memory and powers of concentration. Note taking is not encouraged. The slightest lapse of concentration can therefore threaten pupil progress, given that teacher delivery and explanation are so economically tuned and finely pared, and that textbooks are not as a matter of course supplied for home use.
129. However, some impressive examples of learning were observed. One year 10 girl asked a sequence of questions which took her from a superficial awareness of inflation in the Weimar Republic to an understanding of money as a store of value, of inflation's impact upon savings and of issues surrounding redemption of inflated currency for the new Rentenmark. It was, however, rare for pupils to volunteer answers let alone to pose questions and to so engage with the subject as to be ahead of the teacher. Greater use of facsimiles, artefacts, and other original material should give pupils enthusiasm for the subject and assist in improving take-up of the subject at GCSE. Typically between two thirds and three quarters of pupils have no experience of history at Key Stage 4.

### **Leadership and Management**

130. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory overall. There is a harmonious working atmosphere in the history department. History benefits from the commitment of its teachers and a very hardworking curriculum co-ordinator. Much effort has gone into devising teaching programmes and materials and into evaluating their effectiveness. Teaching is well supported by the meticulous planning of lessons and by regular assessment, recording and reporting of pupil attainment. This data is used to track the progress of individual pupils through both key stages and to set targets, in which pupils collaborate. Greater use can be made of this data to register departmental performance against a range of local and national norms. The department constructs "writing frames". These set written tasks for pupils that explain how higher levels of attainment are to be reached. These are models of clarity. Pupils' work is occasionally unsatisfactory and the quality of marking of pupils' work is variable. Some is marked very thoroughly with careful attention, especially at Key Stage 3, to spelling and sentence construction. Detailed and helpful comments are made but steps could be taken to ensure that such a policy is implemented

throughout the department. Tighter oversight of classroom management would ensure that poor behaviour by some pupils does not impede learning.

131. The relatively small stock of textbooks is adequate for classroom use. The subject benefits from a recent refurbishment of the classrooms, creating a pleasant working environment with adequate display areas. The department enjoys timetabled use of the school's central computer suite and now has its own small computer suite. This will open up opportunities for Internet use and extended personal research, but information technology is by no means well integrated into the teaching of history. However, software written within the school is already being created for use by the department for topics such as the Black Death and Black Peoples of the Americas and to enhance its field trip to York. In addition to York, field trips are made to Styal Mill and the Beth Shalom Holocaust Memorial. The department exploits its links with the local community well, enabling it to offer interesting and stimulating material on the Chesterfield canal and on census returns for Old Whittington. Overall, resources are satisfactory.
132. The department has addressed the previous inspection report thoroughly and although not all the recommendations have been fully implemented, there has, in particular, been substantial progress in the improvement of average levels of attainment by the end of Key Stage 3.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Strengths**

- Computer resources are much improved recently and are well used.
- The use of assessment to inform target-setting for pupils is good at Key Stage 4.
- There is good 'value-added' for lower attaining pupils who take a GCSE course at Key Stage 4.
- Teachers' knowledge and understanding of their subject is good.
- The new leadership has a clear vision of the future of the department.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Room 20 is unsuitable as a teaching area because of its shape.
- Marking of homework is weak.
- The 'CLAIT' Computer Literacy and Information Technology course acts as a 'ceiling' qualification for too many pupils.

## **Standards of achievement**

133. By the end of Key Stage 3, in 2001, the proportion of pupils achieving level 5 or higher was below national expectations. Standards overall at the end of Key Stage 4 are slightly below national expectations. However, all pupils who were entered in ICT for a GCSE or other accredited course in 2001 achieved a grade. Standards for higher-attaining pupils are well below national expectations in 2001, a disappointing result compared with the previous two years.
134. Standards of work seen at Key Stage 3 match the end of key stage assessments in being below national expectations for this age group. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils can carry out a survey and present the results in chart form using a



spreadsheet. All pupils have very good user skills and can search the world wide web, load, save, print and log off independently. However, pupils are seldom able to comment on the significance of ICT in society or to make judgements about the effectiveness of a particular program. For example, when downloading a coat of arms from a website, Year 7 pupils were unable to discuss the advantages of this process over more traditional methods of finding information.

135. Achievement across both key stages is satisfactory overall. At Key Stage 4, some lower attaining pupils achieve much better than expected. All pupils can use a range of general software with a great deal of confidence and skill. Higher attaining pupils demonstrate very good standards of presentation and attention to detail, for example, presenting a spreadsheet using a large font and a background colour. Pupils with special educational needs, in particular, make good progress when they receive clear, targeted support from the teacher. Pupils with English as an additional language achieve in line with others in their groups.

### **Quality of education**

136. The quality of teaching and learning at Key Stage 3 is always at least satisfactory and half the lessons seen were good. Teachers have sound classroom management skills. Teaching and learning at Key Stage 4 ranges from satisfactory to very good. Where teaching is very good, the teacher enables the pupil to make progress in the lesson by setting small achievable targets based on data from the school's system for monitoring pupil targets. This has a significant effect on pupils' achievement. Where teaching is less effective, teachers do not present enough challenge to keen pupils. They rely too much on teaching the technical aspects of ICT and this reduces pupils' opportunities to develop an understanding of the impact of ICT in society.
137. The curriculum at Key Stage 3 enables pupils to benefit from a highly intensive block of ICT for one half-term each year. However, the lack of continuity in this arrangement means that pupils are unable to consolidate their learning from year to year. There is a good range of sensors and subject software in, for example science, but the low number of computers at present limits opportunities for higher attaining pupils to access more challenging material. In design and technology, pupils are encouraged to explore programming and control with a spirit of discovery. Record-keeping is generally good but marking of homework is weak. Statutory requirements across the curriculum are met.

### **Leadership and management**

138. The ICT department is led and managed well by a new co-ordinator who has a clear vision for the future of the department. Strategies for improving provision in resources and in the curriculum have been identified and are already underway. The three networked rooms are well resourced and technical support is good. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Enthusiastic pupils use the network rooms almost constantly outside lesson time and the quality of independent work is good.
139. Computer resources, including a whole school network and technical support, are the most significant improvement since the last inspection. The CLAIT course enables the majority of pupils to gain a qualification in computer skills, but limits the attainment of some pupils at Key Stage 4.

## MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

140. French, German and Spanish are taught. All pupils study one of two languages in Year 7 for 3 hours a week. Sixty pupils study an additional language in Years 8 and 9, each language being taught for an average of 1.5 hours a week. At the age of 14, pupils can choose to study either one or two languages.

Overall, the quality of provision in Modern Foreign Languages is **good**.

### Strengths

- A well-led team of dedicated, expert teachers.
- Many pupils achieving above expectations.
- A well-equipped and well-resourced suite of rooms which set the tone for quality learning.
- Learning is enhanced by the work of the Foreign Language Assistant, support staff and the foreign visits for younger pupils.

### Areas for improvement

- Insufficient time allocation to do justice to the second foreign language at Key Stage 3.
- The use of ICT to promote independent learning is too limited, as yet.

## Standards and achievement

141. Pupils begin their study of a modern language in Year 7 and by the end of Year 9 their average attainment is close to the national average for similar schools. There has been a steady improvement in standards over the last three years.
142. By the age of sixteen, pupils are gaining examination results at the higher grades of A\*-C which are usually below the national averages in French, German and Spanish. The German results are consistently higher than those in Spanish and French. Very few pupils are awarded the very highest grades of A\* and A. Over the full range of grades, A\*-G, however, pupils consistently perform above national averages, with only one pupil failing to be awarded a grade in the last three years. The number of pupils choosing to continue to study two languages in Years 10 and 11 has been decreasing for a number of years and this year only three pupils in Year 11 and one pupil in Year 10 are studying two languages.
143. Achievement at the end of both Year 9 and Year 11 is good. At the end of Year 11 the majority of pupils, regardless of ability and background, are performing in line with expectations and many are performing well above. This is the case in all three languages.
144. Standards of work seen reflect a similar pattern. In Year 7, pupils were able to ask and answer questions about school subjects and to develop a short conversation. In Year 8 they could put together a number of aspects of holiday vocabulary and build quite a long and complex dialogue. Higher attaining pupils in Year 9 were able to understand the partitive article and then use it accurately in conjunction with the verb "aller" plus the infinitive. Pupils are able to cope equally well with both the spoken and written word. Progress is, however, slower in Years 8 and 9 for those pupils studying two foreign languages as the volume of work intensifies. In Year 10, pupils are able to describe people by using adjectives accurately and they use the perfect and immediate future tenses to write and talk about hobbies. In Year 11, the highest attaining pupils produce high quality course work and the lower attaining pupils can build a simple dialogue. The use of ICT is limited.

## **Quality of education**

145. In lessons seen the teaching was always at least satisfactory and two thirds of it was good. Teachers have a good knowledge of their subjects and lessons are based on up-to-date, very detailed schemes of work which have been drawn up since the last inspection. Presentation is always lively and incorporates a variety of activities, including games, which not only keep the pupils' attention but also reinforce learning. The best lessons have a brisk pace and the relationships between teacher and pupils are relaxed. Most lessons seen were challenging and gave pupils maximum opportunity to be active in their own learning. In one lesson a carousel activity was used to ensure that all pupils had an opportunity to use different skills, including ICT. Teachers were skilled in knowing when to use the foreign language and when to use English; consequently the use of the foreign language never became a barrier to learning. Work is marked regularly and teachers indicate what pupils should do to improve further.
146. Pupils learn well because of the good quality of teaching. Although they do not find languages easy, they are interested and are able to produce good quality work either collaboratively or independently. However, pupils studying two languages in Years 8 and 9 learn less well because of the limited amount of time allocated to each language. It is difficult for pupils to retain information at the times when they are only studying a language for one hour a week and the subject becomes less enjoyable because of the increased intensity of the workload.
147. The work of the Foreign Language Assistant, support staff and the foreign visits for the younger pupils, enhance learning.

## **Leadership and management**

148. The good teaching and the achievements of the pupils result from the good leadership and management of the department. The Curriculum Co-ordinator, supported by an assistant, leads well a team of five full-time staff and a Foreign Language Assistant. Each of the staff teaches at least two languages, helps with the co-ordination of the work in the separate languages and is a dedicated teacher. No single language is dominant and all staff are valued for their contribution to the team. The suite of rooms used for Modern Languages has a positive impact on learning, setting a quality tone for every lesson. The use of display both in the classrooms and the adjacent corridors is excellent. Departmental policies and schemes of work are pupil-centred, and a well-developed system for pupils to assess their own progress and work towards new targets has been put in place since the last inspection.
149. The time allocated for the study of Modern Languages is good in Years 7, 10 and 11 and has a positive impact on standards. In Years 8 and 9, however, the reduced time allocation for those studying two languages has an adverse effect on learning.
150. Since the last inspection, improvements have been made in the detail of the schemes of work, the use of display, the quality of resources and equipment and the way in which pupils are involved in their own assessment. Higher attaining pupils can now work more easily at their own level because of the grouping by attainment arrangements in Years 8 and 9 and because of the good use of materials aimed at pupils of differing levels of attainment. However, there is still insufficient time to do justice to the second language.

## **MUSIC**

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

**Strengths:**

- The teaching is good.
- Computers are well used at both key stages.
- The response of pupils to music and the popularity of the subject as an option at Key Stage 4.
- The emphasis the department places on practical work.
- Consideration of the music of other cultures.
- Very good environment and equipment.
- The ethos of inclusion.

**Areas for improvement:**

- Work designed to help pupils of differing attainment, particularly pupils of higher attainment.
- Pupil attainment in appraisal and composition.
- The range of instrumental teaching is limited.

**Standards and achievement**

151. Attainment on entry to the school is below average in music. By end of Year 9, pupils' attainment rises to just below the national average. Progress is good. The standards achieved by pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 are often average in performing. Aural appraisal and composing are sometimes below average. In Year 7 lessons pupils are able to manipulate rhythms with some precision but sometimes find ensemble work difficult. Computer work is used to good effect, for example in a Year 9 lesson on musicals where pupils were able to use computers to aid song composition. At the end of Key Stage 3, pupils are able to use electronic keyboards and percussion instruments with some competence, for both performance and for composition. The department places regular emphasis on technical terms and this helps to improve pupils' understanding and attainment in aural appraisal.
152. In 2001, 48 per cent of GCSE candidates, that is 18 out of 37, gained grades A\* to C, below the comparable national averages. However, the 18 candidates who achieved A\* - C grades represent a higher than average number of candidates achieving upper grades in music than found in many schools. Candidates' achievement in music was broadly in line with their attainment in other subjects and they did as well as expected. The 2001 results improved on the examination results in Music for 2000 when 33 per cent of candidates gained grades A\*-C. The number of pupils taking GCSE music examinations is often much higher than average. The department has a policy of welcoming all pupils who express interest in the subject at Key Stage 4, irrespective of previous musical attainment. At the end of Key Stage 4 attainment is often near average in performing, but below average in appraising music. The achievement in aural and appraisal work of pupils at Key Stage 4 is helped by the emphasis that the department's teaching places on key words and technical terms. Continued emphasis is needed to help pupils to develop a suitable technical vocabulary in extended writing with which to describe the music they hear. On the whole boys do slightly better than girls in music. This may be because many tasks are open-ended and lack formal structure. Pupils' compositions display competence in work derived mainly from their own interests and expertise. Coursework in composition sometimes uses limited harmonic vocabulary and occasionally lacks the use of

developmental devices. Computers are well used at Key Stage 4 for performance linked to composition. Pupils have many opportunities to develop individual enthusiasms and support composition with their own instrumental skills. This leads to good progress across the key stage for most pupils.

153. Progress and development for pupils with special educational needs is good at both key stages. When work is designed especially to cater for pupils of differing levels of attainment and pupils with special educational needs are given additional classroom support, progress is good. Pupils with English as an additional language play a full part in the life of the school and achieve in line with their peers. Gifted-and-talented pupils, however, do not always enjoy work in class specifically designed to present a challenge to their capabilities.

### **Quality of education**

154. In lessons seen teaching is almost always at least good, one third was very good. None was unsatisfactory. There are many elements of good practice, for example, the emphasis on practical music making and the use of computers. Teacher knowledge and expertise are good. Work is matched to most pupils' levels of attainment and teaching helps many pupils to expand and consolidate their learning. Computer work is well used at Key Stage 3 and staff computer expertise is good. Lesson planning is good. Teaching embodies energy, enthusiasm, good logistic organisation and delivers suitable work. The balance in work is usually good. In general, the work of pupils is routinely assessed and records of marks are kept. This has a good effect on target setting and student progress. There is teacher awareness of examination performance across the components of performing, composing and appraising at GCSE. The department undertakes some informal analysis of GCSE results.
155. Teaching ensures that pupils have opportunities to explore both their own culture and non-western cultures, for example in the effective use of African instruments in a Year 8 lesson. Such work helps broaden understanding of other cultures. Good teaching and resources ensure that pupils make good progress across Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. Pupils have opportunities to develop many necessary musical skills.
156. Visiting instrumental teachers make a small but very worthwhile contribution to the curriculum and their work is managed and integrated into the work of the department. There are four visiting teachers and therefore the range of instruments offered is limited. The number of pupils who take extra instrumental tuition is below average. However, instrumental teaching is of sound quality.

157. Pupils' attitudes in music lessons are usually at least satisfactory and often good. Their response to teacher-directed tasks is often attentive, with appropriate levels of interest and co-operation. Pupils often work co-operatively individually and in small groups. They clearly enjoy keyboard work and listen attentively to each other's contributions.

### **Leadership and management**

158. The leadership and management of the department are good. The department is well organised with many appropriate administrative processes in place. Schemes of work are suitable and the work offered to pupils meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Leadership of the department has a good effect on performance and on pupils' enthusiasm for the subject. Management of the environment is good and the accommodation is spacious and suitable for all musical activities.
159. Extra-curricular activity in music is open to all and there are opportunities throughout the year for pupils to perform. The performing and composing work of pupils is celebrated in regular school musical events. Such opportunities for performance have a strong impact on the cultural and social development of pupils; they also foster important links with parents and the community. The department is eager to promote opportunities for pupil involvement in dance and drama, which are under-represented in the curriculum.
160. Since the last report progress has been satisfactory overall, and good in relation to some aspects mentioned previously. There has been progress in a number of areas: the improvement of performing skills and good use of vocal work, the breadth of cultural experience offered to pupils and an improvement in pupil concentration in music lessons.

### **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

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

#### **Strengths**

- GCSE results have improved significantly, and pupils attain results that are above the national average.
- Pupils' good attitudes lead to good learning in lessons.
- Extra-curricular sport provides very good opportunities for all pupils, especially the gifted and talented, to excel.

#### **Areas for improvement**

- Health and safety risk assessments in physical activities have not yet been completed.
- There is not enough monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching to ensure the very best practice.
- Indoor accommodation for the subject is inadequate.

## Standards and Achievement

161. Pupils enter the school in Year 7 with attainment in physical education below the levels expected for pupils of the same age nationally. By the end of Year 9, in 2001, teachers' assessments indicated that standards of attainment match the levels expected nationally. This is confirmed by the work seen during the inspection, and represents a good level of achievement in Years 7 to 9.
162. GCSE examination results in 2001 are above the national average, and well above the results of previous years. All the pupils who entered the examination gained a grade. Boys outperform girls in this examination, and boys also do better in physical education than in most other subjects that they study. Overall, pupils' results in the subject are similar to those they achieve in most other subjects. This represents a good level of achievement for pupils following the GCSE course in Years 10 and 11.
163. By the end of Year 9, the standards of work seen indicate that most pupils of all levels of attainment are competent in a range of games skills, with a minority achieving at a higher level. Boys and girls achieve equally well, and make good progress in acquiring the knowledge, skills and understanding to equip them to play team games. In hockey, for example, lower attaining pupils show sufficient control of the ball to apply their skills, successfully, in small-sided games. Boys achieve particularly well in football, and girls in netball. The performance of higher attaining pupils in this age range is well illustrated by the Year 9 netball team which was runner-up in the Chesterfield Schools' Netball Championships and the Year 8 football team which won the Chesterfield and North East Derbyshire Schools' League during the week of the inspection.
164. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are well integrated into the physical education programme and make good progress alongside their peers. The majority of pupils have a sound understanding of the effects of exercise on the body. They know how to warm up correctly before lessons, and a few can do this independently. Year 9 girls show a good sense of rhythm and co-ordination in their first step-aerobics lesson, and sustain a brisk pace of activity. Although there are some opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in lessons this is not yet a strength in their learning. Pupils do not often use the technical language of the subject or discuss their work. Pupils' skills in planning and performing develop satisfactorily in most lessons, but there are few opportunities for pupils to develop evaluation skills, and it is rare for them to observe, analyse and comment on performance against specific criteria. These skills are underdeveloped.
165. In the work seen during the inspection, the standards pupils attain by the end of Year 11 in the core physical education curriculum match the levels expected nationally. These represent a satisfactory level of achievement. Standards in table tennis are average, but attainment in volleyball is below average. This is because the pupils have not yet mastered the basic skills of the game, and also because the indoor accommodation is unsatisfactory for volleyball. Improvement continues in the major team games, and higher attaining pupils demonstrate their knowledge, skill and understanding of rules and tactics, to good effect, by winning the girls' Under 16 Chesterfield Schools' Hockey Championships and the boys' Year 10 and Year 11 Chesterfield and District Schools' Football Leagues. Standards are above average in the GCSE course. Written coursework reflects a range of knowledge and understanding of theoretical aspects that matches last year's GCSE results. This was well illustrated by Year 10 pupils, who showed a good knowledge of the

respiratory system in response to probing questioning. Standards in GCSE basketball are above average. Boys and girls demonstrate good dribbling technique, and play at speed, effectively, in the game.

166. High standards are achieved in extra-curricular sport, and an extensive programme offers very good opportunities for all pupils, particularly the gifted and talented, to excel. School teams and individual pupils regularly gain representative honours at district, county and occasionally, national level. The school is justifiably proud of last year's athletics and cross-country running teams which achieved many successes at the Chesterfield Schools' Athletics Championships and beyond, including the 400 metre hurdles National Champion.

### **Quality of Education**

167. In lessons seen the quality of teaching and learning was never less than satisfactory and most of it was good, occasionally very good. The teachers' management of pupils and class organisation is very good. This, combined with very good relationships between staff and pupils, contributes significantly to the high levels of participation, good standards of dress and good behaviour of pupils in lessons. Pupils enjoy physical education, are well motivated and have good attitudes to the subject, reflected in the good physical effort they put into their work, and their support for extra-curricular activities. Teachers have a secure knowledge of their subject, plan the physical content of lessons well and maintain a brisk pace of activity. This is well illustrated in games lessons, where well-designed, progressive tasks enable pupils of all levels of attainment to build on previous learning and improve their skills through practice. The good teaching of physical skills in Years 7 to 9, through a strong teacher-led approach, does not provide the same quality of cognitive learning. For example, teachers' planning for the evaluation and improving performance strand of the National Curriculum is insufficient, and pupils' skills in this aspect are underdeveloped. Similarly, much more could be done to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Tasks are not matched to all pupils' levels of attainment, and high attaining pupils are insufficiently challenged on occasions. In too many lessons, a limited range of teaching strategies is used. Insufficient use is made of questioning, for example, and pupils would benefit from more opportunities to consolidate their learning. Opportunities for pupils to take a share of responsibility for their own learning, and gain a measure of independence, also require further development.
168. In the best lessons, pupils are challenged intellectually as well as physically, and skilful questioning probes pupils' knowledge and understanding and makes them think, exemplified in a Year 8 football lesson where pupils made very good progress. Likewise in a GCSE basketball lesson, pupils focused on decision-making in the game, and searching questions enabled them to evaluate their own and others' play, effectively. Marking of GCSE coursework is regular, encouraging and thorough. Pupils' files are well monitored, and they are given good advice on how to improve their work. Appropriate attention is given to the use of information and communication technology.
169. Assessment procedures have improved since the last inspection, a sound system based on the new levels of attainment is in place, and appropriate records of pupils' progress are kept. A database recording pupils' progress in the GCSE course is already being used effectively to inform course planning.

### **Leadership and Management**



170. Leadership and management of physical education are satisfactory. Good, enthusiastic leadership, and a committed, hard-working staff team, create a strong departmental ethos with an expectation of high standards in all respects. At lunchtimes and after school, there is an excited 'buzz' in the physical education area, as the extra-curricular programme gets underway. Pupils value the opportunities to represent their school, and take pride in their successes. The day-to-day organisation and management of the department is good. However, the head of department has a heavy workload and has to balance an extensive extra-curricular commitment with other management responsibilities in the department.
171. There are important aspects of management that are areas for improvement. Schemes of work are outdated and do not yet incorporate the requirements of Curriculum 2000, and other new developments. In their present form, the schemes are less than satisfactory as a basis for effective lesson planning. The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching has not succeeded in addressing the issues concerning teaching and learning, raised in the previous inspection report. The indoor accommodation is inadequate for the development of games, such as badminton, basketball and volleyball, and it has a negative effect on standards and progress in Years 10 and 11. Health and safety risk assessments in physical activities have not yet been completed.
172. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. Standards of attainment in Years 7 to 9 and the core curriculum in Years 10 and 11 have been maintained. GCSE results have improved significantly, through a strong team approach to improving teaching materials, the use of assessment data and monitoring pupils' progress. The quality of teaching is similar to that in the previous inspection.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision for religious education is **satisfactory** at Key Stage 3 but **unsatisfactory** for the majority of pupils at Key Stage 4.

### Strengths

- The very small GCSE groups are well taught.
- The few lessons in the religious education component of the personal, social and health education programme are also well taught.
- Effective use of a programme of extended homeworks.
- Good marking and good modification of work to suit pupils of different levels of attainment.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge.

### Areas for improvement

- The vast majority of pupils in Years 10 and 11 do not receive a full entitlement to RE by establishing reasonable time to cover legal requirements.
- ICT facilities need updating and access to them needs improving.

## Standards and achievement

173. Standards on entry to the school are below average. Pupils have limited knowledge and teachers have to build a platform of understanding quickly. By the end of the Years 7 to 9 (Key Stage 3) a good curriculum and the teaching brings them up to just below average standards. The subject places good emphasis on literacy, helping

pupils by key words on topics and how to organise their writing effectively. Sometimes pupils are given good opportunities to talk and develop their ideas well in lessons.

174. By the end of Year 9, pupils have developed a sound knowledge of the key features of Christianity and major aspects of other world religions including Judaism, Islam and Buddhism. They know the basic terminology of religious language, for example on festivals in Islam such as Ramadan, and the features of places of worship such as mosques. They know about the purposes and the procedures of fasting and appreciate the different requirements for adult men and women, young people, the elderly and those who are pregnant. Pupils in Year 7 are clear about the people who were Christ's disciples and know that Peter was important and a former fisherman. Gradually across years 7 to 9 pupils learn the biblical stories about the life of Christ well so that they can order events in the life of Jesus of Nazareth, his birth, baptism, public ministry and teaching. They examine the way Christian belief influences the thinking of Christians and has a great impact on the way they live their lives. Some pupils show very limited responses and do not understand, for example when considering forgiveness, that people are not 'stupid' if they forgive but are released to start again. From their previous work scrutinised, pupils show that they study Buddhism at a suitable level. They understand the eight fold path as well as the impact of beliefs on behaviour and some of the similarities and differences between moral codes in different religions. Achievement across the key stage is satisfactory, the development of ICT skills is satisfactory but pupils have lost some ground as they have had limited access to computers and none within lessons in the usual teaching rooms.
175. Pupils with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily across the Years 7 to 11 and because of good planning progress at a similar rate to other pupils in their age group. Pupils for whom English is an additional language also make satisfactory progress.
176. The major weaknesses in standards are in the years from 14 to 16 (Key Stage 4). The very short time available, six hours in Year 10 and four hours in Year 11 for the majority of pupils make it impossible for pupils to make solid progress. They cannot build on their knowledge of other faith heritages or consider deeper ethical questions as they mature. Providing continuity of teaching is difficult as teachers try, in a very short time, to establish secure and deep relationships in which serious questions can be posed. After an introductory session, for example, considering the precept to 'do unto others as you wish they would do to you' the class moves to explore good and evil and attitudes to ageism. There are sessions which deal with abortion, crime and punishment and finally two sessions on medical ethics. This completes the only experience of religious education for all pupils other than those taking GCSE. Inevitably the overall experience is incoherent and fragmented and cannot develop pupils' religious and spiritual understanding sufficiently.

177. For the very small number of pupils who take the subject to GCSE level, standards are about average in the lessons seen and in the written work scrutinised. Pupils achieve well in relation to their previous attainment. Although the numbers are too small to make valid comparisons with national statistics, individual monitoring shows that pupils do very well in relation to the other subjects they take. Almost all achieve a grade higher than that predicted by their entry scores on national commercial tests at the age of eleven. Pupils show they can tackle difficult questions, for example in discriminating between the stages in the development of an embryo. They consider when life is said to start, the sanctity of life and questions about abortion, life, death and the impact of scientific advance such as the research on cloned animals. In other lessons pupils look at prejudice and far reaching questions about the leadership of women in the church. Orally these pupils show good competence. They argue well and respectfully wait to hear the other side of the argument before they respond effectively. Learning to support and defend a general viewpoint which they do not hold personally develops tolerance. When considering Christianity and the impact on women in first century Judaism, pupils distinguish carefully between sexist attitudes in Britain now, and the strictures of Paul in the first century culture when women were not educated and 'gossiped in church'.

### **Quality of Education**

178. Teaching is satisfactory in three fifths of lessons from 11 -14, good in a fifth and unsatisfactory in a fifth. In the years 14-16, three quarters of the teaching is good and a quarter very good. A key feature of the approach to teaching at all stages is the commitment of teachers in helping pupils to think critically. In the years 7-9, teachers give clear introductions and direct their questioning well to involve all pupils. A good variety of tasks develops new learning and consolidates it well; for example, in a Year 8 lesson on Ramadan and Eid a video presentation, word searches and worksheets at different levels. Very good question and answer sessions allow pupils to speculate widely and have their confidence increased. Some good group work was seen in Years 10 and 11 but this is not prominent in Years 7, 8 and 9 due in part to constraints of space. The pace of some, still satisfactory, lessons is slowed by the unsatisfactory behaviour of some pupils, especially in Year 8 who try to draw attention to themselves constantly and frustrate other members of the class who want to get on. The crowded nature of the room means that such unsatisfactory behaviour has a bigger impact on the majority than would otherwise be the case.
179. A variety of worksheets predominates but they are closely matched to the needs of pupils of different attainment for each lesson. When available, the learning support assistants make a valuable contribution to progress, for example by working with small groups who find it very hard to focus and concentrate. The task sheets often require short answers, but some questions allow more open-ended responses and do not constrain the answers of higher attaining pupils. A programme of extended homework is a strength of the subject. It allows pupils to write longer and deeper pieces, research topics, use exercises to reflect, for example on what it means to forgive and how it feels to forgive an offender.
180. In Years 7 to 9, a very detailed scheme of work provides good support for teaching. These curricular plans carry through into well-planned and well-prepared lessons to ensure consistent and coherent learning. Year 11 pupils revising for GCSE in an interesting and confidence building fashion are assisted to re-work their previous knowledge and understanding and build up revision portfolios. They receive some very good advice on constructing and practising examination techniques. They are shown how to distinguish carefully between comprehension and higher order

evaluation skills and reminded to state and support their viewpoints by proper argument. Year 10 pupils were well taught as they approached a new topic on war and peace checking biblical references with varying confidence from the Old and New Testaments. The teaching of pupils on the general course is good but the extent is too limited to stimulate progress. Day to day marking is sensitive, thorough, perceptive, and encouraging with detailed comment helping pupils to know how to improve. Work is assessed carefully at the end of each module and pupils and parents are clear about the progress being made and the new targets to be tackled. Reflective and self-aware teachers monitor the teaching of the subject both through observation of lessons and through careful, dated, evaluations of their planning and resources so that they are very clear about what is making the best impact.

### **Leadership and Management**

181. Although the leadership and management of the subject are good the current head of subject works for only seventy per cent of the week and is currently succeeding because of the immense amount of time and skilled planning and development which has been put in previously. Vigilance is needed to ensure that management is not over-stretched, particularly with the introduction of the new Local Agreed syllabus from September 2002. The support of the head of humanities is appreciated. Good support is being given to the only other subject specialist, a newly qualified teacher who is able to meet weekly with the senior specialist to co-ordinate work.
182. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal development. Study of questions of life and death, prayer and worship, peace and justice are fundamental to the curriculum. Opportunities for reflection and considerations of the response of the human spirit in terrible adversity, exemplified in the lives of people such as Oscar Romero, enhance the provision for pupils' spiritual development. Pupils are made clear about right and wrong in various religions and ancient and recent cultures. They are given the opportunities to consider the difficulties of making decisions in acute moral dilemmas such as whether to have a child conceived by in-vitro fertilisation principally to benefit another individual genetically.
183. A variety of ways of working as individuals and in small groups helps pupils socially. The good visits programme enables pupils to look at the way religious communities interact in modern societies and contribute to them. A very good contribution is made to pupils' cultural development through the study of world religions and the cultures in which they evolved.
184. Satisfactory improvement has been made overall since the last inspection. The restricted curriculum for most pupils in Years 10 and 11 has not improved and the unsatisfactory management of the subject component within PSHE is unchanged. However, teaching has improved at Key Stage 4. Assessment has improved and pupils' progress is carefully monitored. A very good scheme of work is now complete and planned in detail.