

INSPECTION REPORT

NEWBRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL

Coalville

LEA area: Leicestershire

Unique reference number: 120293

Headteacher: Mrs. Pat Young

Reporting inspector: Mark Woodward
11049

Dates of inspection: February 5 – 9 2001

Inspection number: 800548
Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Middle Deemed Secondary

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11 to 14 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Forest Road
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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Roger Cairns

Date of previous inspection: 22 April 1996

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(Ofsted No. 11049)	Mark Woodward	Registered inspector		What sort of school is it? How high are the standards? The school's results and achievements.
(Ofsted No. 9306)	Barbara Moore	Lay inspector		How high are the standards? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
(Ofsted No. 8216)	Geoffrey Binks	Team inspector	English Special Educational Needs Equal Opportunities	
(Ofsted No. 15186)	Jeffrey Hardman	Team inspector	Design Technology Information Technology	
(Ofsted No. 17868)	Eileen Metcalfe	Team inspector	Art	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
(Ofsted No. 20729)	James Berry	Team inspector	Science	
(Ofsted No. 13003)	Mark Gill	Team inspector	Physical education	
(Ofsted No. 28101)	Andrew Lagden	Team inspector	History	
(Ofsted No. 17404)	Judith Tolley	Team inspector	Modern Foreign Languages English as an additional language	
(Ofsted No. 12183)	Paul Ingram	Team inspector	Mathematics	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Newbridge High School is a smaller than average middle deemed secondary school, serving around 492 pupils aged 11-14. Girls slightly outnumber boys. The school is situated in a former coal mining area which is one of the most disadvantaged in the county. Around 11% of pupils are eligible for free school meals and 1.6% have English as an additional language which is a little higher than in most schools. 23% of the pupils are on the register for pupils with special educational needs, which is above the national average, and 7% of pupils have statements of special educational needs which is well above the national average. The standards achieved by the pupils on entry to the school are average in relation to national standards.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Pupils achieve well while at the school as a result of good teaching and the care that they are shown by the staff. The very effective leadership of the headteacher has resulted in an improved management structure where middle managers take more responsibility for the development of their areas. This has improved the quality of monitoring and planning. Pupils enjoy coming to the school and it offers good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve well in English, science, design and technology, information and communication technology, art and music. ('Achievement' represents the progress that pupils make from one key stage to the next).
- The quality of teaching is good in English, science, history, music and religious education. It is very good in design and technology, art and in the citizenship, careers and health education programme.
- The school is very well led by the headteacher who receives good support from governors and senior staff.
- Relationships are very good and good behaviour and attendance are promoted very well.
- Pupils' personal development is promoted well through the citizenship, careers and health education programme.
- Good links are forged with outside agencies which enhance the learning opportunities and care offered to the pupils.
- Assessment and progress monitoring in food technology are models of good practice.
- The school works hard to develop close links with parents.

What could be improved

- The achievement of pupils in physical education and the quality of teaching in this subject.
- The amount of curriculum time, the time allocation for humanities and the curriculum for performing arts, modern foreign languages and pupils involved in the pavilion project.
- The management of physical education and modern foreign languages.
- The accommodation, in particular for physical education, modern foreign languages, religious education, geography and drama.
- The organisation of information and communication technology classes to match the availability of resources and the use of some design and technology resources.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in April 1996. Since then it has made good progress with most of the key issues for improvement having been tackled effectively: the caring ethos has been maintained; the grouping of pupils has been improved; middle managers take increasing responsibility for their teams' performance; teachers use information and communication technology more confidently; the development plan is a more strategic document although it still needs improving; and classroom support is deployed more effectively although there remain occasions when support staff are under-used. Standards are similar to those reported at the time of the last inspection and the quality of teaching remains good with some improvement in the teaching of pupils with higher levels of attainment. A good

example of the positive direction in which the school is moving can be seen in information and communication technology where the curriculum and teaching quality have been improved substantially as have the quantity and quality of resources. This is the result of very good work by the head of department and the support given by senior management and the governors. The school has worked hard to improve the opportunities open to all the pupils through initiatives such as the pavilion project.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 14 year olds based on National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3.

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

Taking into account the full range of pupils' work and National Curriculum test results, standards are average in relation to national standards by the time the pupils leave the school. Overall they achieve well and this is because: the quality of teaching is mostly good; pupils are supported well by the pastoral system; and a positive learning culture is developing under the leadership of the headteacher. Compared with standards that they achieve on entry to the school, pupils' achievement at the end of Key Stage 3 is: good in English, science, design and technology, information and communication technology, art and music; satisfactory in mathematics, modern foreign languages, history, geography and religious education; and unsatisfactory in physical education. Most pupils with special educational needs achieve well in lessons. Higher attaining pupils also make good progress, which represents an improvement since the last inspection.

Over the past 3 years, pupils achieved National Curriculum test results that were slightly above the national average for all three subjects (English, mathematics and science), combined; results in science were highest during this period, English and mathematics results being similar. Pupils' achievement is higher in English than mathematics because pupils arrive at the school with weaker skills in English than in mathematics. Girls tend to achieve higher results in English compared with girls and boys nationally, while boys tend to achieve higher results in science. The results of girls and boys in mathematics are broadly similar to those achieved by girls and boys nationally. The school failed to meet the targets that it set for itself in 2000 in English, mathematics and science. This was largely due to the underperformance of a minority of pupils who had unsatisfactory attendance and negative attitudes to learning.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have positive attitudes to school. The majority are keen to learn and respond well to good teaching.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils generally behave well. A small minority show challenging behaviour that initiatives such as the pavilion project are having success in tackling.

Personal development and relationships	Relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are very good. Their personal skills develop well.
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Attendance	Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.
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The school gives pupils very good opportunities to enhance their personal development; for example through the well-planned and high status courses in citizenship, health education and careers. Staff care for the pupils well and have very good relationships with them; this also has a positive impact on the development of pupils' social skills.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

In the 104 lessons seen, the quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in 94%, good or better in 62% and very good or better in 24%. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection.

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 is good overall. It is: very good in design and technology, art and the citizenship, careers and health education programme; good in English, science, history, music and religious education; satisfactory in mathematics, information and communication technology, modern foreign languages and geography; and unsatisfactory in physical education. The teaching of literacy is good and the teaching of numeracy satisfactory. A range of training and planning has taken place to enhance the teaching of literacy and its impact can be seen in most subjects, while a whole school approach to the teaching of numeracy has yet to be adopted.

The good teaching helps pupils to learn well. The great majority of pupils are keen to learn but this is considerably due to teachers presenting lessons to them in interesting ways. When teaching is not varied and well planned, pupils' attitudes to learning are much weaker and they make less progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school offers pupils some very good curriculum opportunities, but overall the breadth and balance of the curriculum is unsatisfactory because pupils' opportunities for studying some subjects after leaving are adversely affected by weaknesses in the curriculum, particularly in Year 9.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Pupils achieve well in the learning support classes and when supported in mainstream classes but the links between the regular curriculum and the curriculum for pupils withdrawn from mainstream lessons are not strong enough.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school has one pupil who is at an early stage of language development and he receives some support from the local education authority. All other pupils with English as an additional language are sufficiently fluent to take full advantage of the curriculum.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	This is a strength of the school and it ties in with the school's very good pastoral work. Particularly impressive is the citizenship, careers and health education programme.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for the pupils well and works hard to ensure that they can all learn in a safe and secure environment.

Citizenship, careers and health education are very well planned and taught. Also, community workers and volunteers, together with local education authority services, make a strong contribution to pupils' learning opportunities. In contrast, the combined arts course is unsuccessful, pupils can only learn 1 modern foreign language and the time allocation for the humanities is too low. Given the weaknesses in the curriculum the relatively low teaching time compared with other schools is also a weakness. The school has very effective procedures for monitoring and improving behaviour and attendance. It does a great deal to improve links with parents and it works hard to encourage parents to be involved with their children's education.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is very well led by the headteacher who is ably supported by a capable senior management team.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil their responsibilities very well. They are well led and have a good idea of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is an area that is improving and it is now good as a result of measures introduced by the headteacher. Some middle managers fulfil their roles well, while others have yet to monitor performance effectively.
The strategic use of resources	The resources available to the school are used satisfactorily.

The school has made good progress since the last inspection and has reorganised its management structure effectively. The match of teachers to the curriculum is satisfactory despite some teachers taking subjects for which they are not qualified. Although they have sufficient expertise to teach the classes that they have been assigned, the quality of teaching that they can offer is at a lower level of performance than that shown by the teaching staff as a whole. The school has adequate resources except for the current numbers of pupils in information and communication technology lessons. The accommodation is unsatisfactory as it has an adverse impact on learning in a number of subjects.

Statutory requirements are met except for the way that some aspects of health and safety audits are conducted and the provision of a daily act of collective worship for all the pupils. The school has effective measures to obtain best financial value, which include making comparisons with the spending of other schools and obtaining several quotations for goods and services.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils enjoy school • The quality of teaching is good • Pupils are expected to work hard • The school is approachable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The behaviour of the pupils • The quantity of homework • The information provided about pupils' progress

Inspectors agree that: the pupils enjoy school; it is approachable; the quality of teaching is good and pupils are generally expected to work hard. Inspectors disagreed with parents about their criticisms of pupils' behaviour. A small minority of pupils show challenging behaviour but the school has good procedures in place to manage this; the majority of pupils behave well. Homework is used satisfactorily and the school works hard to inform parents about pupils' progress.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Taking into account the full range of pupils' work and National Curriculum test results, standards are average in relation to national standards by the time the pupils leave the school. Overall they achieve well and this is because: the quality of teaching is mostly good; pupils are supported well by the pastoral system; and a positive learning culture is developing following the leadership of the headteacher.
2. Taking into account National Curriculum test results and the quality of work shown by pupils in lessons and their books, standards, compared with national standards at the end of Key Stage 3 are: high in science, design and technology, information and communication technology and art; average in English, mathematics, modern foreign languages, history, geography, music and religious education; and low in physical education.
3. Compared with standards that they achieve on entry to the school, pupils' achievement at the end of Key Stage 3 is: good in English, science, design and technology, information and communication technology, art and music; satisfactory in mathematics, modern foreign languages, history, geography and religious education; and unsatisfactory in physical education.
4. The good quality of teaching is the principal reason for pupils' good levels of achievement in English, science, art and music. In design and technology, the teaching is very good and the curriculum is very well organised, which enables pupils to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills progressively. Assessment practices in design and technology are excellent and this helps pupils to make good progress because they always know how well they are performing and what they need to do to improve. The progress of pupils in information and communication technology varies according to teacher expertise. The head of department teaches with great skill and as a result, pupils make very good progress; pupils make satisfactory progress when taught by non-specialist teachers.
5. Pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory in physical education because expectations of their behaviour and potential levels of performance are too low.
6. The standards achieved by pupils are broadly average in relation to national standards when they enter the school; this is shown by their results in the National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Key Stage 2 over the past 5 years and other nationally recognised tests.
7. Over the past 3 years, pupils achieved National Curriculum test results that were above the national average for all three subjects (English, mathematics and science), combined. Results in science were highest during this period, English and mathematics results being similar. Achievement is higher in English than mathematics because pupils arrive at the school with weaker skills in English than in mathematics. Girls tend to achieve higher results in English compared with girls and boys nationally, while boys tend to achieve higher results in science. The results of girls and boys in mathematics are broadly similar to those achieved by girls and boys nationally.
8. Analyses of pupils' National Curriculum test results on entry and their results in the end of Key Stage 3 National Curriculum tests indicate some inconsistencies between years. Between the two sets of tests, higher attaining pupils made most progress by the time they left the school in 2000, while lower and middle attaining pupils made most progress by the time they left the school in the 1999. The school missed the targets it set for itself in 2000 in English, mathematics and science. This was largely due to the underperformance of a minority of pupils who had unsatisfactory attendance and negative attitudes to learning. In setting up stronger support structures, such as the pavilion project, the school is attempting to tackle these issues.
9. Teacher assessments of pupils' levels of achievement in the other National Curriculum subjects at the end of Key Stage 3 vary in accuracy. Due to the excellent assessment procedures in design

and technology they are very accurate and high. In modern foreign languages they are over-generous and this misleads pupils about their real levels of attainment.

10. Most pupils with special educational needs achieve well in lessons. Learning is generally good for pupils with special educational needs in English, mathematics and science. In English and science this is due to skilful class teaching, with some supporting help from a teacher or a support assistant. In mathematics it is the skilled and well-prepared group-support teaching which helps pupils with special educational needs to achieve successfully. Often pupils with special educational needs achieve better than the rest of the class. Pupils with special educational needs achieve particularly well in practical and creative subjects such as art, design technology, and music. The learning and progress of pupils in French and religious education lessons is satisfactory although the acquisition of new language is not high in French lessons.
11. Lesson observations show that pupils achieve well when they attend learning support classes after they are withdrawn from mainstream teaching. For example, 4 very low attainers withdrawn from modern foreign languages in Year 7 receive 1 lesson of 'intensive' French and the remainder of the time is devoted to literacy and mathematics. In one lesson, very good progress was made in learning about the properties of shapes and of how to measure and to calculate the perimeter of a rectangle. Pupils achieve well in the very small groups and individual tuition sessions that form the basis of the pavilion project. This is good, but the achievement is not necessarily linked to the work being covered in the mainstream class from which they have been withdrawn. This means that when they return to that class they have difficulty in catching up with the work that has been covered by the other pupils.
12. Higher attaining pupils also make good progress in most subjects, which represents an improvement since the last inspection. The proportions of pupils gaining National Curriculum levels 7 and 8 in the tests at the end of Key Stage 3 are rising; they were particularly high in mathematics in 2000. Higher attaining pupils do not make as much progress as they could in modern foreign languages and religious education.
13. The head of English has produced a valuable working document of guidelines for the development of literacy across the whole school. This has been introduced through whole school training and through departmental meetings. There is evidence throughout the school of subject departments identifying and displaying key words upon which to focus learning. Most departments encourage accurate writing and emphasise the need for accurate spelling and punctuation. Library lessons within the English curriculum in Years 7 and 8 provide regular opportunities for silent reading; this well-established practice is supported by teachers who hear pupils read on a rota basis within the lessons. Most pupils in Year 7, and a number in Years 8 and 9, have school library books on loan, taken mainly from the recently improved fiction stock. Two reading clubs operate weekly at lunchtimes within the English department; these provide encouragement to readers who are able to choose from a collection of new fiction within a congenial and comfortable environment. One club is voluntary for Year 7 pupils but the other one 'invites' pupils who are thought to need continuing reading practise to attend. Some tutors, particularly those who are English teachers, allow time for personal reading during registration and tutorial time.
14. Provision for the development of numeracy in the school is satisfactory. Several subjects contribute to and use number skills, but there is no co-ordination of this due to the lack of a school numeracy policy. The school has plans to produce its policy later this term as part of its development programme. Mathematics does have a policy, which acknowledges changes in teaching methods in its partner primary schools, and all mathematics lessons start with activities related to number. In geography, observations from field studies are recorded and displayed in graphs. Grid references are used to find the positions of places on Ordnance Survey maps. Pupils count numbers in French and interpret charts and diagrams. In physical education, pupils measure accurately in metric units and record information on body flexibility. Teachers in design and technology emphasise the importance of accurate measurements. In art, pupils learn to scale up diagrams and to make patterns when materials are reversed. In information and communication technology, links are made with the formulae in science and mathematics in using spreadsheets. In science, a wide range of measurements of weight, temperature, time and angles when light is reflected are taken and recorded. Pupils calculate average values of readings and plot graphs, which best fit the readings.

15. Standards in information and communication technology are high compared with standards achieved by pupils nationally. They develop a broad range of skill through the specialist lessons in Year 7 and the topics covered by other subjects in Years 8 and 9. For example, pupils in Year 8 confidently used spreadsheets in a citizenship lesson to create and analyse data, and to present the information in the form of graphs. Also in Year 8, pupils in a geography lesson successfully used web searches to find out information on the Indian earthquake. The success of pupils in information and communication technology is considerably due to the high quality management of the head of department.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

16. Pupils develop good attitudes to their learning during their time in school. Overall their behaviour in classrooms is good; however, there are some pupils who do not respond well despite the school's best efforts. The school uses the assertive discipline policy effectively to ensure continuity of learning for those pupils who are keen to learn. Some parents are critical of pupils' behaviour but the great majority of pupils behave well.
17. Almost all pupils show an interest in their work and most are happy to discuss their achievements with visitors. They take pride in their successes and those of their fellow pupils. After a very good performance of pupils during an assembly others were observed offering congratulations and praise. The attitudes and behaviour of most pupils with statements of special needs are generally positive. In lessons where teaching is well organised, most pupils with learning difficulties have developed good working relationships with teachers and friendships within the group.
18. The school's approach to discipline is used consistently by the majority of staff and in most instances has a very positive effect. The school permanently excluded 2 pupils last year and issued 26 fixed term exclusions. These are average levels of exclusion compared with similar schools, but the school is working hard to lower them further through initiatives such as the pavilion project. Pupils who have difficulties of self-control or who may be near to exclusion from school for reasons of inappropriate behaviour, are taken into this withdrawal centre on a regular or occasional basis to receive guidance or counselling. Sometimes this is combined with individual learning and skills programmes but overall, the curriculum for these pupils is not planned well enough.
19. The school places strong emphasis on pupils' understanding of the impact of their actions on others and, on the whole, pupils respond well. Special assemblies and school briefings have a strong moral content and encourage pupils to respect the feelings and beliefs of others.
20. Staff know and understand pupils well and relationships are very good. The very good team work between year tutors and heads of year offers strong support to pupils who speak openly of their appreciation.
21. Pupils readily accept opportunities to take responsibility throughout the school. There is a very successful school council comprising representatives from each tutor group. The council discuss and make recommendation on a variety of issues relating to the school such as improvements to the one-way system, avoiding litter on the site and they work democratically to a set agenda. Representatives report to their peers during the following day's tutor period and minutes of meetings are posted on the notice board.
22. Levels of attendance and punctuality are satisfactory overall, however, during the week of inspection the numbers in some groups dropped below acceptable levels.
23. There is good community involvement with staff who support the aims of the school. This co-operation between teachers and other agencies enables staff to successfully raise pupils' self-esteem. The school has clear strategies in place to deal with bullying, and every effort is taken to support pupils experiencing any difficulties.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

24. In the 104 lessons seen, the quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in 94%, good or better in 62% and very good or better in 24%. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection.
25. The quality of teaching is good overall, as parents indicated in their responses on the questionnaires. It is: very good in design and technology, art and the citizenship, careers and health education programme; good in English, science, history, music and religious education; satisfactory in mathematics, information and communication technology, modern foreign languages and geography; and unsatisfactory in physical education.
26. The good teaching helps pupils to learn well. The great majority of pupils are keen to learn but this is considerably due to teachers presenting lessons to them in interesting ways. Parents are pleased with the way that their children are expected to work hard. When teaching is not varied and well-planned, pupils' attitudes to learning are much weaker and they make less progress.
27. Over the past two years a number of subjects, including English, mathematics and science, have been affected by the loss of, or absence of, teaching staff. These difficulties have been compounded by problems in recruiting high calibre full time or temporary teachers and the progress of pupils in some classes has therefore been adversely affected. These problems are largely out of the school's control due to the national shortage of teachers and the reluctance of some teachers to apply for a job in a school that does not offer experience in the teaching of GCSE or A level courses.
28. In design and technology the teaching is very good because teachers are knowledgeable, plan very well and have very strong presentational skills. Some of the teaching observed was inspirational and it duly inspired the pupils to produce high quality work. The food technology teacher is also responsible for developing and co-ordinating the careers and citizenship education programme in which the same rigorous and enterprising planning can be seen. The staff recruited to teach this programme are highly motivated and as a result of both factors, pupils learn very well.
29. The quality of teaching in art is very good because teachers give very good demonstrations and present topics in interesting ways. They involve the pupils in discussions and encourage them to be creative and imaginative. This results in the pupils gaining confidence in their ability to use what they have learnt to create individualistic and skilled work.
30. In physical education, pupils are not challenged to produce their best work. As a result, while teaching in individual lessons is satisfactory, pupils make insufficient progress over time and standards decline relatively from Year 7 to Year 9. Inappropriate behaviour by some pupils is ignored and this creates an atmosphere in which they do not feel that they have to work hard and achieve well.
31. Owing to the limited flexibility of staffing in a school of this size and type, many teachers teach subjects for which they do not have qualifications. This teaching was observed to be satisfactory overall; however, the quality of teaching across the whole school is good and therefore the non-specialist teaching is less effective than the specialist teaching and this reduces pupils' progress. A good example of this is information and communication technology where very high quality teaching is offered by the head of department compared with satisfactory teaching by the non-specialist teachers. Pupils make considerably more progress in the lessons led by the head of department.
32. Parents suggested that the quantity of homework was unsatisfactory. This was not found to be the case during the inspection.
33. In the last inspection it was observed that teachers did not share the purposes of lessons with the pupils effectively. This is no longer the case in most lessons. The needs of pupils with higher levels of attainment were also judged not to be met effectively. Good work has also been done in this area and in most subjects, pupils with higher levels of attainment make as much progress as other pupils. In French they make unsatisfactory progress because tasks are not sufficiently challenging. This is also the case as a result of some of the work set in religious education.

34. Most pupils with special educational needs are taught successfully within teaching groups that reflect the levels of attainment of the pupils. Most pupils are taught well in English, mathematics and science. In English, for example, Year 9 pupils receive clear, direct guidance and support from a very experienced specialist English teacher and make good progress in discussing and analysing poems. In science, one teacher who specialises in teaching the lower attaining pupils, including those on the register of special needs, has very good relationships with pupils and teaches them effectively. Often the teacher used prompt sheets targeted at pupils of differing levels of ability and made sure that an appropriate writing frame was available for those who needed guidance. In some of the science lessons observed, the teaching support was generally helpful but there was no evidence of joint lesson planning with the teacher to maximise the gains for individually targeted pupils. In mathematics lessons the quality of support teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teaching is well planned in advance with the class teacher and in lessons observed in Years 8 and 9, it is executed very effectively. In one mathematics lesson observed in Year 8, where pupils' general behaviour was unsatisfactory, the good quality of the support teaching allowed the pupils with special educational needs to make good progress.
35. Pupils with special educational needs receive good teaching in most other subjects. Teaching is particularly effective in art, design and technology and in some music lessons. It is satisfactory in religious education and modern foreign languages. The quality of the support teaching and assistance, however, varies considerably. Teaching of a high standard was seen in small groups in learning support and very good, well-planned support was observed in mathematics. In some cases, however, the assistance offered was not well focused, nor was it sufficiently well planned to bring benefits to the targeted pupils. In some practical lessons, support assistance is available but this is not always required to support pupils' learning. In some design and technology and art lessons seen, for example, the support assistance was superfluous. The school would benefit from a thorough review of the use of special needs support in the classroom. Not all the assistants are fully confident about their roles.

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

36. The curriculum is satisfactory overall, but within that judgement there are a range of strengths and weaknesses. Particular strengths include the provision for personal, social and health education, the careers programme, the development of the information and communication technology curriculum since the last inspection, and the contribution of outside agencies and the community to pupils' learning. The key weaknesses are the combined arts course in Year 9, the lower than average curriculum time, the lack of a second modern foreign language, low curriculum time in the humanities in Year 9 and curriculum planning for the pupils involved in the pavilion project. Although statutory requirements are met, the weaknesses identified make the breadth, balance and relevance of the curriculum unsatisfactory. It is also the view of the inspection team that the 11-14 status of the school is restrictive on its being able to run a balanced curriculum and to prepare the pupils most effectively for GCSE courses.
37. The school has responded successfully to the weaknesses identified in the last inspection report, particularly in its use of information and communication technology as a resource across the whole curriculum. The school has also responded to aspects of mixed ability teaching through which more able pupils were judged to be disadvantaged. On entry to the school pupils are arranged in two half-year groups. They are now taught for the most part in groups that are set according to their levels of attainment.
38. A very well-planned programme of personal, social and health education which receives a generous amount of curriculum and tutor time is a strong feature of the school. It covers all the relevant aspects of health education including sex and drugs education in very good depth which provides pupils with very good opportunities to prepare for life in the upper schools and at work. Careers and citizenship are also included in this programme of work and planning for these aspects is excellent. The school is a pioneer in careers education and has achieved "Career Mark" for the excellence of its work in this area. Teams of teachers with specific interests and

expertise teach different elements of the personal, social and health education programme and the quality of teaching is very good. Teachers demand high standards from the pupils which means that the programme has a high status. All pupils have progress files in which they record and evaluate their own learning. They are able to gain a nationally accredited qualification through this course and can continue and get a full GCSE equivalent qualification at the upper school.

39. Outside agencies and the community make a very good contribution to pupils' learning; for example, the youth tutor and community development worker are very supportive of the pupils, governors regularly help in the classroom and a range of personnel from the local education authority work run programmes such as the anger management course.
40. The combined arts course is unsatisfactory. It does not enable pupils to develop skills in any depth and does not prepare them for making positive choices about arts courses in the upper school. Similarly the lack of opportunity to study a 2nd language adversely affects the chances of pupils to successfully achieve 2 language GCSEs in the upper school. A small number of pupils are withdrawn from French for literacy and have only 1 lesson per week in instead of 3 and so the variety of their experiences is limited. The time given to history and geography is relatively low and as a result there is insufficient time to complete the work required by the National Curriculum. The provision for information and communication technology is very good, but the teaching groups are too large for the number of computers. This means that pupils spend half of lesson times not actively using the machines. Given the problems that the school has in offering a balanced curriculum, it is inappropriate for teaching time to be below recommended levels.
41. No formal disapplications are made from the National Curriculum for pupils with special educational needs although there are some minor adjustments to take small numbers of pupils into learning support lessons from mainstream classes. Pupils achieve well when they attend learning support classes.
42. Some pupils are directed to the pavilion project when they are thought to be in danger of failing to cope with a mainstream subject or becoming disruptive within the classroom. This is a helpful strategy to support pupils who have emotional or behavioural difficulties; however, when removed from lessons there are no strategies to ensure that they keep up to date with the work that they have missed; for example, two boys were seen in the pavilion having been withdrawn from geography and history to work on an English writing activity. This could have been done through the geography or history topic had the teacher in the pavilion been aware of it. When the pupils return to the classes that they have been withdrawn from, the good work done in the pavilion is then compromised by the pupils becoming frustrated.
43. The curriculum builds effectively on links with the seven major primary schools from which it draws pupils. There is a very good series of links involving pupils, parents and teachers that makes the passage-way from primary schools as easy as possible. The school does not yet receive all the pupils' results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2 which means that the organisation of pupils into teaching groups when they arrive is not based on all the available information about the standards that they have achieved. There is a familiarisation day in the summer term for Year 9 pupils to go the upper school. There are good links with the special needs co-ordinators in the other schools.
44. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, though there is no policy for its promotion. The school does not yet meet the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship; this was a point for action in the last inspection report.
45. The provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. The school has addressed the issue of spiritual development and subject areas have indicated how they can give more emphasis to the spiritual elements within subjects but this is not fully developed. There are very good opportunities for pupils to reflect on spiritual matters in some assemblies; in two assemblies there was very good consideration and exploration of the Christian virtue of forgiveness. There is good provision for spiritual development in religious education and in art pupils consider the spiritual elements which are of the essence in Aboriginal art. In English, spiritual aspects are studied in poetry and the study of Macbeth in Year 9 involves a wide exploration of spiritual, moral, social and cultural elements.

46. The provision for moral and social development is very good and is well supported by the personal, social and health education programme. The moral and social aspects are fully integrated. Pupils are made aware of the moral and social aspects in considering their own lives. These are also given emphasis in the assertive discipline policy where pupils gain a clear understanding of right and wrong in decision making and where they learn how their actions have consequences for others. The behaviour of pupils in physical education deteriorates from Year 7 to Year 9 because teachers do not set clear enough expectations of behaviour. Moral aspects are considered in history, for example, in relation to slavery.
47. Social skills are promoted in almost all lessons where pupils have to share with others and treat the ideas of others with respect. There is an activities week for all pupils to ensure that they broaden their social and cultural experiences. Pupils visit France and Italy and there is a residential trip to North Yorkshire where pupils have a self-catering experience. There is a charity event organised by a year group each term. This helps pupils to understand poverty and situations in the third world. This also helps pupils to form a social awareness and to learn of social and cultural differences. The reading club with its good stock of books and inviting atmosphere extends pupils' reading and thus their cultural development. In geography pupils study the development of different cultures. In religious education pupils study the major world faiths and their associated cultures. In French the cultural aspect is an integral part of the subject. Overall, provision for cultural development is good
48. The provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. There are very good opportunities for pupils to use the computers at lunchtime and after school to support their studies. Most subjects have lunchtime clubs. Pupils are involved in the UK mathematics challenge. Extra-curricular sport is satisfactory. There is no extra-curricular music at present.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

49. This area of its work is a strength of the school. Staff know the pupils and their families well and this enables very good relationships to develop. This understanding of pupils' needs contributes to the good personal development and guidance that teachers provide. Pupils also benefit from the care shown by other staff such as the counsellor and school nurse.
50. The procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are good. Policies are clear and staff are aware of the procedures to be followed. The school has good procedures in place for ensuring the care of pupils. However, the school must address the procedures for risk assessment, which currently do not fulfil statutory regulations.
51. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good; the school along with the education welfare officer work hard to keep attendance at levels that are satisfactory in comparison with other schools nationally. The school puts a great deal of effort into the monitoring and promoting of good behaviour and the elimination of oppressive behaviour; these procedures are very effective. A small minority of the pupils show challenging behaviour which is managed well. Pupils know and understand what is expected of them and staff are diligent in their support of all pupils.
52. Procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development and their academic progress are good. There are many instances showing the thoroughness of the support the school gives to personal development through tutor time, assemblies and in particular through the very strong citizenship, careers and health education programme. The very effective support provided by staff makes a positive contribution to the well-being of pupils and enables them to take full advantage of the many opportunities offered.
53. The school has effective procedures in place to gather assessment data. Information regarding pupils' progress is collected from primary schools although the school has yet to acquire all the results of the National Curriculum tests that pupils take at the end of Key Stage 2. The school also tests pupils on entry and on the basis of all the assessment information places them in teaching groups (in most subjects) according to their levels of attainment. The school analyses

results in relation to pupils' predicted performance. This information is passed on to departments and their progress is monitored regularly. Pupils' reading is tested on a regular basis. Profiles of pupils' progress are kept and pupils themselves are fully involved in this process; they are encouraged to evaluate their own performance and set targets in regular meetings with their tutors. Pupils value this process, see it as important; they are aware of the National Curriculum levels that they are working at and know how they can improve. Some parents were critical of the school's reporting of pupils' progress but inspectors disagreed.

54. Assessment information is used effectively by the majority of departments to track pupils' progress through the National Curriculum levels of attainment. Pupils are assessed at the end of units of work. In food technology, assessment practices are excellent; the information is used very effectively to guide teachers in providing challenging tasks, which ensure that all pupils achieve their potential. This is not the case in all subject areas; for example, in physical education and French, information gained through assessment is not used sufficiently effectively to help teachers meet the needs of pupils of differing ability, particularly in mixed ability teaching groups. This means that higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged and lower attaining pupils do not always receive enough support.
55. The school monitors the progress of all pupils with special educational needs satisfactorily. In almost all subjects, teachers have contributed to the setting of learning targets for pupils at Stage 2 of the register and above by adding a subject specific learning target to the general targets agreed between the co-ordinator for pupils with special education needs and the pupils. Pupils with statements of special educational needs and others who are withdrawn for learning support lessons are monitored more closely. For these pupils there is a more precise identification of learning needs, more detailed learning targets to be pursued and a more thorough evaluation of progress.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

56. Parents attending the pre-inspection meeting gave a positive view of the school. The 83 parents who returned questionnaires indicated that their children enjoyed school. They also said that the school was approachable, that their children benefited from good teaching and that the school expected their children to work hard and achieve well. Parents expressed some concern about pupils' behaviour, the quantity of homework and the information given to parents about pupils' progress. Inspectors agreed that: the pupils enjoy school; it is approachable; the quality of teaching is good and that pupils are generally expected to work hard. Inspectors disagreed about parents' criticisms of behaviour. A small minority of pupils show challenging behaviour but the school has good procedures in place to manage this; the majority of pupils behave well. Homework is used satisfactorily and the school works hard to inform parents about pupils' progress.
57. The school does a great deal to improve links with parents and it works hard to encourage parents to be involved with their children's education. The impact of parental involvement on pupils' learning is satisfactory overall. Homework diaries, which have to be signed weekly, ensure parents know what is happening in the curriculum and the school has ensured that the great majority of parents have signed and returned the home school agreement.
58. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept informed about the setting of targets and the school complies fully with all the legislation in respect of transition and annual review procedures.
59. Information for parents supplied by the school is very good. Along with annual reports, new progress files are being used as a means to further involve parents and to keep them informed on their children's progress. Parents also have the opportunity to attend meetings about their son or daughters' progress; the school is always willing to make alternative arrangements for those who find it difficult to attend. Newsletters and other documentation sent home are of a very high quality and these provide a valuable link between school and home. Invariably the letters have a very pleasant tone; they are informative and provide parents with good information about the daily life of the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

60. The headteacher leads the school very well. She has a good grasp of its strengths and weaknesses and skilfully works alongside governors, managers, teaching and non-teaching staff to take it forward. Particular successes since she arrived at the school include the improvement of the procedures for monitoring pupils' progress and the re-shaping of senior management roles. The headteacher enjoys the confidence of governors, staff and pupils.
61. The governing body has made good progress since the last inspection in improving their contribution to the school's development and in monitoring its work more effectively. Governors are knowledgeable about the school's strengths and weaknesses and have an effective committee structure that enables their work to be carried out efficiently. Many have visited the school to observe teaching and learning taking place and some pupil tracking exercises have taken place, for example, in monitoring the experience of more able pupils. The chair of governors supports the headteacher very well, meeting her at least weekly to discuss strategic issues and he leads the governing body well. His knowledge about education matters is an asset, while governors from other walks of life bring insights into the way that other businesses manage their work.
62. Governors ensure that the National Curriculum is fully covered and all other statutory requirements are met except for the way that some aspects of health and safety audits are conducted and the provision of a daily act of collective worship for all the pupils.
63. The aims of the school are clearly seen in its work. While the headline aim is concise, there are too many objectives and this means that they are not readily recalled.
64. School development planning has improved since the last inspection. It now expresses its key priorities well on the opening page and appropriately links departmental plans to whole school priorities. Some of the issues raised by this inspection are not included, for example, the raising of standards in physical education and curricular issues such as the combined arts course in Year 9. While some of the key priorities have not been identified, the school has positively worked towards the whole school targets that are in the plan. Department development plans are variable in quality. Most lack clarity in identifying the key issues that would help to raise standards; for example, the modern foreign languages plan only identifies one target which is the job of adapting schemes of work to meet the new National Curriculum requirements, a task facing all subjects in all schools.
65. The school has made good progress since the last inspection with most of the key issues for improvement having been tackled effectively: the caring ethos has been maintained; the grouping of pupils has been improved; middle managers take increasing responsibility for their teams' performance; teachers use information and communication technology more confidently; the development plan is a more strategic document although it still needs improving; and classroom support is deployed more effectively although there remain occasions when support staff are under-used. Standards are similar to those reported at the time of the last inspection and the quality of teaching remains good with some improvement in the teaching of pupils with higher levels of attainment. The school has worked hard to improve the opportunities open to all the pupils through initiatives such as the pavilion project and anger management courses for pupils with behavioural difficulties.
66. The senior management of the school has been skilfully reorganised. Owing to a problem recruiting a mathematician, one of the deputy headteachers has agreed to take on the vital role of leading this department and this has led to a re-shaping of the senior management team. The registrar, already capably managing the school's finances, is now managing the maintenance and development of the buildings as well. This is a good move because it gives the remaining senior staff more time to support the work of teachers in the classroom. The registrar also now has management responsibilities for all the non-teaching staff, which has improved the school's quality control and personnel support structures. The deputy headteacher is a very skillful teacher who is also an effective manager.

67. The development of middle management roles has been an appropriate focus for the headteacher and as a result, heads of departments are monitoring the quality of the work in their areas more effectively than at the time of the last inspection. They and the senior management team are developing practices, which conform to statutory performance management arrangements. English, science, design and technology, information and communication technology and art are the subjects led most effectively. In English, for example, all the issues identified by the last inspection have been tackled and the use of information and communication technology is now a strength. The co-ordinator for information and communication technology has established a clear vision for the future of the subject and has developed a strong curriculum in which assessment and monitoring structures are integrated well. This is a major achievement. Pastoral teams are managed well, year heads working effectively to ensure that pupils are well supported by themselves and their teams of tutors.
68. The management of modern foreign languages and physical education is unsatisfactory. In modern foreign languages, some issues raised by the last inspection have not been addressed, teachers' knowledge of the National Curriculum is insecure and the monitoring of teaching lacks rigour. The management of physical education is unsatisfactory because planning is weak, there are no policies in place for some important areas such as the assessment of the pupils, teaching quality is not monitored effectively and insufficient professional support has been given to colleagues.
69. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is organised well and supported effectively by the governing body. Statutory requirements are met and there is good liaison with outside agencies such as the psychological service and primary and upper schools. Individual education plans are of good quality but the progress of pupils is not recorded with sufficient detail. As reported by the last inspection, some of the classroom support is used inefficiently.
70. The day-to-day administration of the school is very good. Staff are effective, efficient and capable of taking appropriate decisions without always referring to senior managers. They are led well by the registrar.
71. Though not part of the inspection brief to comment on the local education authority's organisation of schools, the inspection team feel that a critique has to be offered because of its impact on the educational opportunities of the pupils at Newbridge.
- Owing to the money allocated to the school given the ages of the pupils that it serves and the need to cover all the National Curriculum subjects, many teachers teach subjects for which they are not qualified. Overall, the quality of this teaching was satisfactory, but that represents a lower quality of teaching than seen in the school as a whole.
 - The curriculum is organised to fit staffing restrictions rather than optimally to promote learning; this again is an impact of the funding available to a school serving pupils of these ages. The effect of this is most noticeable in the extent to which the school can organise teaching groups according to pupils' levels of attainment and can balance the teaching time available to each subject through the 3 years.
 - By not having GCSE or A level syllabi to consider, some teachers are not as up to date with curriculum developments as teachers in secondary schools that serve pupils up to the ages of 16 or 18. The impact of this can be seen in some of the schemes of work at Newbridge, for example, in geography, modern foreign languages and religious education, and as a result the pupils are not as well prepared as they could be for examination work in the upper schools.
 - Pupils are limited in their opportunity to make informed choices about which GCSE subjects to take because they are not fully aware of the courses on offer at the upper schools and who will be teaching them. A large proportion of staff time has to be spent liaising with junior and upper schools about curriculum and pastoral issues relative to the time that pupils are in the school.
 - The school has difficulty in recruiting teaching staff partly due to it not being able to offer examination teaching experience and partly because of the limited promotion opportunities; for

example, one of the school's most skilful teachers and managers has recently gained another teaching post at a lower level of status in order to enhance his long-term career prospects.

72. The way that the school handles financial matters has improved significantly since the last inspection and all the issues raised have been addressed. The school development plan has been structured to provide strategies for the evaluation of spending against success criteria. It also gives the estimated financial requirements for the achievement of objectives. However, in some areas these are more qualitative than quantitative which limits their effectiveness as tools for projecting the money remaining available. Long-term planning is not sufficiently clear or detailed but work has been done to examine the opportunities for developments to the buildings and to generate income projections linked to possible numbers of pupils.
73. The appointment of the registrar, who is a member of the senior management team and meets the head every week to review the financial situation, and the establishment of a finance committee of the governing body, which meets regularly, have greatly strengthened financial management. Pathways are now well established for the two-way traffic of information between governors, the headteacher, the registrar and budget holders. This has resulted in the establishment of good systems of monitoring and evaluation; however, there are areas where middle management needs additional guidance to produce crisply focused development plans.
74. Administration arrangements for the monitoring and day-to-day control of budget issues in the school are sound. The recent auditors' report in September 2000 found that the schools' financial management was good. It outlined a number of small areas, which needed attention: all these have been, or are, in the process of being actioned. The school has effective measures to obtain best financial value, which include making comparisons with the spending of other schools and obtaining several quotations for goods and services. Specific grants and allocations are used effectively for their designated purposes, for example the social inclusion grant funded much of the pavilion project. The use of these monies is well monitored and evaluated.
75. Currently the school is facing a deficit budget. This situation has, for a large part, arisen due to costs incurred by a number of difficult staffing problems and the need to employ supply staff while still paying those who are absent. The school has reason to believe that these problems will diminish in the near future and is actively examining other possible cost savings.
76. The qualifications and experience of the permanent teaching and support staff match the demands of the curriculum; however, staffing is a major problem for the school in the areas of maintaining academic standards and controlling costs; for example, it has not proved possible to find a new head for mathematics from external candidates. This has led to the need to employ supply teachers, sometimes for long periods in crucial areas. The local and national situation of teacher shortages has meant that it has not always been possible to provide temporary teachers qualified to teach the subject required. This has inevitably had an unfavourable effect on standards, but the school has worked hard to support these teachers and thus reduce the impact.
77. At the time of the last inspection there was no effective system for staff appraisal. A system for performance management has been partially evolved and is spreading down the management levels. It is relatively strong in terms of classroom observation and feedback to teachers, but at present it is less secure in its ability to become informed about undiscovered staff strengths and aspirations. In-service training needs tend to be identified at departmental and senior management levels, they are then considered as a whole and integrated with the school development plan. This plan does present a coherent coverage of the school's needs in this area; money is short and identified personal needs take a lower priority.
78. There are effective systems in place for the induction of new members of staff which are thought to be effective by those who have recently arrived. There have been no pupils in training as teachers in the last two years due to problems with their supply, but the school has good structures for them should they be found. A deputy headteacher specifically handles the induction of supply teachers.
79. The administrative staff are very efficient. They are high in number but their time is used well which enables teachers to concentrate on teaching. This is well exemplified by the work that they do

with assessment records, reprographics and in the library, which would otherwise have to be done by teachers.

80. The general standard of accommodation is unsatisfactory and has an adverse effect on standards of teaching and learning in a wide range of subjects. Action has been taken at considerable cost to rectify problems from the previous inspection report and to carry out other work connected with the structure of the buildings. The original building of the school is attractive in external appearance but is approximately 80 years old. More recent additions to the school buildings are not in keeping with the style of the original building and have flat roofs. The buildings are largely free of graffiti. There is considerable congestion at times of movement of pupils at one of the doors of entry from the playground and the school has plans to widen this door and many classrooms have good displays of pupils' work.
81. Opportunity has been taken to replace faulty windows in parts of the school with double glazed units. The drama room has been re-decorated and provided with a new carpet. The provision of a security fence has led to a considerable drop in the amount of vandal damage in the last two years. The exterior of the buildings was painted 2 years ago.
82. In-door facilities for physical education are poor, being cramped, unattractive and dirty and this has a bad effect on standards. Changes in the layout of the school library will enable it to be used more efficiently. The use of the library for a drama lesson is linked to the fact that one of the English rooms is too small for large classes. Mathematics has three good-sized rooms, one of which has inadequate heating and poorly fitting windows. The acoustic properties of both the modern language and drama rooms are unsatisfactory. The modern language rooms require carpets and curtains and a request has already been made for curtains in the drama room. The religious education and geography rooms have a partition at one end, which needs soundproofing to prevent classes from disturbing each other. The music practice rooms have no ventilation and one is unattractive with a hole in the ceiling. Storage facilities for equipment in science are inadequate. The two information and communication technology rooms are situated closely together and good use is made of their facilities.
83. Learning resources are generally adequate for the curriculum. The resources available to departments have improved since the last inspection, especially the provision of textbooks, and most departments have a satisfactory level of resources. Resources are very good in design and technology, good in religious education and geography but unsatisfactory in modern foreign languages and music. The number of computers has increased since the last inspection but it is below the national average. There are insufficient computers for classroom organisation arrangements and this impacts adversely on learning. The library has a satisfactory stock of books and recent grants and participation in initiatives have enhanced this. It has a sufficient collection of recent fiction books to support reading development but computer facilities are inadequate.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

84. In order to raise standards further in the school the governors, headteacher and staff should:
 - Improve the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils in physical education by:
 - Re-establishing high expectations of pupils' levels of performance
 - Ensuring that pupils behave appropriately both during the lesson and when changing
 - Developing more rigour and challenge in the teaching of physical education skills
 - Improving the matching of activities to the abilities of the pupils
 - Improving the provision for non-participants

(Paragraphs 2-3,5,25,30,162-165)

- Improve the curriculum by:
 - Improving the performing arts provision particularly in Year 9
 - Introducing the option of pupils taking a second modern foreign language
 - Linking the curriculum for pupils involved in the pavilion project to the mainstream curriculum
 - Increasing the curriculum time for the humanities so that the National Curriculum can be covered in sufficient depth
 - Increasing curriculum time at least to nationally recommended levels
(Paragraphs 36-48, 129, 135, 150, 158)

- Improve the management of physical education and modern languages by:
 - A. Physical Education
 - Creating a concise development plan with quantified performance targets to tackle the weaknesses identified by this report
 - Creating a staff development plan so that the targets in the subject development plan can be achieved
 - Creating appropriate policies and practices to meet the needs of all the pupils
 - Developing assessment strategies that enable the progress of the pupils to be monitored effectively and accurately against National Curriculum criteria
 - Creating a strategic plan to improve the indoor accommodation

 - B. Modern Languages
 - Improve the scheme of work to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum
 - Improve the monitoring of the subject's performance
 - Improve the match of work to the abilities of the pupils, particularly the more able
 - Ensure that the statutory assessments at the end of Year 9 are accurate
 - Develop strategies to tackle the weaknesses identified by this report
(Paragraphs 67-68, 151, 164-165)

- Improve the accommodation by:
 - Improving the quality of equipment, decoration and cleaning in the gymnasium
 - Improving the acoustics in modern foreign languages and drama
 - Installing soundproofing between the religious education classroom and geography room
(Paragraphs 82, 131, 150, 164, 169)

- Improve the use of information and communication technology and design and technology resources by:
 - Ensuring that that each pupil is able to work on a machine throughout information and communication technology lessons
 - Making use of the resources for metal work in design and technology
(Paragraphs 83, 124, 142-143)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

104

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

53

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	21	38	32	6	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 – Y9	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	492	
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	53	

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y9	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	36	
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	103	

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	7

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	27

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	7.9
National comparative data	5.9

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.4

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	90	91	181

National Curriculum Test/Task Results	English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	51	61
	Girls	72	57

	Total	123	123	118
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	68 (77)	68 (73)	65 (66)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	24 (39)	43 (44)	35 (23)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	71	64	69
	Girls	80	68	69
	Total	151	132	138
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	83 (78)	73 (69)	76 (76)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	37 (39)	46 (39)	39 (32)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (28)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	4
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	487
Any other minority ethnic group	0

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	26	2
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 – Y9

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	26.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y9

Financial information

Financial year	1999
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	£
Total income	1072238

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	186

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y9

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	82
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y9

Key Stage 2	0
Key Stage 3	21.6
Key Stage 4	0

Total expenditure	1067871
Expenditure per pupil	2070
Balance brought forward from previous year	40458
Balance carried forward to next year	44825

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	492
Number of questionnaires returned	83

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	42	52	2	2	1
My child is making good progress in school.	48	43	4	2	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	22	55	17	4	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	54	13	5	1
The teaching is good.	33	59	4	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	46	7	10	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	53	40	4	0	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	31	4	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	25	54	10	2	8
The school is well led and managed.	35	54	4	0	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	37	46	7	0	10
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	24	53	12	1	10

Other issues raised by parents

All other issues raised by parents are covered in the main body of the report.

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

ENGLISH

85. Standards at the end of Key Stage 3 are average in relation to national standards; they are similar to those reached in schools with comparable intakes of pupils. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests, at the end of Key Stage 3, pupils' scores were above the national average, with lower attaining and middle attaining pupils making greatest progress from their starting points at the age of 11. In 2000, the proportion of pupils reaching level 5 and above in the end of Key Stage 3 tests was again above the national average but the percentage reaching level 6 and above was below average. The difference in test scores is explained by three main factors. The average attainment scores in English of the pupils who entered the school in 1997 (and who were tested in at the end of Key Stage 3 in 2000), were lower overall than those of the previous year group. There were inaccuracies in the external marking of the Key Stage 3 test papers in 2000, (28 of a sample of 30 papers sent for remarking were upgraded). This suggests that if the whole year group had been re-assessed the profile of grades would have been higher. In addition, the prolonged absence of two key English teachers during the previous year caused some loss of continuity of teaching for two groups of Year 9 pupils. Attainment overall in the assessments and tests in 2000 was similar to that in mathematics but below what was achieved in science. An exception to this was that a higher proportion of pupils reached level 8 in the tests in English than in mathematics or science.
86. The work seen in English lessons during the inspection shows that most pupils make good progress in Key Stage 3. The completed writing in folders and the reading, speaking and listening activities observed in lessons is more in line with the higher levels recorded by teachers' assessments than the scores achieved in test papers in 2000. Lower attaining pupils, including the many with special educational needs, are taught effectively and progress well. In Year 7, for example, pupils with low literacy skills on entry read aloud with confidence their own poems to a wide audience of fellow pupils. Similar pupils in Year 9 analysed thoughtfully the language and the meaning of a poem set previously as a National Curriculum test question. The high expectations of teachers encourage most of these pupils to work successfully in lessons.
87. Pupils in the middle and upper sets in Year 9 also work hard and achieve well. In one lesson, higher attaining pupils read aloud, with considerable confidence and feeling, letters they had written as if from soldiers in the trenches in the first World War. Others showed a very good grasp of the plot and knowledge of the characters and the central themes of Macbeth. The enthusiasm for Shakespeare by pupils in two lessons seen comes from inspirational teaching which combines reading the text with interpreting the play dramatically. A middle attaining English group, for example, acted out a synopsis of Act I of the play, in costume, with appropriate props and with the full group participating. The lesson illustrated well the Elizabethan view of the divine right of Kings and the 'natural order of the universe'. The dramatisation ensured that pupils understood an important underlying theme and led to further discussion of the plot; most pupils were then able to write successfully an accurate summary in a relatively short space of time.
88. In the lessons observed, boys' achievement was as high as girls', particularly when reading aloud and speaking skills were required. Most of the volunteer actors in the Macbeth dramatisation were boys. In one area of the department there is cause for concern about pupils' progress. Some pupils in Years 7 and 8 have not completed sufficient written work between September and December due to prolonged teacher absence. However, satisfactory covering arrangements are now in place.
89. The quality of teaching in English is good. All the lessons observed were taught satisfactorily or better; over a third reached a very high or excellent standard. The most effective teaching and learning were seen in Year 9 where teachers were focusing on developing pupils' writing and response skills in preparing them for the National Curriculum tests. Particularly good teaching was seen in lessons focusing on reading and understanding Macbeth, where pupils were active participants in paired, group and full class activities which made exacting demands upon them.

Teachers at all levels encourage pupils to produce final drafts of well-presented and accurate written work. Teachers provide regular opportunities also for pupils to word process and enhance their writing with illustrations. The link between good primary and middle school practice is well established, although, as yet, none of the teachers has visited a link primary school to observe the literacy hour being taught to Year 6 pupils. Lessons are planned well and, in most cases, they use the full amount of time effectively. The practice used by teachers to write up and display the main objectives of each lesson is a helpful one which demonstrates a serious approach to teaching and learning. Teachers are successful in displaying pupils' completed and illustrated work well and in creating within the classrooms a suitable ethos for learning. The quality of the writing within pupils' folders and on display is good although in some groups a greater quantity and a wider range of writing might be expected within each term and each school year.

90. The relationships between teachers and pupils are very good in English with most pupils enjoying their lessons. Teachers expect good behaviour and pupils respond appropriately. In the lessons observed pupils' attitudes to work and their behaviour in lessons were generally of a high standard.
91. This is a well-managed and successful English department. It has been handicapped in the last 15 months by staff absence. This has created difficulties, for example, in maintaining continuity of progress for all pupils and for planning to develop drama more fully within the revised curriculum. Despite this, the department operates well as a cohesive team. There are regular formal meetings each month and there are clear operating procedures in place for marking and assessing pupils' work to the appropriate National Curriculum levels and for guiding pupils to improve their written work. The development plan reflects the whole school requirements to develop literacy, to improve the physical environment and to encourage pupil rewards as well as the more specific subject aims of reviewing the use of information and communication technology within English and revising the curriculum in line with the new orders. Good progress has been made in all these areas.
92. The department has addressed effectively the points suggested for action in the previous Ofsted report. Good use is now made of information and communication technology as an essential part of the English curriculum. A typical example seen in a Year 7 lesson during the inspection gave pupils the opportunity to prepare a travel brochure based on material they had researched themselves using the school computer suite. Since the last report pupils are now grouped in sets reflecting their prior attainment in English. This is felt by teachers to be an effective strategy to focus more closely on individual pupils' learning needs. The head of department and her colleagues now evaluate all aspects of the department's work as a continuing process. This now includes the regular monitoring of teaching.

MATHEMATICS

93. Standards at the end of Key Stage 3 are average in relation to national standards, as they are when pupils enter the school. Results in the National Curriculum tests were in line with the national average in comparison with all and similar schools in 2000. In 1999 the results were above the national average following a dramatic rise from the results achieved in 1998. The comparative fall in results in 2000 is related to the lack of continuity of teaching of some classes in that year. This is due to the loss of teaching staff who the school has had difficulty in replacing. There is no overall significant difference between the standards of boys and girls despite some fluctuations in test results over the three years 1998 to 2000. Standards in mathematics are similar to those achieved in English but lower than those in science.
94. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good in comparison with their standards on entry to the school due to good support in class by experienced teachers, who work closely with the class teacher. This support enables pupils with behavioural problems to work well in class, but some pupils would benefit from having specific mathematical guidance in their individual education plans. All teachers promote good relationships with pupils and between pupils and in this way minimize disruption by potentially challenging pupils. Pupils listen to teachers' instructions and well-directed questions, and have the confidence to respond to them and to write answers on the board.

95. In Year 7, pupils make quick, accurate responses to a mixture of number and algebraic problems confirming the opinion of teachers that standards have improved in this respect due to changes made in teaching approaches to include more whole class number work. All pupils in Year 9 were challenged to work independently at problems of mental mathematics. Lower attaining pupils named various fractions, which were used later in an investigation of probability. Other pupils were required to work at speed in adding two numbers together. In a third class of higher attaining pupils, pupils approximated numbers and re-arranged algebraic equations in preparation for calculations of the circumference and diameter of a circle. Pupils' answers were fully discussed and a test repeated, so that a group of lower attaining pupils increased their confidence with improved scores on the second attempt.
96. In Year 9, higher attaining pupils accurately calculate the lengths of the sides of right angled triangles using calculators in an appropriate way. Mathematics has addressed a weakness identified by the last inspection report with regard to investigations. Pupils take their own measurements of the diagonals of shapes, learn about circle properties and arrange three coins to find the number of ways heads and tails are grouped together. Pupils in Year 7 use a variety of algebraic expressions as instructions in playing a competitive game of moving counters.
97. In general, learning by pupils is satisfactory. In many lessons it is good, particularly when mental work at the start introduces skills, which are used later in the lesson. Learning is less secure when mental work is not focussed on a particular skill or when time management of the lesson is insecure so that learning in the lesson cannot be reinforced at the end. Occasionally, opportunities are missed to use the full range of mathematical words. Homework is set which is relevant to the lesson topic and is in most cases marked, given numerical marks and corrected. Some teachers stated the National Curriculum levels obtained but this was not a general practice during the week of the inspection. These levels are given for each section of work but a general practice of commenting on level attainments in lessons would be helpful to pupils in motivating them to improve the quality of their work.
98. During the inspection, the teaching was satisfactory or better in all lessons observed. Pupils' skills are extended as they move up through the school, for example, some circle properties are introduced into Year 8 and given further development in Year 9. However, the achievement of some pupils over the past two years has been adversely affected by staffing changes and the difficulties of recruiting specialist staff, which have broken up the continuity of learning. Overall, achievement of pupils is satisfactory taking this into account.
99. Mathematics meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Schemes of work are in the process of revision. With the school fully involved in the Coalville mathematics project, curriculum links with partner primary and upper schools are good. There is a project, which Year 9 pupils discuss in the upper school and the school is fully aware of changes in primary teaching due to the national numeracy strategy. Pupils have the opportunity to use computer equipment in connection with mathematics and there are good displays of work on classroom walls of promoted computer activities. The reports of investigations carried out at a local shop were presented in an appropriate form using information and communication technology. Full records of pupils' attainments are kept and targets are set for the performance of individual pupils in national tests at the age of 14. The school is aware of some differences between teacher assessments and forecasts provided by nationally recognised tests and will continue to check on this. This is a considerable improvement on the previous inspection report in terms of checking on pupils' progress. The reference to under-achieving girls in the previous report no longer applies; there is no significant difference in the standards reached by boys and girls.
100. Higher attaining pupils in all years in the school take part in the National Mathematics Challenge, in Years 7 and 8 at junior level and in Year 9 at intermediate. Higher attaining pupils in Year 9 have a weekly extension lesson in the lunch hour to prepare them for the higher level of national tests. Textbooks with varying degrees of difficulty are provided for different ability groups and the department is tackling the problem of challenging higher attaining pupils more effectively. This was a point made in the previous inspection report.
101. Leadership of mathematics is satisfactory. The acting head of department sets high standards in terms of personal teaching, has clear and appropriate aims for the development of mathematics

represented in its development plan, and promotes good teamwork in a group of hardworking teachers. When present in school the acting head of department is very effective in supporting less experienced and non-specialist colleagues and checking the work of the department. A full time appointment of head of mathematics will be in post later this term. The arrangements for leadership of mathematics reflect the difficulty the school has in appointing specialist teachers in mathematics.

SCIENCE

102. Pupils' attainment in the 2000 National Curriculum tests in science taken at age 14 was above the national average in comparison with all schools and average when compared to similar schools. Observations of lessons and examination of the pupils work show that, when taken as a whole, standards remain high in relation to national standards. However, attainment in the strand on physical processes is lower than that found in other areas, but it is close to national levels. Whilst the performance of boys is slightly better than that of girls overall, girls do better at the higher levels. When the results over recent years are considered they show a rising trend, which matches that seen nationally. The school's performance in science is stronger than that seen in English and mathematics.
103. Achievement between Years 7 to 9 is good. Pupils enter the school with National Curriculum test scores that are about average, but with widely different topic coverage and depth from different primary feeder schools. By Year 9 their standards are above average. Progress is most rapid in experimental science, where pupils acquire many useful skills for carrying out and recording experiments. This is well exemplified by a Year 7 lesson in which pupils showed that they could make, view and interpret a slide of plant cells using complex microscopes with a high degree of success. As the course progresses greater volumes of written work are produced, topics are covered in increasing depth and breadth strengthening their scientific skill level and promoting a fuller understanding. By Year 9 pupils can explain the transfer of heat energy by conduction, convection and radiation. In order to do this, some use the particle model of matter, density and wave theory. On the experimental side pupils can utilise data loggers, probes and a wide range of laboratory equipment effectively.
104. In all years, pupils with special educational needs are well known to teachers who match their approach to the needs of the pupils and often produce specially tailored work. Science co-operates well with the special needs department to review how well they are progressing towards the targets on their individual education plans. These pupils make good progress, which is often strengthened when they can be supported individually. The achievement of lower attaining pupils is often good; the higher attainers are presented with more demanding work due to the setting system, but are not always stimulated within their sets to go further. Whilst achievement in information and communication technology is developing well there is still some way to go before it becomes fully embedded in the science curriculum. Nevertheless, already in addition to data logging pupils do use the Internet for information. A good example was seen in a Year 8 class, in which the pupils were able to answer questions about "Healthy Eating" with the aid of several Internet sites.
105. Most pupils clearly enjoy and take a pride in their science work, especially the practical. They generally behave well and work hard, so long as there is plenty for them to do. They usually co-operate well in groups with most members contributing to the common aim. Apparatus is handled with respect and increasing precision. They are often keen to answer questions, but they pose few of their own.
106. The quality of teaching is good. The department has had a number of staffing problems, some quite prolonged, which have had an unfavourable effect on standards. During the full course of the inspection only one permanent member of staff was present to be regularly observed. Nevertheless, lessons are well planned with crisp objectives that are made plain to the pupils. Classes are usually well managed and disciplined; they show a good variety of teaching strategies and a good balance between theory and practical. Most lessons start with a check on what was done last time and many conclude with emphasising what has been learned. Much of the teaching provides good factual knowledge for pupils and questions them to see if they

understand it. However, only in the best lessons are the pupils encouraged to produce and to develop ideas themselves and to design their own experiments from basic principles. This kind of approach was very evident when a Year 9 class was planning for a practical on the effects of temperature on solubility. Here the teacher made full use of pupils' ideas to develop a precise and productive experiment. At each stage he injected just enough information to allow them to go further and then stood back to let them drive the lesson forward towards its objectives. Other lessons are more likely to test pupils' knowledge of what has been taught and to provide a recipe for practical work. There are inconsistencies in the presentation of logical structures for writing up practical work and sometimes insufficient emphasis on basic principles to interpret results. Some practical lessons are mistimed and do not allow sufficient time for pupils to complete the task satisfactorily. Almost all work is marked and the occurrence of teachers' comments designed to improve the work next time is very frequent, but they could be more consistently distributed. Homework is usually set and it provides a useful extension to the pupils' learning.

107. Improvement since the last inspection has been good; standards are now high. Girls' attainment is now above the national average and they confidently take part in class discussions. There is no longer an over-reliance on worksheets and consequently the development of literacy has improved. Marking has improved and pupils are given more opportunities to think for themselves. There has been an advance in the integration of information and communication technology into the curriculum, although more remains to be done. There remains some under-achievement by the highest attaining pupils, numeracy is still not tackled in an organised way and the technician would benefit from more training.
108. The management of the department is good. The subject leader is efficient and works hard with the members of her team to develop the subject and to keep up to date. Much good work has been done to minimise the impact of staffing problems upon standards. There are good systems of assessment, which are well used to benefit the individual and to modify curriculum delivery. The course fulfils all the requirements of the National Curriculum, it is taught in a 'settled' system which enables pupils of all levels of attainment to be appropriately challenged and to make good progress. While the classroom curriculum is good it is only enhanced by one visit out of school and there are no field courses or fieldwork. An effective technician, who works very hard to deploy and to maintain the resources, supports science: a task made more difficult by having an inadequate storage area. The resources are adequate and well supplemented by books in the main library, but there is a shortage of suitable CD ROMs to support the course. The overall impression is of a caring department, which is striving to be up to date and to do the very best it can for its pupils in a time of severe staffing difficulties.

ART AND DESIGN

109. At the end of Key Stage 3 standards in art are high in relation to national standards. Approximately half of the time in art is devoted to textiles which is taught in a creative manner as an integral part of the art and design course. High standards are directly related to very good teaching. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2000 showed boys performing less well than boys nationally and girls performing better than girls nationally. However, there is no discernible difference in the performance of boys and girls in the present Year 9.
110. Pupils are taught the design process from Year 7 onwards. Year 7 pupils can create patterns based on their own still life drawings and from these they can make good quality crayon transfer prints on fabric. In Year 8, pupils can make good, close observational drawings from cross-sections of fruit and vegetables. They learn to look for natural patterns in the details of these cross-sections. In Year 9, pupils can identify symbolic aspects in Picasso's painting "Guernica" and they can use these to develop ideas for their own work. The vast majority of pupils in Year 9 have satisfactory skills in information and communication technology. They use the Internet to do research on designs in a wide range of areas such as fashion, sport, book covers and shoes. They can follow a design brief with teacher guidance. Teachers' planning here is very good and supportive. Art is made relevant to pupils as they gain an experience of the use of art and design in real life.

111. The achievement of the pupils is good from the time they enter the school to the end of Year 9. Lessons are well planned and pupils are encouraged to be creative and imaginative. There is provision for pupils to take work to a greater depth. High attaining pupils make good progress and produce some excellent results. All pupils, including pupils with special educational needs, get individual attention in all lessons. This is a significant factor in ensuring that all pupils make good progress. Colour theory is taught formally and is then used effectively in subsequent work. This leads to good achievement. Finished work in graphic design, and three-dimensional constructions based on studies of Picasso's work, show high achievement. Pupils gain skills in quilting, applique, collage, dyeing and machine embroidery in textiles. Although mark-making skills for achieving tone and texture in drawing are taught formally, this is not used to best effect in later work. The lack of pottery work is a weakness; however, the provision for three-dimensional work, light sculpture and modelling is good.
112. Pupils have good attitudes to study and generally enjoy this subject. There was no poor behaviour evident in any lesson. They maintain interest and concentration throughout the double lessons of almost two hours. There is a good rapport between pupils and their teachers.
113. The quality of teaching is very good, (two thirds of the lessons observed were graded very good). As reported in the last inspection the teachers have an excellent command of the subject. They create a stimulating atmosphere that inspires pupils; lessons are well structured with detailed plans for each stage and they have high expectations of their pupils and maintain discipline with apparent ease. Pupils' work is assessed regularly and good records are kept. Lessons are taught in two adjoining rooms in an open plan structure. The teachers work jointly, in a co-operative manner and this is a strength of the department.
114. The department is well led. The head of department is energetic and enterprising. Planning and schemes of work are of a high quality and there is good order everywhere. All the good features reported at the time of the last inspection are maintained and the main shortcoming in the use of information and communication technology is rectified. Pupils have made good progress in their ability to research personal projects, helped by the use of information and communication technology. Three-dimensional work has improved. However, the use of sketchbooks is still inconsistent. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
115. Art does not have the high profile it deserves throughout the school. There is excellent work retained in the department that could be displayed for the benefit of all. This would enhance the school environment and encourage pupils further.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

116. Standards at the end of Key Stage 3 are high compared with standards achieved by pupils nationally. Schemes of work provide challenging opportunities for pupils in both food technology and resistant material technology, which ensure that pupils achieve well whatever their levels of attainment.
117. Standards of designing and making are high with an emphasis upon learning how to make things of quality, for example, the mechanisms created by Year 9 pupils which demonstrate good use of devices such as cogs. Pupils have a good understanding of materials whose properties they explore through the carefully structured tasks presented in each lesson. This understanding is a major factor in enabling them to produce high quality work. They also have a good understanding of form and function. Graphical skills are very good, the higher attainers in particular using information and communication technology effectively to enhance their designs.
118. Pupils in a Year 9 food technology lesson showed the ability to analyse a product in detail, describing its taste, smell and appearance in order to make a judgement. This was achieved because of the careful preparation of the teacher who explained to the pupils clearly what they needed to know, understand and be able to do in order to achieve the lesson's learning objectives. They analysed a range of similar products and clarified their judgements though thoughtful and

well-focused discussions. The opportunities built into the very good planning for the lesson enabled pupils to reach National Curriculum levels 5 to 7 depending on their skills.

119. Teachers use well-made work that shows a high standard of presentation to illustrate what they expect from the pupils; for example, in a Year 8 lesson on the design and make of a package using thermoplastics, the teacher shared exemplar work from a previous group, all of which was of a high standard.
120. The skills shown by a Year 9 group when marking out, cutting and joining a frame within which a mechanical system will fit were very basic. While the standard of this work was average it was below the levels achieved by pupils in other areas of the subject and therefore the degree of challenge in the task was too low.
121. Pupils demonstrate very good attitudes to the subject. The challenging tasks and the pace and rigour of the lessons requires and receives the pupils' maximum effort. There is evidence of good workshop practices and a regard for health and safety as seen by a class of Year 7 pupils who demonstrated safe kitchen practices even though they had just started the course. Similarly Year 9 pupils in resistant materials wore protective aprons without prompting and made full use of eye protection without having to be reminded.
122. Pupils clearly enjoy their design technology lessons in both food technology and resistant material technology. The relationships between teachers and pupils are very good and this is a factor in the high standards being achieved. Another key factor to high achievement is the very good attitudes that pupils have towards learning; they are well prepared for their lessons, listen carefully and take a full part in discussions.
123. The quality of teaching is very good. Lessons are carefully planned and all pupils are clear about the tasks that they need to complete. They are vibrant and stimulating and, as a result, pupils achieve well. A Year 9 food lesson was excellent because the teacher's exemplary planning stretched and motivated pupils of all levels of attainment. In a Year 7 resistant materials lesson, the teacher enabled pupils to gain a good understanding of the physical properties of materials by comparing the performance of ranges of wood and metal resources. A weakness in teaching is that support teachers are not sufficiently involved in the planning of lessons. On more than one occasion, support staff were under-used.
124. The newly re-furnished food technology room provides an excellent environment and plays a part in the achievement of high standards. The resistant material area has a full range of resources, however, a range of metal work equipment is not used. It is good equipment which would enable the department to broaden the range of manufacturing experiences it offers to the pupils if it were to be used appropriately. The resistant materials area needs to be re-arranged in order to make it a more effective teaching space.
125. The management of the department is good as is the monitoring and evaluation of its performance. Schemes of work are detailed and include careful planning to meet the needs of all the pupils. Assessment practices in food are excellent. They enable teachers to accurately see how pupils are progressing and motivate the pupils to strive for higher levels of achievement.
126. Since the last inspection standards have risen significantly and all the key issues raised have been tackled. This is a very strong subject area. The design centre has been improved with a newly furnished food area and, jointly, a computer area is being established with art.

GEOGRAPHY

127. Standards at the end of Key Stage 3 are average in relation to national standards and the achievement of the pupils is satisfactory. Teacher assessments recorded for the end of Key Stage 3 in 2000 were over-generous at the higher levels where the pupils do not show enough understanding of the connections between human and physical geography and their work lacks individuality. The standard of fieldwork was good; a local project is conducted well in Year 9. As a result of teachers' clear explanations, pupils understand the work that they are set and are able to

make good contributions to class discussions. They have a good knowledge of geographical vocabulary, which is given good emphasis as part of the school's drive to improve literacy standards. Pupils are able to use the Internet effectively to search for information.

128. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. The most effective teaching was seen in classes taught by specialist and non-specialist teachers on permanent contracts. Here teachers display good subject knowledge, enthusiasm and make good use of the school's assertive discipline policy. Lessons are thoughtfully planned with appropriate tasks that are related to geographical examples from the local area. Objectives are made explicit, there is good pace and homework is effectively used to extend and reinforce classwork. Improvements could be made to lessons by the provision of wall maps to better illustrate the teachers' references to distant locations. The least effective teaching was by non-specialist supply teachers covering the long-term teaching vacancy. Since Christmas there have been several. The planning of these lessons to help supply teachers to teach effectively is unsatisfactory.
129. In Year 9 when the subject is taught as part of a carousel, curriculum time is insufficient to complete the course to a satisfactory depth; however, good use is made of the short bursts of concentrated time to enable a local field-study to be conducted and fully written-up.
130. Since the last inspection, assessment has improved and selected pieces of work are now assessed to National Curriculum levels. These are supported by good guidance for the pupils on how they could improve their work. This good practice was observed to be reinforced verbally in lessons.
131. The leadership and management of geography is satisfactory. The head of humanities has appropriately delegated the responsibility for the curriculum to the subject specialists. School procedures have been adapted well to ensure that pupils' progress is monitored effectively and procedures have been put in place to monitor more rigorously the quality of teaching. Good teaching and assessment practices have been shared. Accommodation is adequate but the sound insulation between some rooms is poor and there is also a lack of wall space to display work and teaching aids. Good use is made of the wall space available to provide a pleasant working environment.

HISTORY

132. At the end of Key Stage 3, standards are average in relation to national standards. Teachers' assessments of pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 in 2000 indicated that standards were high in relation to national standards. This is higher than the assessments made in 1999 and higher than the overall judgement of standards during the inspection. There are no apparent differences between the performance of boys and girls. Pupils of all attainment levels have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of topics such as the development of various forms of transport during the industrial revolution, and most have satisfactory skills in selecting and using information for a specific purpose. Year 9 lower attaining pupils demonstrated a good knowledge of transport developments during this period and, using textbook material, were able to analyse the advantages and disadvantages of using horses to carry coal. Discussions are a feature of many lessons although responses, especially those of some lower attaining pupils, are insufficiently developed.
133. By the end of Key Stage 3, the achievement of the pupils is satisfactory. Pupils of all attainment levels make satisfactory progress, especially in applying their historical knowledge and understanding to explain the background of events they are studying. Most higher attaining pupils are making progress towards developing extended writing skills, but such skills are relatively underdeveloped amongst some lower attaining pupils. Pupils of all attainment levels are developing the ability to use source material to support arguments and most are beginning to question the reliability of historical evidence. Year 8 lower attaining pupils studying the effects of the Plague in seventeenth century London demonstrated their increasing ability to assess the reliability of evidence in the form of Pepy's diaries and the orders of the Lord Mayor.
134. The quality of teaching is good. This results in good learning because teachers use their good subject knowledge, often applying it in a local context, to successfully capture and extend pupils'

enthusiasm for the subject. Good lesson planning with clear learning objectives, together with good classroom management skills, ensures that pupils are interested and engaged throughout lessons. A variety of appropriate teaching methods is used well so that learning has a good pace; appropriate materials together with the use of in-class support enables pupils with special educational needs to learn at the same rate as other pupils in the class. Relationships with pupils are good and benefit from an appropriate use of humour together with effective praise and encouragement. Consequently the attitudes and behaviour of all pupils are good. They arrive at lessons with a positive attitude, very quickly settle to work and listen to teachers' introductions and explanations attentively. They work together on a collaborative basis very successfully, demonstrating their willingness to listen to the views of others.

135. The leadership and management of the subject by the head of humanities, working closely with the full time teacher of history, are good. A clear and helpful departmental handbook contains detailed schemes of work. Lessons are taught in specialist humanities classrooms where attractive displays bring the subject to life. Monitoring and evaluating the work of the department have been done on an informal basis by the head of humanities and is an area for further development. The curriculum time allocated to history in Year 9 is relatively low; lack of evidence during the inspection prevented a judgement of the impact of this on pupils' achievement.
136. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection. The quality of teaching has improved and there is now a clear focus on learning objectives. The level of resources has improved and is now appropriate for pupils of all attainment levels. There has been some progress in the application of information and communications technology, and the department recognises this as an area for future development. It has ensured greater consistency in the application of its assessment policy but further development is required in the use of assessment information in curriculum planning. There is an increased amount of curriculum time allocated to the subject in Year 8.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

137. By the end of Key Stage 3, standards are high compared with standards achieved by pupils nationally. During Key Stage 3 pupils in Year 7 have a planned lesson of information and communication technology each week. During that time they cover a broad area of the Programmes of Study in detail, which provides a sound base for them to use information and communication technology to develop their learning in all subjects during Years 8 and 9. During Years 8 and 9 pupils use information and communication technology in the majority of subjects; for example in a lesson on citizenship discussing income, expenditure and taxation, pupils in Year 8 develop their understanding by using spreadsheets to create and analyse data and then to present it in the form of graphs. A Year 8 geography lesson used web searches to find out information on the Indian earthquake; similarly a Year 8 science group used the web to increase their knowledge of healthy eating and the content of food.
138. The achievement of the pupils by the end of Key Stage 3 is good. This is as a result of the solid foundation of skills that they are given in Year 7 and because of the effectiveness of the school's overall policy of ensuring that information and communication technology is used to promote learning in all subjects. In connection with this, there is an ongoing training programme for staff and each department has a representative with responsibility for the development of information and communication technology.
139. The overall management of information and communication technology is very good. The co-ordinator has a clear vision for the future and provides excellent documentation to enable teachers to use information and communication technology to achieve teaching and learning objectives. The school complies with statutory requirements in ensuring that all pupils at Key Stage 3 have an appropriate information and communication technology curriculum.
140. Pupils enjoy their information and communication technology lessons; they respond and concentrate well. At all times during lessons behaviour was good and equipment was used appropriately. During lunchtimes the computer suites are fully used by pupils. When a lunchtime session was observed, each workstation was occupied by pupils using the systems for the

development of their studies in English in order to work on the design of a holiday brochure, and for their French lesson to complete an activity on “myself”. Other pupils were seen completing Year 7 information and communication technology work on spreadsheets and two Year 9 pupils were working on a poster for a project from their careers lesson.

141. The teaching of information and communication technology is satisfactory overall, but this hides a varied picture. Very good teaching was seen in those lessons taken by the information and communication technology co-ordinator. He has very good knowledge of the subject and, having written the Programmes of Study, he has a clear understanding of how best to teach it. Pupils make very good progress in his lessons and are given a very good start in using the technology to improve their learning in all subjects. The non-specialist teaching in Year 7 is satisfactory.
142. The school, appropriately, has a clear vision for the future. The introduction of new equipment has had a positive impact upon standards. Difficulties with regard to the number of computers available to a class set have been recognised by the school. While pupils do use the lunchtime session to catch up on their work the school needs to review either class sizes or how an increase in the number of computers can be made available in order to enable each pupil to be using a computer throughout lessons.
143. Since the last inspection the school has made very good progress. Procedures to conform to the statutory curriculum are now in place and pupils are now making good progress throughout the key stage. The school has appointed a co-ordinator who has established a clear vision for the future and the platform of a strong curriculum in which good assessment and monitoring structures are integral. Hardware has been up-dated well.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

144. Standards achieved by the end of Year 9 in French are average in relation to national standards. Writing, reading and listening skills are well developed but the skills of speaking and responding are less secure. Teacher assessments indicate that pupils achieve well above national averages by the end of Year 9 but inspection evidence does not match this. The quality of teaching overall is satisfactory which together with pupils’ positive attitudes enables the vast majority of pupils to make satisfactory progress. Higher attaining pupils, however, are not always sufficiently challenged to achieve their full potential particularly in speaking tasks.
145. By the end of Year 9 pupils write at some length and in detail about a variety of topics, for example their family, daily routine and their leisure activities. They describe events in the present, past and near future and express simple likes, dislikes and preferences using a good range of structures and vocabulary. However, the majority do this by following a model and, except in examinations, are dependent upon lists of phrases and glossaries, adapting phrases to suit their purposes. Pupils with special educational needs and lower attaining pupils copy and label accurately and match print with meaning. Average and higher attaining pupils have a good understanding of patterns in the language and apply them successfully by referring to their notes. All pupils respond appropriately to instructions and routine questions in French and identify the main points from short extracts of speech. Higher attaining pupils interpret some more complex instructions fairly accurately deducing the meaning of some unfamiliar language in context and identify detail from short extracts of speech and short texts. Lower attaining pupils identify detail with some guidance and repetition and pupils with special educational needs match print and the sound of familiar words and phrases with meaning.
146. Speaking skills are limited; pupils participate in short dialogues but are too often dependent upon notes or prepared scripts to do this. They lack independence in manipulating the language for themselves and they are not confident in responding spontaneously.
147. Pupils have a positive attitude towards their learning, display enjoyment in their project work and in participating in games. When given the opportunity, they work well together in pairs and individually organising themselves well and concentrating on tasks set. They are concerned to do

well but are heavily dependent upon their notes and lack confidence and independence in speaking in French.

148. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. There are considerable strengths in the quality of teaching; for example, teachers have a good command of French and use this knowledge to conduct activities in French; the level of language used is well matched to pupils' previous experience and capabilities and this is effective in developing pupils' listening skills as well as reinforcing previous learning. However, in some lessons, teachers give English translations too rapidly thus eliminating pupils' need to listen and understand in French. Teachers make good use of games to reinforce learning and increase pupils' confidence in speaking; for example, in a Year 8 lesson, a small group of pupils were able to count their way around a boardgame in French and say the names of the school subjects with confidence. Good use is also made of the overhead projector to clarify meaning of new language, focus attention and elicit oral responses from the pupils, enabling them to identify and apply patterns successfully. Lesson objectives are usually shared with pupils so they are clear about what they are going to learn and at the end of lessons a review of key phrases is effective in consolidating learning. In the more effective lessons pupils are given the opportunity to practise informally in pairs and small groups and to try out the language for themselves in realistic situations to exchange information. In these situations pupils increase rapidly in confidence and competence but opportunities for pupils to participate in these kinds of activities are limited.
149. Imaginative use is made of information and communication technology to reinforce and develop writing skills; Year 9 pupils make presentations using Power Point and Year 7 pupils make posters about themselves and add spoken commentaries. The standard of work in these activities is high and pupils display skill in manipulating computer programs to produce their projects. Although activities and resources are generally appropriate and well sequenced to ensure pupils build effectively on previous learning, lesson plans do not take sufficient account of the needs of groups of differing ability within teaching groups; as a result higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged and lower attaining pupils sometimes have difficulty completing tasks successfully because resources are not adapted adequately to be easily accessible to them. There is undue emphasis on reading and writing skills leading to an over-dependence on written notes and adversely affecting pupils' confidence and competence in speaking.
150. The lack of provision of a second modern foreign language disadvantages pupils because it means that they are less well prepared for making choices about whether to study one or two modern foreign languages at GCSE. Although good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs, they only receive 1 lesson of French every week instead of three and this puts them at a disadvantage when they rejoin mainstream classes. Resources for the subject are inadequate and accommodation is not conducive to language learning because the acoustics in the rooms are poor.
151. Since the previous report there has been unsatisfactory progress in developing speaking skills and development planning is not sufficiently focussed on raising standards. Assessment procedures are satisfactory but teachers do not make sufficient use of the data they gather to ensure all pupils achieve their full potential in lessons. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning has improved consistency and teachers work well as a team sharing ideas and planning together. They are committed to raising standards but are in need of increased understanding of current methodology and the requirements of the National Curriculum to do this.

MUSIC

152. In considering this report it should be borne in mind that at the time of the inspection, the newly appointed music co-ordinator had been in post for three weeks.

153. Teacher assessments for the end of Key Stage 3 in 2000 show that 97% of pupils attained the expected level (B+), which, compared with the national results for all pupils (69%), is exceptionally high. Such unusual results must be interpreted with caution as they appear to be over-generous, but since the pupils in question have now left the school there is no way of testing their reliability. The school was unable to provide any information about how many of these pupils, given these very high results, opted for music in GCSE in the upper school.
154. From work seen during the inspection, standards at the end of Key Stage 3 are average in relation to national standards. Pupils can compose simple pieces of an improvisatory nature in groups to provide atmosphere and effects for the Witches scene from Macbeth and perform them with confidence and precision. They can locate on keyboards the notes of elementary tunes and play them with the right hand though rarely with the most appropriate and efficient fingering; some are able to introduce and combine chords with the left hand. Many pupils, but by no means all, recall the meaning of terms such as tempo, dynamics and rhythm, but fewer, for example texture or timbre. Knowledge of styles or composers is rudimentary. No evidence was seen of the use of information and communication technology.
155. Ten pupils enhance their musical attainment with additional instrumental lessons on a variety of orchestral instruments or the piano. No school extra-curricular groups were meeting at the time of the inspection but a number of pupils further enhance their musical attainment by participating in bands or choirs in the area. While attainment is judged to be broadly similar to that of the previous report the number of pupils having additional instrumental lessons has dropped dramatically from 60 in 1996 to their current level of 10.
156. The quality of teaching is good. The teacher's knowledge and understanding are good and basic musical skills are well taught. Expectations are appropriate, planning is good and the pupils are well managed. Assessment of pupils' work requires further development, and it was this aspect which gave rise to an unsatisfactory lesson in which the pupils were given too long answering unchallenging questions about a composition which they had completed in a previous lesson. Schemes of work and assessment arrangements to meet the requirements of the new National Curriculum orders are incomplete.
157. The quality of learning at Key Stage 3 is good and achievement over time is good as seen in the good quality pieces developed by Year 9 over a 5 week period to accompany the Witches scene from Macbeth. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress for the most part, though no work was seen to be adapted to meet their specific needs. No learning support was seen in music lessons, but appropriate help was provided when necessary by the music teachers. Pupils' attitudes to music are generally positive and behaviour is generally good. The teacher is skilled at managing pupils with behavioural difficulties.
158. The Year 9 curriculum and timetable provides two periods of music per week for five/six weeks, followed by five/six weeks of drama, followed by five/six weeks of dance. This is called Combined Arts which means that music is reduced to three five/six week instalments in Year 9. This has a negative effect on pupils' musical learning and reduces the status of the subject. It also adversely affects the opportunity for many pupils to make a considered choice about whether to pursue the subject at GCSE.
159. The equipment for music now represents old technology; for example keyboards with small sized keys and lack of touch sensitivity making any kind of expressive playing, even for a skilled organist, virtually impossible. The one computer in the department does not work and the sound system is out of order. No use is made of the computer suite. The development plan which the new co-ordinator for music and combined arts has inherited is unrealistic in relation to these shortcomings.
160. The arrangements for instrumental lessons are unsatisfactory. On the one hand the cubicles in which they take place have no ventilation or natural light which makes them airless and uninviting and the pianos are in a poor state. The ceilings have holes in them and there is no soundproofing. On the other hand, despite the generous support of the governors, little effort has been made to advertise the availability of this important provision to parents or to harness what expertise exists among the pupils to create viable extra-curricular music making groups.

161. Since the last inspection, while attainment, teaching and learning have remained broadly the same, in some important aspects, such as curriculum provision, use of information and communication technology, equipment, and instrumental tuition, there has been no improvement, and in the case of the last two a significant deterioration.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

162. The standards of performance in physical education at the end of Year 9 are low in comparison with national standards whereas on entry to the school they are broadly average; this represents unsatisfactory achievement. The standards displayed by younger pupils are mostly average and in some activities, for example catching and throwing soft balls in indoor games, they are high. The striking techniques of Year 8 pupils demonstrated in volley ball skills practises are not secure and few pupils are able to direct the ball with sufficient accuracy to sustain a rally. Year 9 pupils display average and sometimes high levels of agility, strength and co-ordination but the close control skills and shooting techniques of most pupils in basket ball are weak. Most pupils in a small Year 9 class playing badminton were able to sustain short rallies, but very few commanded any variety in their shot making or displayed a strategic sense in their placement of shots. Younger pupils mostly collaborate well in activities and team games but the deteriorating attitudes of a significant number of older pupils has a negative impact on the quality of team work and individual standards of achievement. Pupils have only limited opportunities to evaluate their and other pupils' work and these skills are under-developed in the great majority of pupils.
163. Standards of teaching observed in individual lessons were just satisfactory; however, pupils' unsatisfactory achievement over time and their declining attitudes to the subject reflect unsatisfactory teaching over time. Teachers have satisfactory subject knowledge. Planning is never less than satisfactory and sometimes quite detailed. Satisfactory teaching was demonstrated in a Year 7 lesson where there was a clear explanation of the tasks, good organisation and systematic guidance, which enabled all pupils to measure and record four different aspects of body flexibility accurately. Very positive teacher-pupil relationships in a Year 8 girls' health related fitness lesson motivated the pupils to work hard, particularly through their extended warm up. In a high proportion of lessons observed there were many positive features but the standards expected of the pupils were not high enough and pupils were not required to work to their potential. Where teaching and learning were unsatisfactory there was a lack of clarity in communicating the tasks to be carried out and ineffective management of significant pupil misbehaviour. The behaviour of some older pupils, mainly boys, is unsatisfactory, for example when their changing is unsupervised. The attitudes these pupils bring into the lesson are potentially disruptive. In some lessons occasional misbehaviour goes unchallenged. The achievements of higher attaining pupils and pupils with learning difficulties are largely in line with those of other pupils.
164. The curriculum has satisfactory breadth and balance, but due to deficiencies in facilities, no racket games can be learned. The range of extra-curricular opportunities is satisfactory, though some major games are not offered. Assessment arrangements are unsatisfactory. Teacher assessments on the levels at which pupils are working are insecure and there is insufficient data to build up a picture of pupils' progress over time. Schemes of work are well organised and administration is efficient. Insufficient attention is given to the support of less experienced staff and the subject development plan lacks clear targets and appropriate plans of action to tackle the issues identified. Internal accommodation is poor and its facilities are limited. The gym and some changing areas are drab and uninviting. Storage arrangements make the management of equipment difficult and both the gym and hall are smaller than recommended for many of the classes that use them. Collectively these shortcomings are impacting significantly on teaching and learning opportunities.
165. Unsatisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection. Teaching standards have declined; in particular expectations of standards of work are insufficiently high in many lessons and opportunities for pupils to evaluate their work are still being missed. The achievement of older pupils has declined.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

166. Standards in religious education at the end of Key Stage 3 are average in relation to the requirements of the Leicestershire Agreed Syllabus. This syllabus does not have measurable attainment levels, but the department has made good progress since the last inspection in producing assessment tasks, which have level descriptors. Although these relate well to a particular piece of work, they do not allow progression through the levels across the key stage. Pupils show an understanding of key aspects of religious beliefs such as the significance of the Torah in Judaism, and they are able to question thoughtfully the issues connected with the belief in one God.
167. The achievement of pupils by the end of Key Stage 3 is satisfactory. Some pupils show good levels of achievement, but higher attaining pupils are not always given suitable work to give them the opportunity to make maximum progress. The department has, since the time of the last inspection, developed a range of strategies to help pupils with special educational needs. These include writing of specially designed worksheets and assessment tasks, as well as use of word-frames for some assignments. In some lessons, learning support assistants are not sufficiently clear about the focus of their work and this means that the learning of the pupils with special educational needs in these lessons is no more than satisfactory.
168. The quality of teaching is good, and has improved since the last inspection. Lessons are well planned, particularly with regard to subject content and time management. Classroom management is very good and standards of behaviour are high. Marking of notebooks and of the well-conceived, regular programme of assessed work is thorough and includes constructive, encouraging comments. Homework is set regularly and supports classwork effectively. Lesson objectives are rarely shared with the pupils which means that they do not have a clear enough idea about what they need to achieve within each lesson. This weakness was noted at the time of the last inspection. The department currently makes insufficient use of information and communication technology to enhance the learning of the subject and to support the development of pupils' information and technology skills. Some lessons do not cater adequately for the range of pupil abilities, for example, the tasks set in Year 9 on 'coming of age'.
169. The leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. There is a good range of books and learning resources. All teaching of religious education is currently by a qualified subject specialist. The room used as a subject base is pleasant and is enhanced by a range of display, which celebrates pupils' achievement. However, this room is linked by a non-soundproof partition to the adjacent room; noise from this room is disruptive to teaching of religious education and has an adverse effect on learning. There is regular monitoring of teaching, with appropriate subsequent feedback and action. The targets on the subject development plan for 2000-2001 are well chosen but all have not yet been achieved. The department has not monitored comparative achievement of boys and girls. Schemes of work for teaching of religious education do not refer to skills, learning objectives or teaching approaches to ensure that the needs of the range of pupil abilities are covered. There is no audit of how teaching contributes to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. The department needs to rewrite the schemes of work to put right these weaknesses. This would also be an opportunity to make detailed cross-references to the Agreed Syllabus.