

INSPECTION REPORT

COCKBURN HIGH SCHOOL

Leeds

LEA area: Leeds

Unique reference number: 108065

Headteacher: Mr C Richardson

Reporting inspector: Mr P T Hill
6642

Dates of inspection: 11th - 15th March 2002

Inspection number: 199011

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	County
Age range of pupils:	11 - 18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Parkside Gipsy Lane Leeds
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr John Ellis
Date of previous inspection:	November 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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1272	Ian Hocking	Team inspector	Mathematics	
15940	Norman Godfrey	Team inspector	Art and design	How well are pupils taught?
1759	Geoffrey Edwards	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Design and technology	
2615	Eileen Parry	Team inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language Equal opportunities	
4392	Jacqueline Emery	Team inspector	Music	
4664	Ian Birnie	Team inspector	Religious education	
13620	George Leech	Team inspector	Science	
12499	Marie Durkin	Team inspector	English	
2628	Allan Edwards	Team inspector	Physical education	
22849	Ronald Catlow	Team inspector	History Geography	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
21770	John Alder	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Cockburn High School is a mixed comprehensive school catering for 1086 pupils in the 11-18 age range. It is an inner-city school situated in the south of the city of Leeds and has grown considerably recently with the incorporation of pupils from Middleton, a nearby district. The school attracts pupils from a wide range of social and economic circumstances and, although the full range of ability is represented, the majority of pupils enter school with levels of attainment which are below the national average: for a significant number attainment is well below. Thirty per cent of pupils are on the special educational needs register, with four per cent of pupils having statements of special educational needs. The entitlement to free school meals is above average at 31 per cent. Attendance is well below average and the rate of unauthorised absence is high. Five per cent of pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds and English is not the first language in the homes of most of these pupils.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good and effective school. Although overall attainment in GCSE is very low when compared both with schools nationally and with similar schools, based on a comparison of entitlement to free school meals, they are improving rapidly. The problems encountered when the two schools merged clearly account for poor examination performance overall. Teaching is good overall with a significant amount of very good and excellent teaching. This is having a direct and very positive effect on standards. The school is exceptionally well led and managed. Leadership is extremely strong, with the headteacher and senior managers leading by example. They ensure a clear educational direction and that the school is very successful in meeting its stated aims. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Teaching is good overall.
- Standards are rising. In some subjects they are very high.
- Behaviour is good overall and relationships are very good in most areas of the school.
- The school provides a very good range of additional activities.
- Equality of access and opportunity is very good.
- Provision for pupils' social development is very good and is good for spiritual, moral and cultural development.
- The pastoral system and support structure are significant strengths of the school.
- The school's procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are excellent.
- Leadership and management by the headteacher and key staff are exceptional, providing extremely clear direction.

What could be improved

- Despite excellent procedures and monitoring, poor attendance continues to be a significant problem affecting standards.
- The school needs to ensure that its health and safety and risk assessment procedures are rigorously monitored and effectively in place in all areas of the school.
- The school would benefit from increased involvement of parents in providing support for learning and achievement and especially in promoting good attendance.
- Standards and levels of achievement.

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 November 1997, with an HMI review, carried out last year, which reported considerable improvement in many areas. Since the 1997 inspection the school has made good progress in meeting the key issues. Despite the poor results in examinations, numeracy and literacy skills are improving, efforts to improve attendance are considerable and of very high quality, the provision for information and communication technology (ICT) and the library have improved and the school complies with the statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship. Other areas of considerable improvement are the successful merger of two schools, the phased building work, the involvement in national and local initiatives, the successful management of the considerable increase in staffing and pupil numbers and the obviously strongly developing identity of a new and forward looking school.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 11 and students at the end of Year 13 based on average point scores in GCSE and A-level/AS-level examinations.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2000	2001
GCSE examinations	E	E*	E*	E
A-levels/AS-levels	N/A	N/A	N/A	

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

Performance in A-levels/AS-level examinations is not applicable as students in the sixth form take a mixture of advanced and intermediate vocational qualifications. In the small number of subjects covered post 16, overall standards are below the average achieved nationally although in drama they are in line. Overall, the average points score achieved by pupils in GCSE examinations is very low, last year being amongst the bottom five per cent nationally. The school was very disappointed by these results which are at this level as a direct consequence of the amount of change the school has coped with over the past few years. Inspection evidence clearly indicates that standards are being driven up and that appropriate targets are being set. In some subjects at GCSE, for example drama, standards are well above average. At the end of Key Stage 3, although standards in core subjects, as measured in Standard Attainment Tests, are well below the national average in English and science, they are in line with those of similar schools. However, in mathematics, standards are well below those of similar schools. In all areas of the school pupils are achieving at least satisfactorily and in many subjects they are achieving well.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The majority of pupils enjoy lessons; their attitude to work is good.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The vast majority of pupils behave well both in the classroom and around the school. They are, in the main, courteous and welcoming to visitors. Good behaviour is underpinned by good relationships.
Personal development and	Relationships are good and a strength of the school. They make a significant contribution to creating a purposeful working atmosphere, fostering positive attitudes to

relationships	work and to pupils' good behaviour.
Attendance	Very low, despite excellent systems for monitoring and improving levels of attendance.

This is a strong area of the school's work and is recognised as being very important in raising pupils' self-esteem, valuing themselves and others, and in recognising that they can achieve. Good relationships are a strength and make a significant contribution to creating a purposeful working atmosphere, fostering positive attitudes to work and to pupils' good behaviour. The school is very aware of the need to continue to improve attendance levels.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11	Years 12 – 13
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

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

Teaching throughout the school is good overall with almost a third being very good or excellent. This is a very high proportion and represents a significant improvement in teaching since that reported at the last inspection. Only a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Overall, teaching is good in both key stages in English, mathematics and science with science being very well taught in Key Stage 3. Drama teaching is of an especially high quality and this is clearly reflected in the high standard of attainment. Teaching is very good in religious education. The skills of literacy and numeracy are well taught in Key Stage 4 and are satisfactorily taught in Key Stage 3. Key skills are well taught to the sixth form. Support staff play a very positive and significant part in pupils' learning in all areas of the school. Pupils with special educational needs, and those who are disaffected or have behavioural difficulties, are well catered for. Overall, the school caters well for the needs of all its pupils. As a result of good teaching and the provision to meet the needs of all pupils, pupils' learning is good and the majority are making good progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good and enhanced by a good range of additional activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The school has a very good range of initiatives to make sure that all pupils can benefit from education.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. This is integral to all aspects of the school's provision.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Good overall and with very good provision for pupils' social development. This is an areas of continuing improvement.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory and with many areas of strength, including monitoring and improving attendance and systems for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development and assessing attainment and progress. The pastoral system and support structure is a significant strength of the school. In some areas of the school, risk assessment has not yet been efficiently carried out.

A high priority is placed on promoting social harmony and on ensuring that pupils are free from oppressive behaviour: this is a strong area of the school's work. The initiatives and structure provided for supporting disaffected pupils are very good. Central to these is the work of the support corridor where initiatives are promoted and co-ordinated. Mentors provide support for the gifted and talented, and those with poor attendance, special educational needs, and care and welfare needs. The support provided, especially for these pupils and for pupils with special educational needs, is having a very positive effect on pupils' attitudes to school. The school tries very hard to involve parents in school life and their children's education, but with only limited success. A high rate of condoned pupil absence is a problem which needs to be approached by both school and parents in order to raise standards. The school needs to ensure that health and safety procedures are efficiently and rigorously carried out.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The headteacher leads by example and is extremely well supported by the other senior managers.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactorily overall but there is a need to tighten health and safety procedures.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. There are very good and effective systems in place for monitoring and evaluating performance.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Financial and other resources are very well used in line with the school's aims.

The leadership by the headteacher and senior management is of the highest quality. They are highly committed and very forward thinking. This is clearly driving standards up and improving facilities. Governors have a very good and clear role in shaping the school's future direction and are very supportive of the head and his management team. In common with other schools nationally, there is a shortage of teachers in a small number of subjects. This has resulted in supply teachers working in these departments. The school tries very hard to ensure high quality staff, but despite management's best efforts the situation does have a negative effect on continuity of teaching in some areas. The accommodation is very good and is very well cared for. This contributes considerably to the overall learning environment. The links with the City Learning Centre are very positive and add significantly to the quality of pupils' education. Resources throughout the school are very good and of high quality. The school management clearly and effectively implements the principles of best value.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>Over 80 per cent of parents who returned questionnaires agreed or strongly agreed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • Their children are making good progress. • Teaching is good. • They are well informed. • They feel comfortable in approaching the school. • The school expects their children to work hard. • The school is well led and managed. • The school is helping their children to become more 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour. • The amount of work their children have to do at home. • The closeness of the school's relations with parents. • The range of additional activities.

mature.	
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The inspection findings support parents' positive views. The school would clearly benefit from closer co-operation and partnership with parents, especially in ensuring their children's regular attendance at school. Providing greater continuity in learning will clearly improve standards. The school provides a good range of quality additional activities which enrich and enhance pupils' learning

ANNEX: THE SIXTH FORM

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

The sixth form of this 11-18 comprehensive school caters for a small number of students providing a limited range of vocational courses. Because the sixth form is a small one and the school has reluctantly determined it not to be viable, the decision has been taken not to take any more students in the coming year. Students currently studying courses will continue to the end of the course. Although courses and provision were sampled during the inspection, the school, and Ofsted, agreed on a limited review. Most students come from homes with only a limited experience of post-16 education. As a result a significant number of students need advice and support with their studies.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

Within the context of the courses offered, the sixth form is effective. However, the school has always advised students to consider courses at other nearby institutions where these are felt to be a better option for their individual needs. The standard of work seen is average and pupils who have special and individual needs make good progress. Leadership and management of the sixth form are very good, students are very well directed and supported and the school is effective in meeting the students' needs.

Strengths

- Leadership and management are very good.
- Students are well supported and directed.
- The school places a considerable emphasis on student profiles and records which analyse their levels of attainment and areas they need to improve.
- All courses have at least satisfactory provision, with the majority making good provision.

What could be improved

- Although the sixth form will close, the school is aware of a need to continue to encourage and promote good levels of attendance.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan. Strengths and areas for improvement in individual subjects are identified in the sections on individual subjects in the full report.

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM AREAS

The table below shows overall judgements about the provision in the subjects and courses that were inspected in the sixth form. Judgements are based mainly on the quality of teaching and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects in the sixth form were inspected.

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Business studies	Satisfactory although standards attained are below average. Teaching is satisfactory with well-planned lessons and students' attitudes to the subject are sound.
Information and communication technology	Satisfactory. Students' attitudes to the subject are good and achievement is average. Teaching is good with good relationships between teachers and students.
Drama	Good. Students achieve well and have good attitudes to the subject. Teaching is very good with teachers managing lessons very well, using a very good range of teaching and learning strategies. Resources and provision for drama are very good.
Art	Very good. Students have very good attitudes to the subject and, although standards are below average for the course they are taking, they achieve satisfactorily. Teaching is good and the teachers' management of their students is excellent.
Music	Good. Students achieve average standards, have good attitude to the subject and learning is good. Teaching is good with very good teacher knowledge and expertise. The school's aims and values are reflected very well in the department's work.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	Very well. Students have the opportunity to attend tutorials each week where they receive effective support from their form tutors covering a range of topics such as study skills. Additional support and guidance for students is provided on a one-to-one basis by the head of the sixth form.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	Leadership and management of the sixth form are very good. There are considerable strengths in the monitoring and analysis of students' progress and their levels of attainment. The links between guidance and support and management are very strong and thorough, helping to improve students' standards and the quality of their work. All students have equality of opportunity and this aspect is promoted well.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

What students like about the sixth form	What they feel could be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School helped them to settle into the sixth form. • Teaching is good. 	

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• They are helped and encouraged to study.• Courses suit their needs. | |
|--|--|

From the small number of questionnaires and from interviews with a group of students it is clear that most students are settled in the sixth form and feel that they get good support. They feel that they are well taught, that their work and progress are thoroughly assessed and that, as a result, they are helped and encouraged to succeed. The inspection team agrees with students' views.

COMPARING PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

Inspectors make judgements about provision in subjects and courses, and about leadership and management, in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. Excellent and very good are equivalent to the judgement "outstanding" in further education and sixth form college reports; poor and very poor are equivalent to "very weak".

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 Overall, the average points score achieved by pupils in GCSE examinations is very low, last year being amongst the bottom five per cent nationally. The school was very disappointed by these results which are at this level as a direct consequence of the amount of change the school has coped with over the past few years and the amalgamation of two schools.

2 The raising of standards is a major priority for the school and management are very confident, based on careful analysis and the decisive action that has been taken, that there has been a notable improvement in standards this year. Inspection evidence clearly supports this view and confirms that standards are being driven up and that appropriate targets are being set. In some subjects at GCSE, for example drama, standards are well above average

3 By the end of Key Stage 3, when compared with similar schools on the basis of the number of pupils eligible for free school meals, pupils' attainment in English and science was average, but well below the average in mathematics; in core subjects, as measured in Standard Attainment Tests, they are well below national average. Evidence from the inspection showed that in most areas of the school pupils are achieving at least satisfactorily and in many subjects they are achieving well.

4 At the end of Key Stage 4, when compared with all schools nationally, pupils' attainment at five or more grades A*-C in GCSE/GNVQ was well below the national average and in the bottom five per cent nationally. The percentage of pupils gaining five or more grades A*-G in GCSE/GNVQ was well below average. The results in one or more grades A*-G in GCSE/GNVQ, while closer to the national average, were still well below. When compared with similar schools, the overall performance in all three categories was well below average

5 It is well worth noting, however, that drama results in national tests in 2001 were well above the national average at GCSE this year, and pupils gained results that were better than those in all other subjects that they studied. This represents outstanding achievement because pupils' prior attainment was well below average.

6 Literacy is successfully promoted across the curriculum. Standards of literacy, although below average, are improving. Pupils enter the school with levels of attainment that are well below average and make clear progress. Standards of speaking and listening and presentation of work are improving. There is a successful effort on the part of subject teachers across the school to teach subject-specific terminology.

7 The positive impact of the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy is already evident in pupils' computational skills. Pupils' numeracy skills are being developed through the introduction of the strategy although pupils often do not use suitable mathematical vocabulary or spell words correctly. However, it is clear that pupils are becoming much more adept and at ease with the application of numeracy.

8 The school has an unusually high proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties. Many come into the school with very low standards of literacy and numeracy and most of these continue to have very low standards throughout their time in school. This has an adverse effect and depresses results in tests and examinations. However, many good examples of teaching and support were seen which have

a positive impact. This is most often noticeable in pupils' attitudes to learning rather than their work where measurable gains can be quite small even though they are significant.

Sixth form

9 The sixth form is much smaller than other sixth forms and does not offer courses at GCE Advanced or AS levels. It does however currently offer Advanced and Intermediate level vocational courses and students engaged on these will complete the courses, with the sixth form eventually closing when the current lower sixth finish.

10 The average examination points score for each pupil is well below the national average in all subjects offered.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11 Relationships are good a strength of the school. They make a significant contribution to creating a purposeful working atmosphere, fostering positive attitudes to work and to pupils' good behaviour. Pupil's personal development is satisfactory. These findings are generally in line with those of the previous inspection. The overwhelming majority of parents, where their views are known, confirm these findings: they consider that behaviour is good and the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible.

12 The great majority of pupils enjoy lessons; their attitude to work is good. In over one third of lessons observed pupils' attitudes to work were very good or better. Pupils are usually keen to participate in all the activities offered in lessons, and additional activities such as drama, music and sport. They usually concentrate well during class work, such as during an art lesson when they sustain interest whilst applying decoration to large three-dimensional objects. Most pupils listen well to their teachers and because of this they know what they are to do next. As a result of the secure relationships that exist within the classroom almost all pupils want to do well, try hard with their work and are confident to seek help when they need it. There are, however, instances where a small minority of pupils across all year groups have unsatisfactory attitudes to work and their disinterest in lessons impacts on their learning and sometimes on that of others. In the majority of instances this is despite the considerable efforts of the teacher to engage them in the lesson. However, there are times when pupils lose interest because the work set is not well matched to their needs or because the pace of the lesson is too slow.

13 Pupils who are less confident or are becoming disillusioned with school and those who have difficulty controlling their behaviour receive very good support from staff members in the learning support unit or the classroom assistants who organise circle time activities. Because of this many show very positive attitudes, are able to concentrate on their work and make good progress as a result. The learning mentors very effectively support groups of pupils, for example those who may need additional guidance to enable them to achieve a higher GCSE grade. The support they receive helps to motivate these pupils and they make good progress.

14 The vast majority of pupils behave well both in the classroom and around the school. Most are courteous and welcoming to visitors. Good behaviour is underpinned by good relationships within the school. Behaviour in lessons is, in the vast majority of cases, good and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Where behaviour is unsatisfactory it is because pupils set out to be deliberately disruptive, despite the best efforts of teachers to engage them in lessons.

15 During break times the behaviour of the vast majority of pupils is good. The vast majority of pupils understand the impact of their actions on others. They move sensibly about the school, especially in narrow corridors and stairwells, which can become crowded at the end of lessons. Most pupils show respect for the school premises; this is highlighted by the general absence of graffiti although litter can sometimes be a problem both inside and outside school.

When pupils do misbehave the school puts significant effort into ensuring they understand the consequences of their actions. Pupils who misbehave spend time in the inclusion room. This strategy is very successful, and, as a direct result of being placed in the inclusion room, as an alternative to fixed term exclusion, a number of pupils have been able to continue their schooling with only minimal additional support. The number of permanent exclusions has declined since the last inspection. School documents indicate that, so far this academic year, permanent and fixed term exclusion has reduced further. A significant amount of time and effort, on the part of the school, is given to supporting pupils at risk of exclusion. Exclusion is used as a last resort when all other possible alternative avenues have been explored.

16 The school is a harmonious community. Pupils, in the main, whatever their social or cultural background, mix well together. Neither racism nor bullying is tolerated and pupils say they are generally not a problem within the school. Pupils are confident that teachers deal with the small number of instances that do occur quickly and effectively. Pupils are respectful of the beliefs and practices which are not their own. This was illustrated during a religious education lesson when pupils listened respectfully to the views and opinions of their peers and teacher, even though they were not necessarily their own.

17 Pupils have positive relationships with their peers and with adults. They generally collaborate well and sometimes take responsibility for their own learning. For example, without being asked by their form tutor, during a registration period in the ICT room, pupils used the computers to carry out independent research and study. However, the vast majority of pupils are reliant on their teachers and, even when provided with opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning, only a few do so. Pupils support each other and offer praise and encouragement spontaneously. In some lessons pupils will willingly discuss their work, but there are occasions when teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for discussion in groups or pairs. In small group situations, such as circle time, pupils support each other very well, try hard and persevere with tasks; there is a great deal of mutual support and respect during these sessions and as a result pupils grow in confidence and self-esteem. The majority of pupils are interested in the life of the school and enjoy the extra-curricular activities and enjoy taking part in events, such as musical or drama productions. Membership of the school council, and becoming form representatives, all make a good contribution to pupils' personal development; pupils appreciate these opportunities. However, overall there are too few opportunities offered where pupils can take on responsibilities.

18 Despite the excellent efforts made by the school to encourage regular attendance, rates are very low compared to the national average. Unauthorised absence is well above national figures. However, because of the high priority given to this area there has, since the previous inspection, been a substantial increase in levels from 81.8 per cent to 84.4 per cent. Nevertheless significant numbers of pupils, across all year groups, do not attend school regularly. It appears that many parents condone these absences. This puts their children at a disadvantage because they miss vital teaching; consequently the progress pupils make and the standards they achieve are adversely affected.

19 A significant majority of pupils are late arriving at school each morning. There are also many instances where pupils arrive late at lessons. This is despite the school's very best efforts to encourage pupils to be punctual.

Sixth form

20 Students in the sixth form have satisfactory attitudes to their work. In most instances they concentrate well, relationships and behaviour are good and they enjoy their courses. There is quite a high drop-out rate linked to the fact that some students find difficulty with their courses as the level required is too high for them. There is a high incidence of intermittent absence although monitoring of attendance by the head of the sixth form and form tutors is good and the school does all it can to encourage students and to develop their self-esteem. Students' personal development is satisfactory, and, although some are reluctant to take responsibility for their learning and independent study, there are good examples where students book into, and use, the City Learning Centre to support their learning.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

21 Teaching is good overall. 155 lessons were observed during the inspection and the quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in 95 per cent of lessons. In 35 per cent of lessons teaching was good and in 31 per cent it was very good or excellent. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection.

22 The teachers' knowledge of their own subject is good and this has a significant effect on the quality of learning. In English, lessons are well planned with a brisk pace, a good range of activities and effective management of the pupils, increasing productivity and attitudes. In drama, teachers have very high expectations; planning is also very effective and has increased pupil enjoyment of the subject by offering a wide range of practical activities. In mathematics in Years 7 and 8, teachers are presenting innovative approaches to learning using smart-boards. In religious education the expectations of teachers are high with tasks well matched to pupils' abilities and designed to challenge them. In art the teachers have high expectations and plan effectively in order to offer a wide range of opportunities designed to challenge all levels of ability.

23 Teachers adopt a wide range of teaching strategies. Effective lesson planning and high expectations are major influences upon the improvements in learning and achievement. In the majority of lessons good to very good relationships exist between the teachers and pupils. When behaviour is less than satisfactory it is usually as a consequence of lessons which fail to engage or challenge the pupils, combined with ineffective classroom management.

24 Across all subjects most lessons show a good range of activities designed to develop pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. There are often opportunities for pupils to develop as independent learners through exploration and experimentation. The opportunities for pupils to develop as independent learners should be increased in some lessons in order to reduce the amount of teacher-directed learning. Teachers use a wide range of resources effectively, providing opportunities for all pupils to progress. Pupils with special educational needs and those designated as gifted or talented are well served by appropriately planned activities and sensitive, supportive teaching.

25 Homework is a planned feature in most subjects but often teachers have difficulty in getting the pupils to complete homework and submit it on time. The quality of marking is satisfactory to good. The majority of teachers provide pupils with good supportive written comments when marking work and also keep them informed of their progress.

26 Literacy is taught well overall. The teaching builds on the work done in the primary phase and many subjects have a specific focus on reading and writing in Years 7 to 9. In English pupils are encouraged to use a wide range of styles of writing. In music and art, teachers introduce, and expect

pupils to use, the correct terminology and vocabulary in their writing and speech. In all subjects pupils are encouraged to contribute to discussions thereby improving their powers of thought and use of language. The teaching of numeracy is satisfactory overall, although the whole school policy is not yet established.

27 Pupils with special educational needs are well taught in all age groups. The quality of teaching has a significant impact on the standard of learning. Teaching is consistently effective in English, mathematics and science, where work is planned to meet the needs of all pupils. The special needs co-ordinator and the learning support assistants have good knowledge of the pupils' difficulties and have effective methods to deal with them, ensuring that pupils make good progress towards their targets. They are good at teaching basic skills, especially reading and spelling. The support staff are well matched to the pupils they support and they have effective communications with staff in individual subjects so that work is well planned to meet the needs of pupils.

28 There is evidence that the shortage of qualified teachers and the use of supply teachers is having an adverse effect upon the quality of teaching and learning in some subjects.

29 The previous report drew attention to the fact that there was unsatisfactory teaching in a number of subjects. The quality of teaching has improved significantly primarily as a result of changes in personnel and a considerable investment by the senior managers in the school who placed the quality of teaching and learning as a high priority in the school development targets.

Sixth form

30 Teaching in the sixth form is similar to that for the 11 to 16 provision. Teaching is good overall. Fourteen lessons were observed during the inspection and the quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in all lessons. In 57 per cent of lessons teaching was good and in seven per cent it was very good. Although only a small number of lessons were sampled it is clear that they are well planned and that very good relationships between teachers and students enhance learning. The quality of teaching in the lessons seen was good overall with very committed staff striving to ensure high quality learning. Lessons, and the curriculum as a whole, are very inclusive and ensure that students with a range of levels of attainment can take part. Teachers set high standards; for example in a music lesson, a BTEC. National diploma composition session, the teacher's recap of previous understanding was very searching and challenging and the lesson was conducted at a very lively pace. Similarly, in drama, the teacher had very high expectations and challenged students perceptions

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

31 The school makes good provision in Years 7, 8 and 9 through a curriculum that is broad, balanced and relevant and offers a range of learning opportunities, which are suited to pupils' needs. All pupils study the subjects contained in the National Curriculum, including religious education, drama, personal, social and health education (PSHE) and ICT. Included in PSHE is a short course on citizenship.

32 The curricular provision in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory. The curriculum choices are based on one year's open selection and monitored to see that each pupil has a broad and balanced curriculum. This is supplemented by PSHE, physical education and religious education. Most pupils attempt a double science with a small number taking a single science and a vocational course. 192 pupils have been disapplied from a modern foreign language with the intention of performing better elsewhere in the curriculum. There are no breaches of the statutory curriculum.

33 The provision of extra-curricular activities is very good, particularly in physical education and the performing arts. There are commendable successes in many sports. Subject clubs and revision sessions are the main areas with the possibility of those pupils who log 15 events attended receiving a Certificate of Achievement. A good relationship has been established between the school and Leeds United Football Club who as part of their involvement in the community provide Super Learning Days and Success Maker Courses. There are visits to art galleries, the theatre and other institutions that support learning. The school also provides enhancement with revision activities and summer schools during the holidays.

34 The work of the school in nurturing the personal development of pupils and in promoting their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The last inspection described the quality of relationships in the school as a major strength and commented positively on the school's provision for moral and cultural development. Provision for spiritual development was, on the other hand, rated as poor. Since the inspection, the headteacher has, through the establishment of a senior staff working party, moved to formulate a policy set out in the document, 'Moral, Spiritual, Cultural Policy'. The document, which should be extended to include 'Social Development', aims to increase the cross-curricular understanding of the statutory requirement to promote these aspects of personal development. With the objective of encouraging the provision of opportunities for pupils to develop these propensities, the document provides examples of teaching across a range of subjects, which are supportive of that goal. The policy statement makes a very valuable contribution to advancing the school's responsibilities in this overall curriculum aim. As a consequence, many more subject departments now contribute to the task of promotion than was the case. Good contributions were observed in English, drama, science, physical education, art, modern, foreign languages, religious education and PSHE.

35 Progress has also been made since the last inspection in the planning of collective worship. The school now has in place a pattern of well-planned and delivered year assemblies. The place of collective worship as an occasion when the school's intentions in respect of the exploration and celebration of what being fully human means, and of the values and attitudes it seeks to encourage, needs further development. Discussion of these matters should be encouraged in order that so much of what is admirable in the work of the school be given sharper focus in both form periods and the weekly year assemblies.

36 Links with colleges are good. There is a sound guidance and careers programme and links with the Careers Service are good. A high percentage of pupils go on to further education.

37 The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is good. The community provides assistance with the provision of community languages. Leeds Archaeology, a local history project, and Leeds United Football Club also make significant contributions to the breadth of the curriculum and to pupils' learning. There are good links with business and industries providing work experience for all.

38 The PSHE programme provided throughout the school is good. Lessons are well taught by the teachers who make up the small department responsible for this area. The planned programme is enriched by the provision of a range of speakers from outside agencies, for example the fire service and health representatives. Although elements of citizenship are covered within the programme, the co-ordinator has clear plans to develop this area further. Time is generally well used during the morning registration period to support elements of the PSHE programme, but there is not always a clear link between the subjects covered in a morning and the good scheme of work that is in place for the overall programme.

39 The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs. These pupils receive a curriculum that pays extra attention to their needs. For the gifted and talented, this ranges from support and translation in a pupil's own language to trips and extra-curricular activities for both the talented and the interested. Circle time and anger management classes help those with emotional and behavioural difficulties and basic skills work pays particular attention to pupils' spelling and reading needs. Alongside these is a range of imaginative projects, sometimes in school time and sometimes in the evenings or at weekends, such as the 'Tweenagers' and music projects which give high quality, different experiences to those with the most need.

Sixth form

40 The range of courses provided for the sixth form is limited. Courses are run for business and finance, ICT, art and design, performing arts and BTEC popular music. The school does, however, cater very well for the students engaged on the small number of courses and enhances the sixth form curriculum with PSHE and with good quality guidance aimed at encouraging students and raising their self-esteem. General studies promotes a wide awareness and knowledge and understanding of current topics as well as developing debating skills and speaking and listening. Courses sampled during the inspection included music, drama, ICT, art and business education. The school has good links with other local colleges and provides appropriate advice and support for students wishing to take courses at another site.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41 This is a caring school. It aims to meet pupils' needs and to support all pupils whatever their ability, social or cultural background. It is very successful in this aspect of its work. This is confirmed by parents who, where their views are known, indicate that they appreciate their children are well cared for. The majority of pupils feel safe in the school's care and feel able to turn to staff for help and guidance should they need it.

42 The pastoral system and support structure is a significant strength of the school. It is skilfully led by a deputy headteacher who has a clear vision to improve the structure still further. There are several factors that contribute to the success of this aspect of the school's work because they support pupils very well. These include:

- the good pastoral structure that enables form tutors and heads of year to know their pupils very well;
- the good relationships that exist in the school providing pupils with the confidence to seek help should they need it;
- the work carried out in the Learning Support Unit enabling vulnerable pupils to receive a high level of support;
- the provision of high quality circle time for some pupils so very effectively raises their self-confidence and esteem;
- the learning mentors provide considerable support for pupils who are at risk of becoming disillusioned with education; and,
- the provision of the inclusion room for those pupils at risk of exclusion.

43 Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are very good: high priority is given to this aspect of the school's work. Form tutors and heads of year know the pupils well

and provide a good level of support and guidance through the form tutor period. Time, for the most part, is used well, but this is not always the case and there are occasions when pupils sit and chat rather than receiving any direct support and guidance. Through a regular system of meetings with personnel at all levels, and the use of computerised tracking systems, pupils who are causing concern can be identified and the appropriate course of action taken to help them. Many opportunities are taken to raise pupils' self-confidence and esteem, for example through drama lessons and school performances, the opportunities to take part in the very good range of extra-curricular activities, and through residential visits or small group activities such as circle time. Pupils speak highly of the opportunities that are offered to them. However, despite this very good practice, there remain only limited opportunities for pupils to take on any form of responsibility within school.

44 An appropriate code of conduct forms the basis of the school's expectations regarding behaviour. The ethos of the school effectively builds on this and promotes self-discipline, tolerance and respect for others. Pupils they understand the reward system and are clear why sanctions are used; they say both are fair. They also confirm that incidents of bullying or oppressive behaviour brought to the attention of the school are dealt with effectively. Inappropriate behaviour, of any kind, is not tolerated and there are several very effective measures in place to deal with incidents that do occur and to support and promote acceptable behaviour throughout the school. These include:

- an excellent system that is used to monitor the behaviour of all pupils and which is used very well to identify where individuals need help and guidance;
- a very clear referral procedure that is followed by all staff members;
- a rapid-response system that enables senior members of staff to support teachers in circumstances where a pupil's behaviour becomes extremely challenging or aggressive and then to support pupils themselves;
- provision to support pupils who have difficulty controlling their behaviour, or who are vulnerable, such as circle time, discussions with learning mentors and meetings with the behaviour support outreach team;
- teachers, senior staff and parents monitor personal support programmes, where clear targets are set for pupils that aim to help pupils manage their behaviour; and
- support for pupils at risk of exclusion, for example by short sessions spent in the inclusion room or the Learning Support Unit.

45 The programme of work for PSHE is used well to raise pupils' awareness of bullying issues and racial tolerance.

46 Arrangements to monitor and promote attendance are excellent. There is extremely effective communication between all members of the small team who are responsible for this area. This team and the strategies that have been used have had a significant impact on raising the profile, with both pupils and their parents, of the need for good and regular attendance. Because of this, overall school rates have increased during the last two years. The team is not complacent, however; they regularly review and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies that are in place and alter their systems as a result. There are very good arrangements to support those pupils who return to school after prolonged periods of absence. The Learning Support Unit provides an extremely supportive environment in which pupils can successfully re-integrate and adjust to the demands and routines of school life; this is confirmed by pupils who speak very highly of this provision and the care and support they receive.

47 Systems to ensure pupils' welfare are satisfactory overall, but within this there are both very good and unsatisfactory elements. Members of the administration staff have responsibility for any accidents or illness and are very effective. There is an appropriate number of staff who have received first aid training and a rota system ensures they are available during the school day if required; arrangements

are very good and pupils speak highly of the care they receive. The medical needs of pupils are very well catered for; all personnel involved in the care of an individual pupil are made aware of any medication that may be required. Very good arrangements cover the health and safety of pupils during out of school visits or the use of the school mini-buses. There are good documented systems that cover health and safety and risk assessment requirements for each department. However, arrangements to ensure that these departmental systems are consistently implemented are unsatisfactory. This is because no monitoring of health and safety across the whole school takes place, no whole-school risk assessment has been undertaken for over a year and no regular and documented health and safety tours are carried out. The school is aware of the need to address this issue. The arrangements for child protection are satisfactory. The designated member of staff has undergone training and has detailed knowledge of local procedures; any concerns or issues brought to her attention are dealt with sensitively. There has, however, been no recent child protection training for all staff, to ensure they have knowledge of the possible signs and symptoms of abuse; this was an issue raised at the time of the previous inspection. Key staff members meet each Friday to discuss pupils in their care; however, the designated member of staff for child protection is not part of this group. The induction programme for pupils transferring from primary schools at the age of 11 is satisfactory. Valuable information about pupils is gained when teachers visit them in their primary schools. The first day of the new term is used to familiarise pupils with their new school.

Sixth form

48 In addition to the very good level of care throughout the school, students in the sixth form have the opportunity to attend tutorials each week. Here they receive effective support from their form tutors covering a range of topics such as study skills. Additional support and guidance are provided, on a one-to-one basis, for students by the head of the sixth form. Advice and guidance are mainly from form tutors; some visits take place to look at provision available after the sixth form.

49 Monitoring of attendance and behaviour is an important part of the work of the sixth form leaders, and considerable emphasis has been placed on this and especially the links between regular attendance, punctuality and raising levels of attainment. Assessment of students' progress and levels of attainment is by subject teachers, with the head of sixth form having a very good overview of the next steps students need to take to improve their standards.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

50 Many parents express a positive and supportive view of the school and its work. Although there was only a limited response to the parental questionnaires and pre inspection meeting with parents, most say that staff are approachable and suggestions and concerns are dealt with quickly and to their satisfaction. Parents' positive views of the school are also indicated by the fact that the school is the only one in inner city Leeds that is oversubscribed.

51 The school tries exceedingly hard to involve parents in school life and their children's education, but with only very limited success. This is in line with the findings of the previous inspection. The open door policy ensures that any parent can have direct contact with staff without an appointment; it may not be that a specific teacher is available but the school will always make sure that parents can speak to someone. A number of information evenings are organised, together with consultation evenings where the progress their children are making can be discussed. Despite altering the timings of these events, as a direct result of consultation with parents, they are not well attended. However, where their children are directly involved, for example in the presentation ceremony at the end of Year 11, the Elland Road study skills presentation evening or a school performance of 'Whistle Down the Wind',

parents' turnout is excellent. The Friends of Cockburn School hold social and fund-raising events, but in the main these are organised by teachers or governors and not always well attended by parents. Funds raised have been used to subsidise visits to the theatre and the running of the mini-buses. The school does not regularly seek the views of parents. However, it recognises the need to address this issue to ensure it meets the needs of all its parents. Many parents do not support the work their children have to do at home; this can be seen by the low return of homework in lessons. A significant number of parents do not support the school by ensuring their children attend school regularly. Absence rates are very high and it is evident from the school's excellent monitoring arrangements that parents condone a very high proportion of their children's absence. This puts their children at a disadvantage as learning is interrupted and this adversely affects the progress they make.

52 The school has effective links with many parents and places much emphasis on personal contact to resolve problems. There are many instances where the school will telephone parents, not just with concerns but also to celebrate success. For example, a telephone call will often be made if a pupil has had a particularly good day. Parents with children who attend the learning support unit are regularly in contact with the school. Where there are any concerns about pupils, whether it is about their progress in a subject or their behaviour, the school seeks to actively involve parents at an early stage. Despite being consulted and involved in the contents of the home/school agreement few parents have signed the finished document.

53 Most information, for example key dates or letters of commendation, is posted home to ensure it reaches its destination: parents appreciate this. After a pupils' first year in school limited use is made of the school planners as a direct means of communication with home. The school brochure and governors' annual report to parents are well produced and contain much useful information for parents, but neither document contains all the information it should and statutory requirements in this area are not fully met. The annual reports to parents about their children's progress, whilst containing much detail on pupils' own self-evaluation of their attitude to work, contain insufficient detail about what pupils know and can do in all subject areas. The targets that are included in reports are insufficiently focused to enable pupils to know what they must do to improve.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54 Cockburn High School has recently come through some very demanding times - circumstances and changes which would have challenged most schools in the country. The management has been very successful in merging two schools, now housed on a single site, into one, strongly developing, highly inclusive, forward-looking school with an identity of its own.

55 The leadership by the headteacher and senior management is of the highest quality and is the single most important factor in this considerable success. Not only has management dealt successfully with the difficulties of a split site, the uncertainties and understandable worries of parents, pupils and staff but has managed the considerable increase in staffing and pupil numbers and forged all aspects into an obviously strongly developing and forward-looking school. Added complications include the phased building work to provide increased accommodation and improved facilities and the school's involvement in national and local initiatives, for example its links with the City Learning Centre.

56 The headteacher leads by example in all he does. He is exceptionally well supported by a very strong and effective senior management team whose complementary skills and excellent relationships are very significant strengths. Team members have clear areas of responsibility and are very effective.

57 Governors are very supportive of, and committed to, the school, and through a clear and well-defined process have played an important part in producing a very good school development plan to take the school forward. They play a major role in shaping the school's future direction. The school's aims and values are very well reflected in their work. Governors' fulfilment of their responsibilities is satisfactory overall but there is a need to tighten health and safety procedures.

58 The school's monitoring and evaluation of its performance are very good and the action taken to meet the resultant targets is effective. The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching have recently been an area of considerable development. As a result, teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection. Clear links have been made between high expectations, the level of pupils' attainment and teaching. The school's next steps in this area are to ensure that all departments and faculties share good practice and integrate the lessons learned from successes throughout the school.

59 The school has a very good range of initiatives to make sure that all pupils can benefit from education. Central to these is the work of the support corridor where initiatives are promoted and co-ordinated. Mentors provide support such as for the gifted and talented, and those with poor attendance, special educational needs, and care and welfare needs. An example of the effectiveness of such support can be seen in the excellent range of strategies to promote attendance where even small gains are significant.

60 The administration of the special educational needs department is undertaken efficiently. Procedures and provision for pupils who have statements are sound. The teaching assistants are effectively deployed and all staff are circulated with copies of the special needs register and individual education plans so that everyone is aware of an individual's needs. The policy and procedures are beginning to be updated to match the new Code of Practice and it is expected that this process will be completed by the end of the academic year. However, the leadership role of the special educational needs co-ordinator needs to be further developed. Currently management is too narrowly focused on work within the department and misses aspects of the wider picture and the ideas and influence that are needed in a school where so many pupils have such diverse needs.

61 The strategic use of resources is very good with well-managed funding being linked to the school's targets. The school is making very good progress in meeting targets and a major aspect of this is the very good use made of resources, carefully matched to the school's development plan. This clearly takes account of other initiatives, both in the surrounding area and nationally. The headteacher, governors and the senior staff work together very effectively to ensure that funds are targeted carefully to match the school's needs and to support agreed educational priorities. Specific grants, such as those for supporting pupils with special needs, English as an additional language, and those for educational inclusion, are very well managed and properly allocated. Day-to-day oversight and monitoring of the school's delegated budget are very good; systems ensure that the headteacher and governors have an accurate picture of the school's financial resources and how they are being used.

62 Staffing is generally adequate in meeting the needs of the curriculum. The staffing level is appropriate for a school of this size and staff are suitably deployed. However, there are a number of subjects where the school has to use non-specialist teachers and/or supply teachers. In these lessons the level of expertise, and the resultant quality of teaching, is sometimes not as high as in those lessons taught by specialists. In common with other schools nationally, there is a shortage of teachers in a small number of subjects. The school tries very hard to ensure high quality staff, but despite management's best efforts, the situation does have a negative effect on continuity of teaching in some areas.

63 The accommodation is very good and is very well cared for. This contributes considerably to the overall learning environment. The links with the City Learning Centre are very positive and add significantly to the quality of pupils' education. Resources throughout the school are very good and of high quality; in drama they are excellent and in science, art, music for Key Stage 4 and physical education they are very good. The school management clearly and effectively implements the principles of best value.

64 The headteacher and senior managers are highly committed and very forward thinking. This is clearly driving standards up and improving facilities. Cockburn High School is a rapidly developing and improving school.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Despite excellent procedures and monitoring, poor attendance continues to be a significant problem affecting standards. (Paragraphs 18, 19, 46)
- The school needs to ensure that its health and safety and risk assessment procedures are rigorously monitored and effectively in place in all areas of the school. (Paragraphs 47, 114, 134)
- The school would benefit from increased involvement of parents in providing support for learning and achievement and especially in promoting good attendance. (Paragraphs 51)
- Improve standards and levels of achievement. (Paragraphs 1, 2, 68, 86, 102)

Sixth form

- Although the sixth form will close, the school is aware of a need to continue to encourage and promote good levels of attendance. (Paragraphs 214, 219, 227)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 – 11	141
	Sixth form	14
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		51

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Years 7 – 11							
Number	9	37	46	41	7	0	0
Percentage	6	26	33	29	5	0	0
Sixth form							
Number	0	1	8	5	0	0	0
Percentage	0	7	57	36	0	0	0

Care should be taken when interpreting the percentages for the sixth form here as each lesson represents more than six percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7– Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1041	45
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	346	0

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	40	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	321	5

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	48

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	36
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	26

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	11.6
National comparative data	8.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	4
National comparative data	1.1

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2001	94	110	204

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	32	31	36
	Girls	58	41	45
	Total	90	72	81
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	44 (27)	35 (37)	40 (37)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	13 (7)	16 (13)	11 (9)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	34 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	25	24	19
	Girls	44	37	26
	Total	69	61	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	33 (34)	29 (32)	22 (34)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	9 (9)	12 (8)	8 (9)
	National	31 (31)	42 (39)	33 (29)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	98	107	205

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	6	62	83
	Girls	16	80	90
	Total	22	142	173
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	11 (9)	69 (61)	84 (73)
	National	48 (47)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	20 (18)
	National	39 (39)

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	10	n/a
	National		n/a

Attainment at the end of the sixth form (Year 13)

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS / Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Boys	Girls	All
School	Number of candidates	12	4	16
	Average point score per candidate	8	8	7.5
National	Average point score per candidate	9.8	11.4	10.6

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS examinations			For candidates entered for Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Boys	Girls	All	Boys	Girls	All
School	Number of candidates	n/a	n/a	n/a	8	8	16
	Average point score per candidate	n/a	n/a	n/a	8	8	8
National	Average point score per candidate	n/a	n/a	n/a	9.8	11.4	10.6

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	2
Indian	9
Pakistani	11
Bangladeshi	26
Chinese	1
White	1028
Any other minority ethnic group	7

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	2	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	71	3
Other minority ethnic groups	2	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 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	69
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	35
Total aggregate hours worked per week	1163

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	71
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y13

Key Stage 3	23
Key Stage 4	23

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001
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	£
Total income	3698107
Total expenditure	3752200
Expenditure per pupil	3426
Balance brought forward from previous year	151360
Balance carried forward to next year	97270

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	11
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	10
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	8

Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	8
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1086
Number of questionnaires returned	160

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	39	46	8	8	0
My child is making good progress in school.	48	41	8	1	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	26	50	14	3	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	46	16	7	6
The teaching is good.	38	50	5	2	6
I am well informed about how my child is getting on.	41	40	13	4	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	55	34	6	3	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	31	4	1	4
The school works closely with parents.	36	43	13	4	4
The school is well led and managed.	43	40	4	3	10
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	39	47	9	2	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	37	41	8	3	12

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH

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

Strengths

Strong leadership of the department encourages high standards.

Teaching is good; there is some very good teaching.

Relationships between pupils and teachers are good.

Areas for improvement

Continue to work on improving standards.

Weaker classroom management in less successful lessons reduces pupils' achievements.

67 Results in the 2001 National Curriculum tests for pupils at the age of 14 are well below the national average and broadly in line with the average for schools taking pupils from similar backgrounds. English results are better than those in many other subjects. The results reflect a trend that is broadly in line with national trends.

68 In the GCSE examinations in 2001, English results were far below the national average. Results in English literature were also far below the national average. Results in tests and GCSE represent good achievement since they are higher than would be expected from the pupils' attainments when they entered the school.

69 In the work seen during the inspection, attainment by the end of Year 9 is below average. This represents good achievement and improving standards, because, when the pupils joined the school, their overall standards were well below average. Literacy skills, in particular, have improved. This is because of the work done by the school on the National Literacy Strategy. The school and the department take this very seriously and higher standards in reading, writing and speaking and listening are emerging. Pupils' oral skills are developing in classroom discussion and they are keen speakers in informal situations. A speaking and listening assignment, seen in a Year 10 lesson, was planned so that the pupils could develop persuasive speaking and understand emotive language. Pupils successfully highlighted persuasive language but were less successful in presenting their own persuasive arguments. Writing standards are below average; pupils have not grasped key skills in spelling, punctuation and grammar although their work is generally well presented. Writing is also set in a historical context. In a Year 8 lesson on Charles Dickens, pupils extended their knowledge of less familiar words such as 'ponderous' and 'misgiving'. The work of a minority of pupils is less well presented. Recent initiatives to improve boys' standards include a sensitive choice of texts and rigorous teaching focused on test criteria and high expectations. These are beginning to have a positive impact. The standards of all pupils are benefiting from a wide choice in the variety of writing assignments and increasing use of ICT to aid the presentation of work. However, the use of extended writing is comparatively infrequent.

70 Attainment in English by the end of Year 11 is well below average. The standard of work in English literature is also well below average. Pupils write with understanding of Shakespearean texts and pre-20th century poetry but with little analysis. They read a wide variety of texts and can make simple inferences. A key feature in the pupils' work is their ability to place texts in a social context and

then compare them with modern society. They can evaluate character and theme at a basic level and produce detailed writing assignments. Overall, presentation of work is careful. Pupils can examine media texts and research references. They do not always use standard and non-standard English appropriately. A minority of pupils rely too heavily on the teacher and their work is brief, lacking in detailed understanding and insight.

71 Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress. They receive good support from their class teachers and special educational needs staff, to plan lessons and devise strategies for success.

72 The quality of teaching and learning is good, and there are examples of very good teaching and learning. In a small minority of lessons, pupils learn less than they should because the pace is too slow and successful classroom management strategies are lacking. Also, in a small minority of otherwise satisfactory lessons, work for different groups of pupils is not matched closely enough to their needs, so some can flounder and take up unnecessary amounts of the teacher's time asking questions. In the very good lessons, there is a brisk pace; pupils are clearly motivated and a large amount of work is completed. Pupils enjoy exchanging ideas with each other and their teacher in an atmosphere of achievement and respect. Pupils respond well to their teachers' care for their achievement and this helps develop the good relationships evident in the department. In a Year 10 lesson on Martin Luther King's speeches, the pupils thoroughly appreciated working to produce a structured, well-informed discussion. They consciously shaped language for a purpose and presented their findings confidently. This is because the teacher sensitively drew out their ideas and encouraged their thinking. In a Year 9 lesson on Macbeth, pupils worked energetically to draft and polish their work and spoke meaningfully about their tasks. Classical music playing in the background added to the atmosphere. They produced a large amount of work and enjoyed it immensely; the teacher's enthusiasm infected the pupils, whose careful and sensitive analysis encouraged and developed their love of the subject. In a small minority of lessons pupils are not sufficiently involved by the teacher, so they lose interest and less work is produced. Homework clubs are popular and allow the pupils to solve problems and complete work in a supportive environment. Pupils' work is marked regularly and the department makes satisfactory use of assessment information. More detailed analysis of data would target individual pupils to continue to help raise standards. Marking is consistent and constructive, and encourages pupils to improve their work. It is occasionally bland and lacking in focused targets for improvement.

73 The leadership and management of the department are good. The new head of department has a clear educational vision that inspires both teachers and pupils. Teachers share the preparation of schemes of work and departmental responsibilities; as a result, they are regularly discussing what is best for the pupils. They observe each other's lessons and this sharing of good practice is improving teaching styles, classroom management and pupils' learning. Procedures for assessment are clear but are not used sufficiently rigorously to set individual pupils' targets. Pupils' work is cross-checked for progress, standards and capability.

74 Progress since the last inspection has been good. Standards have fallen but these were based on a different cohort. Literacy teaching has been used effectively to target further improvements in English language. There is increased access to the computers, so pupils' opportunities to improve their skills of drafting and re-drafting work are improved. Teaching and learning have improved. Assessment still requires more rigorous focus. Standards are beginning to rise, and, with the shared commitment to sharing good practice and attention to identified areas for improvement, the department has the capacity to succeed even further.

Drama

75 The provision for drama is **outstanding**.

Strengths

Excellent achievement of the pupils as a direct result of the outstanding teaching and learning. Excellent relationships between staff and pupils provide an atmosphere of high expectations and success.

Extra-curricular activities enhance the social and moral development of the pupils.

76 The provision of drama in Years 7 to 11 adds depth and breadth to the curriculum. Results in national tests in 2001 were well above the national average at GCSE, and pupils gained results that were better than those in all other subjects that they studied. This represents outstanding achievement because pupils' prior attainment was well below average. Standards in the work observed during the inspection were well above the levels expected nationally and pupils continue to make excellent achievement.

77 The quality of teaching is outstanding, resulting in excellent learning. Teachers are committed to the subject and contribute to the wider education it gives the pupils. In particular, the drama teachers successfully put emphasis on encouraging decision-making skills, and providing opportunities for pupils to think for themselves. At the same time, the teachers' requirements for pupils to visit theatres and to empathise with others help to develop their independence. Pupils learn so well because lessons are very well prepared and maintain a brisk pace. Consequently, all pupils gain the maximum insight into the subject as well as gaining knowledge of a wide range of sophisticated drama skills. Emphasis on varied activities, personal development and collaborative work enhances the enjoyment and motivation of the pupils. In a Year 10 lesson, dramatic presentations were professional, carefully planned and executed and were skilful. This was because of the high expectations of the teacher and carefully targeted lesson planning. Pupils relish the subject and their enthusiasm and enjoyment is evident in all lessons. Excellent relationships between the staff and pupils create an atmosphere of high achievement and mutual respect. In a Year 11 lesson pupils dramatised a poem and expressed sadness, anger and fear which moved the audience and the inspector. All pupils are taught to operate the computerised lighting desk. In the lessons seen complete darkness lifted to spotlight the performers and faded for the conclusion. This helped create dramatic tension and a theatrical atmosphere. The teaching extends the learning of all pupils, including the gifted and talented and those with special educational needs. This was seen in all lessons. In a Year 8 lesson pupils worked collaboratively to develop mime and the least able pupils made stunning representations. The contribution made by the department to the social and moral development of the pupils is also partly responsible for their success. They are able to discuss serious issues such as race, the homeless and class in an informed and sensitive manner.

78 A wide range of extra-curricular activities contributes to the positive ethos of the school. In the prestigious annual production, staff and a large number of pupils work with many departments, which encourages collaboration in different disciplines and develops the excellent relationships. Accommodation and resources are excellent as pupils are taught in professionally equipped drama studios and are taught to use the facilities as a matter of course. The leadership and management of the department are outstanding. The head of department has a clear vision and excellent relationships with his teachers.

Literacy

79 Literacy skills across the curriculum are below average. The school recognises this and takes it seriously. The National Literacy Strategy has been used to aid the teaching of literacy skills across the school. The literacy co-ordinator is a member of the senior management team and is supported by the second in the English department. Work has also been done with the guidance of the local education authority. Schemes of work, lesson plans and resources have been provided for all staff. Whole-school training days and departmental workshops have helped to raise the awareness of literacy and its importance in raising pupils' standards. The provision is therefore good.

80 A range of texts, in all subjects, encourages the use of technical and specialist vocabulary. In science, art, English and drama, pupils used technical language to good effect. They are less secure in mathematics, French and physical education. Extended writing requires development in most subjects and a wider range of reading texts is needed. Speaking is too often confined to short answers to teachers' questions, and listening skills, particularly in the less well managed lessons, are weak. The library supports all subjects, for instance by stocking specialised texts and multi-media materials. The stock is limited, however. The English department has dictionaries and thesauruses available in each classroom; key words are displayed prominently in most classrooms to familiarise pupils with these words. Carefully censored Internet access allows pupils to research topics in detail in the City Learning Centre. Writing at length is a feature in English, and most subjects take the teaching of basic literacy skills seriously. As a result, pupils gradually make improvements to their spelling, reading and writing skills, particularly in Years 7 to 9.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

Teaching is good: teachers and pupils are clear about the intended learning outcomes. Teachers provide clear explanations and lessons are well structured.

Pupils' attainment is improving.

Pupils' behaviour, attitudes and relationships with each other and with staff are good in the vast majority of lessons.

Very good provision is made for those pupils who are gifted and talented and for those who have significant learning and/or behavioural difficulties.

Departmental documentation, especially the improvement plan, is good.

Areas for improvement

The leadership of the department needs a sharper focus when checking on aspects of the department's work, especially standards of pupils' work.

There is a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching and learning that needs to be improved. Even within otherwise satisfactory lessons, greater account should be taken of the different needs of pupils.

Assessment information could be used to better effect, especially for setting targets to enable pupils to improve their work.

82 The results of the National Curriculum tests taken by Year 9 pupils in 2001 are well below both the national average and the average of pupils in similar schools. Thirty-seven per cent of pupils gained the nationally expected standard (level 5 or above) against a national average of sixty-five per cent. Only thirteen per cent gained level 6 or above, against a national average of forty-two per cent. There is no difference in the results of boys and girls.

83 Results from recent tests, together with evidence from lessons observed and from scrutiny of the work of pupils in Year 9, indicate that standards are slightly better than those of last year. Many, but well under half of the pupils approaching the end of Year 9, have acquired the expected level of knowledge, skills and understanding across all aspects of mathematics and especially in written computation, including manipulation of fractions and decimals.

84 Pupils are able to competently apply their knowledge and understanding when identifying the appropriate formula for calculating areas of cross-sections of various prisms. Pupils can distinguish prisms from other three-dimensional shapes. They can apply their knowledge and understanding of reflective symmetry. Their skills of written computation are, in most cases, adequate, but some pupils too readily turn to calculators when they could calculate mentally. Higher attainers are working at a level above that expected nationally; for example, they are able to select and apply the appropriate formulae in order to solve problems involving speed, time and distance.

85 The positive impact of the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy is already evident in pupils' computational skills; for example, most Year 7 pupils can accurately add two decimal numbers, and higher attainers can also subtract, multiply and divide such numbers.

86 GCSE results for 2001 are well below the national average. Close to 11 per cent of pupils in the school gained A*-C compared with forty-eight per cent nationally. However, there is improvement in standards this year, with higher results predicted on the basis of mock examinations. This is also supported by the work seen during the inspection. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.

87 In lessons seen, Year 11 pupils, aspiring to attain GCSE grade C, are able to simplify fractions in the context of solving ratio problems. However, for a significant number of pupils, insecure knowledge and recall of multiplication facts hinder progress. Higher attainers in Year 11 are able to produce scatter graphs from Olympic records. They can plot a line of best fit and use this to extrapolate likely results for future years. They have a secure knowledge and understanding of correlation. In another lesson, these same pupils produced cumulative frequency diagrams that, in most cases, were accurately drawn. In a few instances, use of a pen rather than pencil impaired the accuracy of drawings.

88 Pupils have many appropriate and relevant opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding in other subjects. In science, pupils are often involved in measuring and graph work. Most accomplish these tasks readily, but some low attainers are given additional help by science teachers to enable them to complete elementary tasks such as multiplying by 10 and in recognising that a rule marked in millimetres can be used to measure in centimetres. Some excellent opportunities arise in design and technology, for example, in pupils' very recent use of computer-aided design technology, within the City Learning Centre. Similarly, within food technology, pupils show accurate measurement of ingredients. In physical education, pupils preparing for GCSE show good use of graphs, and calculate accurately measures such as body mass index and pulse rates.

89 The mathematics department has already begun to liaise with other departments to introduce a cohesive and unified approach to developing numeracy across the school.

90 It is clear that standards are rising across the school, but there has been insufficient progress in standards in the last two years.

91 The standard of teaching and learning observed during the current inspection is at least good in more than half the lessons seen. However, the quality of teaching and learning is variable, ranging from two excellent lessons to two lessons with unsatisfactory teaching. A key factor common to these less successful lessons is ineffective classroom management and control of pupils that results in negligible gains in learning and unsatisfactory attitudes, concentration and behaviour from pupils.

92 Throughout the department, teachers have a good knowledge of their subject. They plan and prepare lessons carefully and have, in the vast majority of cases, clear intentions as to what pupils will learn. Such lessons begin promptly and proceed at a brisk pace that keeps the vast majority of pupils engaged in their learning. Classes are managed well in most lessons. Teachers' good quality exposition is logically structured to promote good learning. Teachers make effective use of good quality textbooks and worksheets. In many lessons the same work is set for all pupils which means that the more able are required to complete questions that are too easy when they might be better challenged by moving them on to more difficult questions earlier. In a few lessons, and in marking of pupils' work, teachers do not always give appropriate attention to developing pupils' literacy skills, for example by emphasising spellings of key vocabulary. This aspect of mathematics requires much greater emphasis. By contrast, teachers give pupils frequent opportunities to apply speaking and listening skills, often through questions that are well pitched to the needs of pupils.

93 Very good teaching was observed in lessons involving pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 and excellent teaching was seen in one lesson in each of Years 10 and 11.

94 This high quality of teaching is characterised by very good relationships, with high levels of mutual respect between the teachers and pupils, and by the teachers' enthusiasm and enjoyment of the subject, which impact significantly upon pupils' attitudes and learning. In such lessons, a positive and productive ethos exists that encourages and involves pupils, for example, in demonstrating or explaining their working. Teachers deal sensitively with pupils' misconceptions and their high expectations of their pupils are often rewarded by the good standards of presentation in pupils' written work. However, in too many instances, the quality of presentation of pupils' written work could be improved. Teachers make accurate assessments of pupils' learning, but do not sufficiently use this information to determine the next steps in learning.

95 In the vast majority of lessons pupils behave well and show good attitudes to learning. However, in a few lessons observed a significant minority of pupils lacked concentration, interest and on occasion, were poorly behaved. The incidence of such attitudes is related to the quality of teaching and relationships with the teacher. Thus, the key challenge to the department if it is to improve learning and thereby raise attainment, is to improve pupils' attitudes by consistently presenting mathematics as a subject to be enjoyed. This is a stated and achievable objective within the department's aims. The school now needs to ensure that all members of the department benefit from sharing the existing aspects of good practice.

96 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in most lessons and especially when additional support is available. In a Year 10 lesson, involving lower attaining pupils in calculating the area of triangles, the effective work of the classroom assistant contributed to the excellent teaching and learning that took place. Similarly, in an excellent Year 11 lesson involving higher attainers, the valuable work of the mentor for gifted and talented pupils not only ensured that a particular pupil made good progress but also contributed to the class teacher's management of a few potentially difficult pupils.

97 Those very few pupils for whom English is an additional language are fluent in English and participate fully in class discussions and achieve similarly to their peers. Homework is set as established practice; it is checked appropriately and makes an effective contribution to learning.

98 The department is soundly led and managed but has not yet impacted sufficiently to bring about the improvement required in pupils' attainment. Departmental documentation is of a good standard especially the handbook and schemes of work. Strategic planning is good, resulting in a department improvement plan that identifies appropriate areas for development and the requisite resources. However, systems for checking the work of the department are at present underdeveloped. This needs to be improved by: undertaking a comprehensive analysis of test results; making better use of assessment information; and making more frequent checks on the standards of pupils' work. Staff work hard and are committed to raising standards, for example by offering extra lessons outside the normal teaching day. Accommodation is satisfactory and is enhanced by very good quality classroom displays.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

The very good teaching.
Pupil-teacher relationships.
Behaviour and attitudes of the pupils.
Comprehensive schemes of work.
Wall displays and celebration of pupils' work.

Areas for improvement

Day-to-day assessment.

100 Standards of work seen during the inspection are average by the end of Year 9 and below average at the end of Year 11. These standards are achieved because the teaching is very good. Pupils' achievement in relation to standards on entry are good in Years 7 to 9 and average in Years 10 and 11. These standards may not be reflected in external examinations due to the high level of absence in Years 10 and 11 and the significant number of lessons that have been taught by different supply teachers over recent months. At the time of the inspection only six of the eight teachers in the department are regular specialists. The remaining two are supply teachers, one a newly qualified science teacher in the first term of teaching and the other a non-scientist offering cover lessons only. It is to the credit of the department that this staffing situation, together with recent difficulties inherent in rebuilding and relocation, have not prevented the degree of improvement that is taking place. Pupils' very good attitude to learning, the high quality of the schemes of work and the good use of available resources cause the quality of learning in science to be good in Years 10 and 11 and very good in Years 7 to 9. Pupils make good progress over Years 7 to 9 and average progress over Years 10 and 11.

101 Results in attainment tests for 14 year olds were well below the national average in 2001 but broadly in line with the results of similar schools. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Results for 2002 should be similar.

102 Results in the GCSE examination in 2001 were well below the national average. Results this year will be well below the national average for A*-C but will show some improvement over recent

years. At the last inspection in 1997 A*-C passes had improved to 23 per cent of the cohort. They should be at a similar level in 2002 against a national average of 48 per cent in 2001 and a school target of 16per cent.

103 Standards seen in Years 10 and 11 are below average. Higher attaining pupils in Year 10 were well able to deduce the formula for the homologous series of alkanes and alkenes and knew how the size of a molecule could affect its properties. Pupils in Year 11 understood the relationship between velocity, time and acceleration and could use the formulae in calculations and express them graphically. Middle attaining pupils recalled previous work on the solar system in one lesson but were unable, even when prompted, to give water as a source of hydrogen in another. Lower attaining pupils knew the terms condensation, evaporation and distillation but the teacher had to work hard to establish that in fractional distillation the fraction coming over first had the lowest boiling point.

104 On entry the level of attainment of pupils in Year 7 are of below average standard, many with very poor numeracy and presentation skills. By Year 9 an improvement is evident in both although some pupils' lack of skills still inhibit the acquisition of scientific knowledge and understanding. Higher attaining pupils in Year 9 could explain the cause of bending of a heated bimetallic strip. When observing an experiment to show that warming a liquid results in it expanding along a tube, one pupil not only noted that the liquid seemed to contract a little initially but was able to deduce that this was caused by the expansion of the container flask. Year 8 pupils could give good definitions of digestion. Year 7 pupils designed their own experiment to prove their prediction that seeds needed water, oxygen and a suitable temperature to germinate. Middle attainers in Year 9 could relate the features of different vehicles to their respective purposes and the part played by friction in determining these features. Year 8 pupils using choice chambers to determine the preference of woodlice for damp or dry conditions were able to adapt the apparatus to test preference for light or dark but did not appreciate that the first experiment would be better done in the dark. Lower attaining Year 9 pupils had trouble remembering 'diffusion' when considering the effect of heat on particles in a gas but could work out the consequences of its expansion. Year 7 pupils could not fully list the properties of a liquid but did accept that smaller molecules move faster than larger at the same temperature.

105 The pupils belonging to ethnic minority groups are fully integrated and achieve equally well. Pupils with special educational needs often have effective help from support teachers. They also benefit from the differentiated materials provided in the schemes of work and lesson plans and the fact that the teachers are fully aware of and cater for their needs. Extension work is available for gifted and talented pupils. The gender of pupils has no significant effect upon achievement.

106 All pupils study for the GCSE double award in science. This is an improvement since the last inspection. A small number of Year 11 pupils opt for a vocational course that includes some science and if they show sufficient progress they can be entered for the single science award and usually achieve a grade. There is still a significant number of pupils who are not entered for the examination because of prolonged absence.

107 Scientific investigation was seen in a number of lessons across all attainment levels. There is clear emphasis on the design and planning of investigations. Pupils routinely predict outcomes and know to take, repeat and average out readings for greater accuracy. The meaning of a fair test and ways to ensure one was also emphasised in lessons. The use of graphs and line of best fit varies with attainment level, especially in years 7-9.

108 Considerable use of ICT by teachers was observed but none by pupils. There is provision for its use in the schemes of work and facilities exist for classes and individuals to pursue independent learning exercises. Good use of word processing in the individual work of pupils was observed.

109 Teaching in science is very good. No lesson was seen that was less than satisfactory. In over 90 per cent of the lessons seen, the teaching was good and in over 50 per cent very good. This is an improvement on the last inspection. Teachers' lesson plans are individually prepared to an agreed departmental formula which takes into account the needs of the pupils in each class. Learning objectives are clearly stated at the beginning of lessons and a review of progress is conducted at the end. Lessons have variety of activity, pace and challenge. Teachers' expectations of pupils are high, sometimes very high and relationships are respectful but friendly. Management of the pupils by the teachers is very good and sometimes excellent. Potential troublemakers are skilfully handled in a non-confrontational manner preventing disruption and allowing teachers to create the learning environment in which open-ended questions can be extensively used to encourage pupils to think for themselves.

110 The quality of the lessons and the skills of the teachers contribute to the very good behaviour and co-operation of the pupils who apply themselves willingly to task across all attainment levels. Not one instance of disrespect for a teacher was observed. The pupils work together well in groups and were often seen to help each other. The extent to which pupils accept responsibility for their own learning is satisfactory overall. Regular homework is set and expected and facilities are provided in school in a homework club. Facilities are also provided for revision and guidance during the holidays preceding external examinations and extra attention is given to those pupils whose expected GCSE D grade might be converted to a C. The library now has a supply of the textbooks used in lessons but there is still no provision for pupils to take textbooks home.

111 The department is well managed and has made good progress since the last inspection. The nucleus of regular teachers work well as a team in keeping with the school ethos and are clearly dedicated to high standards and the well-being of the pupils. Other than the improvements noted above, the tracking of pupils' progress has been further refined and the 'Cognitive Acceleration through Science' course is now taught to half classes in Years 7 and 8. Procedures for the formal monitoring of the quality of teaching have been held back by the pressures resulting from amalgamation but are ready for imminent implementation. Although assessment is good overall, the routine day-to-day marking of books does little to show pupils how they might improve.

112 Science makes a very good contribution to the social, moral, spiritual and cultural education in school through schemes of work and the teachers provide good role models even if they have a tendency to forget the wonder of what they teach.

113 Good laboratory and resource provision is well managed by dedicated technicians who are very generous with their own time. The teaching environment is greatly enhanced by the helpful and relevant wall displays of high quality including some which celebrate pupils' achievement.

114 Health and safety procedures are in place but not always monitored.

ART AND DESIGN

115 Overall the quality of provision in art is **very good**.

Strengths

The relationships between the teachers and the pupils are very good, promoting a very effective learning environment in lessons.

The management of the subject is very effective in the promotion of high expectations and the provision of opportunities for all pupils. .

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Therefore evidence from work seen indicates that achievement in Year 11 is at present higher than previous GCSE examination attainment would suggest.

Areas for improvement

To provide more opportunity for students in all year groups to experience computer-aided art applications. This would be of particular benefit to students studying GCSE art.

116 By the end of Year 9 the standard of attainment is average when compared with national expectation. Pupils experience a wide variety of creative experiences. As a direct consequence of the level of provision, combined with very effective teaching, a majority of pupils show an interest in their work, quality of learning is good and therefore the majority of pupils are achieving considerable success. By the end of Year 9, a majority of the pupils draw and paint with a reasonable degree of confidence, have experience of ceramics, print making and some three-dimensional construction and have some appreciation for the use of colour, line and tone. Evidence from the work seen indicates that the overall achievement of the pupils from Year 7 to Year 9 is good. They increase their knowledge and understanding about certain artists and cultures. Some interesting work is being produced. In Year 7 pupils have produced intricate patterns based on the work of Gustav Klimt. In Year 8 pupils were gaining in skills and knowledge, creating self-portraits in the style of Roy Lichtenstein. Year 9 students were being introduced to the work of Ben Nicholson, creating still life paintings in the Cubist style. Homework assignments are improving research skills. Pupils are willing to discuss their work and a significant proportion show pride in their achievements which is a reflection of the quality of teaching and learning. Overall, pupils make good progress and those with special educational needs or who are designated as gifted or talented also progress well.

117 In the 2001 GCSE results grades A*-C were slightly below the national average, but better than most other subjects within the school curriculum. Evidence from the work seen indicates that standards are improving and will probably exceed the national average in 2002. Over the past two years the majority of pupils entered for GCSE art have achieved a pass. In the three years from 1999 attainment has shown a gradual improvement. The overall quality of learning is good. A majority of pupils handle a wide range of materials competently and show a sound understanding of their progress. Research skills are satisfactory but would improve if students realised the importance of completing homework assignments.

118 The majority of pupils from Years 7 to 13 make good progress due to the challenging and often diverse nature of the experiences on offer and very effective teaching. The achievement of the students in all year groups is improving considerably. Some of the present staff in the department are new to the school and under the direction of a relatively new head of department are providing a very positive influence on the quality of art education now being offered.

119 Throughout all year groups the majority of pupils are reasonably articulate when discussing their work and many are capable of understanding and using technical language. The promotion by teachers of key words in many lessons is having a positive effect upon the pupils' understanding of technical language within the subject. The attitude of the students in Years 7 to 9 is good and very good in Years 10 and 11. A majority of pupils show interest in their work and are justifiably proud of their achievements. A minority find sustained concentration, independent learning, problem solving, and an understanding of aesthetics difficult. These problems are more common with the less motivated pupils in Year 9 for whom the subject has little attraction. A majority of pupils are more than willing to share materials and ideas and assist in the distribution and collection of equipment in lessons.

120 Teaching is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. Approximately 20 per cent of lessons were excellent. The best lessons are challenging and well planned in order to provide all pupils with opportunities to progress and to attain levels of achievement commensurate with their abilities and aspirations. Pupils with special educational needs are well served through sensitive teaching and specially designed learning opportunities, which offer pupils the opportunity to succeed. Gifted and talented students are encouraged to develop originality in their work. Teachers provide them with a variety of learning opportunities and additional challenges. Classroom organisation and management are very effective. The relationships between the teachers and the pupils are often very good, providing a pleasant atmosphere in the lessons. Regular references are made to the work of significant artists and cultures in order raise creative and visual appreciation and awareness. Connections are also established in many lessons to the school literacy strategy. Pupils are encouraged to read as part of their research into artists and cultures. All classrooms within the department and certain public areas around the school contain excellent displays of work, providing an opportunity for pupils to appreciate the standards of work being produced. Assessment is effective and is used as an influence on future curriculum development and lesson planning. Assessment includes a certain amount of pupil self-assessment and therefore when questioned a majority of the pupils were well aware of teacher expectations and their own strengths and weaknesses. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are given target grades for examinations and are capable of discussing their progress towards achieving their targets. Work is marked at periodic intervals, usually linked to the completion of a project. The marking of work is always reinforced by supportive comments by the teachers and therefore the pupils in all year groups are well aware of their level of achievement and what they have to do to make further progress. Pupils with special educational needs are given individual learning targets, which are reviewed regularly by the teachers within the department. The department supports the school programme for gifted and talented pupils and also identifies pupils with particular talent in art, offering them extension studies and extra-curricular time in the department. Many pupils would benefit from an increased development of independent learning skills instead of relying on their teachers to provide them with ideas and advice.

121 The management of the department is very good, promoting high standards in lessons and giving clear direction. The teachers work as a very effective team. The department is fortunate to have the services of an extremely effective technician who often acts as a classroom assistant providing invaluable help to both the teachers and the pupils. The subject meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Accommodation is good and made attractive by displays of pupils' work. The quality of work on display should be available to a wider audience. Display cabinets and quality display boards would assist in the celebration of pupils' achievements. Resources are sufficient for need and used effectively.

122 The last inspection drew attention to the fact that there was insufficient use of computer applications. There is still a need for further development particularly in the provision of software. It was also stated that work in Key Stage 4 lacked variety. Throughout all key stages opportunities for students are now wide ranging.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

123 Overall the quality of provision is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

Impact of ICT, notably CAD (computer assisted design) is beginning to show in standards of work.
Developments in CAM (computer assisted manufacturing) are in hand.
Pupils' behaviour is overall satisfactory and often good.

There is a positive staff ethos in terms of development across the department.
Pupils' individual needs are met on a day-to-day basis.
Recent restructure of the department and appointment of a head of department.

Areas for improvement

Management of the two main individual subject areas that collectively deliver the National Curriculum is satisfactory; however, the co-ordination is not yet secure.

Ensure assessment is used more effectively to inform curriculum planning and monitoring of pupils' progress to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

Review procedures with reference to risk assessment.

124 Standards in design and technology on entry to the school are very low. Pupils' practical skills are below average and they have very limited appreciation of the principles of design. In the statutory teacher assessments, girls' results were significantly higher than the boys' and a little over one third of the cohort reached the national expectation, level 5 or above.

125 In the work seen between the ages 11 and 14, standards were variable and overall below average compared to those expected nationally at the age 14. Pupils' previous experience and opportunities to learn and practise the range of design and technology skills are variable. They do not always recognise and use knowledge and skills acquired in earlier work to inform increasingly demanding 'design and make' activities in new situations. They use a satisfactory range of hand and machine tools safely for designing and making food products and items from resistant materials and textiles.

126 Standards in graphic work are generally low and this hinders progress in designing and making. Research, investigation and modelling activities lack depth and rigour, for example in Year 9, when pupils were using mainly paper and card to produce a bedroom layout. All of the outcomes were very similar and opportunities were missed in terms of developing understanding of scale, proportion, fitness for purpose and appropriateness of construction and materials. Research, analysis and evaluation are, however, used more effectively as tools for learning in design and technology food and textiles.

127 Skills using computer assisted design are beginning to show in standards of work produced by the pupils.

128 The 2001, GCSE results were overall well below the national averages, with broad variations between each of the subjects. In design and technology food, graphic products and resistant materials, results were well below the national averages at the higher grades A*-C. Results in design and technology textiles were good and similar to the national average. In all subjects at the higher grades, results were above, or well above, the overall school averages.

129 During the last three years there has been a mixed pattern in results across each of the subjects. In design and technology food and resistant materials there has been a steady decline in pupils achieving the higher grades A*-C. Results in design and technology graphic products have remained similar for the last two years, following a significant improvement in 1999/2000. In design and technology textiles the dramatic decline in 1999/2000 was equally reversed in 2000/2001. The number of entries have risen steadily in 2000/2001, with the exception of design and technology graphic products, which have remained similar.

130 In the work seen during the inspection, standards were variable and overall there is still under achievement in graphical skills. For example, in Year 11 resistant materials the majority of pupils did

not fully understand how to produce a working drawing prior to cutting and joining the materials. However, the use of ICT as a design tool is beginning to improve the presentation of pupils' work. The acquisition of a digital camera in design and technology food and textiles has introduced new and effective systems to record and evaluate work. Here higher attaining pupils consolidate their skill acquisition through good research, organisation and evaluation and produce portfolios of a good standard.

131 Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to others because they are well supported in lessons by specialist teachers and teacher assistants who are fully aware of their individual needs. The vast majority of pupils have positive attitudes towards design and technology and clearly enjoy the subject and in particular the practical aspects. Behaviour is generally satisfactory and often good. A small minority occasionally spoil the concentration of others by immature behaviour and or calling out unnecessarily in lessons. Poor and/or erratic attendance slows progress for a significant minority of pupils.

132 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It was variable across the material areas that collectively deliver the National Curriculum. It was better in design and technology food and textiles where the majority of lessons were good. In the best lessons teachers quickly establish their expectations of pupils with different prior attainments and enable them all to achieve success. Lessons are well organised and structured and there is a clear sense of purpose and direction to the learning. Display and resource materials are well used to stimulate ideas. Teaching was unsatisfactory on two occasions with key issues for development in a further two of the lessons seen. In these lessons there was a lack of organisation and the teachers' subject knowledge had not been translated into appropriate learning objectives. Teachers were over-directive and the focus for the lesson was directed towards the task at the expense of developing learning to the depth and breadth expected. Pace was slow and though teachers in some instances have records of prior attainment, this was not always used to inform planning.

133 Schemes of work for pupils between the ages of 11 and 14 have in some instances been replaced and/or adapted to include the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) schemes. Curriculum time allocation is similar to the national average. A significant number of pupils, as a result of the rotational course structure however, view design and technology as a series of discrete units of work. The department should recognise and establish common features within these units of work and consider ways of improving continuity between the separate areas. Opportunities for pupils to research a variety of customs and cultures in what is a multicultural school should be reviewed, for example in design and technology resistant materials, when designing and making a piece of jewellery and how body adornment is symbolised in other cultures.

134 Day-to-day leadership and management is satisfactory, but co-ordination is not yet secure. The very recent restructuring of the departments and appointment of a new head of department is a positive step in addressing this issue. The department needs to critically review procedures for identifying risk and for ensuring health and safety requirements are met.

135 Staffing issues have resulted in the appointment of many long-term temporary and supply teachers. The ethos across the department is positive and there is a positive attitude in terms of future development. The technicians in both areas make valuable contributions to the running of the departments.

136 Accommodation in terms of space, layout and suiting of rooms is good. Resources for the teaching of CAD and CAM as a result of the City Learning Centre link are excellent.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

Teachers plan lessons well.
Resources are used effectively.
Teaching is good.

Areas for improvement

Extend the use of ICT to support learning and research.
Marking, so that it is helpful to pupils.
Integrate the school's SMSC policy into lessons to give pupils greater understanding of their learning.

138 GCSE results are below average, both at the higher grades (A*-C) and across the full range. In 2001, the girls obtained higher grades than did the boys. There is a pronounced dip in the results when compared with those reported in the last report.

139 In the work seen during the inspection, the standards at the end of Year 9 are below national averages. Standards on entry and for pupils joining the school during Years 8 and 9 show that both are experiencing difficulties with written and oral work due to weak literacy skills and geographical knowledge. Pupils of all abilities demonstrated in their work or lessons an understanding of some of the processes involved in both physical and human geography and their related effects on the environment and human activity. This was clearly demonstrated in a lesson on flooding where the innovative use of computer-generated resources greatly enhanced pupils' understanding of the effects on people and their local environment. As pupils progress through Years 7, 8 and 9 they show some confidence in finding information from text, maps, diagrams and photographs but their skills in using computers are not as yet fully developed. Higher attaining pupils can, when given the opportunity, write well on a given topic but do not have enough opportunities to attempt pieces of extended writing. There was little evidence of the use of graphs, a contribution that work in geography can make to numeracy. The subject does not provide a sufficient range of text and worksheets to address the different levels of ability within groups. The work of girls is at a slightly higher level than the boys. Pupils with special educational needs make significant progress in working towards the targets laid down in their individual education plans. This is particularly apparent when they receive support. The use of key words has been introduced in geography and is beginning to have some effect.

140 In the work seen during the inspection, pupils were working below national averages at the end of Year 9. Pupils' achievement relative to standards at the end of Year 9 shows some improvement; however, this is rather tentative at the time of the report. Pupils are making progress in their geographical knowledge, understanding and use of geographical skills. While average and below average attaining pupils have texts and work that reflect their needs, the higher attaining pupils need more challenging work and suitable texts to make further advances. In a lesson on, 'Managing resources and tourism', computer-generated case study material reinforced work the pupils had done in previous lessons.

141 Pupils' attitudes were generally positive and where they were not this did not affect the learning in the lessons. Most pupils came prepared to work and concentrate on the tasks they were given. The majority of pupils respond well to the firm demands placed on them by their teachers. They generally work well together and take responsibility for their work. During the inspection behaviour was good and any minor incidents were quickly dealt with.

142 The quality of teaching quality of teaching in all years is good with some that is satisfactory in Years 7, 8 and 9. The quality of learning is similar. Lessons are usually well prepared and draw on an appropriate range of activities and resources. However, all staff do not give enough opportunities to use computers to support learning. All lessons observed had appropriate aims but these were not always shared with pupils. In many lessons, teachers began with a review of previous work, to assist pupils to recall and build on their learning so that they could progress in their knowledge and understanding. Teachers have a good command of their subject and tasks are mostly matched to the needs of pupils, but more could be expected of more able pupils. Question and answer sessions are well used to check previous work and that new learning has been clearly understood. When oral assessment was given it greatly enhanced pupils' involvement and learning. Marking is regular but more constructive comments on how pupils can make adjustments to their work in future would be beneficial. Reports, while giving some indication as to how a pupil is progressing, would benefit from setting targets for the future.

143 The management of the department is satisfactory and improving. Accommodation is good and the availability of resources is satisfactory. The curriculum needs to be continually reviewed to ensure that it reinforces key skills and approaches to reflect the differing levels of ability. Geographical visits are attempted locally on shopping hierarchies and local meteorological studies. Fieldwork extends the work in classrooms and should be included in all years. The department has dealt with some of the issues in the last report but needs to give more attention to the use of computers, monitoring and evaluation and the provision of background reading material on the subject.

HISTORY

144 Overall the provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

Teachers plan lessons well.

Resources are used effectively.

Teaching is satisfactory with some that is good.

Areas for improvement

Increase the effective use of ICT to support learning and research.

Marking, so that it is more helpful to pupils.

Integrate the school's SMSC policy into lessons to give pupils greater understanding of their learning.

145 GCSE results are well below average at the higher grades (A*-C) and below average across the full range of grades. The improvements mentioned in the last report have not as yet shown up.

146 In the work seen during the inspection, standards at the end of Year 9 are below national expectations. Many pupils have a satisfactory understanding of historical knowledge and understanding of the period studied and can use source material to extract information and organise it according to their needs. They also had a satisfactory understanding of bias and were able to look critically at the material they were given to study. Many pupils can write short answers to what was requested of them but more able pupils would benefit from an opportunity to attempt extended writing; this, together with the use of appropriate text, would give greater challenge to their studies. Teachers did provide a range of resources but there was little in the way of differentiated work. The girls were progressing at a greater rate than were the boys. Pupils with special educational needs were often achieving their targets, particularly when supported. In a Year 7 lesson pupils had a clear idea of one issue of the time

about making a claim for the throne in 1066 when they prepared their claims and performed them in front of the class.

147 In the work seen during the inspection, pupils were working below national averages at the end of Year 11. Pupils' achievement relative to standards at the end of Year 9 is showing some satisfactory improvement. Many pupils show some confidence in using source material and do so satisfactorily and in their understanding of developments over time. Pupils were able at some length to write with confidence on a given topic. However, when using ICT to access source material and information, pupils need detailed guidance and specific tasks to find out what they need. Pupils with special educational needs often achieve their targets but would benefit from support. The girls were making slightly better progress than were the boys. In a lesson on the Nazi party and young people, pupils demonstrated that they had a clear idea of the effects of one over the other and this came out clearly in their work.

148 Pupils attitudes were generally positive and where they were not this did not interfere with their and others' learning. Many pupils came prepared to work and concentrate on what they had to study. Pupils responded well to the demands that were placed on them and they worked well together and took responsibility for their work.

149 The quality of teaching was satisfactory in all years with some that was good in Years 7 and 9. Lessons were well planned with clear aims and objectives; however, they were not always shared with pupils. When used effectively, targeted question and answer sessions at the beginning of a lesson promoted the pupils' awareness of their learning and this was further supported by linked homework tasks at the end. Teachers had a good command of their subject and used a range of activities and teaching styles to assist pupil learning. High expectations were usually set or were implicit and most pupils rose to meet them. Many tasks were matched to the needs of pupils but higher attaining pupils were not always sufficiently challenged and average and lower attaining pupils were not always kept on task. The department is beginning to use ICT to supplement the use of other resources; however, lessons need to be carefully structured so that pupils get full benefit from the use of new technology. Marking is regular but needs more constructive comments on how pupils can make improvements. Information that is shared with parents by reports would benefit from clear targets for the future.

150 The management of the department is satisfactory and is led by a new head of department who has clear ideas of how to raise standards. The curriculum needs to be reviewed to see that it reinforces key skills and approaches for the subject so that it reflects all levels of ability. Consideration ought to be given to visits to extend what is learnt in the classroom and pupils' experience. A medieval day and a member of the community who takes on the role of a Roman soldier for pupils brings life to their learning. The accommodation and the availability of resources are good.

151 The department has addressed the issues of the last report but needs to improve standards at the end of Year 11.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

152 Overall the quality of provision is very **good**.

Strengths

Quality of teaching is often good.

Leadership and management are good.

The profile and image of ICT in the school.

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are often good.
ICT facilities are very good and well used, including out of lessons and at breaktimes.
Links with the Thomas Telford Project (GNVQ).
The level of technical support.

Areas for improvement

The assessment and moderation of pupils' work and how these are used to inform planning.
Further develop the use of ICT across the curriculum and a review of progress in addressing this issue (as noted in the department improvement plan).
Explore all course programmes providing accreditation at age 16 in ICT.
Departmental improvement plan – to ensure that there is sufficient time for all of the planned developments to come to fruition and be evaluated.

153 Standards on entry are well below average but improving at various rates as pupils move through the school. By the age of 14 standards are variable and in the statutory teacher assessments over one third of the pupils at the age of 14 reached the national expectation, level 5 or above. The boys' and girls' results were similar and during the last three years there has been a steady but significant improvement.

154 The first entry for GCSE was made in 2001 and a little over one third of the 16 pupils entered gained the higher grades A*-C.

155 Progress in developing keyboard skills is slow and impeded because of the low levels of attainment in literacy and to some extent numeracy.

156 In Year 7, pupils understand how to log on to the network, access the Internet and use a variety of software applications. They can select a variety of font styles and sizes, save and import graphic pictures and use them effectively, for example, when producing an article or report of their own choice. Pupils in Year 8 have a good understanding of Powerpoint to produce a slide presentation. In Year 9, pupils produce databases, following the practical collection of data information; higher attainers work more quickly and accurately on this task.

157 The standard of work seen in specialist lessons up to the age of 14 is variable. The opportunities to learn and practise the range of ICT skills are hampered due to the rotational course structure in Years 7, 8 and 9. Pupils with special educational needs make at least satisfactory and often good progress. The work seen in Years 10 and 11 in specialist lessons is satisfactory and occasionally good. In Year 10 in GNVQ Intermediate (Thomas Telford Partnership) standards and progress are notably improving. Here pupils were interrogating databases with confidence and good levels of understanding. In Year 11, pupils studying GCSE evaluate their work and understand how to improve it and clearly understand the essential of clarity in presentation when producing a web site for a leisure centre.

158 The vast majority of pupils are positive about the subject, and work with interest and enthusiasm and show the ability to work independently. The higher attainers sustain their concentration and complete the tasks they are undertaking. Pupils' unfinished work is often directly linked to poor or erratic levels of attendance. There is limited evidence of the consistent use of ICT as a tool serving the needs in all subject areas. Good examples include the use of ICT in drama, in which pupils take responsibility, for example, in the control of lighting during productions.

159 The quality of teaching is satisfactory or good in all specialist lessons seen. It is consistently good in lessons for pupils between the age of 14 and 16 in GNVQ and GCSE. Where teaching is good, lessons are planned to a good standard and have suitable challenge, enabling pupils to move to a fuller

and deeper level of understanding through a series of sequenced steps. Relationships are good, and the skilled support given to pupils in their work quickly builds their confidence. On occasions there were good levels of independence and collaboration between pupils. Where teaching is satisfactory the methodology and lesson organisation did not always enable pupils to consolidate information from the previous lesson and impact remained on the level of factual knowledge. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and when present, teacher assistants are deployed effectively.

160 Behaviour is at least satisfactory and often good. However, a very small minority of pupils, in particular aged 11 to 14, spoil the concentration of others by immature behaviour and or calling out unnecessarily in lessons.

161 ICT is taught in Years 7, 8 and 9, as a discrete subject for one lesson per week, for alternate half terms. Unfortunately opportunities for the consistent application of ICT are hampered as a result of this carousel arrangement. Specialist ICT lessons and work in some departments allow for the coverage of elements of the Programmes of Study. The ICT department has identified the need to accelerate the use of ICT across all curriculum areas following the increasing number of interactive whiteboards which are now being installed.

162 Evaluation of the system for assessing and moderating pupils' achievements has been identified as an area for development and progress in addressing this issue is to be reviewed. This will also ensure consistency in terms of how assessment is used to inform planning. Teachers within the ICT department have secure computing skills; however, further training is needed for some teachers in other departments to ensure their skills are compatible with the significant changes that are taking place. For example, the recent introduction of computer assisted design is soon to be supplemented with computer assisted manufacturing.

163 Leadership and management of ICT are good. However, due to time constraints and the recent significant changes across the school, co-ordination of ICT across all subjects is not yet secure. Staffing issues have further hampered progress and resulted in devolving all teaching for pupils aged 11 to 14 to colleagues in other departments.

164 The profile of ICT in the school has been raised considerably in a very short period of time. This is as a direct result of the significant investment in terms of resources and commitment shown by the hard-working head of department. The department presents a positive image and this has been enhanced via the links established with the City Learning Centre and in providing specialist resources e.g. the professional sound recording studio and CAD/CAM room.

165 Accommodation and resources are very good and the level of technical support has a positive effect in ensuring the smooth running of the department.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

166 Overall the provision for modern foreign languages is **good**.

Strengths

The quality of teaching, particularly in Key Stage 3, which engages pupils and maintains their motivation.

The use of marking and assessment to inform planning and to enable pupils to improve.

The use of classroom display to provide a stimulating learning environment and to support learning.

Areas for development

Pupils are given insufficient opportunities to acquire and develop reading skills and to learn independently.

ICT resources are not fully exploited.

Pupils are given insufficient opportunities to use French spontaneously and to communicate real meaning.

167 Teacher assessments show below average standards at the end of Key Stage 3, with boys achieving lower results than girls. Inspection evidence shows that the majority of higher attaining pupils are achieving at the expected level. They can produce short pieces of writing to convey information and can refer to past and future events. They can note main points from longer written and spoken passages and can take part in short conversations. Lower attaining pupils tend to achieve in line with their abilities.

168 In 2001 and 2000 standards achieved in French GCSE examinations were well below national averages. In 2001 only 4.1 per cent and in 2000 4.3 per cent of candidates achieved grades A*-C. These results compare unfavourably with other subjects in the school and there has been a dip in performance since 1999. Pupils were also entered for Bengali, Panjabi and Urdu, but the numbers involved are too small to make valid comparisons with national data. Inspection evidence indicates that less able pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve in line with their abilities. These pupils can repeat from memory, but with limited pronunciation, take part in limited exchanges, can pick out words and phrases from passages spoken at normal speed, can note the main points of written texts and can write short passages. The work of higher attaining pupils shows evidence of longer pieces of writing, including reference to future and past events and of well-developed listening skills. Speaking is less developed. Conversations are very structured and pupils rely heavily on written prompts.

169 The quality of teaching was at least satisfactory in all lessons observed and good in over 50 per cent of lessons observed in Key Stage 3. In the best lessons clear objectives were set and monitored. Enthusiastic teaching, good planning, varied and well-paced activities engaged pupils and maintained their concentration and motivation. French was used effectively for routine classroom management, to set objectives and to present new language, thus providing pupils with challenge and a good model for pronunciation. English was used judiciously to maintain the flow of lessons. A range of techniques was deployed to help pupils learn, including mime, movement, song, rhythm and physical response. Games provided opportunities for pair and group work and active learning. Teachers had high expectations, challenging pupils to work harder and achieve more. Pupils were required to cope with the unexpected and to use French spontaneously.

170 In some lessons there was a lack of urgency and pace and pupils' concentration flagged. In these lessons teachers relied too much on English for basic interaction, denying pupils opportunities to hear French; there was a lack of challenge and pupils were given insufficient opportunities to use French for real communicative purposes.

171 Teachers made effective use of ICT to create high quality learning resources. In general, however, the ICT resources available to the department were underused to support teaching and learning and pupils were given few opportunities to apply or develop their ICT skills.

172 Learning was at least satisfactory in all lessons observed. Pupils consolidated previous knowledge and learned how to use new language and apply new concepts. Pupils' work showed clear progress, particularly in Key Stage 3. The overwhelming majority of pupils were well-behaved, enthusiastic, keen to learn and eager to please. Relationships were positive and constructive and pupils

co-operated with teachers and each other. When given the opportunity, pupils worked well in pairs and groups. Boys responded particularly well to challenge and competition. Written work was well presented. In Year 11 a minority of badly behaved pupils caused problems for their teachers and other learners.

173 The modern foreign language department is committed to providing equal opportunities. Teachers are aware of the needs of pupils with special educational needs and resources and teaching assistants are used well to support these pupils. A weekly French club and out-of-hours classes provide additional opportunities for keen learners. Alternative accreditation enables all to achieve success at Key Stage 4. Provision is made for minority languages as required.

174 An effective assessment system is used well to support learning. Individual targets are set and reviewed twice yearly. Pupils are assessed after each module of work. Results are held centrally. A marking policy is applied consistently and teacher's comments in books inform pupils how they can do better. National Curriculum level descriptions in pupil-friendly language and examples of levels are displayed in the departmental area and in every classroom, giving pupils yet more guidance in how to improve.

175 The department is well led. The head of department's clear vision for the department is expressed in a coherent development plan which supports the whole-school development plan. A well-organised departmental handbook outlining policies, procedures and responsibilities and a comprehensive scheme of work ensure consistency of provision and approach across the department. Effective systems for monitoring and evaluating have given the head of department a good overview of the strengths and weaknesses of her department. She has created an excellent team spirit. Staff are clearly supportive of each other and very committed to the development of the department. The department is well resourced both in textbooks and audio-visual hardware and these resources are well maintained and deployed effectively. Excellent use is made of display, both in the departmental area and in classrooms, to provide a stimulating learning environment and to support teaching and learning.

176 The department has made good progress since the last inspection. Although pupil performance at Key Stage 4 remains a concern, the quality of teaching has improved significantly and has become a strength.

177 Work observed in lessons and in exercise books suggests that pupils have now begun to make good progress in Key Stage 3 and it can be expected that the positive attitudes, behaviour and response in observed in Key Stage 3 will, in time, lead to improved GCSE results. Planning has improved and an assessment system is applied consistently. There are, however, still too few opportunities for pupils to cope with the unpredictable and to use French spontaneously.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

Teaching is good.

The department is well led and managed.

Good teacher expertise.

Effective use of ICT.

Pupils make good progress.

Improving resources.

Area for improvement

The breadth of the curriculum for Key Stage 3.

179 Standards in music at the end of both key stages are broadly in line with the national average. The cohort in Year 11 is small and only 4 out of 6 students are expected to gain grades in their GCSE examination, due to the long-term absence of 2 students. Whilst this will affect the overall grading for the department, it is anticipated that, out of the 4 students who have completed the course, 50 per cent will gain an A*-C grade, which is broadly in line with the national average.

180 By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils are able to recognise and sustain a melody and rhythm and play it on a guitar and a keyboard. They can recognise parts of a guitar and discuss effects or 'voices' for keyboard arrangements. They know how to hold a guitar correctly and some are able to use correct fingering on a keyboard. Many pupils use technical names and terms correctly, such as 'fret', 'Gamelan', 'ground bass' and 'pentatonic', and apply them correctly in spoken or written work. They are able to evaluate their own work and that of others. There were some good examples of this noted in some Year 8 written work, where they were evaluating the impact of work on Gamelan, and in composition lessons with Years 8 and 9. The majority of pupils can listen to musical selections and recognise differences and some display good aural awareness, for example, in a Year 7 lesson when a pupil was able to recognise difference in pitch when a phrase was accidentally begun on the wrong note. The majority of pupils can perform together to a satisfactory standard and, whilst some pupils are more reticent, others play with flair and confidence – for example, in a Year 9 lesson on 'Ground Bass' where one boy gave a particularly good interpretation of Pachelbel's 'Canon', and in a Year 9 drum lesson. There were no opportunities to hear singing in Key Stage 3 during the inspection, apart from one taped example of a solo performance.

181 By the end of Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, most pupils can perform with confidence and play/sing effectively in small ensembles. Some particularly good examples of composition were noted in every year group. ICT was used effectively to aid composition, and students demonstrated their ability to use software to create texture in sound, write freely about their work and explain why certain selections of instruments/dynamics had been selected. They are able to assess their work well. In one Year 11 class, pupils displayed an ability to recognise 'Renaissance' style, identify its characteristics and then compose in a way which reflected it. Students in the sixth form also demonstrated good technical knowledge in the recording studio.

182 The music department has made good progress since the last inspection and successfully addressed most of the areas of concern. Teaching is nearly always good and now seen as a strength of the department and additional members of staff are being appointed. Numbers of GCSE candidates have more than doubled and results in external examinations are slowly rising. New instruments and furniture have been purchased, providing a positive working environment and the basis for a greatly improved provision in instrumental tuition. There are now better and more realistic funding arrangements to both replace and develop and the curriculum now includes a strong focus on world music. There is still only one lesson a week, however, and a lack of planned, regular, extra-curricular musical activities. Whilst opportunities for pupils to develop listening skills have been built into schemes of work, there is still a need to address the overall schemes to ensure balance of each key element, including 'listening' to quality CDs.

183 The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. Clear musical objectives are set and lessons are well planned and organised with good introductions and effective plenaries. There is appropriate attention to safety procedures with keyboards and wires. Questioning is good, eliciting appropriate challenge and making good use of technical terms. Where appropriate, such as in a Year 7

keyboard and a Year 8 guitar lesson, good attention is paid to posture and hand positioning. In the peripatetic lesson observed (drum) good use was made of the instrument as a demonstration tool. Good teacher knowledge is shown, for example, concerning sonata form in Year 12 and microphone technique and sound mixing with Year 11. There are very positive teacher-pupil relationships. Lessons are generally well paced, although with both Year 7 classes observed, pace tended to slow down towards the end of the lesson and plenary sessions needed to have more impact. There is a good use of assessment in well-planned schemes of work. Provision for assessment in music is good throughout the school and pupils are encouraged to assess their own work and that of others. 'Level' requirements are clearly placed on both classrooms' walls to assist this. Whilst there are very useful performance and composition record sheets, the department now needs to develop a pro forma to record marks and attach it to pupils' workbooks in order to aid target identification.

184 The quality of learning was good in the majority of lessons observed. Pupils are enthusiastic and work well. In Key Stage 3, most pupils are able to sustain concentration and work independently. In Key Stage 4 and the sixth form, all pupils observed worked with real interest and commitment – for example, by the formation of ad hoc drum and guitar ensemble and regular individual after-school practice sessions without supervision. Good progress is made by the majority of pupils in acquiring knowledge about musical language and satisfactory progress in the development of listening skills. All pupils make good progress using guitars and keyboards in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form; particularly good progress is made in the application of computer software in composition. In the sixth form good progress is made in the use of recording studios and consequent problem solving when things go wrong. There is satisfactory support in Key Stage 3 and good support in Key Stage 4, for pupils with special educational needs. Higher attaining pupils are provided with suitable extension activities.

185 The music department is well led and managed. Documentation is thorough and there is a clear departmental improvement plan to raise standards, increase pupil take-up at GCSE. and provide a wider range of activities in order to gain a higher musical profile. The content of the schemes of work is generally well balanced but there need to be more opportunities for singing in Key Stage 3. The school also needs to consider developing an overall curriculum map to ensure breadth of coverage and note any areas of omission. There is very good liaison with peripatetic music staff and the school has recently extended the breadth of instrumental tuition, as well as the numbers of pupils receiving it. The school now needs to extend the provision to include brass and lower strings. There are a number of performance opportunities within the school, notably the joint annual production with the drama department and summer concert. Ad hoc groups of senior pupils make frequent use of the music department to practise during breaks and after school. There is also a brass band – but it is unable to meet the moment due to staff illness. Apart from this, however, there is a lack of regular, planned extra-curricular ensemble opportunities to enable pupils to make progress in band/singing/orchestral skills.

186 Music is taught in spacious, suited rooms. Practical new furniture has assisted the learning environment but lack of sound proofing between rooms can detract from pupils' concentration. The head of department has made a good start on auditing an excellent African drum and high quality electronic drum kit but the school needs to provide more large tuned percussion for use in composition with Key Stage 3. ICT provision and application are good and the school has access to an excellent, professional quality recording studio in the adjacent learning centre.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

187 The provision for physical education is **good**.

Strengths

Teaching.
Standards are above average in basketball in Year 8.
Leadership in the department.
Extra-curricular activities.

Areas for improvement

GCSE results.
Curriculum planning to ensure full coverage of the National Curriculum.
Assessment.
Reports to parents in Year 11.
Curriculum time for pupils in Year 11.

188 The standards achieved by pupils in the GCSE examinations in 2001 were well below the national average. They are well below those for similar schools but have improved over the past four years. Few girls sat the examination. The teacher assessments for pupils at the end of Year 9 in 2001 are below the national average but realistic.

189 By the end of Year 9 and Year 11 standards observed in lessons are below average although they vary within the activities taught. Pupils arrive at the school with a low level of skill, particularly in games. In Year 7 pupils know the basic rules of netball but passing and catching in the game are below average. They lack accuracy and do not understand the need to move into a space to receive a pass. In basketball, pupils in Year 8 demonstrate standards which are above the national average. They have above average knowledge of the game and use a range of different passes when playing. They understand the defensive strategies of the zone defence and compare it to a man to man method. Standards in rounders are good in Year 11. Pupils possess high-level skills in throwing and catching and play the game to a high level. Pupils have a good knowledge of the rules of the game but do not plan tactics and strategies of play. Standards in table tennis are well below those expected. Most pupils in Year 10 are unable to play a game or maintain a rally across the table. They have little understanding of the game and do not possess a range of shots to progress sufficiently.

190 The scrutiny of pupils' work in the GCSE course indicates standards which are below those expected. Written work is poorly presented by most pupils and is often copied, giving pupils no opportunity to complete any extended writing. In theory lessons pupils recognise large muscle groups and bones of the body but some are unable to name them correctly. Their knowledge of joints of the body is below average. In practical lessons, standards are in line with those expected in badminton where pupils in Year 11 play the game with knowledge and understanding. They demonstrate a range of shots and although the tactics of serving are not understood, they apply the skills into the game effectively. Pupils with a special educational need are integrated into lessons and make satisfactory progress. More able pupils are not often extended in their learning.

191 The quality of teaching is good throughout the department and ranges from satisfactory to very good in almost all lessons. There was one lesson, which was unsatisfactory, where pupils in Year 10 made insufficient progress in table tennis. A contributing factor was the poor attitudes of some pupils who were not co-operative with the teacher. Teachers' knowledge of the activities taught is good, but their awareness of the National Curriculum requirements is less secure. Planning is good and has clear learning objectives but lessons do not always consider the full ability range of pupils. In the best lessons, pace is brisk and pupils concentrate on the tasks set by the teacher. Very good teaching was seen in Year 8, where pupils were challenged to break down a zone defence in basketball. They collaborated in groups and responded positively to the high level of teacher knowledge. Teachers form good relationships with their pupils and are enthusiastic in their teaching. In Year 11 pupils responded to this enthusiasm by being on task and working hard with their teacher who gave them a range of

practices to improve their skills of throwing and catching in rounders. Some lessons begin with a lack of urgency and many finish late. This has an effect on the punctuality of pupils to their next lesson. At GCSE level, marking of pupils' work is not consistent. Comments are not always helpful for pupils to improve and teachers do not follow up unfinished work. Grades are not evident in most work and pupils do not always know the level they are working at.

192 The attitudes of pupils are generally good but there are a significant number of pupils, mainly girls, who have a poor attitude to the subject. There are too many non-participants, without a genuine reason, who do not see the value of physical education. They are sometimes disruptive in lessons and interfere with the progress of lessons, mainly in Years 9 and 10. Those pupils who respond positively co-operate well with their teachers and work hard. Their behaviour is often good, sometimes very good. They work collaboratively with a partner and in groups and support each other, particularly in trampolining, Year 8, and rounders in Year 11. On the GCSE course some pupils in Year 10 demonstrate immature attitudes to their work and show little interest in their theory work.

193 The rate of improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The range of extra-curricular activities has increased and GCSE results have improved. There have been some improvements in assessment but there is a lack of consistency between staff in their moderation. Recommendations for Curriculum 2000 have been introduced in the lower school but have yet to be implemented in Years 10 and 11. There are no reports for parents of pupils in Year 11 except for those on the GCSE course and this is a breach of statutory regulations.

194 Curriculum planning needs to consider the amount of time required to teach the programmes of study, particularly in gymnastics and athletics, and linking them to the requirements of the National Curriculum. Units are taught for six weeks but this is insufficient time for consolidation of learning and lacks continuity for pupils between units. An enthusiastic head of department ably leads the department. He is a very good teacher and role model for pupils and is committed to raising standards and the profile of physical education throughout the school. Teaching is monitored but there are no clear procedures in place to support teachers. Resources are good and although accommodation is adequate, there is no gymnasium to extend the quality and range of work for pupils. This has not improved since the last inspection. There is no departmental base for physical education.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

195 The provision for religious education is **good**.

Strengths

Teaching is very good.

Pupils' learning is good.

Leadership in the department.

Religious education makes a substantial contribution to the school's aims.

Area for improvement

Further development of the scheme of work.

196 The provision for religious education is good and the subject makes a substantial contribution to the school's aims in respect of the academic and personal development of pupils. The last inspection drew attention to many positive features in the teaching of the subject. Those features of good quality have been consolidated through the period of change which the school has experienced and under the leadership of a new head of department the subject is well placed to build on these strengths. A

process of review and revision of courses has begun and the lack of time for teaching the subject in Year 11, noted in the last report, has been corrected.

197 There are no contemporary results in the GCSE examination on which to comment. Two small groups are established in Years 10 and 11 and the department is working hard to increase the viability of the groups in the future. The decision taken to adopt the Oxford and Cambridge Certificate of Achievement Examination to measure the attainment of those following Key Stage 4 Agreed Syllabus course is a significant strategy. The department should now investigate the potential for some pupils to build on this programme to achieve a GCSE half course qualification.

198 The quality of teaching at both key stages is almost wholly very good and on occasion excellent. Lessons are well planned and structured. The pace of teaching is well judged, the range of resources used to support learning good and the content presented in such a way that pupils are challenged intellectually. Teachers are well qualified and use their high level of knowledge very well in the teaching of pupils of all levels of attainment. Impressive examples of this were observed in lessons which focused on: the concept of 'Holy War' (Year 10); key Christian beliefs encountered in 'The Apostles Creed' (Year 11); the place of prayer in the daily life of a Muslim (Year 8); and symbols of Christian belief encountered in the Festival of Easter (Year 9). Teaching strategies adopted create a classroom ethos which encourages pupils' learning and thinking.

199 Pupil learning is good or very good in the majority of lessons seen in both key stages. In Key Stage 3 the quality of learning is judged against the expectations of the Leeds Agreed Syllabus of religious education (1991). The syllabus intends that pupils learn about and learn from religion. Learning about religion is a secure feature of the subject's work and pupils demonstrate knowledge of the key features and terminology of the faiths they encounter. Pupils learn from religion as they consider the experience of the adherents of a particular religion and set that against their own.

200 Pupil attitudes to the subject are good or very good. Rigorous teaching creates an enthusiasm which shows itself in the response of pupils to the challenge of investigative learning. Classroom discussion is lively with some pupils offering quality contributions. Pupils treat the beliefs and values of particular religions with respect and handle the artefacts of faiths with due care. Support for the subject from parents is good and it is noteworthy that there is only one instance of the statutory right to withdraw the pupil from religious education being used.

201 The support for the subject in the school is strong and the head of department is engaged in the task of reviewing and reorganising taught courses. Teaching and learning will be strengthened further where: key beliefs are the focus; a single rather than multi-faith approach is adopted; and content overload is avoided in the planning of schemes.

PART E: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, four subjects and courses were inspected and are reported. Work in other subjects and courses was sampled and contributed to the overall picture of teaching and learning in the school.

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2001

Intermediate vocational qualifications

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		Average point distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design (Advanced)	5	60	n/a	60	n/a	4	n/a
Business (Advanced)	5	60	n/a	40	n/a	3	n/a
Performing arts (Advanced)	4	50	n/a	50	n/a	4	n/a
Leisure and tourism (Intermediate)	3	66	n/a	0	n/a	4	n/a
Health and social care (Intermediate)	2	0	n/a	0	n/a	3	n/a
Manufacturing (Intermediate)	5	40	n/a	0	n/a	2	n/a
Popular music (BTEC)	2	100	n/a	100	n/a	5	n/a

202 The school has structured the sixth form as a centre for vocational education. The school has recognised that many of its students find the transition to further education difficult and would not have been involved in post-16 courses after Year 11. The sixth form catered for these students. Many of the students come from a background with limited experience of further education and often with low levels of self-esteem and attainment. The results indicate a limited amount of success in academic/qualification terms, especially when compared with national averages, but the school feels, and the inspection confirms, that there is a lot of added value.

203 A number of students have, based on their experience in the sixth form, been accepted on further education courses. This is a major achievement for those students and is indicative of the value added to their education by the sixth form courses.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

DRAMA

204 The quality of provision in **drama** is **good**.

Strengths

Students' achievement is good because of the good teaching and learning. Students have an excellent understanding of how to apply theories about acting to practical situations. Teachers work very closely with each other, and with students, resulting in the requirements of the course being shared and well understood.

Areas for improvement

Students do not develop the breadth of interest or competence in written work to the extent that might be expected.
Students' involvement in their own learning needs to be developed more.

205 The number of students taking the subject is small and the retention rate is low. Although it is not possible to make a comparison with national results because of the small group size, students gain at least a merit or distinction in the advanced certificate of achievement. This indicates that standards are broadly in line with the national average.

206 Evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that examination results accurately reflect the standards currently attained in the school. When pupils' prior attainment is taken into account, their achievement is good.

207 Students have a very good understanding of theories about acting, particularly those of Stanislavsky. They are able to use these theories to guide their own acting, to help them evaluate the work of others and to be self-critical. In one lesson, for example, students successfully explored how an actor's emotional memory was an important factor in expressing particular moods. In another lesson students showed a high level of insight as to how the contradictions in characters might be communicated. In all the practical work seen students displayed very good communication skills. The quality of their speech, their awareness of how to use the acting space to advantage and the quality of their non-verbal communication, such as facial expression, meant they held the attention of the audience well. When evaluating the performances of others, students display insight and tact. Written work is not as strong as practical work except for one high attaining student. It is well presented but does not contain the original ideas or sophisticated analysis present in practical work.

208 The quality of teaching and learning is good. The teachers who share the sixth form classes work very closely with each other, and with students, so that all the work is co-ordinated. Students feel the course is coherent and enables them to progress. Students have a good understanding of their own learning. Teachers possess excellent subject knowledge, as was seen in the way in which theories on acting were explained to students and in the discussion of particular texts. They also have an excellent understanding of the practicalities of producing and directing plays. The consequence is that students engage with what they read and act at a high level. They enjoy rigorous discussion with others. The planning of lessons is good. Teachers take into account how well students have understood what was covered in earlier lessons so as to remedy any deficiencies of understanding, as was seen in a lesson which re-visited aspects of bringing text to performance. Lessons include a variety of activities, give ample opportunities for students to be actively involved in the work and are mostly conducted at a brisk pace. All the time available is used to full advantage. The department is active in encouraging students to broaden their interest in the subject beyond the classroom by, for example, organising visits to theatres and working with the community. Even so, students do not use their initiative to explore the subject as fully as might be expected.

209 Extra-curricular activities are an outstanding feature. They are wide ranging, including the community and even international links. Prestigious productions are presented of a professional standard. This encourages the students to present work of a high standard.

210 Leadership and management of the department are good. The excellent resources are deployed efficiently and effectively. Students are provided with good support and guidance on a range of relevant matters, ranging from the opportunities available to become involved with local groups to university courses. The arrangements for assessing students' progress, and using this to determine what and how they will be taught, are satisfactory. A more precise focus for marking written work assignments is needed to target improvement more rigorously.

211 At the time of the last inspection, students' attainment was below average and has now improved to average. The quality of the accommodation has improved significantly. Overall, improvement has been good.

ART

212 Overall the quality of provision in art is **very good**.

Strengths

The quality of teaching. The teachers work as an extremely effective team, offering complementary skills that bring benefits to the students.

The quality of leadership and management of the subject provides clear vision and the promotion of high expectations and is having a positive effect upon student achievement.

Areas for improvement

Consideration to be given to developing strategies which would improve the students' capabilities for independent learning. This would have a significant effect upon the standards of work being produced.

213 Art is offered to AVCE intermediate and advanced levels.

214 Overall the standards are below average. A relatively small number of students, four at advanced and six at intermediate take art. Results were well below the national average in 2001 when seven students were entered, making accurate statistical analysis difficult. The students are taught as a single group. The quality of work seen demonstrates that standards are not improving sufficiently towards national expectations. The present group of students have been entered for intermediate and advanced level courses which, based upon evidence of work seen, is challenging their level of ability. Students lack sufficient creative skills and their ability to develop and produce the required quality of work is below expectations. The students also have limited capacity for independent learning, relying on teacher support and therefore adversely affecting originality in their work. The relatively poor record of attendance by a number of students also contributes towards the less than satisfactory level of progress being made.

215 Teaching is good overall. The lessons are challenging and well planned in order to provide all students with opportunities to progress. Classroom organisation and management are effective. The teachers have a very good level of knowledge of the subject and share the teaching of the group of students. The relationships between the teachers and the students are very good, providing a pleasant atmosphere in the lessons. The department has made use of the skills of artists in residence, which is making a considerable contribution towards the quality of education being provided. All classrooms within the department contain excellent displays relating to the work of significant artists and cultures which provide an opportunity for students to learn and appreciate the wider aspects of art education. Assessment is effective as an influence on future curriculum development and lesson planning. Work is assessed at periodic intervals usually linked to the completion of a project. Students are given individual advice on their progress and attainment.

216 The quality of leadership and management is very good. There is clear vision and very effective planning which promotes high standards in teaching and provides good learning opportunities. The teachers work as a very effective team offering high levels of effective support to the students. The teachers meet regularly to discuss the achievements of the students and to plan appropriate course material. The level of accommodation is very good although there is insufficient space available to provide the sixth form students with a dedicated work area. A wide range of resources are available.

217 The previous report drew attention to the fact that time allocated on the timetable for art was below recommended levels. This is no longer the case.

BUSINESS

218 The overall provision is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

The teacher has a secure knowledge and understanding of the subject.

Teacher expectations are high.

Relationships between the teacher and the students are good.

Areas for improvement

Students' capacity for independent learning.

Attendance in lessons.

219 AVCE business studies at intermediate level was offered for the first time to Year 12 students in September 2001. There are nine students taking the subject. The evidence available from lesson observations and a scrutiny of work produced indicate that standards at present are below average. A small proportion of the students make satisfactory progress in understanding the central ideas of the subject, including those relating to the economic environment in which business operates. However, all the students rely heavily on teacher directed learning due to their limited capacity for independent learning. Research skills and the ability to produce written work, which demonstrates knowledge, and understanding of the course requirements, are under developed. Attendance in lessons is less than satisfactory and therefore some students have difficulty in completing assignments. Poor attendance also affects the continuity of lessons and therefore progress is also less than satisfactory with the consequence that some students could experience difficulties in completing the full course.

220 Overall the quality of teaching is satisfactory. The teacher has a secure knowledge and understanding of the subject, accommodating the needs of the students through carefully planned lessons. Relationships between the teacher and the students are good, promoting mutual respect and understanding. Lessons are invariably designed around current events in the business world. Teaching strategies are carefully orchestrated to promote knowledge and understanding through whole class and small group activities. Expectations are high and therefore the work is challenging, allowing students to experience the complex nature of business. The quality of education is also supported by planned visits to business organisations such as Cadbury-Schweppes.

221 Future development would be enhanced by the introduction of improved industrial links. Involving the local business community through the Education Business Partnership and the Chamber of Commerce would increase student perception of the business world. In addition the provision of newspapers and periodicals would promote greater interest and understanding.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

222 Overall the quality of provision is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

Teachers have a good knowledge of their students, which helps them meet their individual needs on a day-to-day basis.

Teacher-student relationships are good.

Impact of resources on standards is good.

Areas for improvement

Ensure assessment is used effectively to inform planning and monitoring of student progress to evaluate effectiveness of teaching and learning across the units of work (different teachers teach different units)

Study/independent learning skills are underdeveloped.

223 One course in this curriculum area was inspected: GNVQ Advanced ICT.

224 Data provided by the school shows that over the last two years the students have made unsatisfactory progress from GCSE to GNVQ Advanced level in ICT. In the 2000 summary there was no equivalent GCSE course in ICT. The only similar course was GCSE business studies: Single. In this course and its very tentative links with ICT a little over one third of the 32 pupils entered gained the higher grades A*-C. In 2001 GCSE Information Studies, first cohort to be entered for this examination, of the 16 pupils entered a little over one third gained the higher grades A*-C.

225 Standards of work seen were very variable; at best they were barely in line with what is usually expected at this stage of the course. In Year 12, attainment is closely related to their GCSE performance; however, course entry does not require students to have previously achieved one of the higher grades A*-C. Scrutiny of work and discussions with students reveal that not all students have followed an identical course of study at GCSE.

226 In Year 13, standards of work are generally below what is expected at this stage of the course. Some students appear to lack confidence and show little initiative, indicating unsatisfactory achievement for example; when presenting Multimedia Unit 9 Edexcel. Students had produced satisfactory multimedia presentations indicating understanding of the software applications; however, lack of confidence in presentational skills was generally disappointing. The level of individual support in the application of the software is at least satisfactory, but the poorly developed levels of independence were clearly apparent.

227 The progress of some students is hampered as a direct result of erratic attendance.

228 In both year groups the impact of ICT and the use of the Internet, for example, is beginning to show in standards of presentation and research skills which are developing well. There is evidence that the higher attainers, two in the Year 13 group, analyse problems, create ideas and take risks when designing, but not all of them display a satisfactory understanding of the technology and rely too heavily on the teachers.

229 In all lessons teachers know the students well and teacher-student relationships are often good or very good. The better lessons are planned to at least a satisfactory standard and have suitable challenge, enabling students to move to a fuller and deeper level of understanding. Students' work is carefully marked but the critical content on occasions lacks precision to help raise standards

230 The leadership and management of both groups are satisfactory on a day-to-day basis. The teachers work hard to provide high levels of individual support. The co-ordination between teachers should be more formalised to ensure levels of student support and the monitoring of progress are maximised.

VOCATIONAL COURSES

Vocational course were sampled during the inspection week.

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

Strengths

- Very well structured strategies and courses to meet students' needs.
- Students are well motivated and gaining in self-esteem.
- As a result of relevant and interesting courses, students' attendance is improving.

232 The school believes that all students are entitled to an education which is relevant to their needs, interests them, helps them to make rapid progress and eventually achieve the skills and qualifications that they will need in latter life. They are entitled to an education that increasingly gives them both choice and independence in how and what they learn.

233 The school's work on social inclusion is aimed at ensuring that the requirements of all its pupils and especially those in danger of disaffection are met. The needs of different groups of pupils are recognised and are monitored and evaluated.

234 To this end the school has developed a number of interlinked strategies to provide a relevant and alternative curriculum. These include:

- Certificate of Achievement qualifications in maths, English, science and French provide recognition of effort and achievement for those pupils unable to achieve at GCSE level. The reward system encourages high achievement and also rewards perseverance and commitment.
- The Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) is a series of courses aimed at ensuring that pupils succeed, feel that there is a purpose to their education and that courses are relevant to their needs and aspirations. Central to this are the Key Skills of improving students' learning performance, working with others, problem solving, communication, application of number and information technology. Units of accreditation include, for example, first aid treatment, planning cooking and serving a healthy meal, planning journeys, investigating simple industrial processes.
- A small number of pupils are involved in work related education programmes and some pupils have modified timetables outside the normal curriculum structure.
- The highly successful work of the Learning Support Unit is very closely linked to the provision for a number of pupils who are in danger of being disaffected in school.

235 As a result there is improved motivation and engagement of reluctant learners, a better attendance rate for this group of pupils, a marked reduction in exclusions, and pupils' self esteem and academic progress are enhanced.