

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **HAWKLEY HALL HIGH SCHOOL**

Wigan

LEA area: Wigan

Unique reference number: 106532

Headteacher: Mr C. Wilkinson

Reporting inspector: Mrs M. M. Thompson  
2626

Dates of inspection: 1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> October 2001

Inspection number: 216767

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 to 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Carr Lane Wigan Lancashire
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M. B. McMullin
Date of previous inspection:	13 <sup>th</sup> September 1999

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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2626	M. M. Thompson	Registered inspector	Equality of opportunity	Information about the school How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
14404	A. V. Rolfe	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
30576	P. Bannon	Team inspector	Mathematics	
3758	A. F. Barringer	Team inspector	English	
17279	D. Barry	Team inspector		
19026	B. Downes	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages Provision for pupils with special educational needs	
2628	A. J. Edwards	Team inspector	Physical education	
8873	C. Evers	Team inspector	History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
12470	B. Greasley	Team inspector	Geography	
2632	R. W. Holmes	Team inspector	Design and technology	The school's results and pupils' achievements
7315	G. J. Kinder	Team inspector	Art and design	
17868	E. Metcalfe	Team inspector	Religious education	
18846	P. F. Priest	Team inspector	Music	
3937	J. A. Seed	Team inspector	Science	
29428	D. E. Toft	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	



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# REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>7</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>12</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN</b>	





## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Hawkley Hall High School is a mixed comprehensive, taking boys and girls between the ages of 11 and 16. There are currently 911 pupils on roll, making it an average-sized comprehensive school. Numbers have risen steadily over the last few years and the school is over-subscribed. There are very few pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds and there are no pupils who speak English as an additional language. Fifteen per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is close to the national average.

When the current Year 7 pupils came into the school at 11 years of age, they had the range and distribution of attainment typical of a fully comprehensive school. Older pupils had levels of attainment which were slightly below the national average on entry. Twenty-three per cent of pupils are on the school's register for special needs, which is above the national average. Three point six per cent of pupils have a statement for their special needs, which is higher than in most schools. The socio-economic circumstances of the pupils are broadly in line with the national average.

The school was formerly a middle school and is situated in a new, purpose-built building to the south of Wigan. Most of the pupils come from four local primary schools and remain at the school for the duration of their secondary education. In 2000, almost two thirds of pupils went on to further study. The proportion of children continuing their education after the age of 16 has increased steadily over the last few years.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Hawkley Hall is a good school which is improving rapidly and has many strengths. It has successfully overcome the serious weaknesses identified in the previous inspection. Pupils make good progress as a result of good teaching and results in public tests and examinations are better than in many similar schools. The leadership of the headteacher, effectively supported by the senior management team, has established a strong sense of educational direction for the school, aimed at raising standards. Overall the school provides sound value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Pupils do better in public tests and examinations than expected, given their prior levels of attainment. They also do better than pupils in similar schools. GCSE results have improved considerably.
- Teaching is good and promotes effective learning.
- Pupils work hard, make good progress and behave well. They have positive attitudes to school.
- The very effective leadership provided by the headteacher is taking the school forward successfully.
- The arrangements for pupils' social, moral and cultural development are good.
- Aspects of the curriculum are good - there are strong links with the community and the Education Business Partnership makes a very good contribution to pupils' development. The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities. The school has particular strengths in

the creative curriculum that is, music, art and design and drama.

### What could be improved

- Standards attained by pupils in Years 10 and 11 in information and communication technology (ICT) and the short course in modern foreign languages at GCSE.
- Standards attained by the highest attaining pupils in a small minority of lessons across the curriculum.
- Levels of attendance.
- The deployment of support staff and the quality of individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs.
- The management of the behaviour of a small number of pupils in a minority of lessons and around the school.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The last inspection was in September 1999 and the school was found to have serious weaknesses in the attainment of pupils in English, mathematics and science in Years 10 and 11. Four other key issues were identified. Since then the school has made good progress. Standards achieved by pupils in GCSE examinations in English, mathematics and science rose sharply in 2000, departmental planning and management are now generally good across the school and the work of departments is systematically monitored by the senior management of the school. The governors have set up a curriculum committee and have undertaken training to enable them to monitor standards within the school. There is more work to do in this area but governors perform this function to a satisfactory level. The provision of business studies was an issue at the time of the last inspection; the subject is no longer taught. Whilst the proportion of satisfactory and better teaching is about the same as at the time of the last inspection, the proportion of good, very good and excellent teaching has risen sharply. The school has the capacity to improve further.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
GCSE examinations	C	C	C	A

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

In the national tests taken at the end of Year 9, when most pupils are fourteen years old, the results in 2000 were in line with the national averages for English, mathematics and science. These results were higher than were achieved for similar schools for English and mathematics and about the same for science. Taken together, they are higher than would have been expected from the pupils' scores in national tests when they were eleven years old. Over the last few years, girls have performed better than boys in tests by the same amount as is found nationally.

Results have been improving but not as quickly as the national figure because of unusually low results in 1999.

In the work seen during the inspection leading up to the Year 9 tests, standards are better than found in most schools in English, art and design, design and technology, history and music. They are average in science, mathematics, geography, ICT, modern languages and physical education.

Pupils achieved results which were better than the national average at the GCSE examination in 2000. These results are much better than those achieved in most other schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals. They exceeded the school's realistic target for the year. Results have been rising over the previous three years. In this time girls have performed better than boys, but the difference has been less than in most schools.

At GCSE in 2000 the strongest subject was physical education. Most other subjects, including English, mathematics and science were close to the national averages, with ICT and French below average. Standards of the work seen at the school are better than some of the examination results indicate. In the years leading up to GCSE they are higher than in most schools in mathematics, science, art and design, design and technology, history and music. Standards are average in English, physical education and religious education. They are below average in the short French course in Years 10 and 11.

Pupils make good progress throughout the school in almost all subjects, with those in the middle ability range making the best gains, often because the style of teaching suits their needs best. This leads to a high proportion of pupils achieving at least five grades A\* - G in their examinations. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress.

## **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Good. The majority of pupils are interested in their work and take an active part in their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Most pupils behave well in classrooms and around the school. However, there is a minority of pupils who have poor attitudes to learning. The number of pupil exclusions is relatively low.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Relationships are good and make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. Most pupils work well together, and are developing their understanding of other people's faiths and cultures.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. Attendance levels are below average and authorised absences are above the national average.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

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

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

Teaching is good overall. It is good throughout the school in English, mathematics, science, art and design, design and technology, history, music, physical education, religious education and in Year 10 and 11 geography and GNVQ courses. Elsewhere it is satisfactory. There is some very good or excellent teaching in most subjects. Most examples of unsatisfactory teaching were seen in ICT in lessons where there were no explicit expectations for learning or behaviour, and a lack of planning, and in modern languages when taught by temporary staff. The teaching of numeracy skills is good across the curriculum and in mathematics lessons. The teaching of literacy is satisfactory. The quality of pupils' learning is good. Teachers know their subjects well and manage their pupils successfully. Relationships are good, pupils work hard, and make good progress in lessons. They are aware of the objectives of the lessons and good feedback from teachers helps them to understand how to improve their work.

The teaching of special educational needs is satisfactory overall although there is a lack of trained support for pupils in some lessons which slows the pace of learning for all pupils. Some individual education plans for pupils are not specific enough to improve children's learning.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum meets statutory requirements in most subjects and is broad and balanced. Some elements of ICT, design and technology and physical education are not adequately covered in Years 7 to 9. There are very good links with the community, particularly through the Education Business Partnership. Extra curricular provision is good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for special education needs is satisfactory. However, the deployment of support staff does not ensure that the needs of all pupils are met.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory but the school does not consistently meet the requirement to provide pupils with a daily act of collective worship. Moral, cultural and social development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has a well-organised pastoral support system that makes good provision for pupils' care and welfare. Assessment procedures have been reviewed recently and are now good.
How well does the school work in partnership with parents	The school works well with parents who have a positive view of the school. Communication with parents is broadly satisfactory, despite a reluctance of many to attend activities relating to the changing nature of education.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher's robust and committed leadership has established a strong sense of purpose in the school. He is supported well by senior and middle managers in focussing on improving performance. The school has sufficient, well-qualified, permanent teachers but there have been some difficulties in covering for long-term absences in modern languages and science. Arrangements for staff development are good. Accommodation is good overall except in physical education where poor indoor and outdoor facilities limit the range and quality of learning. The dining hall, which also acts as a main assembly area, is too small. Although the premises are well maintained litter is a persistent problem outside.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil their duties to a satisfactory level and are committed to the school. Most statutory duties are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school uses a range of effective strategies to monitor and evaluate pupil and school performance.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are generally used carefully. Financial control is good. Spending is controlled effectively. Resources are good in most subjects. The library provision is very good and it is heavily used in lessons and at lunchtime.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils are made to work hard and achieve their best</li> <li>• Pupils like school</li> <li>• Parents feel that they can approach the school with questions or problems</li> <li>• Pupils make good progress</li> <li>• Pupils are helped to grow in maturity</li> <li>• Teaching is good</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better communication with parents</li> <li>• More information about pupils' progress</li> <li>• More extra-curricular activities</li> <li>• The amount of homework</li> <li>• Standards of behaviour</li> </ul>

Approximately 12 per cent of parents returned the questionnaires and seven parents attended the parents' meeting. Parents view the school as satisfactory. The inspection team were in agreement with the positive views that parents held about the school. Evidence from the inspection indicates that whilst behaviour is generally good, there are pockets of poor behaviour. The school provides a good range of extra curricular activities. The school works hard to involve parents but have had only moderate success. Whilst communication with parents is satisfactory, inspectors consider that there are some inconsistencies in the provision of homework and that the information contained in pupils' annual reports, and the use of the pupil planner to note homework is unsatisfactory.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. When pupils who are currently in Year 11 left primary school their attainment was below average. Attainment on entry has improved and the pupils currently in Year 7 have achieved close to the national average in national tests at the end of primary school. Within this picture, pupils with relatively low previous attainment and those who did unusually well in earlier tests generally made the amount of progress that would normally be expected, whilst the middle range of pupils tended to make more progress and achieved better results than might have been expected. Over the last few years girls have achieved higher results than boys, but the difference is less than in most schools.

2. In the national tests taken at the end of Year 9, when most pupils are 14 years old, the results in 2000 were in line with the national averages for English, mathematics and science. These results were higher than were achieved in similar schools for English and mathematics and about the same for science. Taken together, they are higher than would have been expected from the pupils' scores in national tests when they were 11 years old. Results in the tests in 2001 were also close to the national average and showed even more improvement since age 11 than the 2000 results. Over the last few years, girls have performed better than boys in the tests by about the same amount as is found nationally. Results have been improving, but not as quickly as the national figure because of unusually low results in 1999. In the work seen during the inspection leading up to the Year 9 tests, standards are better than found in most schools in English, art and design, design and technology, history and music. They are average in science, mathematics, geography, ICT, modern foreign languages and physical education. The standards pupils achieve in the aesthetic subjects of art and design, music and drama are consistently good in relation to pupils' prior achievement.

3. Results at GCSE in 2000 were above the national average, with 50 per cent of pupils achieving five or more passes at grades A\* - C compared to 47 per cent nationally. The proportion of pupils achieving five or more passes at grade A\* - G (96 per cent ) and at least one pass of grade A\* - G (97 per cent ) were significantly better than the national figures. This represents a marked improvement over results in the previous three years and a significant improvement since the last inspection. Compared to schools in a similar context, these results are well above average and they also represent considerably more progress than could have been expected from the pupils' levels of attainment when they come into the school and the results they achieved in the national tests they took when they were 14 years old. In most other subjects at GCSE, results in 2000 were close to the national average, apart from ICT and in food technology where they were lower and physical education where they were higher. Results for 2001 have a similar pattern.



4. Standards in work seen in the school leading up to GCSE are generally better than the last set of examination results indicate. They are generally above average in mathematics, science, art and design, design and technology, history and music. In English, ICT, physical education and in religious education they are average. They are lower than average in geography and in the short course in French.

5. Targets set for both GCSE and the national tests at the end of Year 9 are based on a very careful analysis of each pupil's potential using data from a range of sources, including previous performance and standardised tests. They are appropriately challenging. These targets were exceeded at GCSE in 2000.

6. The unconfirmed GCSE examinations results for 2001 are not as high as in 2000, with fewer pupils achieving five or more grades A\* - C (41 per cent ), although the proportion gaining 5 A\* - G (96 per cent ) and 1 A\* - G (98 per cent ) are just as high as last year. These results are not yet final, pending an appeal over the marking, of a significant number of English scripts. As they stand, these results represent sound progress from pupils' previous attainment although they did not quite meet the school's challenging targets for the groups. They are a little above the average for schools in a similar context.

7. Results in English, mathematics and science have risen since the last inspection.

In 2000, results in English and science were close to average with mathematics only a little below. These results were all better than those achieved by similar schools. In 2001, science and mathematics results have improved further, but the English results, which are being questioned by the school, are currently well below average.

8. In 2001, results fell just short of the target for five A\* - C. Twice as many pupils did better than might have been expected. Other targets were met and were better than expected, indicating that the target was sufficiently demanding.

9. Pupils with special educational needs achieve satisfactory standards in relation to their prior achievement and they make satisfactory progress towards their individual targets. Progress is better where their targets involve improvements in behaviour. A good indication of the achievement of pupils with special educational needs is seen in GCSE results. In the year 2000 examinations, the number of pupils gaining 5 A\* - G passes was above the national average and well above average when compared to similar schools. The number of pupils gaining one A\* - G was also above average nationally and compared to similar schools.

10. Standards of numeracy are sufficient to allow pupils to follow the curriculum in all subject areas. They are at least satisfactory in all year groups and good in Year 7, where they are supported by the national numeracy strategy.

11. Standards in literacy are satisfactory overall. In most subjects of the curriculum pupils listen attentively. They answer questions willingly, but in some lessons, do not make extended statements or explore ideas in depth. Pupils tend to lack clarity and audibility when they read aloud. Most pupils have satisfactory levels of reading comprehension. They understand textbooks and printed materials presented to them.

12. Pupils present written work carefully in most subjects and the overall standard is higher than that commonly found. In history, geography and religious education attention is given to the structuring of pupils' writing. In these subjects high attaining pupils construct accurately written extended assignments especially in Years 10 and 11.

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

13. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good and overall behaviour is good. Both these aspects have been maintained since the last inspection and have a positive impact on pupils' learning.

14. Almost all pupils enjoy coming to school. Discussions with pupils in all year groups indicate that they have positive attitudes to learning, they are able to identify favourite subjects and a significant number of pupils participate in the wide range of extra curricular activities provided by the school. The majority of pupils are interested in what they are doing and take an active part in their learning. They listen carefully to their teachers' instructions, maintain concentration for appropriate periods of time and make positive contributions to classroom discussions. For example, in a Year 11 mathematics lesson in which pupils were given very demanding work at the highest levels of GCSE, pupils concentrated very hard. They showed the ability to work well together, sharing ideas, experimenting together and learning from each other's suggestions, and therefore made very good progress during the lesson. Most pupils take an obvious pride in their work and are willing and able to talk about their work and explain their ideas to inspectors. Pupils with special educational needs generally show good attitudes to work and behave well in lessons and around the school.

15. The overall standard of behaviour is good. In the majority of lessons seen behaviour was good and on many occasions very good. For example, in a Year 11 games lesson pupils' attitudes and behaviour were very good throughout the lesson. They entered into the lesson with enthusiasm, but were prepared to listen carefully to the teacher's instructions, and to each other's ideas, which had a positive impact on their learning. Most pupils are aware of what is and is not acceptable behaviour, they like the school's merit system and readily accept the principle of sanctions as an appropriate response to instances of poor behaviour. Nevertheless, there is a significant minority of pupils, mainly boys, many of whom have low self-esteem and poor attitudes to learning, who behave badly in lessons. On occasions they disrupt the learning of others. Generally, behaviour at breaks and lunchtime is satisfactory. However, a minority of pupils is involved in some unruly behaviour when unsupervised in crowded corridors.

16. Bullying is an occasional problem but the school has in place an anti-bullying policy that enables the school to react quickly and positively to known instances. Parents and pupils have indicated that these procedures are effective. The number of pupils excluded in the last academic year was relatively low, with one permanent exclusion and eight temporary exclusions. Inspection of the exclusion records indicates that the use of exclusion has been appropriate in the circumstances.

17. The majority of pupils treat school equipment with care and respect, for example in a Year 7 science lesson pupils were observed handling microscopes very carefully. There are, however some reports of vandalism, for example in pupil toilets, and there is an excessive amount of litter around the school. The school's response to the litter around the school is unsatisfactory and does little to promote

care for the school environment; indeed, on many occasions staff effectively condone pupils' behaviour by not challenging pupils when depositing litter.

18. Pupils make good progress in their personal development. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good, so too are relationships between pupils. These relationships make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils co-operate well together in pairs and small groups and are willing and able to listen to and consider the views of others. For example in a Year 10 religious education lesson, where pupils were asked to consider Christian views on abortion, pupils, both girls and boys, were able to reflect on the issue, make good contributions to discussions, and show a good understanding of the moral conflicts and dilemmas posed by the issue. Pupils are developing well their understanding of other people's faiths and cultures and are encouraged to reflect on the impact of their actions on others, mainly through their studies in religious education and personal and social education.

19. Pupils in all year groups show a willingness to undertake additional responsibilities, performing a range of duties as classroom monitors. Many older pupils are involved in the school's prefect system, for example, Year 11 prefects staff the library at breaks and lunchtime, and organise a rota for the use of the school's computers. Also, Year 11 pupils organise their own rota for supervision around the premises at break and lunchtime, and they take their duties seriously.

20. Overall attendance is unsatisfactory. Authorised absence is above the national average, though unauthorised absence is below the national average and attendance in Year 11 was below 90 per cent in 2000 - 2001. This represents a slight decline in attendance since the last inspection. The school's attendance to some degree is influenced by a small number of girls who have been absent for considerable periods of time due to medical reasons and a significant number of families who take holidays in school time. A significant minority of pupils arrives late on a regular basis. Registration is undertaken morning and afternoon and meets statutory requirements.

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

21. The quality of teaching is good and is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. In the majority of lessons it is at least satisfactory and in around seven out of ten lessons it is good or better. It is very good or excellent in three out of ten lessons. It is satisfactory in geography in Years 7 - 9, ICT, Life Skills and modern languages throughout the school, and in all other subjects and year groups is good. Teaching is rarely unsatisfactory or poor except in a small minority of lessons, which includes ICT, geography for younger pupils and in modern foreign languages when temporary staff are employed. Some very good or excellent teaching was seen in most subjects including English, drama, mathematics, art and design, design and technology, history, modern foreign languages, science, physical education and religious education. Music teaching, particularly in Years 10 and 11, has many strengths, including the highest expectations of pupils, excellent pupil management and use of time. The teaching of history, art and design, and design and technology

has some very strong features. Teaching is a strength of the school and promotes good learning in all year groups.

22. Teaching is best in Year 7, in part due to the introduction of a national framework for the teaching of literacy in English lessons. This has helped to improve standards in writing. The national framework for the teaching of numeracy has supported pupils' progress in mathematics' lessons in Year 7. Whilst the proportion of satisfactory or better teaching is about the same in Years 7 - 9 as in Years 10 and 11, overall there is slightly more good or better teaching with older pupils.

23. The proportion of satisfactory or better teaching remains about the same as at the time of the last inspection. However, the proportion of good or better teaching has risen significantly and has led to improved pupil attainment and learning. Issues relating to the quality of teaching in English, mathematics and science have been addressed. Planning in these subjects is now very effective, pupils understand what they should gain from the lesson and what they should expect to achieve. The quality of teaching is now consistently good and as a consequence pupils are attentive and motivated and respond well to challenging lessons. Overall progress since the last inspection has been good.

24. Teachers know their subjects well and often manage to convey their enthusiasm to the pupils so that they are keen to take part. Learning is enriched through the use of the teachers' own experiences or by the skilful demonstration of techniques and expertise. This is particularly true in drama, music, art and design and physical education, where pupils often respond by producing work of high quality and sensitivity. One example of this was in a 'recreational' samba band. As well as having fun, pupils gained valuable experience and expertise due to the high quality tuition and professional approach of the teacher. In most subjects, explanations and expositions are clear and well informed, questioning is often skilful and this encourages pupils to respond confidently.

25. Lessons are well planned and pupils understand the underlying purpose of the activities. Due to good quality feedback from teachers in mathematics, music and art and design pupils understand how to evaluate the quality of their own and other pupils' work and what has to be done to improve it. Whilst satisfactory, this is less well developed in other subjects.

26. Teachers are generally successful in developing good relationships and managing pupils effectively so that they listen attentively, concentrate and behave well. Most lessons are well ordered and calm. This is not to say they lack excitement. In some of the best lessons, teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour, set a very brisk pace and successfully use high-risk strategies. One example of this was a Year 7 food technology lesson, in which the teacher, dressed for the part, unexpectedly role played an incompetent 'new teacher' preparing food. Pupils played along magnificently and when the 'new teacher' left and class teacher 'returned', they analysed skilfully and in detail what the 'new teacher' had done wrong, producing high quality responses.

27. In most lessons a variety of strategies and activities are used which keep pupils involved and help them to develop independence. Although inconsistent across departments, the library is used more often than in most schools to allow pupils to do their own research, particularly in history. One outstanding example was a Year 9 class who had combined original research with creativity and craftsmanship to produce authentic looking time capsules from the first world war. Pupils had worked conscientiously and to a high standard for homework over a period of time producing work of originality. Teachers make opportunities for pupils to use ICT to enhance their work whenever they can. However, it is made very difficult because of the lack of computer facilities for full size classes, and the lack of availability of the computer suite at fixed points in the week.

28. The quality of homework is satisfactory overall but, as parents suggested, it is not regularly noted in pupil planners and does not always follow the homework timetable.

29. The teaching of pupils of middle ability is almost uniformly good and they work hard and productively in lessons. In some subjects, for example science, skilful provision is made consistently for gifted and talented pupils. However, on occasions, higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged to achieve high enough standards in geography, history, ICT, physical education, modern foreign languages and religious education. In English lessons, teachers are rigorous in their questioning and insist on full and accurate responses, whereas in a small minority of lessons in some other subjects, opportunities are missed for the highest attainers to explore their ideas in depth or to work at the highest levels.

30. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Teachers know their pupils well and generally provide work that is at an appropriate level to pupils' individual needs. However, it is not consistently so across all teachers and all subjects. The school's individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are not sufficiently specific and are not always converted into more focussed targets by individual departments. There is good practice in some departments, such as mathematics and design and technology and this leads to good progress. This good practice does not extend to cover all areas of the work of the school. The level of teamwork between class teachers and those teachers supporting pupils with special educational needs is inconsistent and pupils' progress is satisfactory rather than good because of this.

31. Because there is a lack of support staff for some pupils with special educational needs in a small minority of lessons, teachers occasionally have to spend too much time supporting a small number of pupils, slowing the pace for other pupils. In other lessons, support is not used effectively because it is not really needed.

32. In the small minority of lessons where teaching was unsatisfactory or poor, in ICT, modern foreign languages, physical education and geography in Years 7 – 9, it was linked to ineffective planning to meet the needs of all pupils in the class, lack of pace and challenge, and sometimes ineffective management of a small number of difficult pupils. In these lessons pupils made insufficient progress and occasionally

held back the learning of others. A small number of pupils, often boys, appear to have a short concentration span and easily become bored when teaching is not effective.

33. The teaching of literacy across the curriculum is satisfactory although in some subjects there is insufficient evidence of structured discussions as an integral feature of lessons. Pupils are provided with good opportunities to work in groups in music, physical education, religious education, drama and Life Skills and they work well together. Teachers do not provide pupils with enough opportunities to read aloud. This aspect of literacy has not been fully developed in some departments and the use of talk as an indispensable way of learning is undervalued in some subjects. Key words and specialist vocabulary are displayed well in design and technology, history, music and religious education and help pupils to express themselves in a professional way. In history, geography and religious education, teachers give careful attention to the way in which pupils structure their writing.

34. Overall, the teaching of numeracy skills is good. Whilst a whole school numeracy policy is not yet in place, considerable strides have been made recently to enhance numeracy teaching and coordinate opportunities to use numeracy across the curriculum. For example, in design and technology pupils use measurement of length regularly whereas in food technology they use weight, capacity and proportion for work on recipes. Pupils in geography and science use and interpret graphs appropriately for a variety of purposes. Whilst not occurring as often, there are useful opportunities in history, music, religious education and physical education. The teaching of numeracy within the mathematics department is usually good and sometimes very good.

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

35. The curriculum offered in Years 7 - 11 is broad and balanced, reflects the school's aims and values, and effectively promotes pupils' development and progress. It prepares them successfully for their next stage of education. Pupils with special educational needs follow the full curriculum, with some occasional withdrawal for additional support. The curriculum planning, which was criticised at the time of the last inspection, has now improved, and is broadly satisfactory.

36. The curriculum offered in Years 7 - 9 meets the requirements of the National Curriculum except in ICT and religious education. The decision to teach dance only to girls, means that boys do not receive their full entitlement in physical education. The curriculum for ICT does not offer pupils the full range of statutory entitlement. In Year 10 and 11 the curriculum meets statutory requirements. Pupils in Year 11, however, do not have sufficient time to cover the local agreed syllabus for religious education adequately. The school has taken action to ensure this does not happen for pupils in Year 10, and the new arrangements are planned to continue into Year 11. The decision to enter almost all pupils for the short course in French has led to poor examination results at GCSE, because the time allocated is insufficient. The school is aware of this problem and is investigating alternative provision for French

in Years 10 and 11, which would meet pupils' needs better. The low time allocation for physical education in Years 10 and 11 restricts the range of activities available.

37. In addition to the compulsory curriculum in Years 10 and 11, all pupils must take either history, geography or extra religious education and an expressive art subject. They also have a free choice option which allows them to add a further humanity or expressive arts subject or to take one of the subjects not offered in the compulsory curriculum. Only two courses are offered, however, in hospitality and catering, and in health and social care. This is an insufficient range, and the school is planning to extend this range to cater for pupils for whom a full range of GCSE subjects may be unsuitable.

38. Currently in Years 7 - 9 the school's own numeracy strategy is being developed. The mathematics department has conducted an audit of when other subjects use numeracy. They intend to coordinate teaching methods and terminology where possible. At present good learning opportunities already exist in many departments for pupils to use numeracy skills to enhance their learning and there is good coverage in mathematics.

39. The school is beginning to develop and implement its own literacy strategy in Year 7, building on one element of previous work done by the raising achievement group. Staff from a range of subject areas are already incorporating the development of literacy skills into subject planning and delivery. A number of pupils have been identified as needing extra support in reading and this has been successfully provided. Provision for the development of literacy skills is satisfactory, although inconsistent across departments.

40. The time allocated to teaching of 25 hours per week is in line with national guidelines, and with the exception of French in Years 10 and 11 and religious education in Year 11, the time allocated to subjects is adequate. On many occasions the registration period was not used effectively, often pupils did little or no work and mainly chattered and socialised together.

41. The work-related curriculum is a strength of the school. There are very good links with local businesses through the Education Business Partnership and the Young Enterprise Award scheme, which benefit both the school and the firms involved. Pupils in Year 11 have benefited from practice interviews, and those in Year 9 from an industry day. The school is involved in a Department for Education and Skills demonstration project for work experience, and has been advised to apply for the National Excellence Award for work-related learning at the highest level. Every pupil benefits from a two-week work experience placement in Year 11.



42. Careers education is very effective. It is well planned and organised and all pupils have easy access to the careers service. The programme begins in Year 9 when pupils receive guidance concerning choices available to them as they consider their subject options. This is developed in Year 10 when each pupil is entitled to a careers interview and is informed about opportunities in work-related learning or further education.

43. Provision for pupils' personal and social education has been combined with careers education in a Life Skills department established this term. The provision is good overall. Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 have one lesson per week and those in Years 10 and 11 have one per fortnight. Most lessons are taught by the coordinator. The remaining small number of lessons are taught by seven other teachers. Where possible the coordinator deploys the teachers making good use of individual specialisms, for example a mathematics teacher delivers a topic on money. The teachers are provided with a comprehensive resource package for each topic. In the lessons observed the quality of teaching was at least satisfactory and sometimes good. In one lesson on citizenship the teacher successfully promoted mature sensible discussion within groups of Year 10 pupils. The department is closely involved with four other schools in a "Teenage Pregnancy" project.

44. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities, academic, artistic and cultural, and sporting. There is a number of clubs such as those for mathematics and science, which support academic subjects and which enrich the curriculum for the gifted and talented pupils. These are popular with pupils. The library offers a book review club and a homework club. Musical activities, such as the samba band, open to all who wish to participate, are very well supported by pupils. Some subjects such as science make effective use of outside speakers to enrich the curriculum. The provision of extra-curricular sport is good, and includes a wide range of activities. There are educational visits to France and Germany. In 2001 the school ran a successful literacy summer school.

45. The school has good links with its partner institutions. Teachers of English, mathematics, science, and the special education needs coordinator visit the partner primary schools, and Year 5 pupils visit the school for a day to experience aspects of secondary education. The school recently held a successful joint drama and music workshop day with local primary schools. The art and design department invites pupils to work with their artist-in-residence. There are good links with post-16 schools and colleges, who ensure the school receives information on the achievements of its former pupils.

46. The curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. Pupils with special educational needs have equality of access to all the school's activities.

47. Provision for social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good overall.

48. Provision for social development is good. The school seeks to engender a sense of belonging. Pupils have opportunities to share responsibilities and this helps them to develop more mature and sensible attitudes. There is a prefect system run by pupils in Year 11. Pupils in Year 9 act as prefects on days when

primary pupils visit the school. There are strategies to encourage this sense of social responsibility. Pupils are given certificates and prizes to celebrate their successes, which motivate them to continue working hard. The merit system helps form groups to act together for the success of the whole group. In design and technology pupils are given responsibility for equipment, safety and work rotas and they demonstrate keen attention to health and safety in their practical work. In music and drama pupils have opportunities to play instruments and act in groups and to support each other. There are opportunities for social development in field trips and group visits outside of school. Although a small minority of pupils display poor social skills the school offers a range of activities to support their social development. They have opportunities to behave in a responsible way by being given access to the building at lunchtimes. They respond well to this trust and treat displays and resources with care. The quality of provision for social development helps pupils to become more reliable, mature and independent in their conduct around the school and in their behaviour in lessons, and helps pupils to learn more effectively.

49. Provision for moral development is good. Pupils are given a clear understanding of right and wrong. There is a code of conduct designed to educate pupils to respect all others. The school expects pupils to behave with fairness and justice and to respect the rights of others. As a result most pupils treat teachers and each other with respect and courtesy and the school is an orderly and purposeful community. This is linked to the school's provision for social development. Teachers provide good role models in this respect. In assemblies and religious education, pupils are encouraged to think about their moral duty to help others who are in need and they are encouraged to give to charities. The rights and wrongs of "whistle blowing" in instances of safety are considered in design and technology. In assemblies, religious education, design and technology and geography pupils are made aware of the fragility of the natural environment and the need to conserve our natural heritage. In history, pupils studying public health are made aware of moral issues of government responsibility. Pupils also consider the moral justification for war, the atom bomb, appeasement and conscientious objectors. Pupils are able to reflect on complex matters and to form sensible views.

50. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. It is supported specifically in the religious education programme of work and in assemblies. In religious education the spiritual aspects of the major world religions are studied in some depth. In assemblies pupils reflect on spiritual matters with regard to the wonders of creation and our dependence on the natural world and on each other. Local clergy and others who have specialist knowledge and experience come into school to take assemblies and explore spiritual aspects of life. The provision for aesthetic awareness is good in the work done in art and design, music and drama and often results in work of good quality. The wonders of science are brought to pupils' attention, especially with regard to chemical elements.

51. The school does not meet the requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship. There is a well coordinated, comprehensive programme of work for collective worship. This is designed to be delivered on at least two days each week when pupils do not have assemblies. However, these exercises are not put into practice in many cases so there are missed opportunities for pupils' spiritual development.

52. Provision for cultural development is good and is successful in broadening pupils' views. Pupils are made aware of other cultures in English, art and design, music and religious education. They also experience other cultures in performances given by visiting theatre groups, samba bands and gamelan music. They experience food from other cultures. In geography pupils look at other cultures and study the effects of tourism on Caribbean and Kenyan cultures. There is a strong focus on multi-cultural art seen in pupils' work and in artefacts on display. The school seeks to broaden pupils' cultural and multi-cultural awareness by trips abroad and by visits to galleries, museums and theatres. Overall, the school's provision for social, moral, cultural and spiritual development assists pupils in developing a sense of personal responsibility and in broadening their horizons.

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

53. Pupils are provided with good educational and personal support and they are happy and secure. The school's pastoral system is well organised, form tutors and heads of year know their pupils well and are responsive to their needs both inside and outside the classroom. Pupils are valued by staff and continuity of care is enhanced by pupils remaining with their form tutors and heads of year throughout their time in school. Pupils say that this has increased their confidence in approaching staff should they have any problems either of a personal or academic nature, and that appropriate advice and guidance would be forthcoming. The school has appointed a pupil counsellor and social inclusion officer to assist pupils to address particular problems that have an adverse effect on their learning. Overall, the pastoral system provides pupils with a good level of academic and personal support. This enables pupils to concentrate on their lessons and has a positive impact on their learning.

54. The school has in place a health and safety policy that meets statutory requirements. Generally, procedures for risk assessment are in place, although fire risk assessment has still to be completed and some concerns relating to departmental risk assessments were drawn to the attention of the headteacher during the inspection. Overall, arrangements for child protection are satisfactory. However, guidance in the staff handbook does not contain sufficient information on the signs and symptoms of child abuse and the procedures to follow should allegations be made against staff. The headteacher is currently undertaking the duties of the designated teacher in the absence of the usual child protection teacher due to illness. Some outstanding child protection training requirements were brought to the attention of the headteacher during the inspection and are being addressed.

55. Overall, the school has satisfactory procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance. Form tutors monitor registers and pursue reasons for absence; if no reasons for absence are forthcoming they advise the assistant head of year who then makes further inquiries involving parents should this be considered necessary. Assistant heads of year meet with the educational welfare officer on a weekly basis, at which time they discuss and agree appropriate action to be taken in relation to instances of poor attendance. Generally, the arrangements for the monitoring of short-term absences are effective. However, the long term monitoring of absence is less well developed, and there are a number of pupils with poor attendance records, about which little or no action has been taken. In some cases, this has allowed extended absences from school to go unchecked which has adversely affected pupils learning. Pupils are awarded certificates for good attendance which has motivated some pupils to improve their attendance.

56. The school has satisfactory procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. There is a well-established school behaviour policy and code of conduct that provides a system of rewards and sanctions. The merit system is popular with all year groups and pupils readily accept the principle of sanctions as an appropriate response to poor behaviour. Incidents of poor behaviour are notified to heads of year through the school's referral system. Heads of year monitor referrals and

construct individual behaviour plans for pupils identified as having behavioural difficulties. The school has in place procedures to discourage bullying and oppressive behaviour, and generally these procedures are effective. Overall, these procedures are successful in promoting good behaviour, particularly in classrooms, and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning.

57. The school has significantly improved the procedures for assessment and the use of assessment data since the previous inspection. Assessment arrangements and marking in English, mathematics and science are now good and help pupils to understand how to improve their work. There is a clear whole school policy framework for assessment and marking. Departments use this effectively to develop the policies and procedures which they feel are best suited to their subject requirements. Assessment development planning is well thought out and includes plans for regularly reviewing the system and improving the quality of reporting pupils' progress to parents.

58. The attainment of all pupils is closely assessed on entry to the school to provide an appropriate baseline from which to judge progress. This is shared with the subject departments who use the information effectively. There is a clear and well-structured whole school system for regularly collecting and efficiently recording the assessment data which is closely analysed and forms a good basis from which to chart the progress of individual pupils.

59. Departmental procedures and policies are at least satisfactory and are very good in science and are good in English, mathematics, design and technology, modern foreign languages, history, music and geography in Years 10-11. They are unsatisfactory in physical education as the criteria used are different for girls and boys and are not sufficiently linked to the National Curriculum criteria. Marking to support the quality of pupils' work is good in English, science, history, religious education and at least satisfactory elsewhere. All departments record assessment information effectively and the departmental procedures are closely monitored by the heads of departments and the senior management team. This ensures that work is matched to pupils' needs.

60. Assessment data is used effectively to support individual pupils in Year 11 who are shown to be underachieving. Senior teachers work with these pupils helping them to produce action plans to enable them to improve their performance. The data is also discussed in detail by heads of department and senior managers at each department's annual review meeting. The information is used successfully to plan future work in English mathematics, science, design and technology, and in other subjects it is used at least satisfactorily except in ICT where it is used poorly. Pupils use this data effectively with their teachers to set targets and produce their own plans for action in order to help them raise their performance in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, music in Years 7-9 and in geography in Years 10-11.

61. Assessment information is conveyed to parents through the annual reports, although almost one third of parents felt that they did not receive adequate information about pupils' progress. The annual report to parents indicates for each subject the pupils' strengths, what needs improving, and what action they should take to improve. Although reports are satisfactory overall, the quality of teacher comments is inconsistent, and often focuses on attitude and effort rather than on what the pupils know and can do. The suggested action is often vague and imprecise.

62. There are satisfactory assessment procedures in place for tracking attainment and progress for pupils with special educational needs. This process is hampered to some extent by the unspecific nature of pupils' individual targets, because it makes it more difficult to judge progress accurately and to set new targets.

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

63. This area of work is satisfactory overall. Since the last inspection the school has worked hard to encourage parents to become involved in the life of the school, but has had only moderate success. Approximately 12 per cent of parents returned the questionnaire and only 7 parents attended the parents' meeting. Nevertheless, parents' views of the school expressed satisfaction with provision. Most parents are pleased with the progress their children make in their learning, the quality of teaching, and the expectation that their children will work hard. Parents also indicate that their children enjoyed coming to school, and that the school is helping them to become more mature and responsible. Evidence from the inspection mostly confirms these positive views of the school. A significant minority of parents expressed concerns about the school including, the standards of behaviour, the information they receive about their children's progress, that the school does not work closely with parents nor do they provide sufficient homework, and also that there is a lack of extra curricular activities. Evidence from the inspection indicates that overall the standards of behaviour in the school are good. However, there are pockets of poor behaviour. There is a good range of extra curricular activities and the school works hard to involve parents in the life of the school but has had only moderate success. Inspectors consider that there are some inconsistencies in the provision of homework, and that it is not regularly recorded in pupils' planners. The planner does not provide a good vehicle for information for parents.

64. Overall parents' involvement in their children's learning is satisfactory. Only a very few parents help in classrooms and then not on a regular basis. However, a number of parents are involved in the school's Education and Business Partnership, which has had a positive impact on pupils' learning. The school works hard to involve parents in the life of the school, for example governors attend all parents' evenings and seek parents' views of the school, but their efforts are not always successful. Some school initiatives, including information and study skills' evenings, attracted low levels of parental support, and the Parent, Teachers and Friends Association no longer operates as it was attended by only a small core of parents. However, there is good parental support for school events such as the school concert, which directly involve their own children.

65. Overall the quality and range of information provided for parents is satisfactory. The school brochure and annual governors' report provide a wide range of information about the school and its activities. Termly newsletters and letters about specific events ensure that parents are aware of current school issues. Pupils' annual reports are of variable quality. Whilst most contain satisfactory information about pupils' strengths, many do not make clear what pupils need to do to improve. The information relating to what pupils have studied relates to the stage of their education rather than the year group and many of the grades given have no indication of what the grades relate to. Reports therefore do not consistently provide parents with a clear view of their children's attainment and progress. Parents are invited to one parents' evening each year. However, Year 7 parents are invited to an additional meeting in the autumn term and Year 9 parents to a specific meeting to discuss their children's options. On average 70 per cent of parents attend open evenings and 60 per cent the Year 9 options evening. The school has satisfactory arrangements to involve the parents of pupils who have special educational needs in the development and review of their individual education plans, and nearly all parents attend. In addition, there is frequent informal contact with parents.



## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

66. The leadership and management provided by the headteacher and senior management team are very good. At the time of the last inspection, the school was found to have serious weaknesses due to the standards achieved by pupils in English, mathematics and science in Years 10 and 11. The headteacher, supported well by the senior management team has provided a strong sense of direction in addressing these and other areas for development. There has been a clear and consistent focus on improving attainment and ensuring a good quality of teaching. A thoughtful and succinct school development plan and a thorough analysis of the school's performance in public tests and examinations have contributed to raising expectations and securing improvement. Good links have been formed between senior and middle management, and there is a shared understanding of the issues which have to be tackled and how to address them, which is helped by a system of regular and thorough progress reviews.

67. In general, the senior management team has a good view of the strengths and areas for development across the school, and supports middle managers very well in their work. This has contributed to raising standards. Departmental management is good. There has been an overall improvement in departmental management across the school, particularly in English, mathematics and science. Management is purposeful and effective, provides good leadership and promotes high standards. Most departments make good use of examination and tests analysis to prepare their work with pupils.

68. Management is particularly good in music, where it results in good standards of teaching, learning and pupil attainment in both school and extra curricular activities. Schemes of work and lesson planning have improved across the school and the consistency of the quality of teaching has improved although there is still a need for some further improvement in some areas.

69. Since the last inspection, governors have established the curriculum committee to monitor the performance of the school. Some members of the governing body have also had training to help them interpret the school's performance in tests and examinations in order to perform the role of 'critical friend' knowledgeably. The curriculum committee has taken on the role of monitoring progress, which was a weakness at the time of the last inspection, and has reviewed the work of most departments in school. Although there is still some way to go, governors are beginning to monitor and evaluate the performance of the school and to examine planning critically. They take their responsibilities seriously and provide a satisfactory level of support to the school. The governing body does not fulfil its statutory responsibilities to provide a collective act of worship for all pupils.

70. The school sets challenging but realistic targets for pupils' attainment based on a wide range of information. In 2000, standards achieved rose sharply particularly in English, mathematics and science and the school achieved its highest examination results ever. Pupils exceeded challenging targets at the end of Years 9

and 11. In 2001, targets were broadly met after a difficult year that included the serious illness of a large number of staff. Most pupils made the expected level of progress. Staff and governors show a strong commitment to working together to improve standards in school and to achieving the wider aims of helping pupils to achieve their potential and to prepare them for a fruitful life in society.

71. Overall, the quality of staffing is good, but the number and deployment of staff trained in support for learning is inadequate.

72. The match of teachers to the curriculum is good. Overall staffing for classroom teaching is well balanced in terms of gender and experience, with a changeover in the last two years of 15 teachers. The school has difficulties of recruitment in science, drama and cover for long-term absence in food technology and modern foreign languages. The problems in modern languages still remain. In modern foreign languages the temporary solution is unsatisfactory since it affects pupils' learning detrimentally. Several instances of long-term illness have slowed learning in these subjects since the school finds it difficult to find specialist supply teachers. Overall support for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. There is a temporary arrangement to cover the long-term absence of the special educational needs coordinator. The responsibilities have been taken over by the three learning support teachers. These teachers have shown a high level of teamwork and commitment in taking on these extra tasks. There are three learning support assistants, an inadequate number.

73. Policies and systems for monitoring the overall teaching performance of staff, induction of new staff and the training of new entrants to the profession are good. The previous provision for appraisal, staff reviews and development has been carefully adapted to meet the new requirements, is accepted by staff and was seen to be operating well among middle managers. Recent priorities for staff development have been the use of computers, changes in Years 10 and 11 work, pupil progress and literacy. Links with beacon schools have been used effectively in science. The induction programme is for all staff new to the school. There are currently three newly qualified teachers who are supported well and who have appropriate workloads. The school is a partner to two Manchester institutions for initial training, with nine staff trained as mentors across six subjects. It is usual for three student teachers to work here during parts of any one year. The work of technicians is of good quality and the school is well served by four administrative staff, two caretakers, contracted cleaners and lunchtime supervisors, under the management of the school bursar. The school has successfully renewed its accreditation for Investors in People. Other initiatives being explored include benchmarking for staff attendance (which is generally good) and 'exit interviews' when staff leave.

74. The provision of resources throughout the school is good although the proportion of the budget spent is below average. Most subject areas are adequately provided for with a clear improvement since the last inspection in mathematics, where resources are now good. Art and design makes good use of the local education authority's resource centre and an artist in residence has made a positive contribution throughout the school. There are insufficient textbooks in history to support the GCSE course.

75. Provision for ICT continues to improve and the number of computers in the school is above the national average. However, the budget is higher than in most schools. There are still some older computers in mathematics and science as reported in the last inspection. The ICT rooms are of a high standard and technical support is good. Access to a safe Internet site is now in place; an improvement since the last inspection. The library provision is very good and includes a well-equipped resource centre. It is well organised and supported by efficient staff. Prefects also act as librarians. Subject departments are able to book the facility

during lesson time but timetable organisation does not always allow this to occur for some subjects. Pupils make very good use of the library during lunchtimes and a thriving homework club takes place after school. There has been an increase in fiction books and those of a multicultural dimension have been increased since the last inspection. The number of books in the library exceeds the nationally recommended ratio of books to pupils. Resources to support pupils with a special educational need are satisfactory.

76. The last inspection found the accommodation to be generally good, allowing the curriculum, except for physical education, to be taught effectively. Little has changed since then. Other than music, subjects are taught in suited accommodation that provides also a departmental office and storage. Many departments are in separate blocks with their own toilet facilities. Accommodation is often very good and there are lively displays of pupils' work in corridors and many classrooms providing a stimulating learning environment. The library is a particularly good feature of the school's design. Some of the less good features of the accommodation arise from the school's expansion from its middle school origins which has doubled the number of pupils on roll. Although a number of very attractive extra classroom blocks have been built, problems arise in design and technology where there are insufficient rooms for resistant materials and food, and the music rooms are small producing difficulties when teaching full-size classes. The ICT classrooms do not provide enough space for each pupil to work one to one with a computer; the large social area above the library is under-used and could provide additional working space for computers. Two of the three art and design rooms offer very cramped working conditions even though classes are less than full-size. The many problems for physical education, acknowledged in the last report, remain. The sports hall, built five years ago, is now too small; storage facilities are limited; the playing field space is totally inadequate and the all-weather pitch is poorly maintained. The school is bounded by housing or environmentally very rich countryside so the expansion of the site to increase the playing field area is unlikely. The present provision limits the range and quality of what can be done in physical education.

77. The dining hall is a legacy of the middle school days and is now far too small. It is large enough to seat those who eat a school lunch and the atmosphere at lunchtime is pleasant and civilised. However the many who prefer to bring a packed lunch cannot all be accommodated. In clement weather they eat outside and this contributes to the litter problem that bedevils the school. There are plans to provide a covered way to the dining room so that those in the long queues no longer get wet when it rains. There is no assembly hall as such, the dining hall doubles as a performance area; it is equipped with stage lighting but is far too small for major events and large assemblies.

78. Since the last inspection exterior vandalism has been eradicated to a large extent due to improved security. Cleaning is contracted out and the school is well maintained inside. The caretaking staff carry out many minor repairs to furniture and to the fabric of the building. They are at the moment on a rolling programme of refurbishing the pupils' toilets and this is being done very well. It is disappointing to

them that the response of a few pupils is to continue to carry out minor acts of vandalism despite the careful control over access to these areas exercised by staff.

79. There is no graffiti and displays in corridors are treated with respect.

80. The school plans its budget rationally, as it did at the time of the last inspection. Most of the allocations are dictated by fixed costs and influenced by the policy of maintaining a relatively good pupil teacher ratio. This results in the school having extra teaching time available, which is used to provide additional support for pupils with special educational needs in lessons. At the moment this support is not used efficiently enough because it is sometimes available when it is not needed and at other times it is missing when it would be useful. This was a criticism of the previous inspection. The matter appears in the school's development plan, but has not yet been addressed to a satisfactory extent. The school has a policy not to insure for teacher absence through illness, and acknowledges that recent misfortune has had an adverse impact financially as well as academically and pastorally.

81. Funding for subjects is allocated largely by a formula, with extra money available for bids which match the departmental and whole school development. This system has worked well, resulting in departments being able to develop generally good levels of resources and it has encouraged development such as the use of modern computer controlled machine tools in design and technology. Spending within the school is monitored carefully to ensure that it matches the budget plan and overall financial systems and control are good. Less attention has been paid to monitoring the outcomes of spending in terms of the improvements they may have brought about in the school. One example of this is that the school has a large number of computers, but because of the way in which they are situated, they are not always used effectively.

82. The governing body is involved in budget setting, largely through the finance and staffing committee. This group receives and approves the draft budget proposed by the school and then monitors progress throughout the year in some detail. Careful consideration has been given to alternative suppliers for services and tenders for major spending are evaluated effectively.

83. The overall costs for running the school are noticeably higher than usual compared to other schools with a similar number of pupils. This is mainly due to staffing costs although the number of separate buildings on the site also contributes. However, considering the quality of education provided and the achievements of the pupils, the school provides sound value for money.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

84. In order to improve standards further, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- (1) Improve standards by:

- improving the planning and teaching of ICT as a subject by:
  - reviewing the scheme of work for pupils in Years 7 - 9 to ensure that it provides the full range of entitlement particularly for the highest attaining pupils and meets the statutory requirements;
  - using assessment more precisely to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met and that work is appropriately challenging;
  - ensuring the time allocation for pupils taking GCSE short courses is sufficient to cover all elements of the curriculum to sufficient depth;
  - monitoring the work of the department more closely to identify and deal with issues causing concern at an earlier stage;
  - organising computers so that pupils do not have to share machines in ICT lessons.

(Paragraphs: 76, 155, 157, 159, 160)

- improving the planning and teaching of ICT across the curriculum by:
  - organising computers so that pupils do not have to share machines when using computers for lessons other than ICT
  - ensuring that all subjects have access to the computer facilities they require.

(Paragraphs: 27, 81, 92, 107, 118, 119, 127, 133, 143, 153, 158)

- reviewing the provision for pupils studying the short course in modern foreign languages in Years 10 and 11 and find alternative courses and forms of accreditation that are more suited to pupils' needs.

(Paragraphs: 4, 162, 166)

- (2) Improve the standards of the highest attaining pupils in a small minority of lessons by:

- providing planned opportunities for pupils to explore their ideas in depth during discussions and debate;
- improving the quality of questioning in a small number of lessons to challenge and stimulate pupils.

(Paragraphs: 29, 101, 115, 125, 129, 142, 145, 150, 157, 177, 186)

- (3) Improve the organisation and deployment of resources for pupils with special educational needs by:

- ensuring there is a match between pupils' needs and the availability of suitably trained support staff;
- providing training for staff to produce individual education plans that are more detailed and relevant to specific subjects;
- improving the quality of joint planning between teachers and support staff.

(Paragraphs: 30, 31, 35, 71, 72, 80, 117, 137, 142, 150, 177, 186)

- (4) Improve the behaviour of a small minority of pupils in lessons and around school by:

- supporting teachers to develop classroom management skills;

- ensuring the school's behaviour policy is implemented consistently by all staff in all areas of the school;
- promoting ongoing development to reward positive behaviour and enhance pupils' self esteem.

(Paragraphs: 15, 16, 17, 63, 90, 106, 116, 126, 152, 188)

(5) Improve levels of attendance by:

- working more closely with parents to reduce levels of authorised absence;
- putting in place more rigorous arrangements for the long term monitoring of absence particularly of pupils with poor attendance over a period.

(Paragraphs: 20, 55, 56)

Together with the main issues identified above the school should also consider:

- promoting respect for the environment by working with pupils to ensure they do not drop litter on site and by ensuring all staff are involved in implementing this policy consistently.
- ensuring that statutory requirements to provide a daily act of collective worship are met.
- ensuring pupils in Year 7 - 9 all have an entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum  
by providing the required range of activities for boys in physical education.

(Paragraphs: 17, 36, 51, 69, 77, 179)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	157
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	39

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	6	39	59	42	4	3	0
Percentage	4	25	38	27	3	2	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	898
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	124

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	29
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	147

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	9.7
National comparative data	7.7

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	1.1



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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	89	98	187

National Curriculum Test/Task Results	English	Mathematics	Science	
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	61	70	66
	Girls	70	64	55
	Total	131	134	121
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	70 (42)	72 (58)	65 (49)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	21 (12)	40 (30)	25 (12)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments	English	Mathematics	Science	
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	48	67	77
	Girls	63	68	74
	Total	111	135	151
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	60 (60)	73 (64)	80 (66)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	27 (20)	33 (37)	30 (25)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (28)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	101	80	181

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	47	97	97
	Girls	43	77	78
	Total	90	174	175
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	50 (37)	96 (90)	97 (95)
	National	47.4 (46.6)	90.6 (90.9)	95.6 (95.8)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	40
	National	38.4

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	895
Any other minority ethnic group	1

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	9	1
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### *Teachers and classes*

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	55
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.58

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

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	268

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

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	77
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#### **Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11**

Key Stage 3	23.8
Key Stage 4	18.8

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### *Financial information*

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	2 394 908
Total expenditure	2 401 537
Expenditure per pupil	2 666
Balance brought forward from previous year	86 648
Balance carried forward to next year	80 019

### *Recruitment of teachers*

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	15
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	15

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	729
Number of questionnaires returned	78

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	24	67	8	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	27	56	4	3	10
Behaviour in the school is good.	23	45	15	5	12
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	15	59	19	4	3
The teaching is good.	24	50	10	4	12
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	19	47	26	4	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	37	47	14	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	45	46	8	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	10	51	27	5	6
The school is well led and managed.	26	47	10	5	12
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	27	49	15	3	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	14	40	13	12	22

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

### **ENGLISH**

Overall, the quality of provision in English is good.

#### **Strengths**

- Results in 2000 were above average in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 and close to the national average in the GCSE examination.
- Teaching is good; planning and preparation of lessons is very thorough and teachers' knowledge of their subject is good.
- Pupils are well motivated and eager to learn.
- The subject is well led. Significant progress has been made since the last inspection.
- Accommodation is very good.

#### **Areas for improvement**

- When reading aloud, a significant number of pupils do not articulate clearly or use a variety of pitch, pace or intonation.

85. Pupils' overall standard of attainment at the age of 14 is above that found nationally. In national tests in 2000 the percentage of pupils reaching at least level 5 was above the national average. Boys performed slightly better than girls when compared with their respective national standards. In comparison with similar schools performance was above average. Results were well above average when compared with those of schools with a similar percentage of free school meals. National tests results show good progress by the end of Year 9 when taking into account levels of literacy on entry, which were somewhat below average. In 2001 results were in line with the national average. Standards of attainment at the end of Year 9 show a continuing upward trend over time.

86. At the end of Year 11 pupils' standard of attainment is in line with that found nationally. The percentage of pupils achieving grades A\* - C in the GCSE in 2000 for both English language and English literature showed a marked improvement on those of 1999, especially in English language, although results were somewhat below the national average. Girls did better than boys particularly in English language. There has been a steady upward trend over recent years and results are better than at the time of the last report. Provisional figures for 2001 were less good but twenty-five scripts are currently being re-marked.

87. The quality of speaking and listening throughout the school is close to that found nationally but there are some inconsistencies. Almost all pupils answer questions willingly and clearly but a few lower attaining pupils fail to speak audibly. Pupils in Year 7, for example, gave sharp, accurate and lucid answers during a

literacy period and also told lively, extended anecdotes based on experience. The great majority of pupils listen attentively. They work productively in pairs and small groups. Some high attaining pupils read fluently but many pupils do not articulate clearly and their reading lacks variety of tone and pace. When talking to adults, pupils are confident and courteous. Standards of oracy have, in the main, improved since the last inspection.

88. Standards of attainment in reading comprehension match closely those found nationally. Pupils are encouraged to read widely and they make extensive use of the lively range of attractive books, especially fiction, in the excellent library. The great majority of pupils read well enough to understand and enjoy the wide range of literature which they encounter. In their study of the poetry of Ted Hughes, for example, high attaining pupils in Year 9 showed sensitivity in their appreciation of the poet's meaning, as well as accurate use of the appropriate vocabulary of literary criticism. During Years 7, 8 and 9 pupils enjoy a range of class reading books and, by the age of 14, most pupils identify accurately key elements of plot, character and themes in their studies. Average attaining pupils in Year 11 had read closely Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* and analysed correctly the motivation of characters and their roles in the novel. By the age of 16 high attaining pupils identify and describe accurately writers' intentions and use of language.

89. The quality of written work at the end of Year 9 is above that found nationally. Writing is, on the whole, neatly and confidently presented with accurate sentence structure, spelling and punctuation. The written work of pupils in Year 7 is benefiting from the sharp focus on language in literacy lessons. Pupils draft their work effectively. Some lower attaining pupils present lively writing which, however, contains frequent errors in expression of ideas and in sentence structure. Completed assignments of high attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11 are carefully planned, skilfully crafted and accurate in spelling, punctuation and grammar. The best of such work often springs from the study of literature or is autobiographical.

90. The standard of behaviour is generally good. Most pupils enjoy their work and are well motivated. There is, however, a minority of pupils, mostly boys, in Years 10 and 11, who appear disaffected and whose behaviour occasionally adversely affects the learning of others. The great majority work well together and respect the views and opinions of others. Good behaviour is very closely related to the good standard of teaching.

91. The quality of teaching throughout the school is always satisfactory. Teaching of pupils up to the end of Year 9 is good in almost all lessons and very good in well over half. In Year 10 and 11 teaching is good in almost all lessons. Teachers' knowledge of their subject is extensive and the planning and preparation of lessons is very thorough which wins pupils' respect and results in their willingness to respond positively. In a literacy lesson in Year 7, for example, efficient planning and classroom organisation with skilful use of materials, enable pupils to understand complex sentences well and to answer questions accurately and articulately. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and prepare them carefully for national tests and examinations. This leads pupils to plan written answers thoroughly and organise time efficiently. Because teachers respect pupils' views and encourage

them to express themselves fluently, relationships in the classroom are, in the main, positive. In their study of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, high attaining pupils in Year 10 showed good understanding of the contrast between life in the country and the court, which sprang from the teacher's robust use of questioning, which always insisted upon close reference to the text. Lessons are generally conducted at a good pace with tasks set clearly and with precise targets which result in pupils understanding exactly what is expected of them, and achieving objectives. Very occasionally activities are allowed to continue beyond the concentration span of pupils, with teacher talk predominating. Pupils' work is marked conscientiously and constructively with much positive comment and advice to help improvement. As a consequence, pupils present their work carefully and make good progress. There has been a significant improvement in the overall quality of teaching since the last report.

92. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. There are close links with partner primary schools. In response to the last report an intensive review of both curriculum and teaching has taken place. Schemes of work at all levels have been radically revised, ensuring that pupils make steady and improved progress by following the scheme which allows them to build on their skills effectively. Curricular planning for the first three years is now good. In addition to these major improvements, the new national literacy strategy has been incorporated into the schemes of work and is securely in place in Year 7. The monitoring of teaching in the department is very thorough and regular. Documentation is practical and informative. Assessment and recording of pupils' progress is good. Tasks and responsibilities are delegated and development planning is very good. Accommodation is much better than that commonly found. Staff share a clear set of aims and expectations. There has been a significant improvement in many aspects since the last report. Management is good and the department is led with skill and commitment. There is sometimes difficulty in accessing computers during English lessons.

93. In most subjects across the curriculum pupils listen attentively. They answer questions willingly but rarely make extended statements. There is little evidence of structured discussion as an integral feature of lessons, but pupils work well in groups in music, physical education, religious education, drama, and personal and social education. Few opportunities are made for pupils to read aloud and they tend to lack audibility and clarity. This aspect of literacy has not been fully developed in some departments and the use of talk as an indispensable way of learning is sometimes undervalued. Most pupils have satisfactory levels of reading comprehension. They understand textbooks and printed materials presented to them. Key words and specialist vocabulary are well displayed in design and technology, history, music and religious education. Most subject areas are well represented in the library.

94. Pupils present written work carefully in most subjects and the overall standard is higher than that commonly found. In history, geography and religious education attention is given to the structuring of pupils' writing. In these subjects high attaining pupils construct accurately written extended assignments especially in Year 10 and 11. Pupils are encouraged to write personal responses to their listening



in music and in doing so develop their powers of self expression. There is sometimes difficulty in accessing computers during English lessons.

## **Drama**

95. Drama is taught as a separate subject throughout the school. All pupils during the first three years have regular lessons and in Years 10 and 11 it is a popular, optional examination course. By the age of 14 pupils achieve standards close to those found nationally. In the GCSE in 2000 the percentage of pupils achieving grade A\* - C was close to the national average and so was their overall performance.

96. Pupils work energetically and sensibly together in pairs and groups. This helps them to develop collaborative skills. They listen carefully to each other and reach agreement quickly. Pupils in Year 8 sustained close concentration during an outstanding illustration of hot seating by their teacher. They thought out relevant and clear questions and elaborated freely and easily when invited. This improvised speech was of a high standard. By the age of 16 pupils acquire a good range of skills such as the use of body language, facial expression and spatial awareness which match those found nationally. In activities which require a focus on movement, the quality of movement, particularly of boys, who do not study dance, is below expectation. Pupils enjoy their work in drama and show great commitment. This is a direct response to the consistently high quality of teaching, which is very good in all lessons and sometimes excellent.

97. Teachers bring great energy and imagination to their work. Lessons are very well prepared. Studio management is confident and effective. The behaviour of all groups, even those new to drama in Year 7, is very good. Teachers insist upon the highest standards of respect for the feelings of others and pupils are sensitive and thoughtful when evaluating group presentations. Lessons are conducted at great pace and pupils know exactly what is expected of them. Practical work is skilfully monitored and assessed. Pupils of all levels of attainment work happily together and pupils with special educational needs make particularly good progress in self-confidence.

98. The department handbook is exhaustive. Curriculum and development planning are very good. The department makes a valuable and growing contribution to the cultural life of the school. Management is very good and the subject is led with great energy and enthusiasm.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is good.

### **Strengths**

- Standards of attainment are at least satisfactory throughout the school and are above average by the end of Year 11.

- Results in National Curriculum tests in Year 9 and in GCSE examinations are steadily improving.
- Teaching is at least satisfactory. It is usually good or very good. It is characterised by having clear learning objectives, very high expectations of attainment and very good methods of assessment.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Their attitudes to mathematics are very good when the work is particularly challenging. The majority have a good knowledge of their attainment and progress.
- Standards of numeracy are satisfactory and improving. In Year 7 they are good.
- Leadership and management of the department are very good. Accommodation and resources are good.

#### Areas for improvement

- Results in National Curriculum tests in Year 9 and GCSE examinations are slightly below national averages.
- In a significant number of lessons there is a lack of targeted support for pupils with special educational needs and this adversely affects the progress of the whole class.
- Whilst the use of calculators is good, unsatisfactory provision for whole class use of computer software restricts opportunities to enhance learning in mathematics.

99. In 2000, the proportion of pupils in Year 9 attaining level 5 or better was above the national average. The proportion of pupils attaining level 6 or better was broadly in line. The overall attainment was better than similar schools. There has been a steady trend of improvement in recent years. In 2001, overall attainment continued to be broadly in line with the national average. Results are in line with those in science and consistently better than those in English. Standards in lessons reflect attainment in the National Curriculum tests. Whilst the performance of boys compared to girls has fluctuated in recent years, there has been no significant overall difference. Overall, this is an improvement since the previous report.

100. In 2000, the proportion of pupils gaining A\* - C grades in GCSE examinations was below the national average, whilst the proportion gaining A\* - G grades was above. The school commendably enters almost all of its pupils for GCSE and the average points score for the cohort was only just below the national average. In 2001, the proportion obtaining grades A\* - C improved but was still below the national average. In GCSE examinations in the last two years, girls have performed better than boys at the higher grades. However, standards in lessons show that currently pupils across Year 11 are attaining above national expectation and boys are attaining better than girls at the higher levels. Overall, this is a significant improvement since the previous report.

101. By the end of Year 9, pupils attain standards around the national average. They make appropriate progress in relation to their abilities. The highest attaining pupils are able to solve complicated equations and use trigonometry to solve problems. They demonstrate an awareness of whether or not their answer is reasonable, even before checking. Pupils in the middle ability range perform at

average levels. They are thorough and competent in the way they solve problems in algebra but check the accuracy of their answers in a rote manner without real understanding. Lower attaining pupils in Year 9 attain standards that are slightly below average. They calculate simple fractions competently. In a lesson on fractions, a support teacher assisted pupils with special educational needs. The class teacher used the incentive of coding the answers to form a message to motivate the class. The two teachers worked well together and used their time effectively to help these lower attaining pupils. However, the class teacher did not stretch these pupils. The work was mainly reinforcement and an opportunity was missed to extend the work to problems. Overall, standards at the end of Year 9 are in line with the national average.

102. Whilst teaching is at least satisfactory in Year 9, it is better in Years 7 and 8. It is best in Year 7, mainly because of the resources used and the school's involvement in the new framework for teaching mathematics. In a lesson with mixed ability pupils in Year 7, a variety of resources were used to give all pupils the opportunity to relate fractions, decimals and percentages. Pupils worked in groups, carefully selected by ability, using large attractive cards to choose decimal equivalents to fractions. Individual pupils came to the overhead projector to arrange fractions with different denominators in order. Good pace, helped by well-targeted differentiation of activities, as well as clear learning objectives, stimulated all pupils to learn.

103. In another lesson with Year 7 pupils, starter activities set a very good work and fun ethic for the lesson. Six pupils were asked to give four different descriptions of a number of their choice. This good use of literacy was followed by a timed activity to arrive at each of these six numbers using any of the usual arithmetic operations on four numbers chosen randomly by the throw of a die. Pupils were on the edge of their seats, determined to experiment to reach all of the answers, and as a class they did. The standards of numeracy and literacy shown were good. In a different, slower paced, but very effective lesson with Year 7, high expectation and a sensitive sense of humour, allowed a teacher to develop literacy and high level mathematical knowledge. The pupils played a "round the world" game, using cards where one pupil had a card such as, "I am the name of a prism with circular cross-section" and another would hold "cylinder" and a card with a different description. Achievement is good in Years 7 and 8, because there is very good teaching, typified by very high expectation. Pupils are told and understand clearly the levels at which they are working. The attitudes of pupils are good. They respond to a challenge and show very good attitudes to learning mathematics in the best lessons.

104. At the end of Year 11 standards are above the national average overall. Boys and girls across all levels of ability make good progress and achieve well. Good teaching enables pupils in Year 11 to learn appropriate levels of mathematics including algebra, shape and space and probability. Teachers use regular testing, targeted at particular grades to help pupils revise effectively. They motivate pupils by telling them the high levels at which particular topics are set. There are more higher attaining pupils than expected nationally and there is a genuine mathematics learning ethic in these lessons. Average attaining pupils work confidently at solving difficult problems in algebra. They achieve confidence because the learning

objectives are clear and the teacher allows sufficient time to build up confidence without lessening the pace.

105. Lower attaining pupils in Year 11 attain higher than could normally be expected. Their achievement is good. In a lesson with a lower group, the teacher presented challenging work in geometry which also involved calculation and problem solving. The relevance of this problem to pupils' lives motivated them to work during this lesson at levels of attainment, at least in line with the national average and higher than could be expected for this group. Pupils in the very lowest group also achieve well. In a lesson on angle recognition and measurement, a teacher and support assistant worked well in harmony. They helped pupils, most with special educational needs, to estimate and name types of angles and measure them accurately. The teacher's firm and friendly manner worked well with these pupils. They were made to feel important because their previous work was returned promptly at the start of the lesson and the teacher and assistant had sufficient time to target individual needs.

106. Whilst teaching is usually good or very good in Year 11, it is only satisfactory in Year 10, because there is often a lack of support where needed. Teachers need all of their expertise to manage pupils. Pupils usually have a good attitude, but when teachers do not have enough time to help all the pupils who need it, then some pupils become distracted and behaviour and learning are only satisfactory.

107. Leadership and management are very good. The head of department sets a good example in his teaching and monitors colleagues effectively. Strong leadership has also brought about a very effective system of assessment whereby pupils have clear targets and are constantly made aware of their levels of attainment. New initiatives, such as the department's commitment as a partner school in the numeracy strategy have been taken on board with a clear vision and determination. Staffing in the department is good, with a clear division of responsibilities to enhance working as a team and teachers are effectively deployed to classes. Accommodation and resources are good, with extra funding for the numeracy strategy having been well spent to impact effectively on learning. The lack of computer provision in school for most whole classes reduces opportunities to enhance learning using ICT. There are good links with a nearby Beacon school, from which both schools benefit. However, calculators are used effectively and some good use is made of computers with classes with small numbers. Overall, the department has made significant improvement since the previous inspection.

108. Whilst the whole school numeracy policy is not yet in place, considerable strides have been made recently to enhance numeracy teaching and coordinate opportunities to use numeracy across the curriculum. The mathematics department has conducted an audit of when other curriculum areas use numeracy. They intend to coordinate teaching methods and terminology where possible. The teaching of numeracy within the mathematics department is usually good and sometimes very good.

109. At present good learning opportunities already exist in many other departments for pupils to use numeracy skills to enhance their learning. Design and technology use measurement of length regularly and food technology use weight, capacity and proportion for work on recipes. Pupils in geography and science plot and interpret a variety of graphs accurately at all ages as well as extrapolating information using lines of best fit. Whilst not occurring as often, there are useful opportunities in history, music, art and design, religious education and physical education. Standards of numeracy are sufficient to allow pupils to follow the curriculum in other subject areas. Standards of numeracy are at least satisfactory and good in Year 7.

## SCIENCE

Overall, the quality of provision in science is good.

### Strengths

- Pupils make good progress and attain standards that are now above average.
- Teaching is good and has improved significantly since the last inspection.
- The performance of pupils is carefully monitored and individual targets are set.
- There is strong leadership of a team of committed teachers.

### Areas for improvement

- Pupils with special educational needs do not receive sufficient in-class support.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to gain 'hands on' experience in development of their ICT skills.

110. The results obtained in the national tests for 14-year-olds in 2000 were close to the national averages for all maintained secondary schools. The proportion gaining level 5 and above was well above those of schools having similar proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals. The proportion gaining level 6 and above was in line with that in similar schools. Boys have performed significantly better than girls. The average points scored in these tests has been below the national trend over the past four years but was almost in line with the national figure in 2000. The results were much improved on those of 1999 particularly for boys and the proportion gaining level 6 and above was significantly higher. In 2001 the proportion gaining level 5 and above was slightly below the national average. The teacher assessments closely matched the tests results.

111. The GCSE results in 2000 were slightly above the national averages. All pupils gained at least a grade G. The proportion of pupils gaining A\* - C grades was well above that in schools having similar proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals. It was also well above that in schools having pupils who performed similarly in the national tests taken two years previously. The proportion gaining A\* or A grades was approximately half the national average. Boys performed significantly better in science than in their other subjects whereas the girls did not do quite as well. In 2000 results were a marked improvement on those of 1999. The GCSE results in 2001 were not as high as those of 2000. There was a significant number of

pupils with poor attitudes and there was no additional support within lessons for potential borderline candidates.

112. By the end of Year 9 standards are a little above average. They are above average by the end of Year 11. Older pupils entered the school with attainment levels in science that were a little below average. For the present Year 7 they are close to the national average. Pupils make good progress throughout. By the end of each of Years 9 and 11 pupils have a sound knowledge and a secure understanding of the subject matter across each of the attainment targets. Skills required in practical investigations develop well throughout. Pupils in Year 7 soon learn how to observe and measure accurately and record appropriately. Planning, analysis and evaluation skills develop to above expected levels with older pupils. Year 9 pupils describe photosynthesis using appropriate scientific terminology. Most pupils understand reflection and refraction and draw accurate ray diagrams. They know how some familiar mixtures are separated but cannot always apply their knowledge to suggest ways to separate lesser well-known ones. In one lesson a group of Year 9 lower attaining pupils, many having special educational needs measured time and temperatures accurately and some were able to interpret the data obtained. Higher attaining Year 11 pupils know factors affecting rates of chemical reactions and many of them explain them in terms of particle theory. Most pupils identify parts of the eye and describe their functions. With occasional prompting lower attaining pupils describe the properties of types of radiation. In all the above examples this represents good levels of attainment for the pupils. In most classes pupils have the numeracy skills enabling them to process their experimental results. In one lesson Year 10 pupils improved their numeracy skills when learning how to plot a 'line of best fit.'

113. Skills used in ICT are developed to expected levels and in one lesson Year 11 pupils competently used sensors and displayed their results on a computer screen. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall. They are taught well in smaller groups and given suitable tasks. Teachers are well aware of difficulties of individuals and give them extra help whenever possible. Gifted pupils also make good progress. They are identified early, taught in separate groups and given extension work. Pupils take pride in their work and standards of presentation are above average.

114. The attitudes of the vast majority of pupils to learning are positive and much improved on those during the last inspection. They want to succeed and show interest and enjoyment in lessons. They almost always settle quickly and are well behaved and attentive. They willingly and confidently respond. They cooperate very well in groups, working safely and productively without constant close supervision. Their attitudes to homework are good and they appreciate the prompt marking and the many informative comments which help them move forward. One teacher allows pupils to contact her by e-mail if they need help with homework.

115. The quality of teaching is good and has improved markedly since the last inspection. It is always at least satisfactory and good or better in over two thirds of lessons. Teachers know their subject well and make it comprehensible to pupils of all levels of attainment. In one lesson pupils quickly learned about atomic structure

with the teacher using a local football team as an 'aide-memoire.' In another the teacher captured the pupils' interest by relating relevant personal experiences. Lessons are well planned and objectives are made clear from the start. In most there is a clear summary at the end. Teachers know pupils very well and exploit this to skilfully question them and to check understanding. Occasionally questioning is not sufficiently targeted to focus individuals on the objectives. In a few lessons there was not enough questioning to tease out information and ideas from pupils. Exposition is lively and informative with clear measured delivery particularly with classes of lower attaining pupils.

116. Teachers use praise, encouragement and humour successfully in helping pupils respond well to their high expectations of behaviour and effort. Pupil-teacher relationships are good, promoting confidence in pupils. In most lessons there is a good variety of activity. In one lesson the teacher devised a challenging task using cards with details of chemical elements.

117. The groups of Year 9 pupils were totally engaged working out the correct sequence of elements. Group working is well organised. Pupils know what they have to do and what they are trying to find out. In one lesson groups were too large resulting in individuals not being fully involved. Class management is good and pupils are usually kept busy throughout. However in one lesson Year 11 pupils were not fully occupied while waiting for the experiment to proceed. Not all teachers use well prepared task, information and question sheets to avoid pupils spending time copying from the board. The teacher of a Year 8 class decided where pupils sat and with whom they worked. They accepted this readily and carried out their investigation in an extremely safe and orderly manner. They handled equipment carefully and moved about sensibly. In this lesson and two others there was a significant number of pupils having special educational needs but there was no additional support. Learning was adversely affected, as the teacher could not meet the immediate demands of the many individuals seeking extra help. At the time of the last inspection there were not enough support staff. The quality of homework and marking has improved significantly since the last inspection and supports children's learning effectively. Some Year 11 pupils had spent more than their expected time working on their reports of investigations. They were very well presented with most of them word-processed.

118. The curriculum fulfils statutory requirements. It is delivered using schemes of work which are being up-dated according to recent recommendations. Very good liaison with partner schools promotes good continuity and progression so that the curriculum in Year 7 is well matched to pupils' needs and results in effective learning. Opportunities for pupils to develop their ICT skills have increased significantly since the last inspection. However because of a lack both of up-to-date equipment and availability of dedicated ICT rooms, pupils are not gaining enough 'hands on' experience. In some lessons there is an extra science teacher to give additional support to Year 11 pupils who have been identified as potential borderline GCSE candidates. Comprehensive, regular and accurate procedures have been established since the last inspection. The data is used extensively and most effectively in setting targets for individuals.

119. An enthusiastic and most competent head of department provides very good leadership and clear direction. He manages the department very well. There is careful monitoring of performance including observation of teaching and the quality of marking. The teachers are appropriately qualified and there is a good balance of gender and experience. The technicians provide high quality support. A team spirit is much in evidence with a united commitment to high standards and continuous improvement. The accommodation is good and apart from ICT equipment there are adequate resources. The manner in which the department has successfully addressed almost all of the issues highlighted in the previous inspection report is indicative of its capacity to improve further.



## ART AND DESIGN

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

### Strengths

- The significant improvement in 1999 GCSE results has been sustained in 2000 and 2001. GCSE results are good both for those attaining A - C grades and for all candidates. There are good standards of achievement in all years.
- The quality of teaching in all years is good or better and results in good progress and learning. Long-term planning and assessment are very good.
- Departmental leadership promotes high standards.
- Displays are excellent with high quality work well presented.

### Areas for improvement

- Some tasks for pupils with special educational needs should be modified to ensure better pupil comprehension.
- More opportunities should be given for pupils to talk critically about their work and that of others.
- The cramped accommodation creates problems for teachers.
- The lack of computer facilities in the art and design area hinders further progress in ICT.

120. By the end of Year 9 pupils reach good standards with many achieving exciting and imaginative results. Their attainment overall is above average. In most lessons seen pupils explored new media confidently and with increasing control. Work in folders and in the extensive displays in the department and around the school demonstrate the good standards that are reached by many in a wide variety of two and three-dimensional media. Most pupils make very good progress but sometimes those with special educational needs find the conceptual demands of activities beyond them. Talented and gifted pupils work at an appropriate level for them and produce good results.

121. These overall good standards are maintained throughout Years 10 and 11. In 1999, the year of the last inspection, GCSE results had dramatically improved. This improvement has been sustained well and in 2000 the percentage of boys achieving A\* - C grades was well above national averages. Although the national average for girls was much higher, girls' results succeeded in meeting that average. It is departmental policy to enter the entire group for the examination and in the three years all candidates have achieved a certificate with none getting below grade F in the last two years. The exhibition of the work of all the 2001 candidates attests to the exciting design qualities and overall high standards achieved. Work seen in lessons and in pupils' folders shows continuing good progress throughout the examination course. By Year 11 the work of the girls is noticeably better than that of many of the boys. The department carefully analyses GCSE results and has set clear targets for future years. About a third of Year 10 pupils study the full GCSE art and design course. Many more pupils wish to follow this course but are unable to due to the way in which the option choices are organised. A GCSE short course has

been introduced this year to cater for these pupils and it has attracted a lot of attention.

122. The quality of teaching and learning overall is good with some very good features. Demonstrations of art and design techniques are expertly done and basic skills are taught well. The very careful collaborative planning in the department builds for long-term achievement and provides the foundation for the good quality learning that pupils experience. Expectations are high and tasks are usually challenging. Teaching methods are appropriate and in the majority of lessons pupils are encouraged to explore new techniques within a secure framework. Pupils are well managed in an unobtrusive but firm way. Lesson time and resources are used well and best use is made of the art and design technician's time.

123. Assessment is very good. Helped by an excellent local education authority initiative the department has produced a comprehensive exemplar folder and is now well placed to assess National Curriculum levels accurately at the end of Year 9. Verbal day-to-day assessment is very good, teachers interacting very supportively and analytically with pupils. A new system of recording assessments, including pupil self-assessment, is being implemented and is good, informative and manageable.

124. Pupils with special educational needs generally achieve success in art and design, the open-ended nature of many activities allowing them to work at a level suitable for them. However in a few lessons observed, the conceptual demands of the activity were beyond them and these should be broken down into smaller units.

125. In most lessons in Years 7 - 9 pupils respond imaginatively, they adopt a challenging approach to the tasks they are given and they sustain the pace in their work well. Most pupils concentrate well and are keen to explore new media and processes. A few, mainly boys, are not so focussed and their results suffer. Interest and concentration in the GCSE groups are very good. During the inspection, little chance was given for pupils to talk critically about their work and that of others so as to increase understanding and develop the use of technical language.

126. Pupils' attitudes to lessons in Years 7 - 9 are generally positive. There was in a few lessons evidence of unsatisfactory behaviour which teachers dealt with effectively. Behaviour in the GCSE groups is always good and sometimes excellent. Relationships between pupils and with their teachers are good. During the inspection attendance in the GCSE option groups was usually good.

127. The department is well led. The departmental syllabus sets out a curriculum that meets statutory requirements. There is a good balance of two and three-dimensional work and there is a strong emphasis on non-western art as well as good attention to a range of great western artists. The last report noted the lack of ICT in use. This deficiency has been steadily addressed since that inspection and when further computers are acquired for use in-house, requirements can be met fully. In the meantime there is evidence of good quality computer work being done in most years.

128. There is a strong feeling for beauty and visual excitement in lessons. Pupils work well independently and respect each other's work and this respect extends to the way the many superb displays around the school are treated. Teachers give their time generously and run an 'open-house' system for pupils to continue work out of lesson time. The Art Club is for GCSE pupils only and many benefit from attending this. Apart from computers, the department is well resourced. Staffing is good and the presence of an art and design technician greatly enhances the work of the department. Accommodation is a weakness. The clay room is cramped, as is the second art and design room where the design wastes space, and this often creates difficulties for staff even though classes in art and design are not full size. Storage is very limited and there is no dust filter in the kiln area.

129. Most of the issues raised in the last inspection have been addressed. The use of ICT is now better, but further improvement depends on increased resourcing; teaching has improved with no unsatisfactory lessons being seen; formal pupil self-assessment is now being introduced; standards of achievement in Years 7 - 9 have risen and are now generally above average. Teachers' lesson inputs are now of an appropriate length but the lack of opportunities for pupil discussion remains.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Strengths**

- Pupils make good progress and standards are better than in most schools.
- Teaching is good and pupils respond well growing in confidence and independence.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and relationships are good.
- Management is good and the department is lively and progressive.

### **Areas for improvement**

- The curriculum does not include work on textiles. It would broaden pupils' experience if this were included.
- Links between areas of the department are in need of strengthening.

130. In the National Curriculum assessment of Year 9 pupils' work, teachers assess the standards as being above average compared with other schools in 2001, with boys and girls performing similarly. This represents good progress from the levels of attainment that the pupils have in the subject when they join the school. Results in the GCSE examinations have been rising over the past few years and in 2001 were above the national average. In the three examinations courses followed scores are highest in graphics and a little higher in resistant materials than in food technology. When pupils' prior attainment is taken into account progress is generally good in all three subjects, with the greatest gains made by pupils following the resistant materials course. In 2001 a large proportion of the pupils achieved higher grades than might have been expected, including some pupils who gained A and B grades whose previous performance and attainment in other subjects pointed

to them getting E grades. This considerable improvement in performance is due to the quality of teaching and the well-planned course they follow.

131. These results are reflected in the pupils' work seen in the school. By Year 9 pupils have developed a good understanding of the need of safe working practices and particularly of hygiene requirements when dealing with food. They have learned an appropriate range of basic skills in the subject and generally handle tools and equipment competently as a result of well-focussed teaching and support. Design work is well presented and often imaginative. Pupils use a good range of techniques to express their ideas clearly and effectively. Pupils meet a good range of activities within graphics, resistant materials and food, learning their different characteristics and working properties effectively. Products they create are often well made and carefully finished, for example the wire figures which are carefully proportioned and smoothed before final finishing.

132. Older pupils following GCSE courses develop these skills appropriately and also acquire new ones, such as casting using pewter. They deepen their understanding of the subject for example, extending the knowledge of what constitutes a healthy diet, which they built up in earlier years to take account of special requirements such as diabetes and during pregnancy. Design skills are refined and pupils use a wide range of sources for their ideas and base their design decisions on more carefully chosen criteria, sometimes using prototypes to test their ideas, for example, recipes are often tested and modified as a result of trials. There is a considerable emphasis on using modern techniques within resistant materials and graphics, with pupils meeting computer controlled machine tools. The quality of their work is particularly good and plays a major part in raising standards in these areas.

133. Teaching is good overall, with some instances of very good practice. Teachers know their subject well and convey their enthusiasm for it to the pupils. Lessons are well organised and there are well-established routines so that pupils know what is expected of them. In the great majority of lessons pupils are managed very well so that they work safely and can show independence and initiative, selecting materials and trying out new ideas for themselves. Teachers all demonstrate techniques skilfully. In the most successful demonstrations teachers involve the pupils closely through questioning so that they gain a thorough grasp of the reasons behind each procedure for example, while making a pizza base the teacher encouraged pupils to recognise the importance of using strong flour and the role of gluten in the process. Good quality work is encouraged through the example that teachers set. Through the frequent use of examples of earlier work, pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own work and that of others, suggesting how it could be improved. This happens most frequently in food technology where it is strongly supported by the use of lists of criteria and suitable vocabulary that could be used to make the judgements. Teachers have established very good relationships with most pupils. They work hard at building up the confidence of pupils who do not always find schoolwork easy. As a result of this these pupils often make better progress in design and technology than in other subjects.

134. The department is forward looking and has improved well since the last inspection. It is well led and managed but suffers from being split into two areas some distance apart. The department has looked for ways of working more closely together and links are being strengthened. The strategies they are considering include observing each other teaching and explicitly using skills such as graphics across the whole department after it has been taught in one area. The curriculum provides a good balance between designing and making and there is a good coverage of modern techniques and use of ICT, but pupils do not use textiles. Including this element would broaden pupils' experience of the subject. Technicians provide good support for the subject.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

Overall, the quality of provision in geography is good.

### **Strengths**

- Teaching in Years 10 - 11 is generally of good quality. Lessons are well planned with a good variety of activities gaining pupils' interest and enabling them to make progress. The procedures for assessment are good and its use in helping pupils to understand what steps to take to raise their standards is effective.
- The provision for fieldwork is good, so pupils have a good understanding of the methods of collecting and analysing data, and drawing appropriate conclusions.
- The accommodation is of very good quality.
- The quality and quantity of resources are very good and they are used well.

### **Areas for improvement**

- The quality of teaching in Years 7 - 9 to enable pupils to make more rapid progress. This includes the quality of support for lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs.
- The strategies to provide adequate challenge for the higher attaining pupils to enable them to reach their full potential.
- The provision to enable pupils to develop their skills in the use of ICT in the subject.

135. Pupils' overall level of attainment at the end of Year 9 is broadly average. When teachers assessed pupils' work in 2000 attainment was well above the national average. In 2001 attainment was broadly in line with the national average, which reflected the standards achieved in the previous years. At the higher National Curriculum levels attainment was below the national average. Boys and girls achieved similar results at the average levels, but girls achieved better results at the higher levels.

136. By the end of Year 11 pupils' overall level of attainment is below the national average. GCSE results in 2000 were below the national average and were well below the national expectation for those achieving the highest grades. Girls achieved higher grades than boys and those gaining A\* - C grades were similar to the national average. Pupils' performance at GCSE was broadly in line with what they achieved in other subjects in the school. More boys than girls study the subject to GCSE level, and the results largely reflect the overall lower prior attainment of pupils, particularly boys, who take the examination. In 2001 results were well below the national average at all levels. Results since 1996 have remained broadly static at below the national average at a time when results nationally have been improving.

137. The results are thoroughly scrutinised by the department and an analysis based on the previous performance of the pupils shows that they make satisfactory progress in this subject. A clear strategy for examination improvement has been implemented with a focus on raising the standard of examination techniques, through a greater focus on revision and answering examination questions, and coursework. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress, but this is more rapid when they are supported by additional teachers providing appropriate in-class support.

138. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of how landscapes are formed and of different environments. In one lesson in Year 10, for example, pupils quickly described and explained how plants in a tropical forest have adapted to their environment, and were then able to use this understanding to begin to explain the ecosystem of a savanna grassland area of Africa. By Year 11 pupils can give clear explanations of the links between people and their environments, for example, the effects of large numbers of tourists in National Parks and particular coastal areas, and how this conflict of interest can be managed. In Years 10 - 11 they have a good understanding of geographical models and can use them to describe the patterns of land use in cities.

139. In Years 7 - 9 pupils can describe what particular countries they have studied are like. Pupils in one lesson in Year 9, for instance, described accurately what the landscape of Japan was like, where the people lived, and had a sound understanding of the pattern of imports and exports of the country. Higher attaining pupils have a good knowledge of how landscapes are formed and the effects of natural phenomena such as volcanoes and can give clear examples to illustrate their explanations. Middle and lower attaining pupils have difficulty in providing clear explanations of what they are describing and in applying the knowledge they have learnt previously to new contexts. Lower attaining pupils including those with special

educational needs have a satisfactory basic knowledge of geography and can read maps and locate places on them.

140. All pupils extract information effectively from a range of resource material to complete exercises or for research. They have satisfactory skill in map work and use an atlas successfully to find where places are. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of geographical terms but only the higher attaining pupils use them in written work. In Years 10 - 11 pupils have a good understanding of the methods of coursework enquiry, of collecting and analysing data, and drawing appropriate conclusions. Pupils answer questions briefly in oral work and few opportunities are offered to them to develop their speaking skills. All pupils have good numerical skills. In one lesson in Year 9 for example, pupils successfully drew and analysed graphs to illustrate the main features of Japanese trade, and in Year 10 they quickly noted the main features shown on a climate graph for Kano in Nigeria. Written work is of average standard overall, but spelling is weak.

141. Overall the quality of teaching is satisfactory and it is good in Years 10 - 11, but there are weaknesses in some areas. Pupils generally learn well and make satisfactory progress. Lessons are very well prepared and organised so they start promptly and proceed smoothly. Pupils settle to work rapidly, work hard at a good pace, and have the capacity to assimilate knowledge and ideas quickly. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and give clear explanations which motivate pupils to listen well. Lessons are planned carefully with clear objectives, which pupils understand. Teachers return to these objectives at the end of the lesson to assess how successful learning has been. In Years 10 and 11 pupils have a good understanding of how well they are doing and they discuss with their teachers what they need to do to succeed. Teachers include well-structured and sequenced exercises to develop and reinforce understanding. In one lesson, for example, pupils in Year 10 were studying the ecosystem of savanna grassland. After a brisk and lively review of what ecosystems were, they used an atlas to identify the location of the savanna grassland, and focused on one area of Africa. Pupils' interest and curiosity were aroused as they energetically discussed a series of slides of the area through a sharp question and answer session. They then analysed a climate graph of the area, annotated a well thought out worksheet and gained a good understanding of the link between the climate and the types of vegetation found in the region. Teachers generally have a good relationship and sound skills in managing pupils. Pupils respond by settling to work quickly and concentrating. Teachers give good support and encouragement, so that in the majority of lessons, particularly in Years 10 - 11, a good working atmosphere and pace of work is maintained. Pupils have a good attitude to the subject, are attentive and listen carefully. They are generally well behaved, are interested in the subject and are willing to be involved in the lesson. When working together they co-operate effectively with each other.

142. Where lessons are less successful, particularly in Years 7 - 9, the start of the lesson lacks pace. Teachers do not use their knowledge effectively to initiate incisive and rigorous debate or sufficiently exploit the opportunities offered by the well-chosen visual resources to gain pupils interest and enthusiasm. Often in these lessons the exercises are lengthy and pupils find it difficult to maintain concentration

and a minority lose focus and the pace of the lesson slows. Where well targeted in class support with a specialist teacher is provided pupils with special educational needs make good gains but there is not enough such support, and work is rarely matched to their individual needs so progress is modest. This was reported at the time of the previous inspection and insufficient improvement has been made. Teachers have few strategies for sufficiently challenging the higher attaining pupils. Marking is up to date and in line with departmental guidelines and homework is generally set regularly.

143. The scheme of work is in draft form at a time of curriculum change and is well thought out, but lacks specific details of elements such as the use of ICT, and cross-curricular themes and skills. There is a good programme of fieldwork culminating in visits to the Yorkshire Dales and local shopping centres to gather data for GCSE coursework. As reported at the time of the last inspection the use of ICT in the subject has not been developed sufficiently, and the department experiences difficulties in access to enough computers for whole class lessons. Assessment procedures in Years 10 - 11 are good. However, there is currently no systematic assessment coupled with a central record for pupils in Years 7 - 9.

144. Leadership of the department is good. There is a clear sense of direction and effective planning for the future. The department is well organised with a useful handbook with clear policies and guidance, and the procedures for monitoring the teaching, marking, and the work of the department are good. Three members of staff teach the subject and all are well qualified and experienced. Accommodation in the humanities area is very good and is in good sized, well-equipped, attractive rooms, with good displays of pupils' work, which improve the environment and give an identity to the area. The quality and quantity of resources is very good, with up to date textbooks, maps, and photographs. The staff work hard and are committed to raising standards, and with vigorous implementation of their plans for the future and strategies for improving attainment have the capacity to succeed in raising standards further.

## **HISTORY**

Overall, the quality of provision in history is good.

### **Strengths**

- Teaching is good; teachers expect pupils to work hard and behave well.
- Teachers use assessment well to help pupils make good progress.
- Pupils make good progress in lessons and throughout their course in history.
- Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Teachers do not always sufficiently challenge the highest-attaining pupils in their questioning.
- There is insufficient use of ICT.



145. By the end of Year 9 pupils' attainment overall is above that expected nationally. This is a similar standard to that reported at the time of the last inspection. Most pupils begin Year 7 close to the national average. Teachers assessed their pupils overall as well above the national average by the end of Year 9 in 2000, and results in 2001, although lower, were still above the 2000 national average. The proportion of students who reach the highest standards is above average. The overall standard of work seen during the inspection was above that seen nationally. Pupils with special educational needs reach standards which are below the national expectation, but they usually make satisfactory progress. The highest-attaining pupils usually make good progress, but in a minority of lessons opportunities for them to deepen their understanding still further are restricted by a lack of probing questioning by the teacher.

146. Pupils taking the GCSE course in Years 10 and 11 reach an overall standard that is above the national average. This is an improvement on the standard reported at the time of the last inspection. There has been a steady upward trend since 1998, although results dipped in 2000 to below average. In 2001 the proportion attaining grades A\* - C was close to the national average. The proportion of girls gaining A\* - C grades in 2001 was well above the 2000 average, whereas that of boys was below. The percentage of pupils gaining grades A or A\* in 2001 was significantly higher than in 2000 when it was well below the national average. The standard of work by pupils currently taking history is above the national average overall, although a significant minority produce work below the national average. Pupils with special educational needs reach below average standards, but make satisfactory progress in a subject which requires considerable literary ability.

147. Pupils in Years 7 - 9 generally have good knowledge and understanding about the past. Most pupils in Year 7 have a sound grasp of chronology and of what is meant by primary and secondary evidence. Pupils see, and explain reasons for actions taken in the past, as for example in work on Henry VIII and the closure of the monasteries, in which the higher-attaining pupils successfully identified, and justified their choice of, the most important reasons. Most pupils see that people in the past felt differently from those of today, and the highest-attaining pupils explain why this is so, as, for example, in work on attitudes to slaves in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Pupils use a range of sources well to describe and explain the past, although a significant proportion have difficulty explaining the usefulness of some sources. They work independently to produce topic work which in many cases is of a very high standard. Some time capsules created by pupils in Year 8 on Charles I and in Year 9 on life in the trenches during World War 1 showed very good research used very effectively. They make very good use of the library facilities for research. The highest attaining pupils write very well at length, and most see that there are different interpretations of events in the past, as for example, in work on the assassination of Kennedy in 1963.

148. The overall standard of work seen in Years 10 and 11 is above the national average. Most pupils taking GCSE have good knowledge and understanding of the topics they are studying. Pupils in Year 10 understood the factors behind the growth of the Lancashire cotton industry, and the highest-attaining pupils explained well their reasons for choosing one or more factors as more important than others. Pupils

accurately explained the main processes in making cotton cloth and most, including some low-attaining pupils, used the correct terminology with reasonable confidence. Pupils in Year 11 successfully used a range of sources to investigate changes to conditions in hospitals in the 19th century and the contribution of individuals to the changes. Although most pupils evaluate the reliability of sources adequately many find explaining how useful a source is more difficult; the highest attaining pupils, however, do so well.

149. As at the time of the last inspection, the teaching is good overall, and very good in nearly half the lessons. The lessons are well-planned, and teachers ensure that the aims of the lesson are clear. In most lessons these aims are returned to at the end of the lesson, and pupils are asked to show whether they have achieved the aims through a series of short oral questions and answers. Teachers know their subject well at all levels and communicate effectively, often in a lively and stimulating way. In a lesson on chronology with a Year 7 class the teacher created interest with a series of short activities which involved the pupils directly, in some instances, in correcting the apparent “mistakes” the teacher had made. Teachers often use humour to motivate pupils, and instant rewards of small sweets for good answers are readily accepted by pupils in all years.

150. In some, but not all, lessons, work is modified for the lowest-attaining pupils. Although there are support teachers in some lessons, this support is not always appropriately targeted, and the teachers are not adequately trained to support some specific learning difficulties. In a minority of lessons the highest-attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged, as teachers do not ask them to expand on their initial answer to show depth of understanding.

151. Lessons are frequently broken into a series of short activities interspersed with feedback sessions, in which teachers check pupils’ progress. This was particularly successful in a lesson on public health in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with pupils in Year 11. Teachers use an appropriate range of resources to deepen pupils’ knowledge and understanding. In lessons with pupils in Year 9, for example, the teacher used a video to draw out the horrors of trench warfare. In a lesson with a class in Year 10, artefacts were used to deepen pupils’ understanding of the processes of cloth manufacture. Teachers expect and encourage their pupils to use the library and to make use of the Internet as part of their independent work.

152. Teachers expect their pupils to work hard, and they maintain a good working environment with friendly, but when necessary, firm discipline. Pupils listen well to teachers’ instructions and explanations. When working individually most concentrate well on the task in hand. A small minority is easily distracted, and occasionally behave badly, and need reminders from their teachers to keep them focused on work. Pupils’ positive approach to their work, and their generally good behaviour, are important contributory factors in their good progress.

153. The subject meets the statutory teaching requirements for Years 7 - 9. The department is very well led. There is a very good ethos for learning throughout the department and a strong commitment to improving still further the performance of pupils taking GCSE examinations, especially that of boys. The attainment and

progress of pupils is carefully monitored and recorded, and pupils in Years 10 and 11 are set targets for improvement. The rooms used for teaching history are pleasant, and together with the corridor outside are filled with stimulating displays of pupils' work. At the time of the inspection there was also an excellent display of history work in the library. The department benefits from having three specialist teachers who work well as a team. The provision of resources is satisfactory overall, but there are insufficient books for pupils in Years 10 and 11 to have a textbook to use at home. As at the time of the last inspection, insufficient use is made of ICT. This is in part due to the difficulty of securing sufficient ICT facilities at times to suit the department.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Overall, the quality of provision in ICT is satisfactory.

### **Strengths**

- Many departments are beginning to make use of the skills taught in the ICT course.
- The number of computers available is good.
- There is good technical support provided and Internet access is available across the network, with rigorous safeguards in place.
- The taught course provides a solid grounding in basic ICT skills in Years 7, 8 and 9.

### **Areas for improvement**

- The department is not yet effective in raising standards of teaching consistently across the subject. In some lessons this adversely affects the quality of learning.
- Planning is a weakness in all year groups. Too few opportunities are used to challenge the range of pupils. Assessment is still not used effectively to match work to pupils' needs within ICT lessons and when ICT is used in other subjects of the curriculum.
- Deployment of computers in the department at present means there is little one to one access to workstations, even in GCSE classes.
- The present discrete course in Years 7 - 9 does not offer pupils the full range of statutory entitlement.

154. By the end of Year 9, assessments show that the number of pupils achieving level five and above is above national expectations, an improvement since the last inspection. Work shows progress through Years 7, 8 and 9 in terms of the development of basic skills, with some increase in complexity towards Year 9. Pupils develop an understanding of the main applications (word processors, spreadsheets and databases) and use these appropriately, both singly and in combination, for example in a Year 7 multimedia project. They become more confident in the basic skills and inset text and picture boxes and manipulate their size and position. In Year 8, they create and search databases and insert formulae into spreadsheets, for example in order to convert money from one currency to another. Overall, most

pupils are working at an appropriate standard, but there are too few opportunities to reach the higher levels.

155. By Year 11, standards achieved at GCSE, in both full and half courses, are well below national standards, though there has been an improvement since 1999. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 use the main software applications with confidence and at GCSE can explain why they have chosen to use a particular programme or combination of programmes for a task. This ability is shown when pupils combine text and pictures to create a map and directions, or the use of desktop publishing and databases in a project about archaeology. Standards in all years, especially Years 10 and 11, are affected by the lack of one to one access to computers, which remains an issue from the previous report. There are other weaknesses which have an impact on attainment in all years, some of which were also highlighted in the last report. There is still no use of assessment to match work to pupils' ability and there remain few planned opportunities to challenge and extend pupils beyond the core skills, particularly higher attaining pupils. There are only limited opportunities to reflect on and evaluate the use of ICT itself or of the wider social issues and implications raised by its use in the world. While a few units do have extension work built in, there is no effective matching of work to individual aptitudes and abilities for pupils with identified special educational needs, for lower attaining pupils or for higher attaining pupils. As the course is designed to offer basic skills, lower attaining pupils do make satisfactory progress, but higher attaining pupils are seldom challenged to achieve at appropriate levels. Pupils who have enthusiastically pursued work in their own time or whose skills are more advanced are in effect put on hold while the others catch up. They are not encouraged to deepen or advance their knowledge, skills or understanding, but are given tasks which simply occupy their time, for example copying out word processing sheets after early completion of a spreadsheet unit. This lack of challenge and extension affects all years but is most pronounced in Years 7, 8 and 9. In addition, many pupils now have skills, which were learned in primary school or at home and which are not taken into account by the course. There is little liaison with classes in Year 6 therefore the existing Year 7 course is still not based on any detailed awareness of what pupils have already done in junior school.

156. Overall, teaching is satisfactory. However, the range is wide with some good lessons, but also some that are unsatisfactory and poor. Where good, there are high expectations, which are made explicit to the pupils. Questions and answers are used to encourage the pupils to thoughtful responses, the lessons are well planned and learning objectives are made clear to the pupils. Individual contributions are valued and shared with the class as a resource, for example encouraging a pupil to demonstrate putting formulae into a spreadsheet, using the classroom data projector. Pupils find the work engaging and with individual support from the teacher, are able to make appropriate progress.

157. Where satisfactory, there is evidence of clear planning, but questioning does not encourage pupil participation and demonstration of work is less effective. Pupils make progress, but there are no opportunities to challenge and extend the more able. Teachers are aware of pupils with special educational needs and give these pupils support and attention, but there are no planned strategies in place to ensure

these pupils make appropriate progress. In the lessons which are unsatisfactory, there is no clear introduction to the lesson, nor is expectation with regard to learning or behaviour made explicit to the pupils. The result is that little learning takes place and there is no progress made by the pupils. This leads to poor behaviour through the lack of clear direction and the lack of work of an appropriate level to engage and challenge all pupils. A contributory factor, which makes these lessons more difficult, is the lack of one to one access to computers.

158. ICT is at its most effective when used as a powerful tool to support and enhance learning across all subjects and there has been progress in its use across many departments since the last report, in the range of opportunity and quality of work. There is now greater coverage of data logging in science in Years 7, 8 and 9, and control in design and technology. Pupils work independently and with confidence, applying skills learned in the discrete course across a range of subjects. The computers in the library are used well during school and for after school homework clubs on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Other examples across the curriculum include a computer snooker game as part of a mathematics lesson concerned with estimating angles; word processing in English; varied use in science; good use of digital imaging in art and design, and effective use in music and modern languages. However, several departments such as history and English continue to report difficulties with regular access to networked machines.

159. One reason for the increased use in subjects is that staff in departments are becoming more confident in using ICT, and 35 have started training under the "New Opportunities" funded scheme. Co-ordination and assessment of this cross-curricular work is not sufficiently advanced, so that although the ICT experience of pupils across the curriculum is now improved and improving, there is no effective way of monitoring, assessing and recording this alongside work completed in the subject itself.

160. Within the subject itself, assignments are marked regularly and the outcome recorded, but neither the school nor the department's own assessment policy is followed consistently. There are, for example, few comments on work, particularly in Years 7, 8 and 9. It remains the case from the last report that the outcome of assessment is not used to match work to pupil needs, either in the course in general or in individual lessons. Records of progress are kept on a sheet attached to the pupil's portfolio rather than being held centrally, and no use is made of available technology to collate these records. There is therefore no effective monitoring of individual progress through units, measured against how well those individual pupils should be doing.

161. Management of the department remains satisfactory. There is now clear line management to the senior management team and the head of department has begun to monitor performance, for example, through observing lessons. However, this has not yet been effective in raising standards of teaching consistently across the subject, nor has it led to consistent implementation of the departmental assessment policy. Departmental meetings are held, as are meetings with representatives of other departments in order to help with co-ordination of the

subject across the curriculum. However, there is a clear need for proactive and dynamic leadership to encourage and guide staff in all departments, backed up by effective systems for recording and assessing pupil progress.

## MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

### Strengths

- Good attainment and results in the full course GCSE for French and German.
- Good use of assessment for tracking pupils' attainment and progress.
- The leadership and management of the subject.
- Monitoring and support of teaching and learning to raise standards.

### Areas for improvement

- The quality of teaching especially where temporary staff are employed.
- The curriculum for pupils in Years 10 and 11.

162. The proportion of pupils achieving A\* - C in the GCSE examination in 2000 was in line with the national average in French and well below average in German. The result in German was a "blip" due to a lower achieving cohort of pupils and was against the trend of steadily rising results since the last report. Provisional results in both languages show a further rise in 2001, especially in German. Results at A\* - G in 2000 were both above the national average. However, only a relatively small number of pupils are entered for the full GCSE course. The vast majority of pupils are entered for a short course. A one year course is not appropriate for most pupils and results in 2000 and 2001 were poor. This is the major contributory factor in the poor results and unsatisfactory achievement of pupils in Years 10 and 11.

163. In work seen during the inspection, pupils in Year 9 are attaining standards that are broadly average, and achievement is satisfactory. Pupils in Year 11 attain standards that are below average, largely due to the unsatisfactory nature of the short course. Boys' achievement is lower than that for girls. Standards were in line with national expectations at the time of the last inspection. That is still the case up to Year 9 but pupils' attainment in Years 10 and 11 has declined. There are no significant differences across the four aspects of the subject although speaking is marginally the strongest and writing the weakest. Pupils have opportunities to use the library to improve their reading skills, although the school recognises that this is not yet on a consistent footing and a more specific reading course is now being developed. There are no wide differences in achievement across the different levels of attainment found in the school. Pupils with special educational needs achieve appropriate standards in relation to their prior attainment and their overall achievement is satisfactory in Years 7 - 11. Evidence of this is seen in the good pass rate at A\* - G in GCSE. Attainment for a minority of pupils is affected by their poor attendance. Attainment and results have been adversely affected by a history of instability in staffing and by unsatisfactory teaching from some temporary staff.

164. By the end of Year 9, pupils answer questions, in a basic way, about such topics as how they spend their pocket money, the weather, their houses and the rooms in them, descriptions of people and shops and shopping. In general pupils listen carefully to the teacher, to audiotapes and to other pupils when they are

speaking. There is a minority, mostly boys, who find concentration difficult and do not listen carefully. The vast majority of pupils are confident speakers and try hard with pronunciation. By the end of Year 9 most middle and higher attaining pupils can carry out short conversations with two or three exchanges. There is limited evidence of further development into longer conversations using a range of tenses and the ability to vary and adapt their language to fit different situations. Pupils generally develop their reading skills through reading textbooks and worksheets to find the answers to questions. A useful reading scheme, using the library, is being developed but is still in its infancy. In their written work, a majority of pupils is able to write short, accurate paragraphs by the end of Year 9. Higher attaining pupils write good descriptive pieces using a range of tenses, descriptive language and accurate grammar. In both French and German Year 9 pupils produce good work on their daily routines and on their likes and dislikes in school for example. In Years 10 and 11, pupils extend these topics in preparation for examinations and add others such as their intentions for jobs or further study when they leave school. Because most pupils take the short course, this preparation is not sufficient to bring good results. In many lessons where written work is done, there is a concentration on grammar, spelling and punctuation and the subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' literacy development. Pupils also make frequent use of tables and graphs to present information on the results of simple surveys that they carry out. This is a contribution to pupils' numeracy development. Pupils make good use of ICT to write, edit and refine their work often using draw programmes to add pictures and designs. The school has an e-mail link with a school in France which is now beginning to develop and the use of websites is now being increasingly considered as a means of gathering information.

165. The quality of teaching and the learning it promotes is satisfactory overall. Teaching is satisfactory in half the lessons and good or excellent in nearly a third. Teaching is unsatisfactory or poor in one-fifth of the lessons. Where this is the case, it is temporary staff who are teaching the lessons. In these lessons the strategies used to control pupils are not strong enough and behaviour is unsatisfactory, although not disruptive. More than half of the lesson is conducted in English so that pupils rarely have the chance to learn or practice the language being taught which leads to poor development of listening and speaking skills. In these lessons there is also insufficient challenge to the work and pupils are working below their expected levels. The time wasted in attempting to control pupils and in not speaking the language being taught clearly restricts pupils' learning. This was clearly seen in a Year 11 French lesson where pupils spent 25 minutes learning ten items of vocabulary most of which they would have heard before. Time was also spent with the whole class repeating basic vocabulary aloud, an appropriate activity for Year 7 pupils but not for those in Year 11. The other teachers have good control of their classes so no time is lost correcting behaviour during lessons and pupils concentrate and work hard and effectively. Teachers regularly mark and correct pupils' work, but the use of this type of assessment to give pupils useful pointers as to how to improve is limited. In many lessons that are otherwise satisfactory, the range of activities in use is rather limited and sometimes uninteresting. Teachers make little creative use of overhead projectors, pair and group work, role-plays or music and poetry for instance and there are few opportunities for pupils to actively participate in these lessons. Homework is regularly set. Where teaching is good,



teachers provide a range of challenging activities which are tailored to fit the range of attainment found in most groups and most of the lesson is conducted in the language being taught this results in the rapid improvement of listening and speaking skills and pupils are enthusiastic and engaged in their learning. Where it is satisfactory rather than good, teachers lapse into English too often. This was seen, for example, in a Year 8 German lesson where the pupils spent some time practising counting. They were then asked to find page 8 in a textbook in both German and English, an unnecessary instruction as pupils had already shown that they could count. Where teaching is excellent, the teacher conducts the entire lesson in the language being taught. Because of this pupils are both confident and competent speakers of the language. The work presents a high level of challenge and the teaching methods motivate the pupils to set high standards for themselves and achieve very well. In these lessons there is a high level of co-operation between teacher and pupils and relationships are excellent. As a result the working atmosphere in the classroom is relaxed and happy but highly businesslike. Except in those lessons which are taught by temporary staff, pupils behave well in lessons, have good attitudes to work and there are good relationships in lessons.

166. The accommodation is very good. It provides a good central resource area and a computer room as well as light good-sized classrooms. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' moral, social and cultural development. In lessons there is a moral element and pupils are taught right from wrong. There is satisfactory provision for social development through taking turns and working together. Pupils show respect for each other by not laughing when other pupils make mistakes over pronunciation. The school trip each year provides a strong social and cultural dimension. The study of people in other countries also adds to the cultural development of pupils. There are good procedures in place for tracking pupils' attainment and progress that enable targets to be set for improvement. The head of department and the senior management regularly monitor teaching and this enables best practise to be shared and improves teaching. The last inspection drew attention to a lack of resources in the library and these have improved. The head of department has shown good leadership and management in maintaining the subjects through a period of considerable difficulty and he has been supported well by the teachers who have been in school during this time. The subject has clear and realistic priorities for development. Because of the number of pupils who study the unsuitable short course the curriculum does not provide adequate breadth and balance in Years 10 and 11.

167. Taking into account the high level of staff turnover and the fact that standards overall have been maintained since the last inspection, the subject has made satisfactory progress since that time.

## **MUSIC**

Overall, the quality of provision in music is good.

### **Strengths**

- Pupils achieve well in lessons and extra curricular activities

- Through good quality teaching and assessment, standards have improved and are above the national average.
- The subject is very well managed with much initiative shown to allow pupils to profit from being involved with workshops provided beyond the school.

Areas for improvement

- There are no major areas for improvement.

168. In each of the last three years, teacher assessment of pupil attainment at the end of Year 9 has found the majority reaching or going beyond the expected standard. This is above the national average and is true for both boys and girls. A greater proportion of girls than boys reach this standard, as is the case nationally, but the proportion of boys who do so is increasing. GCSE results in music for the last three years show a gradual improvement. This is above the national average for similar schools and compares favourably with other subjects in the school and with other local schools. Numbers of students have been small but with a majority of boys, which is unusual, and no significant difference between their grades and those of girls. Numbers following the course currently have more than doubled. In each of the last three years, some students have continued their study of music in higher education.

169. Progress during Years 7 - 9 is good. Experience of music of incoming pupils is patchy. Very few have learned to play instruments. Through their contact with a wide range of music, as listeners and performers, pupils become confident in composing. For example, a Year 7 class, having warmed up with an African call and response song, 'becomes' a Brazilian samba band, learning through participation about the carnival atmosphere this generates, as well as how the repeated rhythms combine. Year 8 classes listen to the haunting sound of the Indonesian gamelan, experience creating this with classroom instruments and go on to take part in a workshop using the ethnic instruments. Along the way they also create and write their own rhythmic cycles, learn the names of instruments and something of the context of such music. Through such experiences, most pupils develop the ability to keep a given tempo and appreciate the relationship of beat to pulse. By Year 9, most pupils show an understanding of the structure, sound and mood of blues. They can identify differences in two recorded versions from different decades and, working in pairs at keyboards, recreate their own versions. Pupils enjoy the fact that their creative work is recorded onto cassette tape, and regularly reflect on their progression through self-assessment. However, most do not develop fluency, nor confidence, in the use of musical notation. Those with special educational needs achieve in proportion to their ability, in some cases to a high standard. A gifted pupil was enabled recently to sit the GCSE examination at the end of Year 9, gaining A\* grade.

170. The increased number of GCSE groups in Years 10 and 11 reflects the good and enjoyable learning they have experienced earlier. Some receive instrumental tuition, of good quality as sampled by inspectors. But performance standards as measured by instrumental examining boards are low on entry to the course. However, pupils are perceptive as listeners and fluent as improvisers, for example in a Year 11 lesson with the music of Reich and Takemitsu as stimulus. Year 10, working cooperatively in groups, construct descriptive music, using a comic poem.

They can identify significant features in an art song reflecting the experience of using a garden swing. Composition arises naturally from such class workshops. It is often aided by using computer programmes. Pupils show respect - even delight - in each other's work. All completed work is recorded. Pupils benefit from special workshops, for example one recently with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Society, which resulted in a CD of Year 11 compositions of a very high standard. The enthusiasm of many shows in their request to use facilities after hours, and in extra-curricular groups.

171. The teaching of music is good overall and has some very strong features. Many lessons are very good. Other lessons, whilst not reaching this high standard, are satisfactory. The teaching of Years 10 and 11 is very good. Pupils are stimulated to work productively by challenging and wide ranging examples of recorded music and by a range of other materials including, for example, art and poetry, which support pupils' understanding of concepts common to all art forms. Brisk pace and high expectations result in no time being lost, yet pupils feel encouraged and time is given for discussion and reflection. The spiritual and aesthetic potential of music is not ignored. Teaching encourages pupils to exercise their imaginations, both in talking and writing personally about music heard and in attending to the effects of music rather than exactness of its written form. The relative absence of the use of notation by pupils, a conscious decision by the teacher, could become a hindrance for some who might wish to continue their study beyond school. Teaching in Years 7 - 9 lessons frequently shows many of these very good features, particularly at the outset of lessons. A prompt start, usually with sounded music, clear objectives and good management of pupils (not all of whom are naturally biddable) ensures that learning opportunities are maximised. Teaching provides a variety of learning activities in which all pupils engage and achieve. In the absence of learning support assistance for music, teachers usually find time to adapt tasks for individuals where necessary. Pupils respond well to the deliberately quiet voices and gently delivered reminders and reprimands, which are usually effective in securing full attention. There are occasions when practical activities, with large classes, extend too long for the immediate interest and concentration of some, so that insufficient time is left for the planned consolidation of learning. With rooms arranged well for learning through practice, teachers need to be more sure that pupils distant from them give their full attention. Where teaching is no more than satisfactory more sensitivity is needed to pupils' changing responses.

172. Management of music is a strength of the school. Schemes of work and assessment procedures are exemplary, well prepared for new requirements and linked to school priorities. Deployment of teachers and resources is adapted according to circumstance to improve standards. This ability to rethink applies to extra curricular work too. The type and range of groups is now more inclusive, with those sampled - singing group, samba band and the staged show - attracting large numbers. They are excellently directed and provide valuable learning experiences, socially and culturally as well as musically. These activities raise the level of confidence of pupils, the status of music and the profile of the school community.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

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

#### Strengths

- Results in the GCSE course in 2000 were well above the national average. All pupils achieved a pass.
- The quality of teaching is good, with some very good lessons throughout the age range.
- There is a wide range of extra curricular activities offered to pupils.
- Relationships between teachers and their pupils are very good and pupils are enthusiastic about the subject.

#### Areas for improvement

- In some lessons, high attaining pupils make insufficient progress.
- The curriculum for boys and girls is different and statutory requirements are not met for boys in Years 7 - 9 as they do not cover the full range of activities. Assessment and marking at GCSE has not improved sufficiently since the last inspection.
- The current accommodation limits the quality and range of physical education activities, particularly indoors.

173. Teachers' assessments show that pupils attain well above the national average by the end of Year 9. The standards achieved by pupils in the GCSE examinations in 2000 were well above the national average and better than similar schools nationally. This does not match standards observed in lessons.

174. By the end of Year 9, standards are average overall although they vary between the activities taught. Standards are average in soccer where pupils in Year 8 pass and control a ball accurately, some with either foot. They know the rules of the game and play to an average level. Their knowledge and understanding of tactics in the game are underdeveloped. In Year 9 pupils dribble with control in basketball and demonstrate the correct technique for setting up a shot. They perform to an average level but they do not always transfer the skills into the game successfully, often lacking control in passing. In some lessons, standards are below the expected level. For example in badminton in Year 9 some pupils serve accurately but are unable to maintain a rally over the net in the game. Their knowledge and understanding about tactics in the game is weak. In one Year 8 lesson, pupils did not possess the basic skill of hitting the ball in hockey and stick control in the tackle is weak. They have a below average knowledge of the game and have made unsatisfactory progress over time.

175. By the end of Year 11 standards in compulsory lessons are in line with those expected. In the GCSE course standards are above average but vary between classes. The scrutiny of pupils' work indicates good presentation and pride in work. In Year 10, pupils demonstrated above average standards in a theory lesson on the structure of joints in the body. Pupils know a range of different joints and their knowledge of the skeleton is very good. They know for instance that a synovial joint is freely moveable and can link different joints to a specific sporting activity. In Year 11, pupils have a good knowledge of the rules of basketball and understand when to

use a range of tactics and strategies in the game. They understand the principles of a full court press. In one Year 11 fitness lesson, standards were well below those expected. Most pupils had an immature attitude to their work. They arrived at the lesson unprepared for the work and displayed a lack of interest. They were unable to recall previous learning and made unsatisfactory progress. This unsatisfactory learning was linked to unsatisfactory teaching. In the compulsory lessons, pupils demonstrate good control of the ball in soccer and play the game to the expected standard. They have good knowledge of the rules of the game and more able pupils demonstrate above average accuracy in passing. They are prepared to work hard in their practice to refine their learning, making good progress. Throughout the school pupils take part in a warm up prior to activity but their knowledge of the effect of exercise on the body is less well developed. Pupils with special educational needs are integrated into lessons but higher attaining pupils do not always progress satisfactorily as they are not sufficiently challenged.

176. The quality of teaching is good throughout the department with examples of very good teaching. Only one lesson was unsatisfactory and this was due to insufficient planning but the teacher was unsuccessful in gaining better co-operation from the pupils. In the best lessons, planning is good and there are clear objectives, which pupils understand. The pace of lessons is often brisk and teachers manage classes effectively. Teachers challenge pupils to improve their work and relationships with pupils is a strength in the department. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. In one very good Year 9 lesson, pupils were on task for the whole 60 minute lesson, concentrating on a range of activities. Pupils of all abilities used the "cut" turn to change direction and outwit an opponent. The teacher supported low ability pupils and used demonstration effectively to encourage a better performance. In a lesson with GCSE pupils in Year 11, objectives were made clear to pupils and the teacher used a range of questioning to challenge them to improve – "Why are you losing possession?" Pupils made very good progress in the lesson and showed a clear understanding of the game. All teachers are enthusiastic and a newly qualified teacher is making good progress. Whilst teachers' knowledge of specific activities is good, their understanding of the National Curriculum requirements is a weakness. There has been no planning for the recently introduced curriculum 2000.

177. In less successful lessons, learning objectives lack detail and are not always shared with the pupils. Higher attaining pupils were not extended and made insufficient progress. Support for pupils with special educational needs was not evident in planning or in the lessons.

178. The attitude of pupils is very good generally. They arrive enthusiastically to their lessons and are prepared to work hard. Their behaviour is very good, sometimes excellent. They listen to instructions and work co-operatively with a partner and in groups. Teachers ensure that pupils maintain high standards of behaviour and dress and pupils are proud to represent their school in competitive games. However, in one GCSE lesson some pupils did not take their work seriously.

179. The pace of improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. Whilst examination results continue to improve and all pupils continue to obtain a pass,

some important issues have not been addressed. The balance of activities taught to boys and girls is different as boys do not study dance in Years 7 - 9. This has an implication for assessment at the end of Year 9 as boys and girls are assessed over a different range of activities. It also has implications for equality of opportunity. The development plan now has realistic targets but there is no time scale to monitor success. The present development plan is dominated by games and indicates an imbalance of activities for boys. Reports to parents do not indicate what pupils have covered in their lessons or their level of knowledge and understanding in the activities taught. Schemes of work are in need of updating to ensure coverage of the programmes of study of the National Curriculum in the activities taught.

180. As at the time of the last inspection, the accommodation limits the quality and range of activities that can be undertaken in physical education. For example, it has resulted in two classes sharing the sports hall for some lessons. This has been made worse by the popularity of the GCSE course which has resulted in a large increase in the number of pupils. The all-weather pitch is in need of maintenance and playing fields are poorly drained. Resources are good and although the school makes good use of off site facilities, they are not available to all pupils to enhance their learning. There is a wide range of extra curricular activities on offer to pupils and many have been successful in representation at county and national level. School teams are successful in netball, volleyball, cross-country and athletics. The head of department provides satisfactory leadership in a number of areas of the work of the department, for example in relation to GCSE physical education. However, management is a weakness. The department has made insufficient progress in key areas, and in particular in curriculum development, since the time of the last inspection and leadership and management overall are unsatisfactory.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

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

### **Strengths**

- Teaching including the teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject.
- Organisation and management.
- Schemes of work.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Improve the behaviour and effort of a minority of pupils.
- Meet the needs of all pupils by providing more support for pupils on the special educational needs register and providing more depth of study for gifted and talented pupils.

181. The teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 have not been aggregated but the outcomes are recorded in the pupils' folders. These show standards to be in line with the expectations of the Agreed Syllabus. These standards are similar to those reported at the time of the last inspection. There are no significant differences in the standards of boys and girls.

182. In GCSE standards have been above the national average with regard to the higher grades of A\* - C in the past two years. In 2000, 65 per cent of pupils gained these grades. Overall the pass grade is average. In relation to their earlier assessments most pupils did as well as expected. These results are similar to the standards seen in lessons. Prior to 2000 only a small number of pupils took the GCSE short course in religious studies.

183. In lessons seen, pupils' standards by the end of Year 9 are at the expectation of the Agreed Syllabus. In written work they make personal responses about what really matters in life. They learn the Christian ideas of redemption. They write to a satisfactory level demonstrating knowledge and confidence about prejudice and discrimination. They learn the important features of The Torah. They can write a sound speech giving a detailed description and explanation of what The Torah is and its importance to the Jews. High attaining pupils have good skills in note taking; their notes are concise and clear. Pupils in Year 8 examine the Christian view of salvation and have a sound knowledge of the teachings of Jesus. They also have a basic knowledge of the origins of the Islamic faith and understand the reverence that Muslims have for the Qur'an. In Year 7, pupils have satisfactory knowledge of a range of initiation ceremonies. They understand the use of symbols to represent groups and communities, including the use of symbols in religion and make adequate progress.

184. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are broadly average both for the groups studying for GCSE and the pupils following the core studies. In Year 11 pupils doing the GCSE course know, and can explain to a satisfactory level and in good detail, the Jewish dietary laws. They learn the correct Jewish terms. Both groups study topics that are relevant to modern life. These include the range of Christian attitudes and responses to the issues of abortion, marriage and family life, animal rights and care for the environment. Pupils look at these issues from moral and social viewpoints. They can evaluate the evidence presented and express their own opinions to a satisfactory level.

185. The vast majority of pupils make good progress in all years, especially in understanding religious concepts. They are able to think for themselves and order and analyse information given. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Their spoken answers in class show a much better knowledge and understanding than their written work indicates. Their learning is promoted by a good level of oral work in class and a good use of illustrations and diagrams to convey information. These systems help them to gain the required knowledge and understanding of the subject. A small number of boys in all years do not make enough effort in class and therefore do not make satisfactory progress.

186. There has been a complete change of staff in the religious education department since the last academic year. Both teachers are newly appointed and are in their fourth week of teaching in this school. Teaching and learning are good overall. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. Three in ten lessons are judged very good and there is one example of excellent teaching. Both teachers are specialists and have very good knowledge and understanding of the subject. They make the

learning objectives clear at the beginning of all lessons and display these prominently on the board. They ensure that pupils keep these learning objectives in mind throughout the lessons. The lessons are well planned and both teachers work hard to make the subject interesting and relevant for the pupils. In the best lessons pupils work at a good pace, analyse the information given and write concise and correct answers. In a few lessons pupils are given too long to do the written tasks so they do not work at a good pace. In the case of lower attaining pupils written work needs to be structured in shorter steps so that these pupils can focus clearly on each point. In some of the large mixed-ability classes in Years 7, 8 and 9 there is a need for additional support for pupils who have special educational needs with regard to literacy and concentration. In some cases there is a need for more challenging work to extend the learning of gifted and talented pupils.

187. Teachers promote literacy well in all lessons. They ensure that pupils understand the subject specific words and spell new words correctly.

188. In general, pupils have good attitudes to this subject. They are serious and listen attentively to their teachers. They ask and answer questions appropriately and show confidence in their own skills and opinions. Girls are usually more composed than boys and, while most boys work hard, a minority does not. These boys behave in inappropriate ways, speak out of turn and spoil the climate for learning that is created by the teachers and supported by the other pupils.

189. The leadership and management of the department are good. The newly appointed head of department has worked quickly to get the schemes of work in place. These make provision for good teaching and encourage effective learning.

190. All the good aspects reported at the time of the last inspection are maintained. The inadequate time for given to religious education in Years 10 and 11 is partly rectified. Year 10 now have adequate time. A larger than average percentage of the pupils in Year 10 have chosen to do the full GCSE course and the remainder will do the short GCSE course. This is good provision. The present Year 11 does not have adequate time to cover the study outlined in the Agreed Syllabus in sufficient depth.

191. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, particularly as these aspects pervade the teachings and practices of the major world religions that are covered. All these aspects are examined in relation to modern day situations.

## **VOCATIONAL COURSES**

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

### **Strengths**

- Teaching and learning are good.
- Leadership and management are effective.
- Standards of work seen are above average.



Areas for improvement

- There are no major areas for improvement.

192. The options of General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQ] Health & Social Care and National Vocational Qualifications in Hospitality and Catering in Years 10 - 11 curriculum allows pupils the choice and opportunity to succeed through different programmes of study. The first group of pupils in Intermediate GNVQ Health & Social Care completed their studies. Seven pupils out of thirteen gained a combination of successful grades. One pupil achieved a distinction, three gained merits, and three acquired pass grades. The results were satisfactory and the school hopes this will encourage pupils to continue their studies in further education. The work seen in a limited range of lessons during the inspection was above average.

193. Most pupils had achieved a good standard of written work in their portfolios. There was a good understanding of health issues and awareness of the local availability of care services. Pupils were able to make judgements and draw conclusions about the quality of health care provision at a national and local level. Standards of pupils' work are good and correspond to course expectations. Pupils' work has been marked, monitored and recorded. This helps them to improve the quality of their work.

194. The standard of teaching on both courses is good and is demonstrated by the depth of subject knowledge and experience of teaching vocational subjects. Relationships with pupils are good and lessons are planned with an emphasis on practical tasks. Lessons are skilfully structured to pupils' capabilities. There was effective use of questioning by teachers to engage pupils, who in turn, responded positively and showed enthusiasm.

195. The leadership and management of the course are effective in making good provision for pupils.