

INSPECTION REPORT

WEST PARK COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Spondon, Derby

LEA area: City of Derby

Unique reference number: 112997

Headteacher: Mr Brian Walker

Reporting inspector: Ross Maden
2793

Dates of inspection: 28 January - 1 February 2002

Inspection number: 221868

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:	11-18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	West Road Spondon Derby
Postcode:	DE21 7BT
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Neville Taylor
Date of previous inspection:	6 - 10 March 2000

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2740	Betty Barratt	Team inspector	Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? Sixth form co-ordinator
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30563	Jacqueline Pentlow	Team inspector	Physical education Equal opportunities	
31680	Phil Redican	Team inspector	Art and design	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

West Park Community School is a comprehensive school educating boys and girls in the age range of 11-18. There are 1336 pupils in the school which is above the national average for secondary schools. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is 18 per cent, which is in line with the national average. The number of pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) is well below the national average. The percentage of pupils on the school's special educational need register is broadly in line with national figures as is the percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs. The attainment on entry to the school is below national averages. The socio-economic data for the wards the school serves indicate that the percentage of adults with higher education is lower than the national average as is the percentage of children living in high social class households. The percentage of minority ethnic children and the percentage of children living in overcrowded households are below the national average. The school is an active member of the local Education Action Zone.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The overall effectiveness of the school is good. The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is unsatisfactory. The school achieves standards of work that are close to the national averages and over recent years have shown significant improvement, especially in Years 7 to 9. Most pupils make at least satisfactory progress and many make good progress, particularly in Years 7 to 9. Pupils have good attitudes to school. Teaching is good in Years 7 to 11. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum for pupils in Years 7 to 11 with the exception of the amount of time for music in Years 7 to 9. There are satisfactory procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare. The partnership between parents and the school is satisfactory. The school has made very good progress since the last inspection. The leadership and management provided by the headteacher and the leadership team are very good. In relation to the level of funding it receives, the school is providing good value for money.

What the school does well

- Improving standards in Years 7 to 9 and for pupils with special educational needs throughout the school.
- Improving standards of teaching in Years 7 to 11.
- The very good relationships between pupils and adults contributing to pupils having positive attitudes towards learning.
- Pupils' personal development is good and the provision for pupils' moral development is very good.
- The leadership and management provided by the headteacher are excellent.
- The school's sporting achievements are very good.

What could be improved

- Raising standards in Year 11 examinations, especially for higher attaining pupils.
- The level of resources for information and communication technology (ICT).
- The amount of time for music in Years 7 to 9.
- Standards in the sixth form.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March 2000 and at that time was judged to be underachieving. The school has made good progress since the time of the last inspection. The results in National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 9 show significant improvement on those results achieved at the time of the last inspection. In tackling the key issues since the last inspection the school has made very good progress. Standards have improved in English, mathematics, science, ICT and in French. There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching in Years 7 to 11. The management of ICT and modern foreign languages are no longer weaknesses. Limited progress has been made in providing opportunities for independent learning. Curriculum planning and the timetable are no longer unsatisfactory. There still remains insufficient time given to music in Years 7 to 9.

STANDARDS

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

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

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

Pupils' results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 in the Year 2001 were above the national average in English and just below for mathematics and science. When compared to schools with pupils of a similar background in 2001, pupils in this school achieve results at Level 5 and above for English, which are well above the average, above average for mathematics and close to the average for science. There is no significant difference between boys' results and those of girls.

In the 2001 GCSE examinations the proportion gaining five GCSE grades A*-C was below the national average. The proportion gaining five or more GCSE grades A*-G and 1 A*-G was in line with the national average. When compared to similar schools, results in 2001 show the proportion of pupils gaining five or more GCSE grades A*-C was below the average for these schools but above average for the proportion gaining five A*-G grades and in line for the proportion gaining one or more A*-G grades. Boys' results were below the national average over the last three years but girls' results were well below.

Based on the work seen during the inspection, pupils by the end of Year 9 have reached satisfactory standards in all subjects except for music, where standards are low because pupils receive insufficient teaching time. By the end of Year 11 pupils' attainment is good in music and physical education. In all other subjects standards of attainment are close to the national average except for design and technology where standards are below. Most pupils are achieving well in Years 7 to 9 in relation to their standards when they entered the school. Pupils are managing to achieve at least satisfactory and often high standards in some subjects except for music where they are underachieving. In the work seen, pupils were achieving well in mathematics, physical education, and modern foreign languages. Pupils were achieving satisfactorily in all other subjects except for music where pupils underachieve. In Years 10 and 11 pupils achieve well in mathematics, art and design, history, music and physical education and appropriately in all other subjects.

The school failed to meet the agreed targets set in 2001 for the proportion of pupils gaining five A*-C GCSE grades; one A*-G grades and average point score. The targets for 2002 are ambitious and challenging and the school is confident that 40 per cent of pupils will gain five or more grades at GCSE and that it will reach its target of 35 average points score and 98 per cent of pupils gaining one or more one A*-G grade.

Pupils' standards in literacy across the school are about average. Pupils can speak clearly and articulately. Most pupils' standards of reading allow them access to the curriculum. Written work is mostly competent. Pupils' standards in numeracy are improving. The principles and guidance of the National Numeracy Strategy have been adopted. The confidence and accuracy with which pupils calculate are secure and improving, but the mental recall of number facts is sharper at the lower end of the school. The recall of basic number facts is often quite slow among older pupils, who use a calculator too readily for simple calculations.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
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Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes are good. Most enjoy coming to school and are positive in their lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in the school is good. Exclusion rates are low. The school's behaviour policy is well adhered to and pupils are particularly well behaved in the dining room.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good. Pupils' personal development is good. They are treated with respect by adults and in turn they show respect for adults.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory. Pastoral staff monitor attendance effectively. The procedures for promoting attendance work well.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 7 to 11 and has improved significantly since the time of the last inspection. In Years 7 to 9 the quality of teaching and learning is good in English, art and design, design and technology, ICT, modern foreign languages, music and physical education. In all other subjects teaching is satisfactory. In Years 10 and 11 the quality of teaching and learning is good in English, mathematics, art and design, design and technology, ICT, music and physical education and in all other subjects teaching is satisfactory. In Years 7 to 11 only three lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory or poor.

A particular strength of teaching is the good quality and effectiveness of teachers' planning for lessons. The quality of planning ensures that there is a good pace to lessons and that pupils work hard during lessons. Teachers use a good range of teaching methods to involve pupils in their learning. The variety of teaching methods sustains pupils' interest and concentration in lessons. However, teachers seldom provide pupils with the opportunities for independent learning. The management of pupils' behaviour is very good. Teachers' expectations are good in Years 7 to 11. Teachers mark pupils' work carefully and accurately but not all teachers are using marking to indicate to pupils what they need to do to improve their work. Setting targets for pupils is satisfactory. Most targets concentrate on improving attitudes and behaviour. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good.

In the teaching of literacy skills most subjects give attention to key-words and technical terms, and this emphasis is beginning to bear fruit in pupils' coursework. Models to support writing are used regularly in English, science, history and geography. However, there is no consistent approach across the curriculum towards improving the technical accuracy of pupils' written work. In developing numeracy skills, lesson planning reflects the recommended structure of the numeracy strategy, so that skills can be developed systematically. Mental arithmetic sessions at the start of mathematics lessons are usually focused on the development of a particular skill, often linked to the main objectives of the lesson.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum provides a good range of learning experiences. Throughout their time in school all pupils have access to a broad range of subjects. The legal requirements of the National Curriculum are met, apart from those for music in Years 7 – 9.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The good provision made by the curriculum support department, supplemented by sound practice in all subjects, enables pupils to make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There are very few pupils with EAL in the school. The pupils are originally from Iraq, Russia, Bosnia and Pakistan. None of these pupils are at the early stages of learning English and they are making good progress. The majority of pupils have been in the UK for over two years and are well integrated into the school.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. There is very good moral development and good provision for pupils' social and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school offers a good level of care. Staff know pupils well and relationships are very good. The school has a satisfactory partnership with parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership and management are very good. The leadership provided by the headteacher is outstanding and he is well supported by his senior and middle managers.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are very good in shaping the direction of the school. They are very knowledgeable about the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are failing to ensure that pupils in Years 7 to 9 are receiving their full entitlement to music and a daily act of collective worship.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school's evaluation of its work is very good. Effective action has been taken to tackle weaknesses. The emphasis on evaluating teaching and learning in Years 7 to 11 has not yet been extended into the sixth form.
The strategic use of resources	The strategic use of resources is very good. The school has been skilful in attracting additional funds from a variety of sources to improve the quality of education for pupils. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory. The school is rigorous in ensuring that the principles of best value are applied and that the school gets good value for money in its use of resources.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their child is making good progress • The school has high expectations • Their child likes school • The school is well led and managed • The school is helping their child to become mature and responsible • They would feel comfortable about approaching the school with a problem • Teaching is good 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being kept better informed about how their child is getting on • The school working more closely with parents • The amount of homework

Inspectors agree with parents on the issues that please parents most. Inspectors judge that the amount of homework set is appropriate for pupils of this age. Inspectors judge that there are sufficient opportunities for parents to become fully involved in the life of the school. The school complies with the legal requirements to keep parents informed about how their children are progressing. When the school is concerned about the progress of individual pupils, staff are quick to contact parents regarding their concerns.

ANNEX: THE SIXTH FORM

WEST PARK COMMUNITY SCHOOL

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

The sixth form in this large 11-18 comprehensive school was established in 1996. It is smaller than other sixth forms. Currently there are 92 students in comparison with the national average of 166. There are similar numbers of male and female students. The number of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is very small, reflecting the composition of the community the school serves. In 2001, 20 per cent of students stayed on into the sixth form from Year 11, a drop of 11 per cent from the number staying on in 2000. In 2001, 37 per cent of students went on to local colleges of education. A wide range of academic subjects and vocational courses is provided leading to GCE Advanced Subsidiary (AS) and Advanced (A) levels, and the Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE). Whilst admission to courses leading to GCE A and AS-levels is guided by the requirement for students to have at least four C grades at GCSE, admission arrangements are flexible in accordance with the school's open access policy. Overall, students' attainment on entry to the sixth form is below average. In 2001, 42 (65 per cent) of the 64 students who entered the sixth form in 2000 continued their studies in Year 13. Many of those leaving at the end of Year 12 proceeded to employment following a one-year course - for instance, the three-unit award in ICT. Senior managers and the governing body have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the sixth form. Planning for the future of post-16 provision is well advanced.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

The results at GCE A-level have been well below average over the last three years. In 2001 they were well below average and indicated unsatisfactory achievement when compared with students' GCSE results. Students' achievement at GCE AS-level in 2001 was also unsatisfactory. Achievement is better in vocational courses, where standards are average overall. The wide range of subjects and courses results in many very small teaching groups, especially in Year 13. Opportunities for enrichment through activities outside of lessons are limited in range. The sixth form unit costs are high as a result of some small teaching groups. There are, however, significant signs of improvement. Teaching is improving and in most subjects standards are rising. The improvement in standards is especially marked in mathematics and physics. Overall, teaching is satisfactory, with particular strengths in teachers' subject knowledge, lesson planning and classroom management. It is, however, weakened by inconsistencies in the level of intellectual challenge. Relationships are very good and characterised by mutual respect.

Strengths

- Students are well supported in their personal development. The strong support of teachers is appreciated by students.
- Students are positive in their views of the school and their experiences in the sixth form.
- The curriculum is broad and flexible and well matched to the needs and interests of students, parents and the locality.
- All students have good access to the opportunities available in the sixth form.

What could be improved

- Standards achieved in examinations.
- Consistency in the levels of challenge and expectation in the teaching.
- Procedures for the systematic tracking of students' progress and setting targets for improvement.
- Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision.
- Reducing the high unit costs.
- Leadership and management of the sixth form.

Further areas for improvement are in the curriculum area reports.

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

I am of the opinion, and HMCI agrees, that the school has an inadequate sixth form in terms of paragraph 1(2) of Schedule 7 of the Learning and Skills Act because it has significant weaknesses in the standards achieved in examinations; the level of challenge and expectation in some teaching; procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision; procedures for tracking students' progress and high unit costs for pupils over compulsory school age.

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM AREAS

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

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Mathematics	Satisfactory. Examination results are very low but standards are improving rapidly and are now close to national averages. Teaching and learning are good.
Physics	Satisfactory. Standards are improving. Results have been below average over the last two years and were very low in 2001. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and standards are now average.
History	Satisfactory. Current standards match the average. There were no entries at A-level over the last two years. Achievement at AS-level in 2001 was in line with students' achievement at GCSE. Teaching and learning are satisfactory.
Geography	Satisfactory. Results were average over last three years. Students achieve satisfactorily in comparison with their GCSE results. Teaching and learning are satisfactory.
English	Satisfactory. No A-level examination results in 2001. AS-level results in 2001 were below average but consistent with students' GCSE results. Current standards are also below average and reflect students' prior attainment at GCSE. Teaching and learning are satisfactory.

In other subjects, work was sampled. Teaching was satisfactory. The numbers entered for GCE A-level over the last three years have been too small for valid national comparison. Results have varied usually in accordance with the levels gained by students at GCSE. Standards in vocational courses match the average and represent satisfactory achievement when compared with students' GCSE results. Work seen during the inspection was close to the average in most subjects and well above average in art.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	Satisfactory. Teachers provide good guidance and support for students' personal development. The procedures for assessing their academic attainment, monitoring progress and setting targets for the improvement of standards are insufficiently systematic and rigorous.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	Unsatisfactory. There is a strong commitment to the improvement of standards and the quality of provision. Longer term planning is clearly focused and well advanced to meet these objectives. However, the current arrangements for the monitoring, evaluation and shorter term planning are not systematic. They are not rigorous enough to ensure consistently effective practice and a clear direction for the work of the sixth form.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

What students like about the sixth form	What they feel could be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teachers are accessible for help• They are well taught and challenged• Curriculum choice suits talents and aspirations• They were helped well to settle into the sixth form	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Information about their progress• The range of activities and enrichment available• Advice about future options

Inspection evidence supports students' views on support from teachers, curricular choice and the pastoral help they received to settle into the sixth form. Teaching, however, has been found to vary in the consistency of its challenge. Inspectors agree that there is a need to improve information about progress and the range of activities and enrichment, but judge that pupils are well advised about the options available to them when they leave school. This was confirmed by discussions with students during the inspection.

COMPARING PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

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

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils' attainment on entry is below the national average.
2. Pupils' results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 in the year 2001 were above the national average in English and just below for mathematics and science. When compared to schools with pupils of a similar background in 2001, pupils in this school achieve results at Level 5 and above, which are well above average for English, above average for mathematics and close to the average for science. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels of Level 6 and above was above the average for English and mathematics and below for science. Results for English, mathematics and science show significant improvements on the 2000 results. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. The trend in the school's average National Curriculum points score based on the last five years is above the national trend.
3. In the 2001 GCSE examinations the proportions of pupils gaining five or more A*-C grades was below the national average. The proportion of pupils gaining five or more A*-G grades and one or more A*-G grades was in line with the national average. Over the period from 1999 –2001 the proportion gaining five grades A*-C was below the national average and the trend in the school's average points score was below the national trend. When compared to similar schools the proportion of pupils gaining five GCSE grades A*-C in 2001 was below the average for these schools, but above average for one or more A*-G and five A*-G. Boys' results were below the national average over the last three years but girls' results were well below.
4. Analysis of the results for individual subjects in 2001 indicates that there were relatively better results in history and physical education. Results for art and design, science, design and technology, English language, German and mathematics were relatively weaker than the results gained by pupils in their other subjects.
5. Pupils enter the school with standards below the national average. By the end of Year 9 pupils have reached standards, that are close to the national average, and therefore pupils have achieved well in Years 7 to 9. In Years 10 and 11 pupils achieve appropriately in most subjects, as standards reached by pupils by the age of 16 are close to the national average. In the work seen, by the end of Year 9 pupils have reached good standards in modern foreign languages, satisfactory standards in all other subjects except music, where standards are low because pupils receive insufficient teaching time. By the end of Year 11 pupils' attainment is good in music and physical education. In all other subjects standards of attainment are close to the national average except for design and technology where standards are below.
6. Most pupils are managing above average achievement in English, science, modern foreign languages, art and design, ICT, physical education and religious education. In all other subjects, except for music, achievement is satisfactory by the end of Year 9. By the end of Year 11 most pupils were achieving well in mathematics, art and design, history, music and physical education. In all other subjects pupils were making at least satisfactory progress.
7. The school failed to meet the agreed targets set in 2001 for the proportion of pupils gaining five A*-C GCSE grades; one A*-G grades and average point score. The targets for 2002 are ambitious and challenging and the school is confident that 40 per cent of pupils will gain five or more grades at GCSE and that it will reach its target of 35 average points score and 98 per cent of pupils gaining one or more one A*-G grade.
8. Standards of literacy across the school are about average. Pupils can speak clearly and articulately and usually participate well in group discussion. Many have difficulty, however, in speaking more formally when the situation requires it. Most pupils' standards of reading allow them to take full advantage of the curriculum. Research work in art and design is supported by good quality reading materials. While levels of factual comprehension are satisfactory, many find making inferences or deductions difficult. Written work is mostly competent, in keeping with

pupils' levels of ability. Where writing skills are encouraged, as in design and technology, art and design and English, pupils' work improves as they progress through the school. There is no consistent approach across the curriculum towards improving the technical accuracy of pupils' written work.

9. The mathematics department has adopted the principles and guidance of the National Numeracy Strategy. The confidence and accuracy with which pupils calculate are secure and improving, but the mental recall of number facts is sharper at the lower end of the school. This is largely because younger pupils have also benefited from the impact of the National Numeracy Strategy in their primary school. These pupils are quick with their use of whole numbers, fractions and decimals, often having more than one method for calculating and checking their answers, which they are able to explain clearly to others. By contrast, the recall of basic number facts is often quite slow among older pupils, who use a calculator too readily for simple calculations. This aspect of their mathematical development receives insufficient attention.
10. Lesson planning reflects the recommended structure of the numeracy strategy and is supported by the new scheme of work, so that skills can be developed systematically. Mental arithmetic sessions at the start of lessons are usually focused on the development of a particular skill, often linked to the main lesson objectives. For example, Year 7 pupils practised multiplying and dividing whole numbers and decimals by 10, 100 and 1000 before applying this to converting between metric units of length. There are occasions, however, when these sessions lose their impact because the objectives are imprecise and too many skills are developed. Pupils do not have the opportunity to gain confidence and accuracy because errors and misconceptions are not corrected. The pupils' number skills are sufficient for the needs of other subjects but are not developed, extended and applied consistently in other subjects, in part because there is no whole-school policy for this area. Tackling this has been identified as a priority in the departmental development plan.
11. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. This is shown in the significant progress made by the great majority of pupils in improving their reading and spelling ages. It is also shown in the good progress pupils make in achieving the targets set for improvement in specific areas of learning. For instance, where pupils have statements of special educational needs, the annual reviews show good improvement in meeting the objectives set. They also achieve well at GCSE. For example in 2001, seven pupils who had entered the school on Stages 3-5 achieved a minimum of three, and up to eight subjects in the A*-G range. There was a similar pattern of achievement in 2000 and 1999. Pupils are also successful in the Certificate of Achievement. In 2001, for example, there were ten candidates: seven obtained Grade 3 (Distinction); two gained Grade 2 (Merit); and one was ungraded. In SMP mathematics 97 per cent achieved at least Stage1 and in the Youth Award Scheme 70 per cent achieved a Bronze Award. In 2001, 12 pupils went on to further education or training and six entered employment. Boys and girls achieve equally well.

Sixth form

12. The results in GCE A-level examinations have been below average over the last three years and very low in 2000 and well below average in 2001. In 2000, the students entered for two or more GCE A-levels averaged 7.8 points in comparison with a national average of 17.6. These results had fallen from a score of 14.4 in 1999 when the national average was 17.9. In 2001, the school's average point score remained low at 7.7 in comparison with the national average of 17.7.
13. Students were entered for GCE AS-level examinations for the first time in 2001. Comparison with national averages is not possible as the national data are not available. The percentage of students gaining the highest grades of A and B were 14.3 but 38 per cent were ungraded. The standards reached in vocational courses are broadly average. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.
14. Students enter the sixth form with below average results at GCSE. Nevertheless, the very low GCE A-level results, and the high percentage of low and ungraded GCE AS-level results indicate unsatisfactory achievement when compared with students' GCSE results. Achievement in vocational courses is satisfactory. It is broadly in line with students' attainment at GCSE. The

most able students achieve as well as expected in the light of their GCSE results. Students with special educational needs achieve well.

15. In 2001, 65 per cent of the 64 students who entered the sixth form in 2000, continued their studies in Year 13. Many of those leaving at the end of Year 12 proceeded to employment following the completion of a planned one-year course such as the three-unit award in ICT. At the end of their time in the sixth form, about 25 per cent of students proceed to higher education, a similar number continue their education in colleges of further education, and the remainder seek employment.
16. The work seen during the inspection reflected improving standards in most subjects, and especially in mathematics and physics, where the work seen in both Years 12 and 13 was close to the average in contrast with the very low results in both subjects in 2001. Standards were also broadly average in all other subjects apart from in art, where the work seen was above average, and in English where students were working at too low a level. Students' work in English is weakened by poorly structured and expressed essay writing, careless spelling, and writing which reflects uneven knowledge.
17. In many instances, students' achievement is hindered by their restricted ability to draw effectively on advanced skills of research, analysis and synthesis, to argue convincingly from a good basis of knowledge and understanding, and to think widely beyond their immediate work. The great majority are able to make effective use of ICT in their studies, but weaknesses in other key skills such as communication, study skills and problem solving inhibit achievement.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

18. Attendance is satisfactory. Most pupils enjoy coming to school, and in most lessons pupils demonstrate a keenness to learn and improve their learning grades. Most pupils are very involved and interested in lessons. They work well together, and listen attentively to teachers. Many students are proud of what they achieve, and gain satisfaction from their efforts. They behave both in and out of lessons in a mature and sensible manner.
19. Pupils involve themselves in a variety of activities that the school offers. They have a high level of participation in sporting events. One pupil is a national champion at under-16 basketball, four pupils are in the under-16 Derbyshire county rugby squad, a sixth form student has been selected for the England basketball team, and a sixth form girl is a national student champion. Pupils' show their enthusiasm and support for the school in other ways. Sixth form students have trained at Loughborough University to run sporting events, and organise five-a-side football events for local primary schools. Year 8 pupils have produced a newspaper, which is sold to provide money for school funds, Year 9 pupils provide stalls for the annual parent/teacher association fair, and Year 11 have produced a professional year book which is sold in school. Many pupils also participate in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, and show a deep commitment to gain bronze, silver and gold awards.
20. Pupils' behaviour both in the classroom and at break is generally good. Pupils behave very well in the dining room, and use lunchtime as an enjoyable social occasion. All pupils are aware of the school's high expectations of behaviour, and there are many examples of good behaviour around the school. Pupils have a healthy respect for their own property, school property, and other people's property. The library is well used, and pupils treat its computers, books and artefacts with care. The school has no graffiti, and is litter-free.
21. The positive ethos in the school of care and concern for its pupils is well understood, and the overwhelming majority of parents confirm that pupils enjoy coming to school.
22. The school well understands the responsibilities of social inclusion, and is extremely pro-active in retaining pupils and students in full-time education. Exclusion is used as a last resort, and figures are very low. In the last term eleven pupils were given fixed-term exclusions, and one pupil given a permanent exclusion. All exclusions are well documented, and are mainly for physical and verbal abuse. The strategies that the school has for the monitoring and eliminating of oppressive behaviour work well. Pupils receive a two-hour detention on a Saturday for extremely

serious misbehaviour, and the school has established a withdrawal unit to isolate pupils for a short period of time if they misbehave in lessons.

23. The very occasional incidents of bullying are well dealt with by staff, using documented procedures, and the school takes a very serious view of bullying. All staff are aware of procedures for dealing with it. Year 10 and 11 pupils are trained at Nottingham University as anti-bullying counsellors, and when interviewed pupils confirmed that they felt that bullying was most effectively dealt with, and were confident that any future problems would be well handled by the school.
24. Relationships within the school are good. All pupils are well known to staff, who relate to them well. The personal health and social education, and preparation for life programmes have been recently introduced, and have a strong effect on pupils' pastoral progress. Most pupils show respect for their teachers. They know that they can approach them to share concerns or receive guidance. In lessons pupils collaborate well with each other. In a Year 9 geography lesson seen, pupils worked well together to investigate and discuss the problems of developing countries. In a Year 10 English lesson, pupils worked collaboratively to discuss and develop the perception of the character of Lady Macbeth, and four pupils with learning difficulty in the lesson were well integrated, and took part in the discussion.
25. Pupils are given the opportunity to display responsibility and initiative. Year 11 pupils apply for positions as school prefects, and are proud to be appointed. They help in the library, act as stewards in parents' evenings, and train as anti-bullying counsellors. Pupils are proud of their school. During the inspection week a fire severely damaged unoccupied school buildings, and many pupils expressed regret and hoped that the culprits would be caught. During a power failure pupils behaved well and sensibly.
26. Attendance at the school is satisfactory, at 91 per cent, and is close to the national average. The school makes consistent efforts to improve attendance, and liaises very well with the school attendance officer. Parents are made aware that their children's education is disrupted by poor attendance and condoning of absence, and are encouraged to see that their children attend regularly. The school has satisfactory procedures for the monitoring of attendance, and first day absences are tracked by the clerical staff, who liaise with the heads of year, and form tutors. Registers are marked using the SIMS registration system, but the school is currently investigating ways of using a more sophisticated electronic system.
27. Punctuality of students is generally good, and most lessons start on time. The positive comments in the previous reports regarding pupils' behaviour at the school have been maintained, and the pupils are well prepared by the school for adult life.

Sixth form

28. Students are generally positive in their views of the school. Nearly all completed the students' questionnaire and, although they expressed a number of criticisms, in discussion most were positive about the sixth form and would recommend it to others. They are especially appreciative of the support of subject teachers. Their main criticism is of the limited range of social activities and opportunities out of lessons to extend their learning experiences.
29. Students are well motivated, co-operative and do the work asked of them. In many lessons, however, they are compliant rather than avid learners, and often over-dependent on the teacher. This is resulting in their capacity to respond as confident, independent learners to the demands of higher education often being underdeveloped.
30. They are courteous, friendly and supportive of each other. Relationships are very good. Most attend school regularly. The majority, especially in Year 13, have clear views of their longer term goals. They respond positively to opportunities to take responsibility and initiative - for example, in raising funds for charity - and some are frustrated by the lack of structured opportunities to take meaningful responsibility in school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

31. Teaching and learning are good overall. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 7 to 11 is good and in the sixth form is satisfactory. Improvements in teaching and learning since the last inspection have been good. At the time of the last inspection 91 per cent of lessons were judged to be satisfactory or better and this has now improved to 97 per cent. Of the 138 lessons observed in Years 7 to 11 during the inspection over half were judged to be good or better, compared with only 41 per cent at the time of the last inspection, with only three lessons judged to be unsatisfactory or poor.
32. The good teaching is having a clear impact on the quality of learning throughout the school and overall pupils are making good gains in skills, knowledge and understanding. When pupils are taught well the pace pupils work at is good. When teaching is good and the level of challenge is high pupils' response is good and they make good gains in developing their levels of skills, knowledge and understanding.
33. In Years 7 to 9 the quality of teaching is good in English, art and design, design and technology, ICT, modern foreign languages, music and physical education. In all other subjects teaching is satisfactory. In Years 10 and 11 the quality of teaching is good in English, mathematics, art and design, design and technology, ICT, music and physical education and in all other subjects teaching is satisfactory. A particular strength of teaching is the good quality and effectiveness of teachers' planning for lessons. The quality of planning ensures that there is a good pace to lessons and that pupils work hard during lessons.
34. Most teachers share the aims of the lessons with pupils and at the end of lessons many teachers test pupils' understanding to judge whether the lesson's aims have been met. The management of pupils' behaviour in lessons is very good and teachers are consistent in applying the school's behaviour policy. Teachers' expectations are good in Years 7 to 11. On occasions pupils are not fully stretched, especially higher-attaining pupils, and the lack of challenge results in pupils making insufficient gains in their learning. The characteristics of those lessons judged to be unsatisfactory were either that the level of challenge for pupils was low or that pupils' behaviour was not effectively managed.
35. Teachers use a good range of teaching methods in Years 7 to 11. The variety of teaching methods sustains pupils' interest and concentration in lessons. However, teachers rarely provide pupils with opportunities for independent learning. Too many pupils are passive in lessons and do not take sufficient responsibility for their own learning and are over-reliant on their teachers. Many subjects, including English, science, art and design, design and technology, geography, music and religious education are not making the most use of information and communication technology to support their teaching.
36. A feature of most lessons is the constructive purposeful relationship between teachers and their pupils. The good use of praise by teachers enables pupils to feel secure and confident enough to answer and ask questions. There is a lack of consistency across the whole school in ensuring that all subjects identify extension activities for the most able pupils.
37. Teachers mark pupils' work carefully and accurately but not all teachers are using marking to indicate to pupils what they need to do to improve their work. The school has a lot of data from external testing of pupils' attainment that are being used by teachers to set targets for individual pupils to raise standards. The weakness is that few teachers identify what pupils need to do to reach those targets in terms of skills, knowledge and understanding. Most targets concentrate on improving attitudes and behaviour.
38. Many parents raised concerns about the homework set. The inspectors' judgement is that the setting of homework is good. During the inspection week appropriate homework tasks were set. Pupils felt that the amount of homework set was appropriate.
39. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. The good practice in the curriculum support department results in pupils' learning needs being clearly identified and met through a range of effective strategies. Withdrawal lessons are well planned to provide a range of learning activities that are specifically focused on particular skills' development. For example, Year 9 pupils made good progress in a mathematics lesson as a result of teaching being very well structured and matched to their specific learning requirements and the good sequence of

progressively demanding activities. This lesson, along with others observed, was successful not only in promoting learning, but also in boosting pupils' confidence as learners. In lessons across the curriculum pupils make good progress when withdrawn in small groups for specialist teaching and also when supported by education care officers (ECOs) in lessons. This was evident, for instance, in science where learning was significantly better when ECOs were available to provide well targeted one-to-one guidance and clearly focused help. Similarly, in English there are many instances of pupils benefiting from support from ECOs. This was shown for instance in a Year 8 lesson on instructional writing where two pupils made good progress in comprehension and writing because of the good support from the ECO. Pupils benefit also from being taught in small groups, as in mathematics. There are, however, instances where teaching of pupils with special educational needs in subjects is weakened by inconsistencies in the extent to which planning takes sufficient account of pupils' learning requirements, with too little use being made of IEPs to ensure an appropriate match of work.

40. Provision for and teaching of literacy across the curriculum is satisfactory, though the school is making a late start on initiatives. A cross-curricular working party exists but there is no whole-school policy. A sample literacy audit of departments' schemes of work has been carried out and whole-staff training is planned for this term, in collaboration with the local education authority's literacy consultant. No summer school activities for Year 6 pupils due to enter the school have been held. As there is at present no co-ordinated approach to literacy, practice across subject departments differs widely. Most subjects give attention to key-words and technical terms, and this emphasis is beginning to bear fruit in pupils' coursework. Writing-frames are used regularly in English, science, history and geography. Teachers in geography, science, English and art and design encourage and develop pupils' extended writing, but not in other areas. Those with special educational needs are well supported; they can speak articulately and make good progress in reading and spelling.
41. In mathematics lesson planning reflects the recommended structure of the numeracy strategy and is supported by the new scheme of work, so that skills can be developed systematically. Mental arithmetic sessions at the start of lessons are usually focused on the development of a particular skill, often linked to the main lesson objectives. Pupils do not have the opportunity to gain confidence and accuracy because errors and misconceptions are not corrected. The pupils' number skills are sufficient for the needs of other subjects but are not developed, extended and applied consistently in other subjects, in part because there is no whole-school policy in this area. Tackling this has been identified as a priority in the departmental development plan.

Sixth form

42. Teaching is satisfactory. This was evident from the lessons seen and from evidence such as students' written work, schemes of work and lesson plans. In 91 per cent of the lessons observed during the inspection, the quality of teaching was satisfactory or better. In 50 per cent teaching was good. In seven per cent (two lessons) teaching was very good, and in nine per cent (three lessons) it was unsatisfactory.
43. Teaching is particularly strong in mathematics. Teaching in four out of the five lessons seen was good or better, and teaching is also good in ICT. In other subjects, practice is more variable in quality but there are elements of good teaching in all. Overall, teaching is improving, resulting in clear indications of improved achievement. The impact of improved teaching on standards is most marked in mathematics.
44. The strengths in teaching include good subject expertise, detailed planning and thorough marking. The teachers' good subject knowledge is used effectively to provide clear introductions and explanations and thus to enable students to acquire a sound knowledge base. These are strong features in the majority of lessons, and at best, the teachers' good subject expertise inspires students to share their teacher's enthusiasm for the subject. In a Year 12 physics lesson, for example, students' interest and enthusiasm were aroused by the teacher's lively presentation of good subject knowledge, and their understanding of resistivity was helped significantly by very clear explanation that drew effectively on everyday examples such as house wiring. Similarly, in a Year 12 history lesson students gained sound knowledge of Henry VII's foreign policy and the complexities of the dynastic rivalries of European states as a result of brisk, clear and

knowledgeable exposition. In modern languages, students' speaking skills are significantly enhanced by the teachers' very good speaking skills.

45. Teachers' good expertise also results in good lesson planning, providing clear aims and objectives and helping students to understand the purpose of lessons. Most lessons are well structured and subject content is covered thoroughly. Marking is also thorough. It is a significant strength in most subjects. Students' work is marked regularly and comments help them to understand what they need to do to improve standards. In English, for example, marking of exceptionally high quality provides clear and precise guidance to assist students in improving their work.
46. The weaknesses in teaching lie in the inconsistency in levels of intellectual challenge, and the demand on students' initiative and independent research. There are instances of significant strengths in these aspects of teaching. For instance, in a Year 13 mathematics lesson on integration, the students were fully involved in response to good challenge that required them to think and apply their understanding of partial fractions and trigonometrical ratios. As a result they developed a very good understanding of integration techniques. Similarly, in a Year 12 geography lesson, good stimulus and use of group work focusing on synthesising information and the identification of issues, promoted good understanding of rural environments in economically underdeveloped countries, and helped to promote research skills. There are also instances in geography of questioning being used effectively to require students to apply and build on prior knowledge and resulting in a very good response from the students.
47. On the other hand there are too many instances of too slow a pace, lack of variety and challenge in the teaching, and of teachers' expectations of the standards to be achieved being too low. In many lessons students are too dependent on the teacher, thus restricting their enquiry, debate and conceptual understanding. For example, in a Year 12 English lesson, the over domination by the teacher in the analysis of a prose extract severely limited the opportunities for students to think for themselves. As a result they worked passively with very little intellectual involvement and effort. Likewise, in a Year 13 psychology lesson, while the teacher's good subject knowledge was transmitted clearly, the students made virtually no response because of too little demand that they should do so, even to controversial issues relating to socially sensitive research.
48. In several lessons learning is slowed by too slow a pace of teaching and undemanding tasks being set. This was evident for example, in a Year 13 physics lesson on nuclear radiation where, following a lively start, learning became slow because of a lack of coherence in the structure of the lesson, and while questioning was effective in assessing students' recall, it was not demanding enough in extending their understanding. Learning was also restricted in a Year 12 geography lesson on changing environments because of both over-dependency on the teacher, and the setting of undemanding tasks such as the copying of tables. In this lesson there was too much emphasis on transmission of knowledge and too little on the development of geographical skills.
49. These shortcomings in teaching often result in students not learning as well as they can. In many instances they are inhibiting students' confidence as learners and their capacity for critical analysis.

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

50. The curriculum provides a broad range of learning experiences and is fully inclusive both socially and educationally. Planning is very soundly guided by a clear vision and drive to ensure that throughout their time in school all pupils, including those with special educational needs, have access to a broad range of subjects and learning experiences. The legal requirements of the National Curriculum are met apart from in Years 7 to 9, where too little time is allocated for music. This results in the requirements of the National Curriculum programme of study not being fully covered.
51. The breadth and relevance of the curriculum in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory. In addition to all of the subjects of the National Curriculum, pupils follow courses in personal, social and health education.

52. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have access to a wide range of subjects. All follow GCSE courses in the National Curriculum subjects, drama and business studies, and non-examination courses in preparation for life, which includes personal, social and health education, careers and work experience. In addition, a free option enables pupils to study two languages, a creative or performing arts subject or a second subject from one of the other curriculum areas. In addition, pupils in Year 10 have access to the Youth Award Scheme. Planning for the introduction of GCSE vocational courses in September 2002, which includes liaison with local schools and colleges, is well advanced.
53. PHSE and PFL courses have recently been revised and are very good. They are well-structured, clearly focused, interesting, relevant and kept under review to ensure their effectiveness. Provision for citizenship is well planned within personal, social and health education in Years 7 to 9, and preparation for life courses in Years 10 – 11. Careers education is also well planned and managed to meet the needs of pupils as they progress through the school. Its teaching is well supported by detailed schemes of work and productive liaison with the local careers service. Work experience is organised effectively to meet the entitlement of each pupil to at least one week's placement.
54. Pupils have the opportunity to enrich their learning experiences through out of lesson activities and clubs that, while relatively limited in range, provide valuable opportunities for pupils to widen their learning. The main strengths are in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme in which over 100 pupils are involved and in the wide range of sporting activities including competitive teams in all the major sports, which are well attended. In addition, there are several subject-based clubs in, for example, ICT, French and science, and a programme of school visits in this and other European countries, many of the visits taking place through the annual Activities Week. There are also opportunities for pupils to engage in young engineer activities sponsored by Rolls Royce and the annual music and drama productions.
55. The school values the contribution that can be made by the community to pupils' learning and regards itself as a truly neighbourhood school. All humanities subjects use the village extensively as an educational resource, and activities in physical education are well supported by the strong links with local sports clubs. Use of the Internet, to enable pupils' learning to benefit from the information available worldwide, is developing well. Pupils' learning benefits significantly from the very good partnership with other schools and colleges. The school enjoys very positive links with the community it serves and is actively planning to build profitably on these to enhance pupils' learning.
56. All pupils with special educational needs have full access to the whole range of the curriculum. Work is well matched to their needs and is supported by teachers and learning support assistants. Teachers are helped in their curricular planning by being given details of pupils' learning requirements and targets on pupils' individual education plans. Individual education plans have been recently updated to ensure that planning takes account of a wide range of learning requirements. Pupils are supported well in the development of specific literacy skills through a carefully judged and planned programme of withdrawal from lessons. The development of numeracy skills is supported well by pupils being taught in small ability sets. Good support is also given for pupils' achievement in the Youth Award Scheme and Certificate of Education courses. Not enough use is made of ICT to support pupils' learning.
57. The school has made good progress in dealing with the issues identified at the time of the last inspection, when curricular provision was judged to be unsatisfactory. Improved timetable arrangements have resulted in shorter lessons that facilitate a good pace of learning and greater flexibility. The breadth of learning experiences in Years 10 to 11 has increased, setting arrangements are well judged to support pupils' learning and planning for ICT is much improved. However the shortage of time for music in Years 7 – 9, which was identified as an issue in the last two inspections, remains to be tackled.
58. Research work in art and design is supported by good quality reading materials. While levels of factual comprehension are satisfactory, many find making inferences or deductions difficult. Written work is mostly competent, in keeping with pupils' levels of ability. Where writing skills are encouraged, as in design and technology, art and design and English, pupils' work improves as they progress through the school. There is no consistent approach across the curriculum towards improving the technical accuracy of pupils' written work. The pupils' number skills are

sufficient for the needs of other subjects but are not developed, extended and applied consistently in other subjects, in part because there is no whole-school policy in this area. Tackling this has been identified as a priority in the departmental development plan.

59. Overall, the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. A strong school ethos characterised by good relationships and respect provides a strong context for pupils' moral, social and cultural development. The commitment and attitudes of staff sets a very positive example for pupils. They are good role models. There are many references to this area of pupils' development in the school's documentation, especially with regard to behaviour, equal opportunities and bullying. The PSHE programme is an integral part of the school's curricular provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. However, at present there is no co-ordinated approach to ensure that all departments contribute fully to this area of pupils' development. There is a need to develop a shared policy for the planning, teaching and monitoring of this aspect of curriculum provision.
60. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory overall. Assemblies are held regularly and are used as a very useful vehicle for the celebration of pupils' achievement. However, they do not always include an act of collective worship, and because pupils do not participate in an act of worship or period of reflection either in assembly or form time, the requirement for a daily act of collective worship to be held is not met. This was also the case at the time of the last inspection. In some subjects, such as history, consideration is given to characteristics of hardships suffered during the holocaust. In music, feelings, emotions and reflective opportunities make a good contribution. In religious education there are many opportunities to help pupils consider and respond to questions about the meaning and purpose of life.
61. Very good provision is made for pupils' moral development. Adherence to school rules, the behaviour policy and the school's successful anti-bullying strategy, using trained pupil counsellors, promotes an orderly environment where pupils help and support each other. Several sensitive issues are discussed. A mature and responsible discussion took place during a religious education lessons the pros and cons of euthanasia and abortion. The careful choice of appropriate texts in the English department ensures that pupils can explore and discuss moral dilemmas, choices and responsibilities. Pupils work hard to raise money and support local charities. Geography lessons explore issues such as inequality through a study of children's conditions in South American countries.
62. Social education is good. Good relationships exist between staff and pupils during lessons and at other times during the school day. Opportunities are taken for pupils to develop social and collaborative skills in many of their lessons. In physical education, group work, captaincy and good team spirit make a significant contribution. Pupils collaborate well in practical work, for example in art and design, design and technology, drama and music lessons. Year 10 pupils have produced a booklet describing their own experiences in order to introduce the school to new pupils. Pupils have opportunities to develop leadership responsibilities as prefects, librarians and by supporting lunchtime clubs and activities. The regular activities week, theatre and overseas visits are enjoyed by all and offer a range of opportunities for pupils.
63. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good, but many subjects do not provide enough opportunities for awareness of life in a multi-cultural environment. An exception to this is in the art and music departments, where very good displays and use of multi-cultural artefacts develop pupils' understanding and appreciation of African culture. The humanities department contributes strongly to this area of pupil development through well-organised visits to local stately homes and also the Imperial War Museum in London. In geography pupils study life in other parts of the world including Kenya, Brazil and Japan. Trips abroad, including ski trips to Italy, language visits to Paris and an art visit to Venice, enhance pupils' cultural experiences. There are frequent visits to the theatre and regular music and drama productions.

Sixth form

64. Curriculum planning is based on a strong commitment to offer broad and flexible learning opportunities to meet students' wide-ranging learning requirements. The school has responded positively to the opportunity to provide greater breadth through Curriculum 2000. A good range of subjects is provided comprising 15 subjects at GCE AS and A-levels, and six vocational courses,

five leading to the six-unit award in the AVCE level, and one to a three-unit award in ICT. The desire to offer students as much choice as possible results in very small teaching groups, especially in Year 13. The quality of learning experiences is sometimes impoverished, especially in terms of opportunities for group debate and challenge. Students wishing to follow courses not provided at the school are given detailed specific advice about provision in other local institutions, thus ensuring that all have full access to the courses they need.

65. Students are provided with clear information about the range of subjects and courses available in the sixth form and are well guided in making choices. The arrangements for the induction of students in Year 13 were good and much appreciated by the students. However, those for students currently in Year 12 were unsatisfactory, resulting in students not being given sufficient guidance about the requirements of study, and of their response, at sixth form level.
66. The introduction of the teaching of key skills was planned and piloted in 2000-2001, but the full implementation of the key skills programme has been delayed to allow for AS and A-level courses to become established.
67. Students take part in fundraising events for charity, including an annual rag week, and benefit from university links and visiting speakers, but overall the opportunities for students to enrich their learning experiences through out-of-lesson activities are more limited than is usual in most sixth forms. The use of private study time is not sufficiently well structured and planned to ensure that students develop the skills to use it effectively.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

68. Procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare are satisfactory, but the inspection has identified some weaknesses in the school's system and procedures for child protection, and for ensuring pupils' safety. The school responded effectively to the concerns over staff training and record keeping.
69. The school has a health and safety policy, which was introduced in 1999, but is not reviewed annually. The school does not at present carry out an audit of risk assessment, but plans to do so shortly. Some departments carry out their own risk assessment, and control of hazardous substance procedures. Other departments do not.
70. The school has an adequate number of first aiders, all of whom have received the correct training. Accidents are recorded, but full details of treatment provided are not given. The school does not keep a record of administration of medicines. All the above items have been reported to the school, and will shortly be rectified. The provision for first aid is good. A dedicated first aid room is provided, and first aid boxes are provided and well stocked. The fire alarm is regularly tested, and regular fire practices take place. Chlorine levels in the swimming pool are regularly checked and monitored.
71. The school has effective measures for the monitoring and recording of attendance. Attendance is monitored by form tutors and heads of departments, who liaise well with the four clerical workers, who contact parents on the first day of absence. The newly appointed education welfare officer visits the school regularly, and liaison between him and the school is excellent. The school records attendance electronically by means of SIMS system, but is investigating ways of improving the information it receives by installing the 'Bromcom' electronic system. As a result of the school's pro-active approach, attendance is improving.
72. The school has a very effective pastoral system, which well promotes pupils' welfare, and helps to raise their achievements and standards. The school contacts Year 6 pupils prior to their admittance, and form tutors visit primary schools to get to know their prospective pupils. Year 7 pupils interviewed during the inspection week confirmed that they feel secure within the school, and are well supported by staff. Both teaching and non-teaching staff, including heads of years, form tutors and heads of departments, are well known by pupils. They offer a high level of support to them, and show concern and care. The progress that pupils make is enhanced as a result. The recently introduced personal health and social education programme in Years 7 to 9, and citizenship programme at Years 10 and 11 aim at giving pupils a good insight into adult life. A

number of external speakers and drama groups are invited into school to give pupils their perception of life in the wider community.

73. The school has recognised that many pupils can relate better to their own peer group than to teachers, and has introduced a bullying counselling programme for Year 11 pupils, who receive training at Nottingham University. These pupils, together with staff and careers staff, are available to pupils on a drop-in basis to discuss with them any items of concern that they may have. This very successful scheme gives older pupils a good level of responsibility, and their interpersonal skills are well developed as a result.
74. The school has arranged for pupils with behavioural or emotional difficulties to have placements for 50 per cent of their school timetable with the Rathbone centre. They follow an academic curriculum, but in addition receive vocational training and extra support and guidance. This innovative system has increased attendance, and has reduced a number of fixed-term exclusions. In addition, the school has used education action zone funds to provide places for a number of ten and eleven year-old pupils to attend a work-related project one day a week. This project enables pupils to develop their self-esteem, and gives them an insight into the world of work.
75. The school has recently extended its registration period to 25 minutes a day. Most classes use the time very well, and pupils are given the opportunity to discuss with form tutors the progress they are making, and any problems and concerns they may have.
76. The high level of concern that the school shows for its pupils contributes significantly to the progress that they are able to make.
77. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good. Policies are detailed and clear, ensuring that common methods are used by all departments and teachers. Departments submit assessment information each term. Progress is monitored by both subject and year heads. The current system has achieved much success since it was introduced. In practice, assessment is a strength of the department in history, it is good in some other subjects. It is satisfactory in English, mathematics and science. Some teachers do not always make best use of the detailed data, available to them, particularly in relation to target-setting, which needs to have a sharper focus. In several subjects, marking and the monitoring of marking need to be more rigorous.
78. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is assessed and monitored closely. Testing and the recording of progress are systematic. Each pupil is set targets for improvement. The achievement of targets on individual education plans are monitored. Targets are specific but not all are measurable. IEPs are kept under review and updated regularly to sustain good momentum in the learning. The annual reviews of statements of special educational needs meet statutory requirements and are well attended by parents and, in most cases, by representatives of external agencies. The achievement of the objectives set in statements is very well supported by the provision made.

Sixth form

Assessment

79. Sixth form procedures for the assessment of students' attainment and progress are, as a whole, not thorough and systematic enough. The assessment of students' progress and achievement is heavily dependent on procedures in subjects, which while good in many instances, do not provide a sound enough basis for an overview of the progress being made by individual students and for target setting for improvement. Attempts to meet this need are not rigorous enough. Students' progress files are kept and records of progress are summarised and used in one-to-one mentoring sessions with tutors, but this process is not sufficiently systematic. Meetings with tutors are too infrequent, and not rigorous enough in closely tracking progress and taking effective action to ensure improvement where this is necessary.
80. Furthermore, whole-school procedures for the use of performance data to set appropriately challenging targets for examinations, and for measuring the value added to students' attainment against benchmarks, are underdeveloped. Examination results are analysed and compared with

students' attainment at GCSE, but much of this is not pro-active enough. Not enough emphasis is placed on the joint responsibility of teachers and students for monitoring and target-setting as an integral part of tracking students' progress prior to examinations.

81. Shortcomings in assessment procedures result in students not being sufficiently well informed about how well they are doing. It also weakens the reporting of progress to parents on standards.

Advice, support and guidance

82. Students are well supported personally by their teachers. Those interviewed praised their teachers highly for going out of their way to help them. Advice and guidance, including careers guidance, is well structured to provide continuing support as an intrinsic part of sixth form provision. Attendance and punctuality are monitored closely and there is effective liaison with parents if problems arise. There is regular, accurate and clear reporting to parents on attitudes, attendance and punctuality. Students get good and timely advice on higher education applications. The information provided before students start courses is clear and they are appropriately advised on the suitability of Year 13 courses in the light of their achievement in Year 12.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

83. West Park Community School is very popular with parents. The high number of parents, who select the school as their first choice, shows this. Only 18 per cent of parents answered the pre-inspection questionnaire, and only 21 parents attended the pre-inspection meeting at the school. A significant minority of parents, who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire felt that they were not well informed about how their children were getting on, and that the school does not work closely with parents, and behaviour in the school is not good. The inspection findings do not concur with these views. The school makes considerable efforts to liaise with parents, and keeps them informed about their children's progress. The school holds regular parents' evenings each year for every year group, with an additional evening arranged for parents of Year 7 pupils shortly after their arrival at school, to see if they have settled in, and an additional evening for parents of Year 11 pupils to discuss progress on their GCSE courses.
84. The student planner is well used as a means of providing information for parents on pupils' progress, but few parents use the planners as a basis for informing the school of their views. Parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting had very positive views of the school.
85. The school prospectus is very well produced, being parent-friendly and containing all information that parents need to know about the opportunities the school offers. The school's news magazine is regularly produced, and gives parents useful information about school life and activities of present and past pupils.
86. Annual reports are comprehensive, and contain detailed information of pupils' progress on a subject-by-subject basis. They contain targets, but target-setting in many subjects are too vague, and do not give precise indication of what pupils must do to improve their grades.
87. The school well supports the parents of pupils with special education needs. Annual reviews of pupils' progress are well attended by parents, and they contribute to individual education and target-setting.
88. Transfer arrangements for pupils into Year 7 from primary education are very effective. An induction evening is held prior to pupils' selection, and parents receive good quality information about the school's ethos and working practices. Year 7 staff visit primary schools in the term before pupils' admission to give pupils and parents' information about the many opportunities the school is able to provide.
89. The school encourages parents to come in to help, and a number of parents respond. They help in a variety of ways, such as providing reprographic materials for various departments, helping at school productions, and providing refreshments for school occasions. Their help is much appreciated by the school.

90. The school has an active parent/teacher association, which is pro-active in encouraging parents to join them. They hold a number of successful functions such as bi-monthly discos, Christmas fair, prize draw, and arrange with pupils the five-a-side football tournament with local primary schools. They raise a significant sum of money (approximately £2,000 each year) for the use of the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

91. Overall the quality of leadership and management is very good. The quality of leadership and management provided by the headteacher is outstanding. He is an enthusiastic headteacher who provides clear leadership for raising standards. He is determined to ensure that pupils and students at the school receive the best possible education that can be provided. He is well supported by his leadership team. A particular strength of the leadership team is their presence around the school. They are prominent around the school at lunch and break times and it is evident that pupils find senior staff very approachable. They provide calm and confident leadership, evident as they coped with a three-hour power cut on the first day of the inspection and a major fire on the former lower-school site during the inspection week. The high quality of leadership in the school has created high staff morale. There is a confidence and expertise among those with posts of responsibility to ensure that standards will improve even further in the coming years.
92. The quality of middle management is good. There is very good leadership for science, design and technology, geography, history, modern foreign languages and physical education. For all other subjects leadership and management is good except for religious education where it is satisfactory. The school has had difficulties in recruiting a head of department for religious education. The leadership and management from those with pastoral responsibilities are good.
93. The governing body is well informed about the work of the school and uses this information to contribute very effectively to the leadership of the school. Governors are very knowledgeable about the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are aware that the current provision for sixth form students has weaknesses and are rightly convinced that working in collaboration with another 11 to 16 school and a local college of further education can make a better provision. The school fulfils most of its statutory duties: but not all pupils in Years 7 to 9 are receiving their full National Curriculum entitlement to study music, nor are pupils receiving a daily act of collective worship.
94. The school development plan is very good and has an appropriate number of priorities for raising standards. The issues identified by the school reflect the priorities identified in the previous report. These include improving teaching and raising standards; improving the management of subjects; improving ICT; improving the quality of pupils' learning and improving the curriculum. For each of these priorities there are clearly identified strategies, timescales and criteria for success. Good quality department plans reflect the priorities from whole-school planning. There is a shared commitment to improvement and determination to succeed.
95. The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching are satisfactory. There are very good policies to promote more effective teaching and there has been an emphasis on monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in Years 7 to 11. There has been no systematic monitoring of sixth form teaching. The school has benefited from recent appointments that have made a significant contribution to raising the standards of teaching from those seen at the time of the last inspection. Other areas of the work of the school are very well evaluated and appropriate action taken to remedy weaknesses.
96. The special educational needs department is well led and managed. The special needs co-ordinator (SENCO) is very well qualified and experienced. The management of the department is well structured to ensure on-going monitoring of pupils' progress and the quality of provision, and to ensure consistency of practice. The experienced assistant SENCO and the special educational needs teacher make a significant contribution to the work of the department. Educational care officers (ECOs) are well supported and deployed. There are good systems to support their professional development that are resulting in all being on track to become appropriately qualified. Systems and procedures for the management of provision for special educational needs, and the meeting of statutory requirements, are thorough and rigorous.

97. Planning is good and takes full account of the requirements of the new Code of Practice for special educational needs. Liaison with subject departments is mainly informal, well-structured and systematic enough to be fully effective in ensuring consistency of practice in planning to meet pupils' learning needs. Funding and resources are well used to support learning. Resources are carefully chosen but there is not enough access to ICT to help pupils to boost their confidence as learners and to make good progress. The teaching accommodation for learning support is attractive and well ordered but too small to cater for the wide range of teaching and learning activities needed to support pupils' learning.
98. There is a satisfactory match between teachers' qualifications and their deployment to meet the needs of the school curriculum. Although non-specialists undertake a small proportion of teaching, they do so in subjects closely related to their own teaching subjects. The staff in the humanities department benefit from a generous amount of ancillary support. There is sufficient technical support for ICT and science, but more is needed for design and technology, especially in the area of food technology. This shortage puts an unnecessary strain on the specialist teachers. At present levels of staffing in modern foreign languages is affected due to the long term absence, following an accident of the head of department for German. The office and support staff are an experienced team with a strong sense of loyalty to the school. They bring good levels of expertise to their work and show high levels of professional responsibility. The librarians provide good support and advice in maintaining an up-to-date selection of reading and reference materials. The support provided for both newly qualified teachers and students undertaking initial teacher training is good and valued by participants, as are the induction arrangements for all new members of staff. Professional development days and other staff training are well planned and have a focus that relates to the priorities identified in the school development plan. However, not all teachers are confident in using ICT to support teaching and learning. Departments base their training needs on their own departmental priorities and individual members of staff have the chance to identify and benefit from appropriate training linked to performance management.
99. The school has good vision and plans strategically for the school's accommodation. There is good expertise and understanding of the needs of the school's accommodation and health and safety issues that follow.
100. Originally there were two school sites, the lower and upper sites, both of which were badly maintained over a number of years. The school was located to one site in September 2001. The school has been determined in securing funding for the improvement to the school's accommodation. The school has used both external funding and the school's money to improve both the interior and exterior of both sites. The major projects include three new art rooms, a new reception area, re-cladding and replacing of one side of the building, two science laboratories and refurbishment of the technology block. The toilets have been refurbished to a very high standard. This and the full-time member of staff who maintains the toilets mean that there is no vandalism, and the pupils have respect for them. The above works have caused much disruption to school life but this has been managed well by the school's senior staff. There was a fire in the lower site during the inspection week. The school had tried to get the demolition of the site brought forward owing to its being subject to vandalism. The school continued to function as normal the day after the fire.
101. The school has effective short-term and long-term plans for further renovation and development of the site, which including carpeting more areas, installing a second disabled lift, improvements to the sports hall and improvements to the outside of the technology block.
102. The provision of learning resources is satisfactory overall. The library is very well used by pupils, both before and after school, and at break and lunchtimes. The atmosphere is busy and welcoming, and pupils do their homework, and read both fiction and non-fiction to help with their lessons and for pleasure. The library is in the process of refurbishment, and this, at present, produces rather cramped conditions. Numbers of books are good, though not all are in good condition. A small number of computers are available, though more are planned to make the new library a more varied learning resource. The library staff also supply a good service to subject departments, and can provide books for projects, supplementing their stocks from the schools library service. Many books are on loan to subject departments, and are well used, for example in art and design, humanities, and in design and technology.

103. The provision of technical resources is good, and the reprographics department provides teachers with a good copying service. Visual aids, such as colour photocopies, are produced to support teaching in the classroom, for example in art and design and in humanities.
104. Provision of resources for music is good; there is a good range of keyboards and percussion instruments. There is also a good range of instruments from other cultures. For most other subjects, resources are satisfactory, though there are still some shortages of textbooks in physical education. In addition, not all textbooks are up to date in modern foreign languages. For some subjects, including mathematics, science, and design and technology, there are not enough computers available in the classrooms, and this makes access more difficult for pupils. For ICT, the provision of learning resources is unsatisfactory. There are not enough computers, and some of those in use are out of date. The school recognises this, and plans are in hand to expand provision in this area in the very near future.
105. The expenditure per pupil is in line with the national average. Finances are managed effectively. The most recent auditor's report in July 2000 was satisfactory and the governing body accepted and implemented the recommendations. Opportunities are taken to ensure that the principles of 'best value' are followed when making decisions on the purchases of goods and services. This particularly applied to the proposals to support the setting up of a joint post-16 centre in collaboration with a local college and neighbouring schools. The principles of best value were also in evidence in the planning and provision for school meals when the school moved to a single site. Financial planning is very good and the school has been successful in obtaining additional funds for the benefit of pupils by the skilful use of match funding. Specific grants, including those for special educational needs, Standards Fund, EAZ resources and New Opportunities Funding are spent effectively on the purposes for which they were intended and in line with the priorities identified in the school's development plan.
106. The school makes effective use of new technology to aid administration and management. The introduction of 'swipe' cards by pupils to pay for their school meals has led to increased efficiency and helped to reduce the time pupils have to queue for their meals.
107. In relation to the level of funding the school receives and the quality of education pupils receive the school is providing good value for money. At the time of the last inspection the leadership and management of the school were strengths and this remains the case. All of the issues identified for improving the leadership and management of the school have been effectively undertaken. The management of modern foreign languages and ICT, identified as weaknesses at the time of the last inspection, are now strengths.

Sixth form

Leadership and management

108. The headteacher provides a clear direction, and a strong commitment to the growth, development and improvement of the quality of provision, post-16. The senior management team and governors are well aware of the current strengths and weaknesses in the sixth form. Very detailed proposals, drawn up in consultation with two local 11 to 16 schools and a nearby tertiary college, have been submitted to the Learning Skills Council for a Post-16 Education Centre to serve the locality. It is envisaged that this would offer a new approach to post-16 provision, and make a significant contribution to addressing problems of underachievement. The governors are fully in agreement with this proposal, and have endorsed a well-developed plan to seek re-designation of the school as 11 to 16.
109. Currently, however, the arrangements for the leadership and management of the sixth form are unsatisfactory, especially in ensuring appropriately high standards of achievement and attainment. The head of sixth form works hard in the day-to-day management and administration of the sixth form. She meets regularly, both formally and informally, with the co-ordinator for AVCE courses to discuss operational issues and to plan development. However, there is no clear structure of responsibilities for the management of the sixth form, and both have a heavy teaching load. While they assume responsibility for the oversight of students' well being, they have no responsibility for the formal monitoring and evaluation of provision. Development planning reflects

main school priorities but it is not founded on systematic review and evaluation and is restricted to some extent by the longer term planning for post-16 provision.

110. Line management arrangements are not effective in supporting and monitoring the quality of provision, or in steering development planning in the shorter term. The monitoring and support of teaching are not well established, nor are the procedures for monitoring standards and target setting. This is resulting in a lack of consistency and coherence in practice, especially in teaching, and in changes being made, for example, for the induction of students and private study arrangements, in reaction to immediate pressures rather than in the light of well considered planning.

Resources

111. While financial management and planning are careful, the unit costs of this small sixth form are high. The resources allocated to the sixth form are subsidised to a small extent by the main school. Comparison of income and expenditure with the low standards achieved by students and the small size of some teaching groups indicate unsatisfactory value for money.
112. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is satisfactory, and learning resources are also satisfactory overall. Accommodation is good. The sixth form block provides a pleasant and adult learning environment.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

113. In order to raise standards the governors, headteachers and teaching staff should:
- (1) Raise standards in Year 11 examinations, especially for higher attaining pupils, by:
 - implementing changes to the curriculum to allow higher attaining pupils to be entered for more subjects;
 - ensuring that all departments identify extension activities to fully stretch higher attaining pupils;
 - increasing the opportunities for pupils to take more responsibility for their learning and so reduce their over-reliance on teachers.
(paragraphs 2, 34, 35)
 - (2) Continue to improve the level of resources for ICT to ensure that:
 - all teachers feel confident to use ICT to support teaching and learning in their subjects;
 - pupils have increased access to computers to support their learning.
(paragraphs 35, 98)
 - (3) Increase the amount of time for music to ensure that all pupils receive their full National Curriculum entitlement.
(paragraph 50)

Sixth form

In order to raise standards in the sixth form, the headteacher, governors and staff should:

- Identify and tackle specific instances of underachievement;
- Introduce strategies to ensure that the teaching offers appropriate challenge and levels of expectation;
- Further improve the procedures for the systematic tracking of students' progress against well defined bench marks, and for setting targets for improvement in standards;
- Increase the size of teaching groups to reduce the high units costs.

- Strengthen leadership and management in raising standards by ensuring that procedures for the monitoring, evaluation and development of sixth form provision are systematic, rigorous and strategic in nature.
(paragraphs 17, 46, 79, 111, 109)

In addition to the key issues identified above the governors may wish to include the following less important issues within the action plan:

- Marking; (paragraph 37)
- Spiritual development; (paragraph 60)
- Health and safety audit; (paragraph 69)
- Use of assessment data to set targets for pupils. (paragraph 77)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 – 11	138
	Sixth form	32
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		53

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
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Years 7 – 11

Number	1	13	61	60	2	1	0
Percentage	0.7	9.4	44.2	43.4	1.5	0.7	0

Sixth form

Number	0	2	16	11	3	0	0
Percentage	0	6	50	35	9	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1270	93
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	209	6

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	22	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	249	0

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	43
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	67

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.2
National comparative data	8.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.7
National comparative data	1.1

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2001	126	109	235

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	84	84	83
	Girls	92	69	67
	Total	176	153	150
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	75 (58)	65 (58)	64 (57)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (69)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	33 (9)	43 (33)	24 (25)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	34 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	74	79	77
	Girls	75	70	69
	Total	149	149	146
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	63 (55)	63 (62)	62 (63)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	23 (22)	41 (36)	29 (24)
	National	31 (31)	42 (39)	33 (29)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	125	113	238

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	36	111	122
	Girls	48	106	108
	Total	84	217	230
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	35 (35)	91 (91)	97 (97)
	National	48 (47)	91 (91)	97 (97)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	31.2 (31.1)
	National	39.0 (38.4)

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

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

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	8	3	11

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	6.6 (4.8)	13.5 (13)	8.1 (8.1)	N/a	N/a	N/a
National	16.9	17.9	17.4 (18.2)			

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number in their final year of studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	7	85.7
	National		N/a

Ethnic background of pupils

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

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	26	3
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)	69
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	18
Total aggregate hours worked per week	518

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	80
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	26
Key Stage 4	22

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000
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	£
Total income	3460855
Total expenditure	3501041
Expenditure per pupil	2629
Balance brought forward from previous year	166165
Balance carried forward to next year	125979

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	23
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	24

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	4.9
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	1336
Number of questionnaires returned	209

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	40	55	3	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	43	52	3	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	17	63	12	0	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	58	15	4	0
The teaching is good.	22	66	8	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	21	46	25	6	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	48	44	6	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	57	40	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	20	48	23	7	2
The school is well led and managed.	41	52	3	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	33	61	4	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	52	8	3	6

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

ENGLISH

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

Strengths

- Improvements in attainment at the end of Year 9 and in GCSE examinations since the previous inspection.
- The head of department leads and manages the team well, with a clear sense of purpose.
- The quality of new curriculum plans.
- Teaching is good. Teachers use their subject-knowledge well and plan activities that pupils enjoy and so they work hard.

Areas for improvement

- Opportunities for pupils to use ICT consistently.
- Appropriate provision for more able pupils.
- The use of assessment to inform curricular planning.
- Opportunities for pupils in Years 10 and 11 to take greater responsibility for their own learning.

114. Pupils enter the school in Year 7 with levels of attainment broadly in line with national averages. Standards in English at the end of Year 9 are above national averages at Level 5 and higher, and in line with national figures at Level 6 and higher. This is a significant improvement on results at both levels since 2000, when percentages were below national averages. Boys outperformed girls, as they had done also in 2000: this shows good achievement. These results are well above average when compared with similar schools, and represent good achievement. The trend over time in results has been inconsistent. Pupils' attainment of grades A*-C in English at GCSE in 2001 is well below national averages, while the proportion of A*-C in English literature is well above (though with a very small number of pupils entered). Results show an improvement in English, and a small decline in English literature from 2000, when comparisons with national figures were the same. In both subjects, girls outperformed boys by a margin much smaller than that found nationally, which indicates that boys achieved well. Pupils entered for English in 2001 did significantly worse than in the average of all their other GCSE subjects, while those entered for English literature did significantly better. The proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-G in both subjects is in line with national averages, and this indicates satisfactory attainment. In 2000 the percentage of A*-C grades achieved by pupils in drama matched national averages.
115. Standards of work seen in Years 7 to 9 are about average. Pupils speak well, though often only briefly, and express themselves accurately. A few lack confidence orally. They generally listen well to their teacher and to one another. No drama work was observed in English lessons. Pupils read aloud accurately in all years. The answers they give to teachers' questions indicate the accuracy of their reading for information, and the high-attaining pupils have good recall. The quality of written work varies widely. The most common weaknesses are poor planning and organisation of material, and pupils' failure to proof-read what they have written. The most able pupils can vary their written style to suit audience and task successfully, and use redrafting effectively. There are isolated examples of excellent narrative writing, which is confidently and fluently expressed, well constructed and sustained, and interesting to read. Weaknesses in spelling, punctuation and grammar are most frequent in low-attaining pupils' work, as is the tendency to use an informal written style in all circumstances. Pupils with special educational needs make at least satisfactory progress in lessons, and this improves when they receive in-class support. There is little difference in attainment between girls and boys, but girls' work generally shows more flair and enthusiasm and is better presented than that of boys. Irrespective of their ability levels, pupils make good progress and sometimes find the work challenging.
116. Pupils' attainment by the time they are sixteen is about average, but below average in relation to national standards at GCSE. Their confidence and oral skills have improved, so that by Year 11 many pupils can participate well in group discussion, contributing relevantly and responding appropriately to others' questions and ideas. Work in drama fosters pupils' oral skills, particularly those of improvised speech: in Year 11, some vary the tone and pace effectively in

prepared pieces, while in Year 10 pupils' speech is frequently rapid and uninflected. In English lessons pupils speak clearly and directly but sometimes colloquially when more formal diction is required. Pupils listen well, regardless of their ability. Reading aloud is clear and accurate, and the majority of pupils show good understanding and knowledge of their texts. Higher-ability pupils in Year 11 have difficulty with inference and deduction and some do not read texts carefully enough. Most pupils' writing is broadly in line with expectations, but work of the highest quality is scarce. The best writing possesses good control of style and tone, displays mature responses to literature, and includes well-structured and clear factual writing as well as lively imagination. A significant proportion is written in a monotonous style, lacks coherence and organisation into paragraphs, and control of tenses and sentence-structure is sometimes weak. There is no difference between boys' and girls' standards of attainment. Pupils' occasional use of word-processing improves the appearance but not the accuracy of their writing. There are insufficient opportunities to use ICT to support their learning. Those with special educational needs make progress in line with their peers, as teachers are well aware of subject-specific targets on their IEPs.

117. The quality of teaching and learning across the school is good. It frequently has very good features and occasionally some unsatisfactory ones. Teachers plan their lessons well and effectively, which provides for clarity, order and development in pupils' learning. They use their good subject-knowledge skilfully to facilitate learning. This was exemplified in a good Year 11 lesson on a Roald Dahl story, where the teacher developed pupils' understanding by opening up alternative avenues of interpretation for them to explore. Pupils, particularly in Years 7 to 9, often play an active part in lessons, as was seen in a very good Year 8 lesson on developing sensory descriptive skills: here brisk pacing, combined with a linked series of short-term activities, sustained pupils' interest and involvement as well as sharpening their perceptions and developing their vocabulary. Teachers have worked hard to establish good relationships with pupils, and in the overwhelming majority of lessons seen, good control and management ensured a positive atmosphere for learning. The air of mutual respect and trust that pervades most lessons encourages pupils to make a good effort. In almost all lessons, pupils' own interest in and commitment to their work helps to improve their standards of attainment. They usually concentrate fully and are well motivated. Teachers use a range of resources well to assist learning, such as overhead projectors and individual whiteboards, and frequently deploy a variety of learning strategies effectively within the space of a single lesson. Marking of work is accurate, consistent and up to date. Teachers' comments helpfully combine diagnosis with encouragement, although targets identified for improving the next phase of work are sometimes too generalized. Mark books are maintained clearly. Responses to pupils' work in lessons provide a powerful incentive to their efforts, and constructive evaluations in drama lessons ensure that pupils know what they need to do in order to improve. Weaknesses in teaching include errors in timing, too much teacher-talk, and in one Year 9 lesson poor pupil management and a lack of challenge.
118. The head of department had been in post for just three weeks at the time of the inspection. The team is led and managed efficiently and effectively. Staff are beginning to work more collaboratively than earlier and this is raising morale and demonstrating their shared commitment to continuing the improvement in pupils' standards of attainment. A very good development plan has been produced, which contains achievable targets and clear strategies for achieving them. Extensive revision of the curriculum in Years 7 to 9 to incorporate the new Framework is in progress, and GCSE schemes of work and curriculum are also under review. Short-, long- and medium-term planning has been revised to incorporate the necessary emphasis on clear objectives and specific skills to be learnt. Interactive teaching methods have been introduced, which make more demands on pupils, and increase their motivation effectively. Systems for tracking pupils' progress are being put in place, to help in setting targets. Departmental documentation is also under review, and examples seen provide staff with information and a clear sense of shared purpose.
119. The department has made very good improvement since the previous inspection. Standards of attainment at the end of Year 9 and in the percentage of grades A*-C obtained in GCSE English have both risen. The number of pupils entered for GCSE literature has increased. Curricular planning is being totally revised to reflect the requirements of the English Framework for Years 7 to 9. Schemes of work for Years 7 to 11 are being reworked to improve the consistency of pupils' learning. Interactive teaching strategies are being implemented effectively, so that pupils are

becoming more involved in their own learning. The new four-part lesson structure places greater emphasis than before on pupils' speaking and listening skills. The current creation of databases to help monitor pupils' performance also increases pupils' awareness of their rate of progress. The department has achieved much, but has still much to do.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- There is much good teaching resulting in pupils achieving well and making good progress.
- Substantial improvements have been secured since the last inspection and standards are rising.
- The department is well led and managed by a strong team of teachers.
- Pupils are highly motivated and work hard to achieve good results.

Areas for improvement

- Homework set does not provide a consistent challenge for all pupils.
- Marking is inconsistent and does not provide pupils with a clear picture of how well they are doing and what is needed to improve.
- There is insufficient support for the development and application of numeracy in other subjects.

120. Considerable improvements have taken place in mathematics since the last inspection, when there were many shortcomings affecting the progress and achievement of pupils, resulting in low standards. National Curriculum test results for Year 9 pupils have improved steadily and were close to the national average in 2001. However, GCSE results have remained static and there has been little change in the proportion of pupils achieving an A*-C grade in the last three years. GCSE results in 2001 were below the national average and represented slower than average progress for these pupils from their earlier test results taken in Year 9. Attainment observed during the inspection was close to the national average in Years 7 to 9, but highest in Year 7. In contrast to recent GCSE results, attainment has improved in Years 10 and 11 and is now close to the national average. The proportion of high attaining pupils is increasing throughout the school, which bodes well for future GCSE results.
121. Several factors have contributed significantly to improvements in standards and the progress made by pupils throughout the school. First, the mathematical attainment of pupils on entry has risen steadily in the last three years and has reached the point where it is close to the national average for the current Year 7. Second, teaching and learning have improved as a result of changes in staffing and the close monitoring of their work, and are now good. Third, the organisation of the curriculum has improved considerably. New schemes of work are supported by a thorough system for evaluating the attainment of pupils, monitoring their progress and setting individual targets. However, the targets set could be more challenging for higher-attaining pupils and more realistic for the least able. Fourth, the relocation of the department has also contributed to improvements by raising teachers' and pupils' morale and in developing strong staff teamwork. Finally, teachers and pupils are committed to raising standards, as seen from the large number of pupils who regularly return at the end of the day for extra tuition from staff who give willingly of their time.
122. A further factor in the improving standards observed in Years 7 and 8 is that the department has adopted the principles and guidance of the National Numeracy Strategy. The confidence and accuracy with which pupils calculate are secure and improving, but the mental recall of number facts is sharper at the lower end of the school. This is largely because younger pupils have also benefited from the impact of the National Numeracy Strategy in their primary schools. These pupils are quick with their use of whole numbers, fractions and decimals, often having more than one method for calculating and checking their answers, which they are able to explain clearly to others. By contrast, the recall of basic number facts is often quite slow amongst older pupils, who use a calculator too readily for simple calculations. This aspect of their mathematical development receives insufficient attention.
123. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. Lesson planning reflects the recommended structure of the numeracy strategy and is supported by the new scheme of work, so that skills can be developed systematically. Mental arithmetic

sessions at the start of lessons are usually focused on the development of a particular skill, often linked to the main lesson objectives. For example, Year 7 pupils practised multiplying and dividing whole numbers and decimals by 10, 100 and 1000 before applying this to converting between metric units of length. There are occasions, however, when these sessions lose their impact because the objectives are imprecise and too many skills are developed. Pupils do not have the opportunity to gain confidence and accuracy because errors and misconceptions are not corrected. The pupils' number skills are sufficient for the needs of other subjects but are not developed, extended and applied consistently in other subjects, in part because there is no whole-school policy in this area. Tackling this has been identified as a priority in the departmental development plan.

124. Lessons throughout the school are planned carefully and resourced well. Most lessons have clear objectives for the pupils' learning, but these are not always shared or reviewed with the pupils, who therefore are not always clear about the purpose of their work. Teachers have a good level of subject expertise, which they use well when giving clear explanations of new ideas, when reviewing previous learning and when probing the pupils' understanding through skilled questioning. These techniques retain the pupils' interest and concentration well and ensure that classes are calm and well ordered. Teachers often choose interesting activities that support the development of the pupils' ability to investigate, solve complex problems and analyse and interpret data. As a result, pupils become more systematic in their approach to questions, often working very effectively in pairs and small groups. A very good example of this was seen in a Year 10 top set. An introductory activity undertaken in groups to consolidate the pupils' understanding of the properties of several different formulae was followed by a challenging task to find the formula for the terms of a sequence by the method of differences. This lesson challenged the thinking of the pupils and consolidated their knowledge of formulae very effectively. There was a genuine sense of purpose to the lesson and the time passed very quickly. As in this lesson, the more able pupils in each year group are extended, although no identification is made of gifted and talented mathematicians and there is no provision to meet their specific needs. Pupils with special educational needs are usually taught in small lower ability groups, where they benefit from the close attention that they receive. They make good progress as a result. Opportunities for the use of ICT to support learning in mathematics have been built into the new schemes of work, but as they are not compulsory the pupils' experiences vary depending upon the interest and expertise of their teacher. This matter has also been identified as an area for improvement in the departmental development plan.
125. A strong staff team contributes effectively to a well-led and managed department. Staff share a commitment to tackle remaining shortcomings, and share their expertise with colleagues in the search to improve their teaching and the quality of the mathematics curriculum. Many of the remaining shortcomings have already been identified by the department and plans prepared for their elimination. As a consequence, the subject is now well placed to improve further and to raise standards achieved by pupils throughout the school.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- Pupils make good progress up to the end of Year 9, in comparison with their attainment on entry to the school.
- Standards of attainment for all pupils are improving.
- Relationships between pupils and teachers are good; pupils behave well and respond well to the teaching.
- The leadership and management of the department are very good.
- Planning for science teaching is good.
- Pupils undertake a wide range of practical work to reinforce their learning.

Areas for improvement

- The pace of some lessons is too slow and does not always make the most of the time available.
- Marking of pupils' work is inconsistent and does not always help pupils to improve.
- Monitoring of the quality of teaching, learning and is not yet systematic enough.

- The use of ICT in lessons is hindered by a lack of suitable equipment.
- Some of the science accommodation is still unsatisfactory, although improvements have been made.

126. The standards attained by Year 9 pupils in the National Curriculum tests in 2001 were average in comparison with all schools nationally and with similar schools. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher levels was lower than the national average but was around the average for similar schools. The progress made by pupils in comparison with their attainment on entry to the school is good. There were no significant differences between the results achieved by boys and girls. The average points score gained by Year 9 pupils was slightly higher than in previous years and the trend of improvement was similar to the national trend.
127. The overall standards attained by Year 11 pupils in the 2001 GCSE examinations were below average. The proportion of pupils gaining A* to C grades was well below the national average, while the proportion gaining A* to G grades was around the average. Boys' performance was significantly weaker than that of girls when compared to national figures. The progress that all pupils made was below average when compared to their results at the end of Year 9.
128. The standards of work of current students are average across the school. The work seen in Years 7, 8 and 9, in lessons and in pupils' notebooks, was average overall although some of the written work was above average. The pupils present their work well and they have good written records of the practical work they have carried out in physics, chemistry and biology. They are able to carry out experimental work effectively and to use tables, graphs and charts to represent their results. For example, practical work on mechanics and electricity is recorded accurately and graphs are used to represent their results. There is less evidence of pupils' ability to predict outcomes or to interpret and evaluate results in the light of their scientific knowledge. These weaknesses were also apparent in talking to pupils in lessons and this is an area for improvement. The work undertaken in preparation for the national tests in Year 9 shows good understanding of basic principles in physics, chemistry and biology.
129. The work seen in Years 10 and 11 is also average overall and shows that pupils have covered a wide range of practical work in chemistry, physics and biology. They have accurate records of this work and are able to use graphs and tables to represent their results. The work on bonding, electrolysis, light and mechanics shows sound understanding. As in other year groups, the pupils' ability to predict, evaluate and interpret is less well developed than their observation and recording skills. This is an area for improvement.
130. The progress that pupils are making is regularly assessed and a system of target setting based on this information has recently been introduced. The projected results based on these data suggest that standards are improving. For example, the current forecast for Year 11 suggests that they should achieve results that are around the national average level. This represents satisfactory progress based on their previous national test results in Year 9. The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent and does not always help them to make progress. There is a need for closer monitoring of this. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in all year groups and those who are taking the 'Science Plus' course in Years 10 and 11 are making good progress. Overall, the progress pupils are making is good up to the end of Year 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Pupils behave well in science lessons and they respond well to teaching and have positive attitudes to their work. They carry out practical work effectively and safely, co-operating well with each other in group work. This helps them to learn effectively.
131. The quality of teaching and learning in science is satisfactory overall and was good in one third of the lessons observed. Only one unsatisfactory lesson was seen. Teachers plan their lessons well and make clear what pupils need to learn. For example, in a Year 10 biology lesson effective planning and good demonstration of techniques enabled pupils to successfully produce microscope slides of leaf stomata and to examine them under the microscope, recording their findings in detail. The pupils were very interested in this work and made good progress in their learning. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and maintain good order in their lessons, ensuring that pupils can learn effectively. In some lessons, although these were satisfactory overall, the pace was too slow for pupils to make the most of the time available and the progress was therefore less than it could be. This is an area for improvement.

132. Support for pupils with special educational needs is good and the support assistant works well with teachers to ensure that these pupils make progress. The work in some mixed ability classes meets the needs of most pupils but does not always fully stretch the most able. Ways of tackling this need to be found.
133. The science department is very well led and managed by the new head of department. Clear priorities for improvement have been established, with a renewed focus on the effectiveness of teaching and learning. New schemes of work are being introduced to give better support to teachers. There are good relationships and a sense of commitment to improvement in the department. Good progress has been made in tackling the issues raised in the last inspection. In-service training on teaching strategies has been provided for staff but the arrangements for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning are not yet fully in place and this is an area for improvement. The science technicians, whose assistance is valued by the staff, effectively support the science teaching.
134. The resources for teaching science are generally adequate but there is a shortage of suitable computers to use in science lessons. This is an area for improvement.
135. Although the science accommodation has been improved since the last inspection, there are still some rooms that are poorly furnished, have defective services or are unsuitable in design for teaching large classes. This is also an area that needs to be improved.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good, and pupils achieve well as a result.
- Standards in Year 11 have improved significantly.
- The subject makes a very good contribution to cultural development, especially by celebrating the art of other cultures.

Areas for improvement

- The use of ICT.
- Experimentation with materials in sketchbooks.

136. Standards in Year 9 are average. Teacher assessments for 2001 confirm this, and similar standards are seen in the school.
137. Standards in Year 11 are average. In the GCSE examinations in 2001, results were well below average. There were not enough girls taking the examination to compare their results with those of the boys. Results over the previous three years have remained at A-level that is well below average. In the work in the school, however, standards in Year 11 show considerable improvement, and are average. Standards have improved because the quality of teaching and learning has improved significantly since the previous inspection. There has also been considerable improvement in the accommodation for the subject.
138. In Year 12, standards are average. In the AS-level examination in 2001, one student was entered, and gained a grade A. The work in the school in Year 12 is average.
139. In Year 13, standards are currently well above average at A-level, though there is only one student taking the course. In the A-level examination in 2001, no students were entered. On the AVCE course, standards are below average. In the AVCE examination in 2001, one student was entered, and gained a pass. Numbers taking art and design in the sixth form are very low, and standards vary from year to year as a result.
140. Achievement in Years 7,8 and 9 is good. When pupils come to the school in Year 7, their work is below average, and in Year 9 their work is average. They make good gains in their skills in drawing and painting, and they learn to make large paintings on paper, based on the study of

confectionery wrappers, which are bright and bold in their use of colour and shape. Above average pupils are confident when drawing, and show sensitivity in their use of line and tone. All pupils learn to use the art of other cultures to inform their own work, and some sensitive studies in watercolour wash and ink show a growing understanding of Japanese art. However, below average pupils lack confidence when using paint, which is applied crudely. In addition, there is very little use of ICT to support and extend pupils' own work.

141. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is good, when the work of those pupils who choose to take art and design in Year 11 is compared to their work in Year 10. They make good gains in their skills in composition, and produce still life studies in oil pastel from everyday objects, such as vegetables and kitchen utensils. These studies are detailed, and represent the textures and colours accurately. They also make studies based on seashells, using chalk, paint, paper and wool, which are richly textured and coloured. Their work in sketchbooks, however, is not varied enough, and there is not enough experimentation with materials.
142. Achievement in Year 12 is good, when the work of current students is compared to their grades in the GCSE examination. They make good gains in their skills in painting and drawing, and produce detailed small-scale acrylic paintings based on local landscape. They also learn to undertake research in greater depth, though their drawing in sketchbooks lacks crispness and contrast.
143. In Year 13 achievement is good, and good gains in drawing and painting skills are made. As a result, some detailed portrait work is produced which shows a confidence and fluency in using pencil and paint. Research skills continue to develop, and students' work shows good application.
144. Teaching and learning are good in all years. Strengths of the teaching seen include the good subject knowledge shown by teachers, which means that they give good advice to pupils and students on an individual basis. In addition, in lessons in Years 10 and 11, there is a good range of materials provided, and good levels of choice for pupils. This was seen in a lesson where pupils were working on individual pieces, informed by the art of other cultures. They could choose to draw in pencil, oil pastel or coloured pencil, paint in watercolour or acrylics, or work in mixed media. The teacher also gave good advice and encouraged pupils to look at a wide range of artwork. This included the paintings of Picasso, African masks, and the sculpture of the Inuit people. As a result, they showed good levels of personal interest in their work, good levels of application, and good learning was the result. In some lessons, however, pupils begin to chatter and lose concentration on their work for short periods. This means that the pace of the lesson slows, and learning is no better than satisfactory as a result.
145. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. Standards have shown significant improvement in Year 11, and the quality of teaching and learning is now good. As a result, achievement in all years is now good. The accommodation has also improved, and displays in the department help to show pupils examples of high standards. Attitudes to the subject are good in Years 7 to 9, and very good in Years 12 and 13. Leadership and management are good, and have been focused on improving standards and improving the quality of teaching and learning. This has been successful, although improvements have not yet had time to be reflected in examination results. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' cultural development, through a varied programme of activities. This includes visits to galleries, a trip to Venice, and visits by professional artists. Teachers also value all artistic activity. This is particularly true of the art of other cultures, which is extensively celebrated and used to inform pupils' own work.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Lesson planning and preparation are good throughout the department.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning.
- Pupils with special needs make good progress as a result of good support from teachers.
- Assessment is consistent and gives pupils enough information about their progress.
- The specialist accommodation.

Areas for improvement

- Continue to work on improving areas where attainment is not high in external examinations.
- Develop numeracy.
- Improve ICT facilities and specifically computer aided design (CAD) and computer aided manufacture (CAM).
- More development of cultural education.
- Improve consistency in marking of pupils' work at Years 7 to 9.
- Improve presentation of pupils' work where necessary to include date, headings and labeling of diagrams.

146. Results in GCSE examinations in 2001, when compared with all schools nationally, were well below the national average for A*-C grades. In all the courses the proportion of pupils achieving A* to G was close to the national average. However, the 2001 results are an improvement on the results of 2000. There was a decline in 2000 from 1999. In design and technology overall, girls' and boys' performance in 2001 regarding A* to C grades was similar. Graphics achieves the best results overall. Results compare well with other subjects that the pupils take in the school. Pupils achieve as nationally expected by the end of Year 9.
147. Results in the A-level examination in 2001 were average by national standards. However, only a few students were entered. Comparison of standards of attainment at the end of Year 11 with the results obtained in A-level examination shows satisfactory achievement. The department has set challenging targets for 2002.
148. Since the last inspection, the timetable has been significantly changed and this has resulted in the better co-ordination of designing and making activities.
149. Standards at the end of Year 9 are at the national average. This represents good achievement, as many pupils enter the school with levels of attainment in design and technology that are low. Pupils have satisfactory making skills in a range of materials by the end of Year 9. Some pupils of all abilities have good making skills. For example, in a Year 8 resistant materials lesson, pupils were making mechanisms that focused on levers and linkages. They used measurement accurately to get the correct lengths of wood and shaped the material well. They used a range of hand and machine tools with confidence, good control and awareness of safe working practices. Graphical skills are satisfactory for the majority of pupils and enable them to express their ideas. The higher attaining pupils have good design skills and a more secure grasp of subject knowledge and specialist vocabulary. Lower attaining pupils and those with special needs have some difficulty with design skills but their making skills are better developed. Middle and lower attaining pupils are not confident at evaluating their work. Work is not always clearly labelled; for example, subject headings, date and diagram descriptions are missing.
150. Standards of work of pupils in the current Years 10 and 11, while below the national average, are nearer to expectations for their age than GCSE results indicate for the last few years. However, the achievement of pupils is unsatisfactory overall. Subject knowledge and the technical vocabulary that underpins it are below national levels for all but the higher attaining pupils. Practical skills in all materials are the strongest element of the subject for the majority of pupils and are of sound quality. Pupils handle tools, machines and materials with confidence. By the age of 16, the best pupils can design and produce graphical work of a good standard to present their own individual ideas, such as that seen in the children's toy project at Year 11 for the resistant material with business studies course. Coursework is developed with increasing depth and rigour. Pupils undertake research, analyse, drawing up specifications and evaluation in depth. They make good use of ICT present questionnaires and pie and bar charts to illustrate results. The least able pupils can follow the design criteria although coursework can be short. With teacher help, special needs pupils make good progress in lessons and produce similar work to peers.
151. In the sixth form, students have satisfactory levels of skill in designing, making and graphical communication.
152. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good, as opposed to satisfactory at the last inspection. Teachers have good subject knowledge. Planning and preparation of resources for

pupils' lessons are very good. For example, in a Year 9 graphics lesson, pupils designed and made a pop-up game or card of their own creation. The good quality appropriate resources and individual pupil support ensured high interest in the task set, with good learning and progress in the lesson. Teachers give high levels of individual support to pupils. Individual target setting is well established and effective in Years 10 and 11 and the sixth form. Assessment and feedback, particularly at Years 10 and 11, encourage pupils to improve their work. Marking of pupils' work in Years 7 to 9 is not consistent throughout the department. Progress made was reviewed at the end of some lessons. Homework is well used to increase pupils' understanding of topics covered in lessons. Learning is usually good in lessons, although a few pupils in Years 10 and 11 do not use time wisely and their learning is limited. Issues of class management arise at Years 7 to 9 when there is a large number of special needs pupils with behavioural difficulties in a class without additional support. However, pupils with special needs learn well throughout their time in the department because teachers know them well and plan accordingly.

153. Literacy skills are taught satisfactorily, although attention to numeracy development is limited. ICT is well used by pupils in their work at Years 10 - 11, although lack of equipment affects control work at present. Pupils' work is very well displayed throughout the department and provides good stimulus on the topics being undertaken.
154. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning in design and technology. They listen attentively to teacher explanations and demonstrations. Most pupils concentrate well and they are interested in the tasks presented to them. Routines are well established. Relationships are good and mutually supportive. In a Year 8 lesson on designing and making a bag, using textiles, pupils helped each other to understand the use of the sewing machine and discussed the evaluation of their work.
155. Improvement since the last inspection is good. There is an upward trend in standards and teaching is better than at the last inspection. There is a very strong team spirit and a commitment by all, including the technicians, to raising standards further. The experienced and dedicated head of department provides a clear vision for the direction of the subject's work. The department functions well on a daily basis. The use of ICT is being further developed. The work of the department is kept under close review and is very well placed to make further improvements.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Very good planning in detailed schemes of work.
- Very good relationships and support for individuals.
- Very good leadership and management.
- Improving standards on the GCSE course.

Areas for improvement

- The match of work to meet the range of pupils' needs.
- Further development of use of ICT.

156. When pupils join the school in Year 7 their attainment in geography is below average. Pupils' progress across Years 7-9 is uneven. It is more consistent in Year 9, when most lessons are taught by subject specialists, so that by Year 9 pupils' attainment matches the national average. Results at GCSE are below average but have improved over the last two years and in 2001 all pupils achieved a grade, with girls attaining more highly in the highest grades (A*-C). Results are better than in many other subjects. Attainment in lessons and the work seen confirms that standards are improving and are now broadly average.
157. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in Years 7-9. Enquiry skills are effectively promoted through fieldwork. In a well-planned unit of work, pupils in Year 7 plot land-use in the local area and recognise patterns in the distribution of housing, shops and industry in the area. Higher attaining

pupils offer some sound explanations for their location. Pupils make good use of ICT to consolidate map skills. Pupils' knowledge of places is satisfactory and they respond well to investigations about life in Kenya and Japan. Higher attaining pupils in Year 9 write good accounts to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of nuclear power in Japan. Standards of work from average and lower attaining pupils are more variable. Their understanding of ideas is less secure; their use of geographical terms remains weak. There is occasional underachievement when too much time is spent on low level tasks, which contribute little to pupils' learning.

158. Pupils on the GCSE course achieve satisfactorily in relation to their attainment in Year 9. Pupils in Year 11 made good use of glossaries to prepare accounts of the advantages of membership of the European Union. Pupils in a Year 10 lesson found information from a range of resources to investigate the redevelopment of London's docklands. Higher attaining pupils could evaluate the success and impact of the redevelopment scheme. Lower attaining pupils have difficulty in consolidating, retaining and applying a body of knowledge to tasks and this adversely affects their success in examinations.
159. Pupils with special educational needs generally achieve satisfactorily. The structured tasks on worksheets provide appropriate support to help them to record their work with a degree of accuracy. However, in some lessons the work needs more modifications to help them to keep up with the work of the class. Additional support for pupils, where it is available, is very effective. The learning support assistant works within the humanities faculty so that liaison with teachers is regular. Her knowledge of the work and pupils' needs contributes effectively to their achievement.
160. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers have a good command of the subject and their enthusiasm and commitment contribute to pupils' motivation. A feature of most lessons is the very good relationships between teachers and pupils. Discipline is firm but with a light touch so that pupils feel able to ask for help and a good atmosphere for learning is established. Pupils' good behaviour means that lesson time is well used for learning. Long-term planning in detailed schemes of work is very good and ensures a variety of teaching and learning styles to interest and motivate pupils. Planning to meet the range of pupils' needs is developing but remains an area for improvement, both in schemes of work and in lesson planning. The best lessons are well planned to promote a balance of knowledge, understanding and skills. A very good lesson with Year 9 pupils made good use of artefacts to introduce a study of Kenya. Pupils were able to identify pertinent questions to ask about the objects and to suggest sources of information for their investigations. The degree of challenge and the emphasis on learning held pupils' interest and concentration throughout the lesson. More often lessons are less dynamic, rely heavily on worksheets, are closely directed by the teacher and pupils' learning is less secure. Homework is well used to develop pupils' independent learning. Work is regularly and conscientiously marked, with some perceptive and helpful written comments to show pupils how to improve: others encourage but are less helpful. Textbooks are well supplemented by departmentally produced worksheets, which provide effective support for non-specialist teachers in Years 7-9 and are well used for homework, but are relied on too much in some lessons. An appropriate emphasis on improving pupils' literacy skills is beginning to contribute to improving standards. Key words are displayed in rooms. Glossaries of geographical terms and helpful prompts to encourage pupils to write more detailed and structured accounts, contribute well to pupils' learning.
161. Pupils respond well to their work in geography. Most work hard, concentrate well and present their work neatly. They take pride in their work that is displayed around the rooms. Their positive attitudes to the subject are reflected in the popularity of the subject at GCSE. Behaviour is generally good, although occasionally pupils are restless and concentration lapses when they are not sufficiently involved in class activities. The pace of work was slowed by unco-operative behaviour in a Year 9 lesson.
162. Leadership and management of the department are very good. Areas of weakness in the previous report have been effectively tackled. Satisfactory standards have been maintained in Years 7-9 and GCSE results and standards of work in lessons in Years 10 and 11 have improved. The use of ICT is beginning to make a contribution to pupils' learning in the subject, although further development is needed. Procedures for assessing pupils' progress are very good. Monitoring of teaching and the curriculum has contributed well to raising standards in geography.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- Results in GCSE examinations are among the best in the school.
- Teachers take great pains in preparing lessons and building relationships with their pupils.
- The quality of management is very good.
- The recording and use of assessment data contribute to high standards.

Areas for improvement

- Teachers need to make pupils think, talk and write more.
- There should be a greater use of text-books.
- The department should find a way to make history more popular as an option.

163. Attainment as seen in lessons and pupils' work is below average by the end of Year 9 in relation to national standards. Pupils join the school with standards below national expectation. They make satisfactory progress through their first three years but by the end of Year 9 they are still slightly below the national expectation. Pupils make good progress in Years 10 and 11. GCSE results and standards observed in lessons are in line with national averages. These results have been consistently among the best in the school. There is no marked difference between the performance of boys and girls.
164. By the end of Year 9 higher attaining pupils, working at levels above the national average, write well-argued essays about, for instance, the Industrial Revolution, showing the links between establishment of factories, changes in transport and the growth in trade. They can write imaginatively, but with historical accuracy, about the employment of women and children in mills and mines. There is good use of a database to research conditions in the Derby workhouse. Pupils understand the horrors of trench fighting in the First World War, and talk well about the use of propaganda to counter low morale. Pupils make well-produced booklets describing what they have observed at the Blists Hill Museum, comparing shops of the eighteenth century with those of today. Such pupils make few contributions in class, and find it hard to remember what they had studied in previous topics. They make numerous notes on worksheets, but get too little practice in writing longer answers.
165. Standards observed in Years 10 and 11 are in line with the department's examination results, and show that pupils are making good progress. Among their best work is a study of Spondon, making excellent use of maps, census returns and their own photographs to research how and why and where the community has grown. Pupils are gaining confidence in the use of sources, but the weaker pupils in particular rely on a re-telling of the subject matter, rather than discussing why the text came to be written and whether it can be trusted. There is very little reference to sources in essays. Pupils argue well about the influence of religion, war and government policy on the development of medicine, showing how this development was particularly strong in the Arab civilisations of the Middle Ages. However, many pupils are unable to give even the most approximate dates for the events of the past.
166. Teaching is satisfactory throughout the main school, with many strengths. Teachers are highly conscientious, with a good knowledge of the subject. They are diligent in preparing materials, often for different levels of ability in a class. They are guided by excellent schemes of work, which enable all teachers, whether specialist historians or not, to cover the syllabus fully. They mark thoroughly and organise visits out of school. They develop good relations with pupils, offering much praise and advice. As a result, behaviour is consistently good.
167. Despite these strengths the quality of learning is only satisfactory. Pupils could learn more, and achieve even better results, if they had more opportunity to talk about history in lessons. Teachers ask questions, and pupils answer, but only briefly. In the lessons observed there was very little discussion, either in the whole class or in small groups. Pupils ask few questions, being heavily guided by the teacher and, in many lessons, by an array of worksheets. They are seldom given text-books that would enable them to check facts and compare divergent sources.

Lack of opportunity to express their own ideas in speaking leads to a lack of fluency in writing, as pupils have less confidence in what they know. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from support in some lessons and make progress according to their prior attainment.

168. The high standards described in the last report have been very well maintained. There is no doubt that the very high quality of management contributes to the pupils' high standards of achievement in Year 11. Pupils know what is expected of them, both in output and in behaviour. Their work is marked thoroughly. Under-achievers are picked up at once, and given help. All records of previous and current attainment are in place and used to set appropriate targets. The way forward requires a greater attention to how pupils learn.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

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

Strengths

- Teaching in many lessons where ICT is a focus.
- Collaborative use of computer rooms by teachers.
- Development planning for ICT.
- Technical support for ICT.

Areas for improvement

- More opportunities should be provided for pupils to reach the higher levels of attainment at age 14.
- More consistency is needed across departments in the use of ICT to enhance teaching and learning.
- The quantity and range of ICT resources.
- Greater use of ICT to measure, record, control and automate events.

169. By the end of Year 9 standards in ICT have been below national expectations and below the school average. There have been no examination courses in ICT. Recently there have been significant improvements in ICT resources as well as in the planning for, management of and co-ordination of ICT provision. A member of the senior management team now has responsibility for improving standards in this area. This is beginning to have a positive impact on raising standards. In ICT lessons, or where ICT was a significant element of the lesson, standards were, overall, in line with expectations by Year 9. There could be greater challenge in some schemes of work to ensure that more pupils have opportunities to achieve the higher national curriculum levels in ICT. All pupils in Year 7 have two ICT modules, which last for about half of the year.
170. Standards of work seen in Years 10 and 11 were in line with expectations. Two groups of pupils in Year 10 are now able to follow a GCSE course in ICT, and in addition, there are several other GCSE courses in Years 10 and 11 where ICT is an integral element of the syllabus. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls in any year. Standards and provision have improved since the last inspection.
171. Standards in the AVCE ICT course, which is in its first year, are in line with expectations. The scheme of work provides appropriate challenge for all students who make at least satisfactory and often good progress. Students are well supported in their studies and have adequate access to ICT equipment. In other vocational courses ICT is well used and students make good progress, often from a low level, in the use of software for communicating and handling information. Word processing and desktop publishing skills are in line with expectations and the ability to create on-screen presentations is developing effectively. Spreadsheets are often used effectively and at an appropriate level and the use of databases for storing and analysing information is being developed. Many students on these courses have covered a range of ICT applications in business courses at GCSE. Where this is not the case much more support is needed to bring them up to an appropriate level. Good use is made of the Internet for research in vocational courses and it is also used effectively in a number of other sixth form courses. There is scope for more ICT use to be included in schemes of work in most other sixth form subjects but the current level of resources does not always make this feasible. Although opportunities to develop ICT skills in lessons are limited, some support is available from a specialist ICT teacher when necessary. There is a good deal of autonomous use among students, although there are times when access is difficult during the day. A further significant improvement in the number of computers is imminent and will help to alleviate this problem.
172. The developing, planned programme of ICT use within the subjects of the curriculum is now providing a much better range of experiences for pupils in all years and is helping to fulfil statutory requirements throughout the school. Very effective use is made of computers by the history, business and modern foreign languages departments. Most other departments, particularly English, mathematics and science, need to expand their use of ICT as resources continue to improve. Computers are well used for word processing and desktop publishing in many subjects. Skills in the use of databases and spreadsheets are developed to an appropriate level in Year 7, where pupils are able to construct appropriate questionnaires, sort data using several criteria, draw a range of graphs and draw appropriate conclusions from the data. Pupils have opportunities to develop these skills further in some subjects in Years 8 and 9. Many good examples of animated presentations were seen, particularly in Years 10 and 11. Slides contained text and pictures and were usually effectively enhanced with animation effects, although the full impact of this work could not be demonstrated because of inadequate projection facilities. Those who take one of the ICT related courses progress further in the use of a variety of software. Most pupils in Years 10 and 11 have the opportunity to progress to using more sophisticated database software and to using more complex spreadsheet functions in a number of subjects, including languages. In a Year 10 science lesson, a group of lower attaining pupils were well motivated by software that

was enabling them to make good progress in improving their understanding of plant life. The school is considering introducing a short course GCSE examination when resources allow.

173. Pupils are well motivated in lessons where ICT is used. They are keen to learn and usually apply themselves diligently. Pupils are able to co-operate effectively when required and many examples of pupils supporting one another were seen in all years.
174. Overall, teaching has improved since the last inspection. Teaching and learning in lessons where ICT was the main focus were good in all years, enabling pupils to make good progress. This is particularly significant in Year 7, where some pupils start from a low level of ICT capability, and in Years 10 and 11, where pupils had to use out-dated computers in earlier years. They have had to adapt to different hardware and software. Lessons are well planned and tasks are appropriate for a range of abilities. Support for individual pupils was good in all lessons seen. However, some lessons, particularly in Year 10, would have benefited from more class teaching in order to deal with common problems and to review learning and progress at the end. Marking of ICT work is regular and some printouts contained diagnostic comments, although the most effective feedback was from teachers working with pupils during lessons. The school has procedures for assessing ICT capability throughout Years 7 to 11, although additional staff training will be needed if all teachers are to play a full part in assessing ICT capability in addition to their own subjects. In most of the lessons seen teachers' ICT skills and knowledge were good or at least appropriate for the work being undertaken. Where subject teachers need support, this can often be arranged with an ICT teacher who has some support time built into his timetable. Although overall planning for ICT provision is now becoming much more effective, there is still variation between subject departments that need to be overcome. The school's "New Opportunities Fund" programme of professional development in the use of ICT in the curriculum is just about to begin. This should help to strengthen the school's cross-curricular provision.
175. The number and quality of the computers in the school have improved significantly since the last inspection but the number is still below the average for a school of this size. The school network is reliable and well maintained, technical support is very good. There were occasions during the inspection when there was considerable pressure upon the existing resources. However, pupils from several subjects were often able to successfully share a computer room. Ten new computers are being installed in the new learning resource centre and an additional computer suite is planned, bringing the school's number of machines nearer to the national average. The curriculum in design and technology, science and music is restricted because very old computers have not been replaced. ICT resources to measure, record, respond to, control and automate events need to be updated as soon as possible.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- Leadership and management.
- Staff teamwork and expertise.
- The range of languages offered in Years 7 to 9.
- The use of ICT.

Areas for improvement

- To increase pupils' confidence in oral work.
- To identify ways of improving examination results.
- To increase the use of audio tapes in lessons.

176. In teacher-assessed tests at the end of Year 9, the proportion of pupils reaching Level 5 and above in French and German in 2001 was well above national averages. At GCSE level, results in French and German have fluctuated. In 2000, in both languages the proportion of pupils gaining A* - C grades was close to national averages, showing a big improvement on the previous year. In 2001, although the proportion of pupils gaining A* - C grades was lower than in 2000 and lower than the national average, pupils performed as well in French as in other subjects. In German

there was a big dip in results, results were low in comparison with other subjects. In both languages, there was a high proportion of grade Ds and a departmental priority is now to identify and target borderline students as early as possible. Girls perform better than boys in both languages, though the gap is not as wide as that found nationally. The fact that all pupils study a language to examination level does affect the proportion of high grades. A contributory factor that is now affecting standards in German is the problem in recruiting German specialists.

177. In the sixth form, the students who entered the AS French examination maintained their progress from GCSE. In German, the results were not as high as one would expect from their performance at GCSE and the two students who took A-level in 2001 were unsuccessful.
178. German or French are studied in Years 7 to 9 as the main language. Spanish has been introduced as a second language in the current Year 8 for the higher attaining groups, and is very popular. By the end of Year 9, in the light of attainment on entry, pupils have made good progress and enjoy language lessons. Although pronunciation and intonation are good, pupils are lacking in confidence in speaking skills and are reluctant to give more than a minimal answer. The register is routinely answered with a word or phrase from the current topic and lessons usually begin with a question and answer warm up. This represents good practice, but there are few opportunities for role-play or group work, which would help release any inhibitions. A power cut provided the opportune moment to use the time for active learning. A Year 7 German class became fully involved in a lesson comprising games and oral activities. Reading skills are well developed. Pupils readily understand written texts. Independent reading is encouraged through a selection of new, interesting readers, with a written review as follow up. Written work varies according to ability. The lower ability pupils tend to be less accurate and work is often incomplete. The higher attaining pupils are able to write more extensively and imaginatively, using different tenses. Some written work in French was humorous. Pupils wrote about having a sore throat, not just as a result of a cold, but through talking too much or shouting. Grammar is taught in context, so that in German, which has some difficult usage, pupils are able to use the article correctly, as seen in a Year 8 lesson on places in town. Innovative use of resources made verb endings in Spanish seem easy. ICT is being successfully used and many very good examples of work were on display. Pupils are immersed in the foreign language in lessons, but find listening tasks difficult. The use of audio tapes should be a regular feature of all lessons.
179. Progress and achievement in Years 10 and 11 are satisfactory. Pupils are still lacking confidence in speaking skills. A Year 11 German class was using ICT to write up oral presentations. All the features for a good grade were there (for example, detail, complex structures and a variety of tenses), but pupils felt insecure about their ability. They are unable to link skills. In a Year 10 French lesson, pupils were able to give a fair amount of detail about the area they live in, using interesting photos and cue cards. In reading pupils are able to read long passages with understanding and are being taught essential examination techniques to pick out key information required in answers. There were few opportunities for listening. A certificate of achievement class protested the work was hard as they listened to a tape about buying stamps. The teacher persevered until all grasped the technique. Writing is a strength and coursework has been chosen as an option to raise grades. Some excellent pieces of coursework were seen and examples of drafting and redrafting. Pupils are secure in their use of grammar and use a wide range of vocabulary.
180. In the sixth form, students are positive about their studies. They are able to undertake independent research for the chosen topics and use the university library and the Internet. In French the students showed enquiring minds about tenses and with practice, following explicit teaching, soon grasped the rules. In German, students enjoyed a very difficult task on the topic of drugs and showed their ability to skim material, which is important at this level of study.
181. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. There were no unsatisfactory lessons. In Years 7 to 9 over half the lessons seen were good or better. In Years 10 and 11 all lessons were satisfactory. Only two lessons were seen in the sixth form. One was good and the other satisfactory, with good features. Good lessons were a result of good planning, presentation, challenge and brisk pace. In a Year 7 French lesson about nationalities, the teacher constantly used reinforcement, recapitulation and consolidation. A 'catchy' song enthused everyone and was used several times to introduce countries outside Europe. A very good worksheet provided work that was a challenge and catered for all. The teachers are role models in the use of the

foreign language and are enthusiastic about their work. They know the pupils well and give freely of their time to give extra help. Setting alleviates some of the problems of providing work to suit all abilities, but teachers are aware of individual needs and teacher-produced worksheets are effective in catering for all.

182. Leadership and management are very good. The newly appointed head of languages is leading by example. Languages are to be used and celebrated. His enthusiasm is infectious. Very high goals have been set. Everyone works as a committed team. Schemes of work have been updated and courses chosen to suit the needs of all pupils. Lessons are monitored, with formal feedback, and marking is also checked regularly. High targets have been set for the summer examinations and means of reaching these and surpassing them are in place. National Curriculum levels and criteria are on display. Good use is made of assessment and data. Pupils value certificates and incentives. To enter the language area is like walking into different lands. The environment and ethos are overwhelming.
183. Since the last inspection, very good progress has been made. Leadership is now very good. All teaching is now satisfactory. The use of ICT is a strength. New appointments have raised standards and results in French.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- Standards achieved by pupils in their GCSE results.
- Good teaching, overall, with examples of some very good teaching.
- Good relationships between pupils and staff.

Areas for improvement

- Raising the standards achieved by pupils by the end of Year 9.
- Increased and regular curriculum time to ensure that all requirements of the National Curriculum are met.
- Improved access to appropriate and sufficient ICT equipment to support music teaching.

184. The standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 11 are good. Only a small number of pupils choose to study music for GCSE but many achieve high grades. The teacher assessments of pupils' work at the end of Year 9 indicate standards well above the national expectations with girls achieving considerably better than boys. The work seen in lessons, in pupils' notebooks and recordings however indicates that these results are over generous: attainment for both boys and girls at the end of Year 9 is below national expectations and is unsatisfactory. Owing to the irregularity and shortage of curriculum time Year 9 pupils are underachieving and not reaching the expected standards. Despite slight changes to timetabling arrangements since the last inspection, this situation is still unsatisfactory and pupils are unable to study all the requirements of the National Curriculum. Pupils do not consolidate and practise musical skills regularly and consequently they are lower than expected. It is therefore to be commended that pupils achieve well in their examinations and make good progress during Years 10 and 11.
185. Some Year 7 pupils have limited prior knowledge and experience of music and take time to settle sensibly to their work. Few pupils are able to identify the names of percussion instruments or play short rhythmic phrases. Others, including those who learn instruments, are able to sustain an ostinato pattern within an ensemble and recognise different musical elements. Pupils are keen and enthusiastic to contribute to lessons but do not use musical language sufficiently in their answers. The limited teaching time means that emphasis has been placed on certain areas, including rhythm work, and playing melodies on keyboards. This means that some skills, including using musical language and pupils' evaluating their own and others' work are underdeveloped by the end of Year 9. The progress made by all pupils, including those with special educational needs, during Years 7-9 is unsatisfactory.

186. Teaching and learning are good overall with some examples of very good teaching. The very best teaching is characterised by good subject knowledge and the teacher's using personal experiences to inspire and motivate pupils. In a lesson for Year 7 pupils their knowledge and understanding of music from Africa was greatly enhanced by the opportunity to hear and play authentic instruments. This contributed to their understanding and appreciation of music from other cultures. Activities are well structured to enhance and develop the syllabus requirements. Good use is made of recording pupils' work in progress that helps them to review, revise and improve their compositions. There are clear worksheets that build into a good bank of revision material for pupils to use. The less successful teaching occurs when a lesson moves at a single tempo and there is a lack of planned and structured challenge for both the more and the less able pupils. Lessons then become rather pedestrian in character and pupils become passive. When the same task is set for all pupils this means that the higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently stretched and those with special educational needs lack a clear structure to help them achieve successfully. Pupils in Year 11 study music as an extra subject receiving one lesson during lunch-time. However, their hard work and commitment to their studies is evident as they rehearse pieces and discuss their compositions maturely. The lack of prior attainment, however, is reflected in their inability to describe their compositions using appropriate musical language.
187. Pupils enjoy their lessons and take pride in their compositions and performances. One pupil discussed his plan for a composition combining Golden Jubilee, celebration and football influences. Since the previous inspection more pupils are receiving instrumental lessons. These are well organised and the teaching methods link closely to work done in the classroom, especially in the area of rhythmic development. There is a small number of extra-curricular activities. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 enjoy the opportunity to use the facilities of the department at lunchtimes in order to practise or improve work done during lessons.
188. The department is well managed and since the previous inspection there have been changes in staffing, accommodation and resources. The accommodation is now very good, with a variety of attractive music rooms for ensemble and group work. The department is well resourced but lacks sufficient or suitable ICT equipment. This means that pupils are unable to use sequencer programs in order to compose. In order to obtain more accurate assessments of pupils' work a more coherent system for monitoring and assessing pupil progress is needed. At present there is an over reliance on pupils' self-assessment. However, the unsatisfactory standards in attainment by pupils in Years 7-9 has not changed. This situation has remained since the previous two inspections and a careful review by senior management is needed.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- The new core course in Years 10 and 11.
- The range and availability of extra-curricular activities.
- The leadership and management of the department.
- The behaviour and attitudes of the pupils leading to high levels of participation.
- Aspects of teaching.

Areas for improvement

- Development of the assessment process.
- A greater use of data to analyse and target areas for improvement.
- In the GCSE course a greater use of marking that tells the pupils exactly what to do to improve.

189. Standards, as seen in lessons and pupils' work, at the end of Year 9 are average when compared with national standards. A number of pupils exceed that level. This is reflected in the teacher assessments at the end of Year 9. Pupils take part in a wide range of physical activities. Pupils are able to control the ball or shuttlecock in a range of activities that allow small and full games to be played effectively and spatial awareness is at the expected level. In gymnastics pupils show good balance and an awareness of body position, although the quality of movement of the body extremities is weaker. There is a significant improvement in the body awareness of pupils from Years 7 to 9, showing good progress. Boys and girls are able to work out simple gymnastic

sequences and girls can work out simple dance routines. The swimming pool was out of action during the inspection but teachers' records show that swimming is a strength within the school. When asked to evaluate the work of their peers, pupils are able to do so and at times they do this spontaneously. Pupils use technical terminology accurately in lessons. Good progress is made in lessons and from Years 7 to 9 this represents good achievement. There is no significant difference in the standards of girls and boys, although they have different strengths, and all groups of pupils make similar progress.

190. Standards in the core course at the end of Year 11 are also average compared to the standards expected at this level, although there are no national data to compare standards statistically. Standards in the GCSE course were above the national average in 2000 and 2001. Pupils do significantly better in physical education than in their other subjects. By the end of Year 11 pupils participate in a wider range of activities, many of which they can use as recreational activities later. They also have an element of choice in the activities studied. The new introduction of sports education, which is specifically designed to allow pupils to take on the role of coach and official and leads on to the Junior Sports Leader Award, is an excellent course. Year 10 pupils are already showing a very good awareness of the different roles that they can assume and the responsibilities involved. The pupils on the receiving end of the coaching were appreciative and responsive to the work. Pupils following the GCSE course show a much higher level of practical skill than those in the core course.
191. Behaviour in physical education is very good and attitudes to the subject are good. Pupils arrive ready to participate and bring appropriate kit for lessons. Levels of participation in lessons are high, as they are in extra-curricular activities. In all lessons pupils work well in pairs and in groups and show spontaneous appreciation of others' efforts. The very good relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves encourage a positive environment in which learning can take place and in which the pupils feel confident in trying out new ideas.
192. The quality of teaching and learning are good. Some lessons seen were very good and one was excellent. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. There is no significant difference in the teaching in Years 7 to 9 and that in Years 10 and 11. Strengths within teaching are the relationships with pupils and the clear lesson objectives that, with well-structured development, build on the skills of pupils. Different activities are given to pupils with more ability, enabling them to develop at a faster rate, and additional help is given to pupils with weaker skills. All groups of pupils are encouraged to participate fully in the work provided, giving the opportunity to experience success while at the same time pushing them to their skill limits. Weaker aspects of teaching are a failure to make pupils manage their own warm-up and a lack of reference to prior learning, seen especially in the first lessons units that do not consider areas where transfer of skills could be encouraged. In the GCSE course the pupils are carefully monitored with regular testing, when pupils are expected to achieve their target grades. However, some written work is just ticked rather than giving a specific comment as to how the work could be improved.
193. The curriculum provided exceeds the National Curriculum requirements. The curriculum is enhanced by the use of outside coaches in lessons and by an excellent provision of extra-curricular activities. Pupils of all abilities take part in these and the recently introduced Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme is extremely popular and successful. Pupils have the opportunity to participate in match situations as members of form and school teams and older pupils lead activities in the extra-curricular activities. School teams have achieved considerable success locally and some have achieved success at national level, in particular the current Year 11 basketball team, who are national champions. A number of individuals have achieved success at local, county and national level. The facilities for physical education have been significantly improved since the last inspection but there are still occasions when poor facilities are preventing the pupils from reaching their full potential. All groups of pupils are catered for and make similar progress. ICT is developing, with new equipment having been purchased.
194. In line with National Curriculum requirements the department has moved over to using National Curriculum levels for assessment. The procedures give a very thorough assessment at the end of each unit, taking into account performance, planning and evaluation of work, and pupils' progress is tracked from year to year. However, further development of this process is required so that pupils fully understand their levels and what they need to do in order to raise their work to the next level. Assessment records would benefit from more analysis so that specific areas of weaknesses can be identified and thus targeted for improvement.

195. Leadership and management of the department are very good. All members of the department share the vision for improvement, giving good role models as team members. The schemes of work are under revision, leading to improvements in the curriculum. As indicated, a number of other areas have improved since the last inspection and in 2001 the school obtained the Sportsmark award. Overall, this represents good improvement and the department has a very good base from which to improve further.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Good support for non-specialist teachers.
- Good management of behaviour and learning.
- Effective assessment procedures.

Areas for improvement

- Schemes of work for Years 7 to 9, which are not sufficiently referenced to syllabus.
- Narrow range of teaching methods.
- Too few opportunities for teaching or developing the use of ICT.

196. Religious education in Years 7 to 9 is part of integrated humanities and, because of the school's rotational timetabling, in the inspection week lessons were taught only to Year 9. Through staff illness, supply teachers taught half of all the lessons seen. Despite advertisements, there is currently no head of religious education, and last academic year there was an acting head of department.
197. In Years 7-9 standards in work seen are average in relation to the expectations of the Derbyshire Agreed Syllabus. Pupils in Year 7 know about birth ceremonies in several religions; they can describe the Sikh naming ceremony from the point of view of a parent. They understand the significance of the Jewish Seder meal. By the end of Year 9 pupils can explain various religious signs and symbols; they understand why Easter is important to Christians. Work on moral issues develops from Year 7 to 9. Overall, achievement is good, taking into account the standards of the pupils on entry to the school.
198. Standards in Years 10-11 are average and achievement is satisfactory. Work seen for the GCSE short course module is good: pupils know how the Bible is used in public worship; they can debate some issues surrounding clerical celibacy and ordination of women. No Year 11 lessons were seen but work on euthanasia was at the expected level. Throughout Years 7-11 pupils with special needs perform as well as other pupils. There are no significant differences in attainment of boys and girls or of other groups such as ethnic minorities. However, gifted and talented pupils are not identified.
199. Religious education in the sixth form is part of the tutor period and focuses on some moral and ethical issues. Since it was not timetabled during inspection, and written work was not available, it is not possible to judge students' attainment.
200. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and in some cases good or very good. Schemes of work and subject guidance support non-specialist teachers well. Strategies such as word walls help pupils with special needs, but there is not enough material to ensure that the most able are challenged sufficiently. Behaviour and learning are well managed. Pupils know how well they are doing, and class records of assessment are a good tool for departmental evaluation and curricular planning. Inconsistent marking of classwork leaves some pupils confused on approaches to some moral issues, and on aspects of religious practice, particularly among Christians. Videos and imaginative worksheets are well used in teaching. Literacy is developed through a variety of creative writing tasks. Few opportunities exist for developing numeracy and ICT. Other approaches to teaching, such as use of art, music or religious artefacts, are not sufficiently incorporated into schemes of work. The library has a good range of books on the Bible, various Christian denominations, and a number of world faiths.
201. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Files are well kept and behaviour in lessons is good. Pupils concentrate well when watching videos and can express their views on religious and moral issues, both in group work and class discussion. They respect the beliefs of others.
202. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Within the humanities course, religious education is well managed. Arrangements from Year 10 upwards are currently informal, reflecting the need

for a head of department. The current scheme of work for Years 7-9 is not cross-referenced to ensure full coverage of the core content and attainment targets of the Agreed Syllabus.

203. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Attainment in Years 10-11 has improved and the time allocation for Years 7-10 is near to that envisaged by the Agreed Syllabus. These arrangements are planned to include Year 11 by September 2002. Planning for the sixth form is inadequate. Teaching does not always provide sufficient challenge for able pupils. ICT is not sufficiently integrated into teaching.

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

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

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

GCE A-level and AVCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Biology A-level	3	33	88	0	34	0.7	5.3
Chemistry A-level	2	50	90	0	43	2.00	5.90
Design and technology A-level	2	100	91	0	30	5.00	5.4
General studies A-level	5	80	85	0	30	2.00	4.91
Geography A-level	4	100	92	25	38	6.00	5.74
Mathematics A-level	3	0	87	0	43	0	5.80
Other social studies A-level	4	25	87	0	34	1.50	5.30
Physics A-level	3	0	88	0	40	0	5.7
Sociology A-level	4	75	86	25	35	4.50	5.3
Art and design post 16 VQ	1	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6.00	12.2
Business post 16 VQ	2	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	12.00	10.5
Leisure & tourism post 16 VQ	5	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	9.60	10.1

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

The focus was on mathematics and physics, but work in chemistry was also sampled. In chemistry, two students were entered for GCE A-level examinations in 2001 and their results were below average and below those expected considering their GCSE results. GCE AS-level results were better. In the one lesson seen teaching was good and standards matched the average. Good planning enabled students to contribute well, especially in practical work on oxidation.

Mathematics

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

Strengths

- Standards have improved considerably in the current Years 12 and 13 and are close to the national average.
- Teaching challenges the students and as a result they learn new skills rapidly, which they apply readily to the solution of problems.
- Students are highly motivated and committed to succeeding and to achieving high standards.

Areas for improvement

- A-level and AS-level examination results, which have been low in recent years.
- The progress of students, which is not rigorously monitored.

- Formal pieces of homework; they are not set and marked regularly enough.

204. It was a key issue for the school at the last inspection to tackle the low standards being achieved in mathematics. This has been successfully undertaken, but has yet to have an impact on examination results. The attainment of students currently in the sixth form is close to the national average, although A-level examination results have been very low for the last few years. Groups taking A-level have been small and a high proportion of the students have not achieved a pass grade, including all of the three students who took the examination in 2001. AS-level results were also low in 2001, with 11 of the 16 candidates not passing.
205. The current Year 13 students (the five remaining from the 2001 AS-level cohort) are capable mathematicians. Their work is of a much higher standard than indicated by recent examination results. They are on course, if their present progress is maintained, to achieve the best results seen in the school for some time. Their skills and their understanding of pure mathematics are good. Their algebraic manipulation of expressions is secure, and they can bring a wide range of skills to bear when approaching new theory and when faced by complex problems. Their achievement in both statistics and mechanics is good; the underlying principles of both subjects are fully understood and applied well. Year 12 students have not made the same rapid progress this year, but have settled in well to the rigours and demands of the course and have laid firm foundations for their future success. They have improved their algebraic techniques and have a clear understanding of the graphical properties of various functions and their transformations.
206. Several factors have contributed to the considerable improvement in the standard of the work of students observed during the inspection. Entry requirements to the course had been lower than in most other schools in recent years, resulting in very weak candidates being taken on. Much tougher and more realistic entry requirements introduced this year mean that students start from a more secure foundation. Students are achieving well and making good progress, particularly in Year 13, because teaching is good and is resulting in a good pace to learning. Students in both year groups are highly motivated and committed to the courses that they are following. They work hard and are prepared to return after school for additional tuition. A further factor that has benefited Year 12 students in particular has been the increase in teaching time from three to five lessons per week. This, coupled with newly written and well-constructed schemes of work that include planned revision and examination preparation time, has increased their rate of progress considerably. One weakness, however, is that the new scheme of work is not supported by a rigorous assessment programme. Teachers know the individual students well but their progress is not rigorously monitored or used to establish challenging individual targets.
207. The major factor contributing to the good progress of the students and their good achievement is that a significant proportion of the teaching is good or better. The team of teachers now working with sixth form students is strong. They bring a high level of subject expertise to their teaching. They are able to respond rapidly to any difficulties the students might have, and their lessons are lively and interesting. New theory is presented clearly and students are involved in the discussion of techniques that could be employed. Teachers have high expectations of the students and challenge their thinking regularly in lessons. In a Year 13 pure mathematics lesson, for example, the students were required to apply their knowledge of integration techniques and trigonometrical ratios to a variety of problems encompassing most of the types of questions that they are likely to have to undertake in their module examination. Skills are consolidated well where students undertake questions based on new theory, and their understanding is deepened when teachers question, probe and discuss problems with individuals and whole classes. In a Year 13 statistics lesson, the teacher discussed the difficulties posed by a particular question with one student before the whole class entered into the debate, solving the problem between them. One shortcoming is that most students do not organise their theory notes and worked examples so that they are easily available for reference and revision. They also do not make sufficient use of worked examples in their textbooks for reference when faced with a question causing difficulties. A further shortcoming is that homework is not of the same challenging nature as lessons, generally being a continuation of exercises started in lessons. Students generally approach these tasks conscientiously, using their free time well. However, they would benefit from undertaking regular, formal pieces of work that are assessed by their teachers, with feedback provided on how to improve and eliminate errors.

208. Mathematics in the sixth form is well led and managed, with a strong team of teachers contributing significantly to the improvements since the last inspection. The department is in a strong position to secure further improvements and to raise examination results.

Science

209. The focus was on physics but one chemistry lesson was also seen. It was not possible to observe a biology lesson, owing to an unforeseen staffing problem. In chemistry the A-level examination results have been well below average for the last three years but the AS-level results for 2001 show signs of improvement, with seven of the nine students entered gaining passes at grades A to E. The teaching was good in the practical chemistry lesson seen. The teacher's explanations and careful questioning helped students to gain a better understanding of their work on the oxidation states of vanadium. Examination results in biology have been well below average for the last three years but there are some signs of improvement in the AS-level results for 2001.

Physics

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

Strengths

- Improvements in the curriculum and teaching are resulting in better standards.
- The teachers are enthusiastic about the subject and have worked well together to establish clear priorities and plans for improvement.
- The teachers provide good support to help students to learn better. The students value this support and say that it has helped them to improve their results.
- The students' attendance is good, they work hard and a high proportion of them have continued on the course.

Areas for improvement

- Standards in A-level examinations have been very low in the past.
- The students work conscientiously in lessons but they do not always enter fully into class discussions that are designed to extend their knowledge and understanding.
- The pace of some lessons is too slow for students to get the most out of the available time.

210. The A-level results for 1999, 2000 and 2001 were well below average. Only three students were entered for the 2001 examinations but none of them gained a pass at grades A to E. This was worse than expected in relation to their GCSE grades. However, some students had relatively low grades in GCSE mathematics and this could have had an effect on their ability to cope with A-level physics. The AS-level results for 2001 were better, with five of the six students entered gaining grades A to E. Two of them gained grade A. These results were slightly better than expected, in relation to their GCSE results. For most of these students, their grade in AS-level physics was above their average grade in other subjects.
211. The standards of work of current students are average. They are achieving as would be expected in relation to the results in their GCSE examinations. Year 13 students are able to draw on their previous knowledge from GCSE work to cope satisfactorily with new work on nuclear physics and astrophysics. The lessons seen on these topics were designed to help students to learn well by reminding them of basic principles from earlier work before moving on to more demanding new work. In one lesson, for example, the properties of converging and diverging lenses were discussed and the students were asked to construct various ray diagrams before moving on to new work on calculating the focal length of lenses. They were able to handle the calculations confidently because of the structured way in which the learning had been presented. The students' written work is well organised and includes a variety of different styles of work, including practice examination questions. This gives them a good basis for effective learning. Their recall and understanding of previous work are good enough to allow them to tackle new work with confidence.
212. Year 12 students are also achieving standards in line with their results in the GCSE examinations. They have sound knowledge of earlier work on electricity and are able to use this to understand new work on resistivity. Standards in their written work are average and most of them

are able to carry out calculations effectively, although a few have difficulties with the use of 'standard form' to represent numerical values.

213. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, overall. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen and some lessons had good teaching. The teachers plan their lessons well and the objectives of the lessons are clear, so that the students can understand what they have to achieve. A lot of thought has been given to reorganising the planning and structure of the course and to improving the teaching methods used. This has helped the teachers to meet the students' needs more effectively. For example, new work on nuclear physics and astrophysics builds effectively on previous work to ensure that students have sound understanding. In some lessons this painstaking approach can lead to a lack of pace that does not allow the students to make the most of the available time. The teachers have very good relationships with their students and provide good support for learning. They have produced materials for students to help to ensure understanding and they are available outside lesson time to give advice and clarify work. The students value this support.
214. Assessment of students' work is effective and targets for attainment are reviewed after each module. The notes that students have taken are not marked but other written work is corrected and advice on how to improve is given. Concise summary notes are also provided, ensuring that students have a good basis for revision.
215. The students learn well and they are conscientious and attentive in lessons. They have good attitudes to work and respond well to the teaching. They make their own notes without prompting and have good relationships with each other and with the teachers. The opportunities for them to contribute to wider discussion of topics are limited in some lessons and they are sometimes reluctant to do this. This is an area that could be improved.
216. The leadership and management of the physics courses are good and there is a clear commitment to improving standards. The staff have worked hard to bring about changes designed to raise the standards of attainment and there are signs that standards for the current students are higher than in the past. The teachers have undertaken training, for example with the examination board, to ensure that they are effectively trained to teach the new syllabuses and this has helped them to support students well.

ART AND DESIGN

Art and design was not a focus subject for the inspection of the sixth form. Very small numbers take art and design in the sixth form, and in some years there are no entries at A-level. An examination of the work on all courses shows that students achieve well in relation to their GCSE grades. One lesson was sampled, and in this lesson the teacher's good subject knowledge meant that good individual advice was given. However, the lack of a sense of urgency meant that the pace overall was merely satisfactory rather than good, and as a result, learning was similarly satisfactory.

ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING

No subjects were focused on but work in design and technology was sampled. Two students were entered for GCE A-level examinations in 2001; one gained a Grade C and the other a Grade D. Six students were entered for GCE AS-level and achieved in line with their GCSE results. In the one lesson seen during the inspection teaching was good and students made good progress in working on case studies focusing on the needs of the disabled.

BUSINESS

No subjects were focused on. Two students were entered for Advanced Business in GNVQ in 2001. Both were awarded a merit and achieved well in comparison with their GCSE results. One lesson was sampled as part of the sampling of ICT. Here teaching was good and students made good progress in learning about the use of ICT systems in commerce.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

ICT was not inspected in depth. There were no entries for examination in 2001. Teaching was good in the two lessons sampled. Students made good progress - for example, in the development of keyboard and data entry skills - and were achieving in line with the standards expected at this stage of the course.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

No subjects were focused on. Five students were entered for Advanced GNVQ Leisure and Tourism in 2001 and all gained a merit and achieved well in comparison with their GCSE results. Travel and tourism, which has replaced this course, was sampled as part of the inspection of ICT. This showed teaching and learning to be good. Good progress was made in the planning of journeys and accommodation for a range of customers in a variety of locations.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

No subjects were focused on. There were no entries at GCE A-level in 2001. Nine students were entered at GCE AS-level. Achievement was satisfactory. One lesson in physical education was sampled. Teaching was satisfactory.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

No subjects were focused on. Art and drama were sampled. There were no A-level entries for either in 2001. Students achieved well in both in AS-level examinations. In the lessons seen during the inspection, teaching and learning in art were satisfactory. In drama it was good, with students spontaneously making suggestions for the direction of the play *The Trojan Woman*.

HUMANITIES

The focus was on geography and history. A lesson in psychology was also sampled. A-level results in psychology are very low.

Geography

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

Strengths

- The contribution of field studies to students' coursework.
- Learning benefits from the teachers' good subject knowledge.
- Examination results at A-level match the national average.

Areas for improvement

- The consistency in the levels of expectation and challenge in lessons.
- Assessment of students' work.
- Target setting for improvement.

217. The number of students opting to take geography in the sixth form has grown in the last two years. There are currently 24 students following AS and A-level courses. Standards overall are average. The A-level examination results over the last three years were broadly average, with almost all students achieving a pass grade, although numbers were small. In the AS examination in 2001 results were lower, although students achieved satisfactorily in relation to their GCSE grades. Most students complete the courses and retention rates are satisfactory.

218. The observation of students in lessons and an analysis of samples of their work confirm that standards are average. In relation to their GCSE grades, students' achievement is satisfactory. Residential field studies contribute well to students' coursework, some of which is of a high

standard. They use a good range of techniques to collect and present data. There is clear progress in the standards achieved from the first to the second year of the A-level course in the quality of both written and oral work. A-level students demonstrate a mature understanding in discussion of the factors that affect demographic change. Students on the AS course acquire sound knowledge and understanding of problems of rural areas of Kenya. They have used a variety of sources to find information, including the Internet.

219. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, but there is a lack of consistency in the degree of challenge and expectation in lessons. The best lessons have a clear structure and a range of resources to stimulate and inform. The teacher's good subject knowledge and experience is reflected in clear explanations and effective questioning which contribute to students' secure understanding of the topic. Activities are varied through the lesson and discussion is well used to deepen students' knowledge and understanding of the topic. Practice in examination techniques is well planned and used effectively to check students' learning. Learning is satisfactory. Students respond well to the supportive teaching and readily ask for help when necessary. Access to resources is good. Students make effective use of the Internet to find up-to-date information about their individual research topics. They work effectively in groups, sharing ideas and information. The main weakness in the teaching is the lack of challenge in some lessons. In a less effective lesson, tasks relied heavily on the textbook. There was insufficient input by the teacher to deepen students' understanding, so that some scappily presented diagrams with inadequate labelling were produced and students' learning was less secure. Work is regularly marked with some detailed and perceptive written comments, which are helpful in showing students how to improve standards. However, some marking does not give an accurate indication of attainment in relation to examination grades and weaknesses in students' written work are not adequately challenged or reflected in the marks given.
220. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Resources are improving and students are well supported in their learning. Students are aware of their target grades in the examinations, but targets are not yet sharply enough focused on specific learning goals. Monitoring of lessons has not had enough impact on improving the consistency of teaching and learning.

History

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

Strengths

- Results in the AS-level examinations.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and are highly committed to improving standards.
- Marking and assessment procedures.

Areas for improvement

- To devise ways in which students can become more independent in their learning.
- Increased opportunities to learn through discussion.

221. Results in the 2001 AS-level examination were in line with students' prior attainment. They were the first students to study history in the sixth form. Ten of the twelve candidates obtained certificates, four with grades A and B. These were among the best results in the school. Standards observed in lessons are in line with national averages for Year 13, but below the national average for Year 12. More girls than boys choose this option, and achieve slightly higher grades, but overall there is no marked difference in attainment.
222. Students in Year 13 showed sound knowledge of the Tudor period, using sources intelligently. They understand the conflicts that raged over religion and the exercise of power. In their handling of secondary sources they compare the attitudes of Dawson, Jones and Elton. There is a competent analysis of Loach, using his hypotheses to open up a fresh approach to the causes of rebellions in the reign of Mary. They find the study of Nazism and Stalinism more difficult, but the abler students spoke knowledgeably about Hitler's unscrupulous response to the treaty of Versailles. These students were able to discuss whether the evidence, for instance in *Mein Kampf*, shows that Hitler had a long-term plan, or whether he rather reacted to the unfolding of

events. The abler students are reading widely. Their essays are well argued and well structured. The prose style is fluent, and appropriate to this level of historical analysis.

223. Students in Year 12 have weaker GCSE results than those in Year 13, and consequently their current attainment is markedly lower. They have still to acquire the necessary vocabulary and prose style to cope easily with the demands of essay writing. Their background knowledge of the history, geography and culture of Europe is still narrow, so they find it difficult to untangle the complexities of foreign policy in the reign of Henry VII. In their modern European study they could perceive that the sources give conflicting accounts of who set fire to the Reichstag in 1933, and whether the Communists were involved, but students argue less successfully about the results. AS-level essays make very little use of sources. There is much narrative at the expense of analysis.
224. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with the quality of lessons ranging from good to unsatisfactory. Teachers have undoubted strengths. They are conscientious in the choosing and copying of appropriate sources. They can talk fluently about these sources but seldom provide additional material from their own store of historical knowledge. Exposition is clear, with occasional well directed questioning. Marking is very good. Comments are detailed, and give advice about how to do better. The atmosphere in the classroom indicates good relationships between teacher and students, but the latter are often passive, offering few comments and asking few questions.
225. The weakness in teaching is lack of opportunity for discussion. Students are not sufficiently challenged to offer their own interpretations of events. For instance, they may understand during the lesson why England's trade with Burgundy was central to prosperity in the fifteenth century, but they do not argue about this, or analyse the reasons for evicting the Flemish merchants, and the consequences of so doing. As a result they remember less of what they once understood, and, in Year 12 at least, do not write fluently. Students would learn more effectively if they were less reliant on the teacher, free to pursue their own research, with opportunities to offer their findings to the class for criticism and debate.
226. Students speak well of the way they are taught. They receive all the help they need, sometimes in additional classes that extend for two hours after the last lesson. They are given advice about what to read, with sign posting to the relevant pages, and about how to organise their note taking and revision. They are encouraged to use the Internet. There are visits to university libraries for further reading. They acknowledged that they needed to research more deeply in original texts and rely less on secondary sources.
227. Last summer's results were achieved with only three hours of timetabled lessons a week. The department has this year justifiably increased the time to five hours. Each student is regularly assessed, and such assessments are checked for adequate progress. Those who cannot cope with the course are counselled and appropriate action taken. Several have left, two in the middle and four at the end of the first year. The sixth form teachers are highly committed to ensuring success for the new courses, and communicate this determination to the students.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

The focus was on English. There were no entries for either language at GCE A-level in 2001. One student was entered for French and two for German at GCE AS-level. Achievement was satisfactory overall. Lessons in French and German were sampled. Teaching in French was good and in German it was satisfactory. The good teaching in French enabled students to make good progress in translation using complex tenses.

English

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

Strengths

- Students show good levels of commitment to their work and to one another.
- Specialist staff who have good rapport with students.

- Assessment is clear and helps students to improve their performance.

Areas for improvement

- Increase the number of students reaching higher grades at A-level.
- Greater consistency in the levels of intellectual challenge provided for students.
- Students are not consistently given enough opportunity in lessons to play an active part in their own learning, when classes are large.

228. No candidates were entered for A-level in 2001. In 2000, standards achieved at A-level were well above national averages, but only two students sat the examination. The proportion of students gaining the highest grades at AS-level in English in 2001 - six per cent - was low, but in line with their earlier GCSE results.
229. Standards of work seen in Years 12 and 13 are below average. Students do not speak with fluency and confidence about their work, save for those following the A-level drama course. Students listen well and respond to direct questions satisfactorily, but in Year 12 several remain impassive, so their gains are hard to assess. Group discussion is more fruitful and students collaborate satisfactorily. All find the reading of literary and non-literary texts difficult. Their responses to reading in both years lack confidence, though they show some understanding. Reading aloud is clear and accurate and is sometimes done with animation: as readers' confidence increases their level of understanding deepens. Year 12 students, at the start of a unit of work on the language of speech, showed a sound but limited understanding of categories of written and spoken speech. Their discussions were constrained by unfamiliarity with the material and thus tended to lack detail, and they needed much guidance from the teacher. Year 13 drama students, working on a section of *The Trojan Women*, engaged in a thoughtful exchange of views, contributing equally to discussion and at the end they marshalled arguments to support their interpretation of the text well and spontaneously suggested several refinements. Their range of ideas was restricted by the size of the group and their tendency to conform rather than to be divergent. Students' writing is mostly below average in both years. Year 12 students in particular start from a low level of knowledge and technical competence. Much of their work is marred by their inability to develop an appropriate style for an academic essay. Sensible ideas are sometimes masked by weak expression and organisation, and their analyses of texts vary much in quality. By Year 13 several students have developed a more confident style and better informed responses to texts. General vocabulary and specialist terms are handled with greater accuracy than before and the most able students produce sensitive interpretations of literature.
230. The quality of teaching and learning in the sixth form is satisfactory, and it contains many good and a few unsatisfactory elements. Teachers are skilled and knowledgeable, and they use their knowledge to support individuals and groups as they work. Lessons are thoroughly planned. Subject-knowledge is particularly well displayed in the nature of their marking, which is of high quality throughout. Detailed, accurate comments identify strengths and weaknesses in students' work, and these are helpfully combined with a more generic overview. Although their evaluations of work are occasionally over-generous, teachers' comments are usually perceptive and well-judged. Extensive diagnosis and advice provide students with a great deal of information. Teachers' responses to students' work in class are very positive, though there is an occasional tendency to over-value their work. Students have, however, a clear idea of the levels at which they are working.
231. Teachers provide their students with uneven levels of intellectual challenge. A Year 12 group, for example, had to work hard to answer their teacher's questions on a non-literary text, as did the single sixth form drama group seen in Year 13. Elsewhere, unsatisfactory practice in another Year 12 lesson resulted in almost all students taking no responsibility for their learning beyond listening to their teacher, which did not help to build their confidence as learners. Questions are sometimes used skilfully to help students define their attitudes to writer or writing, but they are frequently used merely to test knowledge at the start of a new unit of work.
232. Students invariably make a good effort, are well motivated and usually make satisfactory progress. The quality of their learning in lessons varies in direct relationship to their involvement in learning activities, so the best lessons are those that require them to think for themselves. Year 13 drama students did this better than those in English lessons. They learn from one another well when they engage in discussion. Good relationships with teachers are helping students to develop confidence, as was seen during the course of a good Year 13 lesson on *Othello*. At the start the

teacher had to work hard to extract single ideas from the group, but by the end several students had the confidence to voice their own reactions to the text and characters. They all have a mature attitude to the subject and the majority is keen to learn.

233. The subject is well managed. Teachers are working well together to develop and refine new units of work in order to ensure good progression from AS- to A-level. This, together with recent changes to the choice of examination syllabus, clearly indicates their commitment to raising standards.