

INSPECTION REPORT

**MARKET BOSWORTH HIGH SCHOOL AND
COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

Market Bosworth, Nuneaton

LEA area: Leicestershire

Unique reference number: 120245

Principal: Mr J. Hemingway

Reporting inspector: Terry Parish
15465

Dates of inspection: 11th – 15th December 2000

Inspection number: 223911

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Middle deemed secondary

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11 to 14

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Station Road
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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: M M Preston

Date of previous inspection: 2nd October 1995

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			The school's results and pupils' achievements
			Teaching and learning
			Leadership and management
			Key Issues for action
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			Pupils' welfare, health and safety
			Partnership with parents and carers
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M. Flatman 8806	Team inspector	Music	Quality and range of opportunities for learning
		Religious education	
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R. Pitcher 3930	Team inspector	Geography	
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		Provision for pupils with special educational needs	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Market Bosworth High is an 11-14 mixed school, smaller than average with 659 on roll. Pupils come from a very good socio-economic background and fewer than average are eligible for free school meals. Almost all pupils are white. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below average whilst the number with statements is average. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is above average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school. Effective leadership and management have made Market Bosworth High a school in which very good teaching enables the standards of many pupils' work to be either well above or above average by the time they leave. Relationships in the school are very good and there is an enthusiasm for work shared by pupils and staff. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Teaching in almost all subjects enables pupils to reach high standards.
- Pupils' achievements in science and the management of the subject are particularly good.
- Personal, health and social education is taught well and appreciated by pupils.
- Fosters very good attitudes, personal relationships and behaviour by pupils in lessons.
- Pupils with statements of special educational need receive a high level of support and their progress is monitored well.
- Extra-curricular sports.

What could be improved

- Pupils do not achieve quite so well in mathematics as they do in English and science.
- The opportunities available to pupils in their work in music, drama and art and design.
- The resources and accommodation for information and communication technology (ICT), so that opportunities for using it can increase in Year 9 and within subjects.

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 October 1995. Improvement since then is good. High standards have been maintained. Teaching has improved significantly. Provision for ICT has improved very substantially but more is needed. Standards in design and technology have improved. The quality of pupils' work in modern languages is now consistently good. The standards of pupils' numeracy have improved. Standards in religious education are too low due to staffing difficulties. There is a better use of assessment data though room for even more development. Evaluation of the work of departments and more rigorous school development planning are still needed.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 14 year olds based on National Curriculum test results.

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

In 2000, the attainment of pupils in English, mathematics and science tests is well above average compared to similar schools. Standards in all three have consistently been well above the national average and standards in mathematics have improved since 1999 when they were well below those of similar schools. The trend in the school's results over five years is broadly similar to the national trend of improvement with some indication of it moving faster since 1998. If the achievement that pupils make between the end of Year 6, when they enter the school, and the end of Year 9 when they leave, is considered, then in English and science their achievement is very high whilst in mathematics it is good.

There are no statutory, yearly, school targets for the attainment of pupils in an 11-14 school.

Pupils' work seen in English and science during the inspection was well above average. Their work in mathematics, modern languages, art and design, design and technology, history and geography was above average. Pupils' work in ICT was average overall but with some areas above average. Their work in music was average and in religious education below average. There is no overall significant difference between the attainments of boys and girls or between different ethnic groups (represented by very small numbers).

Overall, pupils' work shows they achieve well between starting and finishing at the school. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. There is little evidence available to determine the progress of pupils who are gifted and talented, as they are not monitored sufficiently.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Keen to do their work and take advantages of opportunities available.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good overall. Very good in classrooms, a little boisterous in corridors. Evidence of some pupils misbehaving on buses taking them to and from school.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Year 9 pupils can act as counsellors to other pupils, particularly in relation to possible bullying. Form groups mix ages so older pupils influence younger ones positively. Too few opportunities for pupils to use their initiative in mathematics and physical education.
Attendance	Good. Above average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

100 percent of teaching is satisfactory or better. 83 percent is good or better. 39 percent is very good or excellent. The teaching of English and science is very good. The teaching of mathematics is satisfactory. Within other subjects teaching is very good in art and design, ICT and modern foreign languages. It is good in design and technology, geography, history, physical education and numeracy within mathematics. Teaching is satisfactory in music. No judgement could be made about teaching in religious education as only temporary, non-specialist supply teachers were present and the full time teacher has been absent for some time.

Particular strengths in teaching are teachers' knowledge and understanding of their subjects, their methods of working and management of pupils, and their use of time, support staff and resources. Comparatively weaker are: the teaching of basic skills within some subjects, particularly numeracy and ICT; teachers' use of assessment to inform them of how best to proceed with individual pupils, particularly those of higher attainment, and their use of homework to improve the quality of pupils' learning.

Pupils learn very well. They are particularly strong at acquiring new skills and knowledge, working at a very good pace, producing lots of work, showing interest in their lessons and being aware of how well they are doing. The school meets the requirements of most of its pupils very well, including those with special educational needs and statements of need. Pupils who are particularly gifted and talented are insufficiently recognised. There are too few opportunities for pupils to excel in musical and dramatic performances.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. Generous time for English, mathematics, science, modern languages and physical education. Too little time for art and design, music and religious education. All aspects of ICT not fully developed. Very good provision for sport. Very good opportunities for trips including foreign exchanges.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good overall and within mathematics, science, art and design and technology. Very good in English, particularly the support groups for literacy. Individual education plans not always used effectively.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Very good moral development. Good social and spiritual development - strong in English and science. Good cultural development, with strengths in art and design, modern languages and English.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Particular strengths in promoting attendance, good behaviour and eliminating bullying. Gifted and talented pupils insufficiently identified. Several health and safety issues need attention.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	The school has good links with parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership has produced an effective school with high standards and very good teaching. Management is good overall with strengths in administration, financial control and induction of staff; weaknesses in evaluation and focussed planning.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory in fulfilling statutory duties, keeping finances on an even keel and taking on new initiatives like performance management. Good in developing links with subjects. Need to be sharper in monitoring the curriculum and evaluating development planning.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Strengths are recognised and the school has maintained high standards. Weaknesses insufficiently defined and acted upon.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Staffing, accommodation and resources are good overall and used to best effect. Financial control ensures satisfactory attention is paid to 'best value' – getting the correct service or product at the right price.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teaching• Progress pupils make• Leadership and management• Standards of work• Behaviour of pupils in school	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Information about pupils' progress• Homework – amount and organisation.

The inspection team agrees with parents' views. Very good teaching and good behaviour allows pupils to make good progress and achieve high standards. The whole supported by effective leadership and management. Annual reports need to be more informative about pupils' progress and academic targets. Homework needs to be better planned and monitored.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. In 2000, the attainment of pupils in English, mathematics and science tests is well above average compared to all schools. This is true if the proportions of pupils achieving level 5 or above, or level 6 or above are considered, and also if the average points scores assigned to each subject are used. There is no overall difference between the performances of boys or girls. Neither is there any difference between any ethnic groups (represented by very small numbers of pupils).

2. A comparison can also be made with similar schools. The 'similarity' is the proportion of pupils with free school meals. In 2000, Market Bosworth High has 5.1 percent of pupils eligible for free school meals so is just within the 'more than 5 percent and up to 9 percent' group of similar schools. Within this group, English, mathematics and science test results are still at least well above average. The proportion of pupils reaching level 5 or more in mathematics is very high (in the top 5 percent of similar schools), as is the case in the proportion of pupils reaching level 6 or above in English. If average points scores are compared, the English score is very high and mathematics and science scores are well above average. The judgement of the inspection is that, overall, the school is well above average when compared to similar schools.

3. End of Year 9 test standards in English, mathematics and science have consistently been well above national averages for five years. The trend in the school's test results over five years is broadly in line with the national trend of improvement though the school's rate of improvement has increased since 1998 and particularly between 1999 and 2000. English and mathematics both improved between 1999 and 2000 more than the school trend suggested they might, mathematics significantly as results in 1999 were well below those of similar schools.

4. There are no statutory, end of Year 9 school targets, for the attainment of pupils in an 11-14 school. Consequently it is not possible to judge the school's progress towards them. It would obviously help to measure success if targets were established within the school. The data to allow this to happen is now collected by the school and in a form for useful interpretation and analysis by managers and teachers.

5. The standards of pupils' work seen during the inspection in English and science are well above average; in mathematics, modern languages, art and design, design and technology, history and geography they are above average. Standards in ICT are average overall but with some areas above average. Standards in music are average and in religious education below average.

6. Pupils' standards of speaking and listening are good and their standards of reading and writing are very good. Pupils respond enthusiastically in lessons and provide well thought out answers to questions they have listened carefully to. Pupils read work aloud with enthusiasm and accuracy and take advantage of opportunities to read novels and other fiction. They also read well for finding things out, including useful Internet searches. Written work is copious and well presented in a wide range of subjects including science, history and geography, as well as English. Technical words are used accurately.

7. Pupils, in mathematics, use number skills relating to fractions, decimals and percentages very confidently. Their estimating and mental mathematics skills are well above

average. All pupils are able to use calculators appropriately. Pupils' graphs are of a high standard in science. Pupils' standards in ICT are average. They can create presentations and use simple databases. They can search effectively for information on the Internet and create annotated three-dimensional drawings.

8. In English pupils generally achieve very well and those with special educational needs make very good progress, though those pupils with the highest prior attainment, when they enter the school, do not achieve well enough. In mathematics pupils' achievement is satisfactory. They acquire sufficient knowledge and skills but their understanding is inhibited through too few opportunities to either discuss their work or work independently at problem solving. Consequently, although mathematics Year 9 test results have improved significantly over the last year, there remains room for improvement in standards within the classroom. Pupils' achievements in science far exceed what might be expected. They make very good progress from entry to the end of Year 9.

9. In science pupils can explain the melting of ice in terms of the particulate nature of matter, make effective use of spreadsheets and argue the case for ecological conservation. They need more experience of the use of ICT in data logging.

10. Pupils' standards in art and design are above national expectations. They have a well-developed knowledge of art and design and artists and can apply technical skills and processes competently. Their achievement is very good within the range of work they do. However, the range and depth of art and design experiences offered to pupils is restricted by the short curriculum time they have.

11. The standards of pupils' work in design and technology are above average. Their achievement is good. Pupils have a good understanding of tools and materials and make good products. Pupils with special educational needs do particularly well in relation to their general attainment. Pupils of high prior attainment are sometimes insufficiently challenged by the nature of the design and make activities they are given to do.

12. Pupils' work in geography is above national expectations. Their achievement is good. They have a good understanding of basic concepts and skills such as map reading, climate and weathering. They can compare and contrast countries such as Italy and Japan.

13. The standards of pupils' work in history are above national expectations. Their achievement is good. Higher attainers make very good progress. Pupils have a firm grasp of the use of source materials. They have a sense of history and can pose moral and social questions.

14. Pupils' achievements in ICT are substantial but not yet satisfactory as opportunities to attain at levels they are undoubtedly capable of are limited, particularly in Year 9.

15. The standards of pupils' work in modern foreign languages are at least average and better in French than German as they only begin the latter in Year 9. Pupils make very good progress and their overall achievement improves further if they are able to take advantage of foreign visits and exchanges. Most pupils have good listening skills, can read a range of written text, depending upon their attainment, and can write well.

16. Pupils' work in music is average. Those with instrumental backgrounds do better and girls generally attain better than boys. Pupils can listen to a variety of musical styles and appraise them critically. Computers are not used at all for composition or performance. Insufficient opportunities for practice mean the more able pupils do not achieve as well as they might.

17. Pupils in physical education make good progress and at least reach national expectations of performance by the end of Year 9. Pupils quickly grasp games skills.

18. Pupils' attainment in religious education by the end of Year 9 is below expectations and their achievement is below what should be expected. Their progress has been adversely affected by staffing difficulties.

19. All pupils with special educational needs make at least good progress in literacy but less so in numeracy. They cope progressively well in mainstream classes and this was particularly evident where imaginative, thorough and appropriate support work is well developed as in history. Progress is sufficient to enable almost all pupils to be adequately prepared for education at Key Stage 4. There is insufficient evidence available to determine the progress of pupils who are gifted and talented, as they are not identified or monitored sufficiently.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

20. Pupils' attitudes to their work are very good. They enjoy coming to school. They are very interested and enthusiastic in their learning. Relationships are very good.

21. Enthusiasm and very good attitudes are seen particularly in lessons, illustrated by a Year 7 personal, social and health education (PSHE) lesson on "mini enterprises", where pupils behaved well, were positive about what they were doing and showed their respect for each other by listening carefully. In a Year 8 science lesson on circuits, pupils were very interested in the content of the lesson, and showed very good behaviour. In a Year 9 English lesson about Macbeth, pupils worked well on individual and paired tasks and they were attentive to the teacher throughout the lesson. All pupils with special educational needs respond well to the professional expertise of the learning support teacher and her colleagues. The relationship between special educational needs pupils and teachers is very good and helps pupils make good progress.

22. Very few incidents of misbehaviour were seen. Although pupils' behaviour is always very good in lessons, it is less orderly when moving around the school, with some minor "jostling" in the corridors. Pupils are clear about the rules and the reasons for them. They can quote the code of conduct that is displayed in classroom and the rewards or sanctions that are applied for good or poor behaviour or attitudes. The incidence of exclusions is very low. There are instances of poor behaviour on the buses that take pupils to and from school. These were reported by parents, pupils and bus drivers and acknowledged by the school. It is a matter of concern to all that the increased use of double-decker buses, requiring no seatbelts, and no provision of a supervising adult is inherently unsafe.

23. Pupils' personal development is well provided for, both inside and outside lessons and pupils take advantage of it. There is project work in most subjects and pupils work well in teams. They are given the responsibility of nominating and raising issues with the school council on a monthly basis and do so to some effect. There is a wide range of activities including sports, chess, drama and computer clubs that pupils enthusiastically join. PSHE lessons include health and sex education and issues about bullying, self-awareness and personal relationships. These topics are well taught and pupils deal with them in a mature

and responsible way. Pupils are involved in the School Bank, and as Year 9 “Peer Counsellors”, to address any bullying incidents. Pupils say bullying does happen occasionally and “peer counselling” is an effective way to help when it does. Certificates are awarded to pupils for good work or attendance.

24. The social atmosphere produced by pupils working purposefully in groups, or individually, is exceptionally good and produces a very good environment for learning. The ‘division’ or house system, is used well by most tutors and contributes very effectively to the development of very good relationships between pupils and between pupils and teachers.

25. Attendance is good at 93.9 percent, with unauthorised absence below the national average at 0.2 percent. Punctuality to lessons is good.

26. Judgements in the last inspection were very similar. The contribution of PSHE lessons to pupils’ personal development is now greater.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

27. Teaching is very good. 100 percent of teaching is satisfactory or better. 83 percent is good or better. 39 percent is very good or excellent. The teaching of English and science is very good. The teaching of mathematics is satisfactory. Within other subjects teaching is very good in art and design, ICT and modern foreign languages. It is good in design and technology, geography, history, physical education and numeracy within mathematics. Teaching is satisfactory in music. No judgement could be made about teaching in religious education as the full time teacher has been absent for some time and classes were taught by a number of short term, non specialist supply teachers during the inspection.

28. Particular strengths in teaching are teachers’ knowledge and understanding of their subjects; their methods of working and management of pupils, and their use of time, support staff and resources. Comparatively weaker are the teaching of basic skills, particularly numeracy and ICT: (other than in mathematics or ICT) teachers’ use of assessment to inform them of how best to proceed with individual pupils, particularly those of higher attainment and their use of homework to improve the quality of pupils’ learning further.

29. Overall, pupils learn very well. They are particularly strong at acquiring new skills and knowledge, working at a very good pace, producing lots of work, showing interest in their lessons and being aware of how well they are doing.

30. In English teaching is effective because it encourages pupils to take some responsibility for their own work and pupils respond well to this and learn better from their own endeavours. Assessment of pupils’ attainment and progress is well managed.

31. Teachers’ knowledge and understanding of mathematics is good but higher attaining pupils are insufficiently challenged by the work given to them and so learn less well than they might. Otherwise, pupils’ questions are answered clearly, improving their knowledge and understanding. Basic skills in mathematics are taught well, including the use of ICT when opportunities arise and resources are available.

32. Very good lesson planning in science, coupled with clear objectives means pupils know exactly what is expected of them and teachers can monitor their understanding. High expectations of behaviour and performance lead to very good learning.

33. Very good relationships with pupils in art and design allow a range of challenging and enjoyable activities for pupils of all levels of attainment. Pupils are encouraged, and learn techniques well through searching and leading questions and good demonstrations by the teacher. Teachers' very good knowledge of their subject in design and technology helps pupils learn effectively about such things as annotating drawings on a computer screen and making quality products from wood, metal, textiles and food. Higher attaining pupils need more challenge built into projects rather than completing them to a higher standard.

34. Good teaching in geography allows pupils to learn basic skills well through extended written work, graphs and the use of ICT. Very good marking informs pupils, especially more motivated ones, what they need to do to improve. Tasks are adjusted to make them more suitable for pupils with special educational needs. In history teachers make very good use of resources like short videos of pupils enacting historical scenes to help pupils gain a sense of history and give scope for their imaginations to work.

35. The very good knowledge of ICT possessed by the ICT teacher allows pupils to learn well with the resources available. The scheme of work allows some freedom for higher attaining pupils to move ahead of the rest. Individual support to pupils moves them on and makes their learning relevant to their needs and homework is used effectively to support classwork.

36. The fluent use of authentic and relevant language by very good modern language teachers, coupled with high expectations of pupils, causes pupils to concentrate well and persist in their work. Teachers' brisk, interactive styles of working encourage pupils to help each other. Homework is satisfactorily used to prepare for and extend lessons.

37. Music teaching is thorough and follows the scheme of work meticulously. Good assessment procedures are used. However, it is sometimes too formal and can be unimaginative and lacking in challenge, with the limited range of work failing to motivate some pupils so that they attain rather less well than they might.

38. Enthusiasm amongst physical education teachers, coupled with a secure knowledge of their field, motivates pupils to put in a lot of effort and learn accuracy and control in new skills. However, more emphasis needs to be given to planning and evaluating within lessons.

39. Teaching to develop pupils' literacy skills is proving very effective in English and other subjects. All English teachers have visited feeder schools to observe their use of the Literacy Hour. In-service training has been organised for the English department on the subject of literacy progression from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3. Elements of a literacy policy have been discussed at head of department level and have been introduced in several subjects. Good examples of literacy teaching observed during the inspection included the use of art and design dictionaries, improving pupils' vocabulary to do with taste in food technology and providing opportunities for extended writing in history and geography. Most frequently used techniques by teachers are the use of Key Words and "Word Walls", especially well used in English, science, food technology and in French. Much more remains to be done in some subjects, including physical education, drama and religious education.

40. Standards in number work are above average in mathematics where they are taught well. There are fewer examples than is usual in the use of number work in other subjects. This is linked to the lack of a whole school numeracy policy although this is identified as a priority for the future. Number skills are taught very effectively in science where graph work and analysis of measurements are of a high standard, and in geography and history.

41. Teaching pupils with special educational needs by the Learning Support teacher and her colleagues is always at least good and sometimes excellent. The appropriate variety of work and the careful planning, using individual education plans, ensure pupils' progress in literacy is at least good. In most subjects except for physical education, French and English, however, individual education plans are not used as thoroughly as they should be. The school has responded very well to the challenge of teaching pupils with visual impairment. Teachers learned fresh skills rapidly and have proved very effective in their co-operative work with the local authority. Pupils who are particularly gifted and talented are insufficiently recognised and most teaching does not consider their particular needs. In addition, there are too few opportunities for pupils to excel and extend their skills by taking part in musical and dramatic performances.

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

42. The school continues to provide a broad and balanced curriculum with a satisfactory range of learning opportunities for all its 11–14 year old pupils. The school provides all parents with a curriculum handbook that clearly explains the contents of the curriculum. All the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are taught and the school meets statutory requirements although the use of ICT is not developed as fully as it should be in some subjects, for example art and design. The curriculum is augmented with the teaching of drama, PSHE and, for Year 9 only, citizenship.

43. The school does not meet the requirements for a daily act of collective worship. However, the provision for pupils' spiritual development is good.

44. The time allocations are generous for English, mathematics, science, modern foreign languages and physical education but less than usually found in many other schools for art and design, humanities, music and religious education. The shortage of time reduces the range of work that should be offered in art and design and reduces opportunities for pupils to show how well they can achieve.

45. The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant overall and the work covered in drama lessons ensures that all pupils are able to experience theatre and to extend their education in English lessons. All pupils receive a good grounding in ICT in Years 7 and 8 that can be applied across the curriculum to most other subject areas but the experiences of the current Year 9 are less secure. Music and religious education have very few opportunities to use ICT in their subject bases because they have no computer equipment and very little software with which to enrich pupils' learning. The lack of satisfactory recording and computer equipment in music currently hinders progress in this area.

46. Skills developed from the National Literacy Strategy are well used in support lessons and in some mainstream English lessons when appropriate, for example: key words, paired reading and writing frames. A club for paired reading takes place on Wednesday lunchtimes with the support of other teachers and this helps raise reading standards. The current development plan for English includes measures to introduce a spelling programme. The English and drama departments have worked closely together to set standards for assessing pupils' speaking and listening skills. The school does not have a literacy policy, nor a literacy

co-ordinator but has adopted elements of the Leicestershire Policy. Neither is there a numeracy policy, though one is scheduled for development. Numeracy is well taught in mathematics and used well in science and history but less well developed in other subjects.

47. The school provides a satisfactory range of extra curricular activities. The physical education department provides activities every day, which include table tennis, trampolining, dance, hockey, basketball, badminton and netball and rugby and soccer. In addition sailing is offered to pupils after school each week. The extra-curricular sports provision is popular with pupils and a particular strength of the school. Weekly orchestral rehearsals and guitar club and flute choir are organised by the music department. The chess, gardening, miniatures, reading, dance, drama, design and karaoke clubs are popular and valued by many pupils. However, opportunities to integrate music, dance and drama in productions or other performances are more limited. In addition to the clubs there is a range of visits, exchanges and excursions that enhance the lessons that are organised by various departments. The pupils all have good access to the full curriculum and extra curricular activities and excursions and the school assists parents when financial problems cause problems.

48. The PSHE programme is good and a strength of the school. All pupils have one PSHE lesson each week throughout the school. Teachers have comprehensive schemes of work and high quality resources to use. The programme includes study skills, self awareness, relationships and bullying in Year 7 and work on alcohol, drugs and smoking awareness in Year 8. In Year 9 there is work on action planning, contraception and sex education, self-awareness and peer group pressures. Issues of community and citizenship are being piloted with all Year 9 pupils in a weekly timetabled lesson, so addressing current government legislation.

49. The careers education programme is good. The school works closely with the local careers service, the Leicestershire Training and Enterprise Council Limited and individuals from the local community. Much of the work done in this area is comprehensive and thorough and provides pupils with a good grounding for their option choices and future education. The school offers pupils the latest technology in careers resources, including CD-ROMs and materials developed by the Leicestershire Careers and Guidance Services and others. Business personnel from a wide variety of occupational areas frequently visit the school. The police, magistrates, Rotarians, theatre groups, governors and parents have all made positive contributions to the pupils' careers education and guidance and speak positively of the school's welcome and support. The 'Take your sons and daughters to Work' project gave many pupils insights into the world of work and a first hand knowledge of their parents' working lives.

50. Relationships with partner institutions are good. Many departments have forged links with feeder primary schools in order to collate personal and academic information about pupils. This has eased transition and enabled the school to identify pupils' strengths and learning needs. Links with Post 14 institutions are developing well and some departments have joint planning meetings on a regular basis with these schools and schools. Higher education institutions appreciate the experiences provided by the school for their pupils and valuable links have been established with several institutions.

51. The school continues to make good provision for pupils' personal development. During the inspection it was evident that the staff were committed to the creation of an environment in which pupils could learn and live in an atmosphere of security, mutual trust and respect. There is a strong sense of community that pervades the life and work of the school.

52. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. The whole school assembly held once weekly is a positive time when the school comes together to reaffirm its values and identity. On most occasions there is a collective act of worship that is predominantly Christian in character. The school welcomes the involvement of leaders from a variety of local churches and youth organisations who ably assist in the religious aspects of the assemblies. The groups employ a variety of engaging styles such as drama, poetry, quizzes and formal talks to stimulate the pupils' consideration of spiritual matters. Input from groups as diverse as the Salvation Army, Youth for Christ, the local Anglican churches and the Gideons all play an important role in assemblies. Pupils' spiritual development is also enriched by attendance at the local Anglican Church for Christmas and Easter services. The tutorial periods, however, and other assemblies rarely include a collective act of worship but nevertheless have important roles to play. The pupils gain good insights into the beliefs of Christians, Jews, Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhists in religious education lessons.

53. The schools' provision for pupils' moral development is very good. The key feature of this provision is the determination and commitment of all staff. The English department, for example, specifically chooses texts that challenge racism and prejudice and ensure that the texts of speeches of people such as Martin Luther King are studied and considered very thoroughly. Teachers insist on high standards of behaviour and work hard to create an orderly community. From the principal downwards, every teacher is committed to the code of conduct and its rigorous implementation. The school has a positive system of rewards and punishments that is consistently carried out. Pupils who work hard are rewarded with merits, certificates and commendations and those who misbehave are reprimanded promptly and fairly. The Division heads work closely with teachers, pupils and parents to ensure that pastoral support is available.

54. Many initiatives promote pupils' moral development. Year 9 pupils are involved in peer group counselling and receive through training before embarking on this work. This confidential counselling service is well received by the pupils and highly regarded. The School Council enables pupils to discuss key issues related to the concerns of the student body and gives pupils valuable insights into democracy and debate. Pupils raise much money for local and national charities including Blue Peter, Papworth Hospital, Leicester Royal Infirmary and various cancer relief agencies.

55. The PSHE programme fosters respect for law, justice, democracy and for different opinions, values and cultures. It is well structured, comprehensive in coverage, well taught and well received by pupils. It is enhanced by annual PSHE focus days. Recent themes have covered anti-bullying, tackling prejudice, and the world of work. On each occasion, these events have been enriched by the contributions of many outsiders. Caribbean poetry workshops, ethnic dance workshops, disability workshops and contributions from many industrialists, supported by the Leicestershire Training and Enterprise Council Limited and The Education Business Partnership, have added an important breadth and depth to these focus days. The school has just introduced a Citizenship module with a view to its inclusion into the PSHE programme from 2001.

56. The school's provision for pupils' social development is good. The school provides many opportunities in lessons and extra curricular activities for pupils to work together. The vertical tutorial system, in which year pupils from all year groups register together, fosters social development across the year groups. Pupils have many opportunities in lessons to work in pairs and in groups especially in art and design, design and technology, history, music, physical education and religious education. The pupils relate well together in the chess, miniatures, reading, dance, drama, guitar, design and karaoke clubs. The daily sporting activities involve many pupils and the orchestral rehearsals and guitar group enrich the musical education of pupils on a weekly basis. A choir, comprising predominantly girls, is formed prior to Christmas and Easter services but it does not meet regularly throughout the year.

57. The provision for pupils' cultural development, outside of lessons, is good. The pupils are provided with opportunities to visit places of cultural interest. There have been visits for Year 7 to the outdoor pursuits centre in Aberglaslyn, visits to Le Touquet and Dieppe for Year 8 and the French exchange for Year 9. Theatre trips to Stratford upon Avon and the Haymarket in Leicester have given pupils good opportunities to enjoy and to experience live theatre and to enrich their understanding of set works. Subject based visits to the Leicester Space Centre, the Science Museum, the Black Country Museum and the Dome have enriched pupils' knowledge and understanding of man's endeavours to explore and to explain the unknown. The music department presents concerts at Christmas and Easter and in the summer term and involve pupils in solo, ensemble, orchestral and choral performances covering compositions from the seventeenth to the twentieth century. The school currently misses opportunities to combine the work of the music, drama and dance departments for full-scale musical productions. There is a relatively limited range of field-work and visits arranged by the geography and history departments.

58. A wide range of multi-cultural opportunities have been presented to pupils including opportunities to correspond with pupils in Kampala in Uganda, to e-mail friends in Germany and to write to French pen friends. Various departments ensure that multi-cultural issues are sensitively, yet comprehensively, covered in lessons. The art and design department promotes significant understanding of multi-cultural dimensions including detailed coverage of Aboriginal art, masks and third world artists. The geography department ensures that there are in depth studies of countries as diverse as Japan and Kenya. Pupils study third world issues such as employment in Brazil, tourism in Zimbabwe and Borneo and the spread of aids in Uganda. Year 9 study aspects of racism that were prevalent in Victorian times. The religious education department has taken Year 7 pupils to a Sikh temple in Leicester. The pupils dressed in appropriate clothing, sampled Sikh food and learned about religious customs and practices. The music department's coverage of Indian and African music and musicians expands pupils' knowledge of different scales and rhythmic patterns. During the anti-prejudice days pupils produced two screens in an art and design workshop to celebrate cultural diversity

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

59. The school's provision for pupils' pastoral care is good. Pupils say they feel secure when approaching teachers or other staff when they have concerns.

60. Procedures for child protection are good. The person designated with responsibility has very good contacts with relevant statutory agencies, including social services and the education welfare service. Staff are made aware of the arrangements. Health and safety are well monitored and all necessary arrangements are in place with a clear published health and safety policy. Risk assessments are carried out in all departments though some work needs to be done in design and technology. The school is concerned that the provision that it is

required to make when transporting small numbers of pupils to sports events and the like (seatbelts and adequate supervision), does not extend to the public service provision made available by the County Council for transporting large numbers of pupils to and from school.

61. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good. Pupils' attendance is actively monitored. Registration procedures are good and meet requirements.

62. Procedures for monitoring poor behaviour are very good, with well-developed systems in place. Instances of good behaviour and attitude are rewarded through certificates presented at whole school assemblies. The procedures to eliminate bullying are very good.

63. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress and the use of assessment information to guide curricular planning are good overall. Gifted and talented pupils are not identified and this is a weakness. The appointment of an assessment co-ordinator has enabled accurate information about pupils' standards of work and their progress to be compiled. This has filtered down to the classroom level, though further work needs to be done in relating such information to individual pupils and the work that they are set, particularly in respect to higher attaining pupils. This has particular effect on the relatively lower achievement of pupils in mathematics compared to English and science.

64. The marking of pupils' work is good in English where testing is also used well to set pupils appropriate work. In mathematics, assessment is not used well on a day-to-day basis, hence work does not recognise the range of pupils' abilities in each class. Marking is also weak in mathematics and there is very little evidence of individual pupil targets. In science, the use of assessment is very good. There is very good marking of exercise books, with comments and corrections, and very good use of self-evaluation sheets and of topic check lists. This good experience is generally repeated in history, geography, music, drama, design and technology, modern foreign languages, personal, social, and health education and music. The reports sent home about pupils' progress are unsatisfactory. Whilst the information on what pupils have done is satisfactory, information about what pupils need to do to improve is not precise or definitive enough. Consequently, the issue raised by some parents that "they are not well informed about pupils' progress", is correct.

65. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from the marked sense of professional care shown. This care is well illustrated by the lunchtime 'Read and Feed' club. Assessment of pupils with special educational needs is rigorous and effective in helping them to make good progress. Procedures for recognising and supporting gifted and talented pupils are weaker and currently insufficient.

66. Overall, the standard of care is good and better than that found in the previous inspection. Assessment is better used to provide good information on pupils' progress. The monitoring of pupils' attendance and behaviour has improved.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

67. Parents are generally very pleased with the education provided by the school. Over 90 percent of those responding to the questionnaire said their child “liked the school”, that they would be “comfortable in approaching the school with complaints or problems”, and that the school had “high expectations of pupils”. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are very confident in the school planning and provision for their pupils. This was noted in an annual review where the liaison between school staff and a representative of Bosworth School at Key Stage 4, sensitively reviewed a pupil’s progress and mapped out a course of action to maximise the effect of the support available and the progress the pupil is likely to make.

68. The impact of parents on pupils’ learning was found to be good. Parents fill in homework diaries, help in school with pupils’ reading, and have put library files onto the computer system. The diary is well used by pupils and it helps parents’ understanding of what they do.

69. The involvement of parents in the work of the school is satisfactory. Parents are very keen to participate on some occasions. When there are parents’ evenings, over 90 percent attendance is expected. In Year 7 there are two such evenings with one for every other year group.

70. A newsletter is published each week. There were drugs education evenings and an evening for parents to view the new ICT facility in the last year. Year 7 held a series of “open mornings” and an open evening so that parents could see their children’s work. There is a parent teacher association that successfully raises money to improve resources in the school. The issue, raised by some parents, that the “ school does not work closely enough with parents” is not borne out by inspection evidence.

71. The quality of the school’s prospectus and the governors’ report to parents is satisfactory. The quality of the annual reports to parents, about their children’s work, is unsatisfactory as insufficient guidance is given on how pupils can improve academically or about the academic targets they should be striving for.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

72. The leadership and management provided by the principal and vice principals are good. The majority of parents agree that the school is well led. The principal, who is due shortly to retire has encouraged teachers at all levels of seniority to share and perpetuate his vision of a school providing a secure and orderly environment, where high standards are achieved. In responding effectively to the recommendations of the last report and recent developments in education, he has been particularly well supported by the vice principals whose complementary skills contribute to the efficient running of the school.

73. The governing body plays a satisfactory role in shaping the direction of the school. The control of finances is particularly good. In setting the budget for the current financial year, the governing body has effectively targeted resources to meet the priorities of the school’s development plan. Most governors have had a long association with the school, many as parents of current or former pupils. They meet regularly to approve policies and innovations and several are frequent visitors to the school. They are well advised by the principal and vice principals about many aspects of the school’s development, although they are insufficiently informed about some curriculum issues such as the unbalanced allocation of teaching time to subjects. They do not meet the statutory requirements regarding a daily act of collective worship.

74. The challenge of meeting the changing demands of the education system is an ongoing issue. These include performance management of teachers, monitoring the effectiveness of their teaching, and wider applications of ICT in class and school administration. While continuous progress is being made and new responsibilities have been assigned, teachers and governors alike are aware of the rapid pace of change and that much remains to be done. Since the appointment of an assessment co-ordinator, for example, better use has been made of data to analyse pupils' attainment to date and predict their future achievements though the identification of gifted and talented pupils is still needed.

75. The quality of most curriculum and pastoral leadership is good, and is never less than satisfactory. In art and design, design and technology and languages leadership is very good. The small music and religious education departments have not established themselves strongly enough in the work of the school. Since the last inspection, most departments have revised and improved their schemes of work and have made good policies in line with the school's targets. The English department's handbook has insufficient detail to guide its teachers and, in mathematics, development planning lacks rigour. The quality of the scheme of work of personal social and health education is very good. Lively lessons and opportunities for pupils to exchange ideas contribute to the school's positive ethos.

76. Two teachers, responsible for administration and the organisation of support, manage the provision for pupils with special educational needs. This system works well, so that lower attaining pupils and those with physical disabilities are well integrated and mostly successful. There is insufficient concentration on the needs of gifted and talented pupils, despite general awareness of their presence in the school.

77. The organisation of the pastoral system is effective. Pupils benefit from regular and continuous contacts with their form tutors. They have more immediate access to those teachers who manage the pastoral divisions, as well as meeting them in the classroom. The confident and trusting atmosphere thus created in the school gains most parents' approval. It is tempered only by a relative lack of self-reliance and initiative among a minority of pupils.

78. Since the last inspection the school has made insufficient progress in formally monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning though teaching is very good. Senior and middle managers have been more involved than other teachers, and some departments are more advanced than others. Plans are in hand for a more determined move towards structured and consistent performance management in the near future. The informal methods of evaluation pursued to date have contributed to the high standards of teaching and learning found in most subject areas.

79. The school's development plan identifies a small number of priorities for raising standards that largely reflect external requirements. The strength of the plan is that responsibilities are clearly assigned and finances targeted to meet these priorities. The allocation of resources to departments is based largely on their producing detailed plans to implement the school's aims, although contingency funds and allowances exist for meeting particular needs such as repairs and the replacement of textbooks. Best value principles are applied where major expenses are incurred, such as the purchase of multi-media projectors and improving facilities for ICT. The school bids successfully for specific grants such as those available from the government for purchasing computers and uses the money appropriately. Regular audits of the school's finances have found the controls and organisation to be good. The bursar uses up to date computer software effectively and takes appropriate action following any recommendations made by the auditors.

80. Widespread commitment and enthusiasm for the school supplement the limited

statements of intent contained in the development plan and the finance committee's astute financial projections. These sentiments are shared by governors, senior and middle managers, teachers and support staff, most of whom are well motivated to raise standards further. Some attention might profitably be given to overcoming problems with transport and extending the very good extra-curricular provision made in languages, physical education and science to other areas of the curriculum.

81. The quality of staffing is good. The school has sufficient staff with appropriate qualifications and experience to teach the National Curriculum. Turnover of staff has been low and the maturity, stability and dedication of both teachers and support staff bring particular benefits to the pupils. Only in a minority of instances, in humanities subjects and religious education, has staff absence had a detrimental effect on the quality of pupils' learning. The ratio of pupils to teachers and the amount of time that teachers spend in the classroom are broadly average. A minority of the staff, including some of those supporting pupils with special educational needs, and one caretaker, is externally funded. There is appropriate support from technical staff in the practical subjects, and particularly strong support in science. The school supports the training of new teachers, and has a very good programme of induction for new members of staff.

82. Staff development is well organised. Teachers new to the school each have a mentor who oversees their first year on the staff. Teachers and their assistants can pool their ideas and learn new skills on specific training days run in school. The governors and appointed senior staff guarantee release and funding for any training out of school that corresponds to whole school or departmental targets. Teachers' individual development programmes are discussed and full records of their training are kept.

83. The school's accommodation is satisfactory. The buildings are in good condition and kept clean and welcoming by the efforts of teachers, site managers and cleaning staff. Most departments have identifiable and well-appointed suites of rooms that serve as an informative and supportive learning environment. The greenhouse and the pond act as valuable resources for science lessons. The joint use of certain facilities, including the small open-air swimming pool and the new computer suites had been beneficial. Despite the development of the school's ICT facilities, the rooms created are too small and poorly designed to accommodate full classes comfortably. Physical education enjoys good facilities, including a small sports hall, although the lack of a gymnasium reduces the breadth and variety of the curriculum offered. The extensive playing fields were too wet for play at the time of the inspection. The poor sound insulation in the music department, mentioned in the last inspection report, continues to cause problems. The school is currently looking forward to an imminent building programme that will replace its old and inconveniently sited canteen.

84. Most departments have good learning resources that contribute to the quality of teaching and learning. As far as possible, resources are well deployed around the school where they are readily available for use. Only small stocks of equipment such as the digital camera and the multi-media projectors are held centrally. The allocation of funds to subject areas and the bids for particular funding are overtly and equitably managed, and largely based on the number of pupils taught. In music and religious education, the availability and use of ICT is inadequate. Art and design continues to suffer from the same shortage of consumable stock that was noted in the last inspection.

85. A number of departments enrich their provision by the use of resources external to the school. These include fieldwork and visits to museums and the theatre, participation in local cultural events, and sports competitions. The school offers a range of opportunities for travel in Britain and abroad, most recently trips to France, and a thriving French exchange scheme.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

86. To raise pupils' attainment further and to improve the quality and breadth of pupils' education, the governors should:

- (1) Improve pupils' achievement in mathematics by:
 - Ensuring work set in lessons matches the needs of all pupils.
 - Providing more opportunities for pupils to solve problems.
 - Identifying targets for teaching and learning in the departmental development plan, together with a clear understanding of how targets can be measured.(Paragraphs: 5, 8, 27, 31, 75, 95, 96, 99-101, 104, 106)

- (2) Increase the opportunities for pupils' performance in music, their involvement in dramatic productions, and their experiences in art and design by:
 - Increasing the curriculum time for music and art and design.
 - Introducing a broader range of choral and orchestral opportunities.
 - Using computers to compose music and create art and design.(Paragraphs: 10, 16, 37, 44, 45, 47, 52, 57, 80, 94, 115, 118, 153, 155)

- (3) Improve the resources and accommodation available for ICT by:
 - Rigorously pursuing a satisfactory local share of the current National Grid for Learning bid.
 - Seeking, in co-operation with the community wing of the school, more use of ICT resources by the school within the school day.
 - Providing funding for more ancillary equipment such as digital cameras, palm computers and hand held data collectors.
 - Improving current accommodation and seeking a larger room or another room.(Paragraphs: 14, 45, 83, 84, 109, 118, 119, 135, 136, 138, 139, 141, 149, 153, 163)

Minor weaknesses:

- Standards of pupils' work in religious education. (Not included as a more significant weakness as it is entirely a staffing problem that cannot be easily resolved). (Paragraphs: 18, 167, 168)
- Insufficient identification of gifted and talented pupils. (Paragraphs: 19, 41, 74, 76, 87, 100, 121)
- The quality of written reports to parents, particularly information about pupils' progress and academic targets. (Paragraph: 71)
- The formal monitoring and evaluation of the standards of teaching. (Paragraphs: 78, 106)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	104
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	21

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6	34	43	17	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y9
Number of pupils on the school's roll	630
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	25

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y9
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	11
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	111

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	16
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	18

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.9
National comparative data	5.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.4

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

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

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	87	85	78
	Girls	83	78	75
	Total	170	163	153
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	86 (82)	87 (73)	82 (84)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	55 (48)	60 (46)	53 (52)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	71	79	78
	Girls	81	76	70
	Total	152	155	141
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	81 (76)	83 (74)	75 (98)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	59 (78)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	47 (35)	56 (49)	48 (38)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	30 (28)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	3
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	603
Any other minority ethnic group	8

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	16	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y9

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	38
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y9

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	64

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y9

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	75.5
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y9

Key Stage 3	23
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Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	1 426 487
Total expenditure	1 473 797
Expenditure per pupil	2 421
Balance brought forward from previous year	179 716
Balance carried forward to next year	132 406

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	600
Number of questionnaires returned	195

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	50	43	6	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	39	54	2	1	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	25	62	3	2	9
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	21	64	12	1	2
The teaching is good.	36	57	1	1	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	48	14	1	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	53	41	3	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	41	1	1	2
The school works closely with parents.	28	53	15	3	2
The school is well led and managed.	43	49	2	1	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	40	51	6	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	47	41	4	1	8

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

ENGLISH

87. Levels of attainment in English of pupils when they enter the school in Year 7 are just above the national average. Although a small number have a reading age well below their chronological age, more than three quarters of the pupils entering the school have attained level four in National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2. By the end of Key Stage 3 levels of attainment are well above average, with 85 percent attaining level 5 or better and 55 percent attaining level 6 or better. Based on National Curriculum average points scores, standards in English at the end of Key Stage 3 are well above those of all schools and similar schools. The school trend over the last three years has been better than the national trend of improvement. Very few (0.3%) pupils have English as an additional language. The number with special educational needs affecting their attainment in English is broadly in line with the national picture. Pupils with special educational needs make progress similar to that of other pupils. Over Key Stage 3 the majority of pupils achieve very well. The pupils with highest prior attainment do not make sufficient progress. The attainment of girls was higher than that of boys in 1999. Their attainment is a little closer in 2000.

88. Standards of speaking and listening are good. Pupils respond enthusiastically in lessons and volunteer relevant, well-formed answers showing that they listen carefully. In the best lessons, group work provides opportunities for speculation and hypothesis to be tested in discussion. Where lessons are teacher-led the most successful teaching demands a justification for an answer, a textual reference or a follow-up question requires further thought or better expression. There was evidence that pupils are acquiring technical and specific vocabulary related to figures of speech, literature, drama and media studies. Most pupils recognise formal contexts and use standard English appropriately.

89. Standards of reading are very good. Lessons contain a good variety of reading challenges: (poetry, prose narrative and drama and dialogue.) In almost half of the lessons observed, pupils read poetry aloud either individually or in groups with enthusiasm and accuracy. Pupils were required to read verse aloud in Year 9 lessons on "Macbeth", in a Year 8 lesson to read World War One poetry, and "The Charge of the Light Brigade" in a Year 7 lesson. In another Year 7 lesson pupils read aloud their own poem with obvious enjoyment. In other lessons, pupils read competently from novels. The majority of private reading was fiction, however, there was evidence of pupils being asked to read for research. Pupils are required to read news articles, non-fiction and to gain information from the Internet for project work in Year 7 and Year 8 and for their personal anthologies in Year 9. ICT is well used to help less able pupils develop spelling and reading skills. There was evidence of the library being used well by individual pupils in lesson time. Teachers offer good examples of lively, accurate reading and are sensitive and helpful when asking pupils to read aloud. Time is set-aside in lessons for private reading and is used productively by pupils, whose record of their reading and responses is monitored by teachers. Pupils are also encouraged to read privately and to keep a log of their reading. Pupils are asked to report in writing and to present oral reviews of books. There is evidence of a growing understanding of genre and pupils are able to express their tastes confidently.

90. Written work is very good overall. It is tackled with enthusiasm and is generally well presented. Pupils are introduced to a variety of styles and genres. Planning and drafting skills are taught well and pupils demonstrate a growing ability to take responsibility for the quality of their own work. Preparation books are generally well used but, in a significant number of cases, pupils' work is shoddy or the books themselves are not being used appropriately. Accurate marking and teacher comments balance encouragement with personal targets for

improvement. Most pupils are clear about the aims of their writing and the criteria by which it will be assessed. Marking is assiduously done, but pupils are not always required to complete their corrections. There are some opportunities for extended writing to develop construction and essay skills, but the majority of writing tasks are short. Many pupils make good use of ICT and the best work combines word processing with more advanced skills like importing pictures and graphics from the Internet and from other sources. Written work is copious and well presented in a wide range of other subjects including science, history and geography. Technical words are used accurately.

91. The curriculum in English is broad, balanced and coherent, with programmes of study appropriate to the ability and the maturity of the pupils. The curriculum meets the requirements of all pupils and has been developed to ensure that pupils of all abilities enjoy comparable work. Those pupils of low prior attainment benefit from learning support lessons and from literacy groups using methods developed in line with the National Literacy Strategy. Some groups are reviewed and reconstituted each term to meet pupils' short-term needs. Three accelerated groups exist in Year 9 for more able pupils and schemes of work in 'skills' have been developed for the most talented. However, work seen in other English lessons does not always offer enough intellectual challenge to the highest attaining pupils, especially in Year 9.

92. An experienced teacher effectively leads this strong department. Clear aims have been defined in plans for development of the subject. Teachers are well deployed with tasks appropriate to their ability, qualifications and experience. Responsibilities are effectively delegated and there is a good sense of teamwork.

93. Teaching is very good. Teachers know their subject well and use interesting and effective methods. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. In over half of the English lessons inspected the teaching was very good or excellent. The best lessons contain a variety of activities to develop talking and listening, reading and writing. Pupils are well managed and maintain a very positive attitude, working alone, in pairs or occasionally in groups. Teaching is effective because it encourages pupils to take some responsibility for their own work and progress and the pupils respond well and their learning is very good. Assessment of pupils' attainment and progress is well managed. On entry, pupils are thoroughly assessed and grouped according to ability. Pupils are re-tested each year. Good use is made of knowledge of pupils' attainment and teachers have detailed and accurate understanding of their pupils' abilities. Very good liaison with feeder schools has been organised and all English teachers have observed use of the Literacy hour and teaching methods derived from the National Literacy Strategy. The leadership of the English department is playing a significant role in the development of a school approach to pupils' literacy. Resources are good and well managed. Accommodation is rather cramped, but attractive and well used. Teachers tend to work from their classrooms. There is no base in which teachers can collaborate, leave work in progress or keep records. Since the last inspection the standard of attainment in English has continued to rise broadly in line with the national trend. It has remained well above the national average for all schools because high quality teaching has been maintained across the department.

Drama

94. Some good work was seen in drama lessons and in the performance of a Mumming Play in the market place. Pupils enjoy their drama lessons and work well together in groups. Work in drama combines the development of personal creativity and self-expression with an understanding of practical theatre skills. During the four days of the inspections, the lessons observed were predominantly of one teaching style and on very similar patterns, concerned with combining group improvisations around a central theme. However, schemes of work indicate other approaches in different terms: for example work on pollution in Year 7 or investigating issues associated with teenage pregnancy in Year 9. Drama functions as an autonomous subject department, but one that works closely with English, for example in the assessment of speaking and listening skills. to the benefit of both subjects. The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils and the stated aims of the department include the intention that all pupils be given the best possible experience of work in drama. There is a drama club and pupils have been involved in projects like the production in 1999 of "The Canterbury Tales" and the "Our Town" performance as part of the Leicester Art and designs Festival. However, the lack of a larger scale school production involving large numbers of pupils and all of the associated skills is a weakness in the curriculum. The department has a well-thought out and comprehensive handbook that includes: schemes of work, pupils' activities, literacy skills, dance skills, assessment of progress and target setting. The drama studio provides very a spacious work area, but it is not big enough to accommodate a large audience and it is currently devoid of display work, posters and other stimuli.

MATHEMATICS

95. In 2000, pupils' results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 are well above the national average. Compared to similar schools, tests results are also well above average and this represents a very significant improvement to 1999, in part due to the school just edging into a different group of similar schools. There are no significant variations in results between girls and boys or minority ethnic groups. In the last 3 years test results have improved faster than the national rate of improvement. Teachers' own assessment of pupils are in line with the test results. Targets were set for 2000 and were achieved but they lacked sufficient challenge. Appropriate targets are not yet set for 2001 although the department is in the process of using value-added information to predict results for individual pupils.

96. The standard of work seen in class is above average although there are variations in the four different Attainment Targets. In Using and Applying Mathematics (AT1) standards overall are average. In the top sets standards are above average. Pupils can spot patterns, check results and generalise findings algebraically. In middle and lower ability classes standards are average. Pupils formulate simple conclusions from information collected. Overall standards in this attainment target are depressed because pupils are given too few opportunities to investigate mathematical problems.

97. Standards in Number and Algebra (AT2) are above average. Pupils use number skills very confidently. For example, pupils can use fractions, decimals and find percentages. Pupils' estimating skills and mental mathematics skills are well above average. In upper ability groups, there are high standards in algebra. In the middle and lower ability groups, problem-solving skills need improving. Throughout, pupils are able to use calculators appropriately. Pupils' numeracy skills are well honed in science and history but less well developed in other subjects.

98. Standards in Shape Space and Measures (AT3) are above average. Pupils produce high standards of work in a high ability class when using formulae to calculate the radius and circumference of a circle. In a middle ability class, pupils were well able to visualise mentally a range of different shapes and describe their properties. Overall, standards in transformational geometry (enlargements, translations, rotations) are lower than expected because there are too few occasions for pupils to answer questions relating to this topic.

99. Standards in Handling Data (AT4) are average. The vast majority of pupils can collect information and tabulate results. Pupils are less skilled in interpreting their results. Where work on probability was seen, standards are above average. For example, in one top set pupils are able to describe differences between theoretical and experimental probability. In other teaching sets more work needs to be done in the area of probability.

100. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory. They acquire knowledge and skills in many topics but their understanding is inhibited because there are too few opportunities to discuss their work or work independently at solving problems. The department does not currently identify gifted and talented pupils although appropriate assessment data is being collected so that these can be identified in the future. Although the achievements of pupils with a special educational need is generally good there are very few pupils with an Individual Educational Plan containing targets for improving numeracy.

101. Teaching is satisfactory. There are no examples of unsatisfactory teaching. Teacher's knowledge and understanding of the subject is good and this gives pupils confidence to ask questions and receive clear responses, hence their learning improves. Basic skills are taught well. In all classes, literacy skills are encouraged through the correct use of technical terms and spelling is corrected. There are few opportunities to teach computer skills to all pupils but where these skills are taught they are taught well. For example, in one Year 7 class, important spreadsheet skills were taught in the context of a census. Number skills are encouraged and taught well across all year groups. The pace of lessons is generally appropriate, enabling pupils to achieve satisfactorily. Teacher's plans are adequate but often lack challenging activities for the highest attaining pupils within each set. This significantly inhibits the achievements of these pupils.

102. The management of pupils in class is good. Teachers generally expect pupils to do well and some good teaching strategies enable high standards to be achieved. For example, in one lesson when teaching scatter diagrams, a range of resources were used well, the pace of the lesson was brisk, clear objectives were identified and shared with pupils. These skills resulted in pupils achieving well in discussing and interpreting the meaning of scatter diagrams, drawing a line of best fit and estimating its equation. Resources are used appropriately and support staff are effective, particularly in supporting pupils with a special educational need. These strengths contribute significantly to the well above average standards attained by pupils.

103. Pupils' good attitudes towards their work are supported by the strengths in teaching. Pupils are well-behaved, know right from wrong and, when given the opportunity, work well together. Relationships are satisfactory but pupils' personal development in the subject is hindered because there are too few opportunities for pupils to work investigatively and improve their independent learning skills.

104. Weaknesses in teaching include unsatisfactory use of day-to-day assessment information about pupils. Work given does not match the pupils' range of abilities within each set and consequently pupils' learning is less effective, particularly for the higher ability pupils within each one. Homework is not set consistently or marked well. Marking generally lacks supportive and informative commentary. Pupils are unsure what they need to do in order to

improve and consequently pupils' achievements are inhibited. Curriculum targets are not set for individual pupils so they have little to aim for.

105. The quality of pupils' learning is satisfactory. They acquire knowledge and skills in many topics but lack the understanding to apply these skills in problem-solving situations. Pupils are motivated by teachers and interested in their work. Pupils think carefully about their work and when they are encouraged, their level of concentration improves. The few pupils identified as having a special educational need learn effectively because the class teacher and support teachers provide good quality individual support.

106. Leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. The department's aims and objectives are clearly written. Teachers are well deployed and appropriately qualified, resources are good and accommodation is adequate. The full range of attainment targets is taught hence statutory requirements are met. The curriculum on offer meets the needs of most pupils. There are good links with the upper school ensuring a smooth transition between schools. There are fewer links with partner primary schools, resulting in some work set in Year 7 being too easy, particularly for the higher ability in each set. Weaknesses in management include little or no monitoring of teaching making it difficult for the department to plan improvements in teaching and pupils' learning. This is reflected in a development plan that lacks clear criteria for measuring success and provides few references to teaching and learning.

107. Overall, there are some good improvements since the last inspection. The quality of teaching has improved significantly, mental arithmetic skills have improved and the pace of lessons is now appropriate. The achievements of higher attaining pupils overall is better because setting arrangements have been introduced although the achievements of higher attaining pupils within each set is hindered due to lack of appropriately challenging work.

SCIENCE

108. At the end of Key Stage 3 pupils' performance in the 2000 National Curriculum tests was well above the national average and well above the average for similar schools. This level of performance has been consistent for the last five years. In the lessons seen, achievement was well above national expectations for all pupils. In Year 9, high attainers were able to calculate pressure, form word and symbolic chemical equations and also balance equations. Most pupils in Year 9 were able to make predictions based upon scientific knowledge and understanding, carry out a fair test and link their results to their original predictions. Whilst pupils enter the school with above average performance in this subject, their achievement by the end of Key Stage 3 is very good.

109. The teaching is very good overall. This is characterised by very good lesson planning with clear objectives that reflect very good subject knowledge and understanding. Teachers use very good classroom management techniques that include high expectations of behaviour and performance. Teachers make sure that pupils know what is expected of them and constantly monitor pupils' knowledge and understanding of the topic by skilful questioning. This results in very good learning. For example, in a very good Year 9 lesson on the digestive system, pupils were constantly questioned about the adequacy of a simple model of the intestines to explain the human system, leading to very good learning. Teachers constantly encourage pupils to search for answers to key questions. In a very good Year 7 lesson on the melting of ice, pupils were able to explain their results of a practical investigation in terms of the particle theory of matter. Teachers inspire and motivate pupils well. In a very good lesson on the Amazon rain forest, pupils were enthralled by an excellent rain forest sound and slide presentation and this together with the teacher's richness of knowledge on the topic resulted in very good learning of the conservation argument. In an

excellent Year 7 lesson on crystallisation and dissolving, very skilfully designed interaction between the teacher and pupils during a demonstration resulted in the pupils becoming so well motivated that they could not wait to find out the answers to key questions, leading to excellent learning. Overall the teaching of the basic skills is good. The language and style used in selected textbooks and work sheets are well matched to the pupils' reading skills and the key words are displayed in most areas. Numeracy is well reinforced in measurement, calculation and graph work. ICT is used well by teachers to support learning and the pupils make effective use of spreadsheets and information access. The effective use of data logging needs to be further developed in line with the departmental plan. As a result of very good teaching, clear direction and very good teacher pupil relationships, pupils have a very positive attitude towards science and behave very well in lessons. The teachers' concern for safety is a good feature in science lessons.

110. The science curriculum meets the statutory requirements at Key Stage 3 and provides breadth and balance across the attainment targets. Schemes of work are in place and there is a generous allocation of curriculum time. Extra curricular activities in the last two years have included visits to the Science Museum, the Space Centre and Future World. The 'gardening club' has provided pupils with the opportunity to foster environmental and plant growth awareness. The grouping structure adopted by the department has enabled a closer match to be established between the potential of the pupils and the demands of the curriculum. Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are not specific enough to be easily used in the department. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are very good. Pupils are helped to make progress because they have a clear understanding of what they should learn through the 'what pupils should know and understand' checklists for each topic. However a formal system for tracking pupils' progress and generating specific pupil targets is not yet in place. Exercise books are well marked on a regular basis with informative comments and corrections added.

111. The head of science demonstrates very good leadership and management of the department. He is forward thinking, has developed a culture of challenge for pupils and staff in the department and has provided excellent induction and support for the most recent member of staff to join the team. The head of science is supported by a very effective committed team whose strengths are recognised and who share a common vision of providing the very best educational opportunities for all pupils in science. Although expertise is shared informally and at departmental meetings there is no formal system for monitoring teaching yet in place.

112. An efficient well-organised laboratory technician supports the teaching staff. Her contribution extends beyond her immediate role of preparing practical resources to the running of the gardening club and habitat area. She is greatly valued by the teaching staff. Resources for the department are good and well managed. The science department conforms to safety requirements for the storage of poisons, flammable and hazardous substances. The accommodation allows the curriculum to be taught effectively and consists of four well-appointed laboratories, each with at least two computers and a central preparation room. The laboratories are clean and well decorated although ventilation and heating are sometimes a problem. Some examples of pupils' work are around the walls together with key word displays. The greenhouse and pond provide a very useful resource for biological studies.

113. Since the last inspection the quality of teaching has improved significantly. Teaching is now a strength of the department. The standard of work seen in lessons has improved substantially and is now well above average.

ART AND DESIGN

114. Standards in art and design seen during the inspection show that pupils' attainment by the end of Year 9 is above the standard expected nationally. This is reflected in the teacher assessments in 2000, which show that a significant number are achieving at above the national average. Pupils enter the school with a wide range of attainments in art and design. They are taught in mixed ability classes, where they are given the opportunity to draw from direct observation, express ideas and feelings and use art and design terms appropriately. Pupils demonstrate a good level of knowledge, skills and understanding. They understand concepts and processes apply technical skills competently and have a well-developed knowledge of art and artists. Year 9 pupils use media appropriately when producing paintings based on Surrealism, where they demonstrate a good understanding of the use of perspective. When they compare the work Van Gogh and Salvador Dali, pupils show a clear understanding of the artists' styles and the ability to use it to influence their own ideas. After experimenting with a range of drawing techniques and methods, pupils show the ability to evaluate and modify their work when planning quite complex compositions. Higher attaining pupils demonstrate a clear understanding of aerial perspective and built in elements of foreshortening.

115. Levels of achievement are good with pupils of all abilities are making good progress overall. Pupils learn very well and make very good progress in lessons. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls. Pupils arrive in Year 7 with attainment generally in line with national averages and by Year 9 are achieving levels above average in the range of work covered. They learn quickly because the quality of teaching is predominantly very good. In Year 7, the structured course gives pupils a good understanding of formal elements and introduces them to a range of techniques. Pupils working on a project on Aboriginal art and design made rapid gains in the lesson when they had to match examples of techniques to words on the board. By the end of the lesson, pupils could describe what graffiti and scumbling were and use it competently in their work. Lower attaining pupils gained the confidence to use the techniques in their animal painting. In Year 8, pupils' increasing knowledge of artists and their styles helps them to abstract ideas into three-dimensional projects. This was particularly evident in the work of a higher attaining pupil who used the elongation of form in the design of a mask after looking at the work of Modigliani. Progress over the Key Stage is limited by the fragmented nature of the timetable. Pupils only have lessons for a maximum of nine weeks in each year. Due to this, the very good achievements made in lessons cannot be sustained over time.

116. The overall quality of teaching is predominantly very good. The teacher has a very good relationship with pupils and high expectations create a positive learning ethos. Lessons are well planned and include a range of enjoyable and challenging activities for those of all levels of attainment. For example, pupils were encouraged, by searching and leading questions, to think carefully about pertinent points and to make decisions on what the teacher should do next during a demonstration of a technique. Lower attaining pupils are given the support and encouragement to respond confidently in discussion. Specialised vocabulary is built into projects and displayed around the room and its use is positively encouraged. Exemplars of good practise are used to raise pupils' standards of achievement. Very clear introductions give pupils strong direction on what they have to do to achieve and the high quality of individual attention and support plays an important role in raising standards. The teacher talks to pupils about their work during lessons and marks finished work regularly. Staff put a lot of emphasis on personal encouragement and higher attaining pupils are

extended in lessons, however extension activities are not built into planning. Lessons are well paced and pupils cover a wide range of activities within lessons. Projects are well structured using interesting techniques and resources linked to artists and cultures. This ensures that pupils experience the widest range of approaches within the limited time available.

117. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils are very good. Pupils are well motivated and respond well to the challenges of the work presented. They organise themselves efficiently, work collaboratively and show respect for each other. Pupils discuss work with enthusiasm and are keen to describe how their personal influences have affected the decisions they have made. The high quality of teaching encourages a strong degree of pride and interest in work. At the end of a Year 8 lesson, most pupils chose to come back in the dinner hour to carry on with their papier-mâché sculpture. The positive attitude of pupils contributes significantly to the progress and achievement in all years. Pupils take care with the presentation of their homework and sketchbooks are well kept.

118. The department has continued to maintain the high standards reported in the last inspection. Art and design still has no discrete status in the curriculum and the management of the school has not solved the problems of the rotational timetable. Due to this, the allocation of curriculum time is well below the average for schools. In Year 9 pupils only have twenty-seven hours of art and design a year compared to an average in most school of about forty hours. Whilst the standards of work are above average, too few hours severely restrict the range and depth of experience offered to pupils and is barely sufficient to cover the programmes of study. There are no computers within the classroom and the pupils' ability to use ICT for creative or research purposes is too limited. This combined with the lack of opportunity for staff to gain experience in this area and the lack of curriculum time, means that the department is not meeting the statutory requirements for ICT. The management of the department is very good and the teacher uses what curriculum time and resources, she has, very efficiently. Strong links have been built with the upper school to assist in the pupils' transition to Key Stage 4. The ethos of the subject is promoted by the good quality of display of work in the classroom and around the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

119. Standards of work in design and technology show that pupils' attainment by the end of Year 9 is above the standard expected nationally. This is reflected in the teacher assessments in 2000, which show that a significant number are achieving at above the national average. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. Since the previous inspection standards have improved. The departments' concentration on developing skills in designing and making throughout the Key Stage has ensured good outcomes. Pupils, in lessons using wood and plastic, have a good understanding of the tools and materials they use and make good quality products. When making a clock, based on designs influenced by the Memphis style, pupils fit their design to specific criteria, select suitable materials, and use construction techniques confidently. They understand the concept of rigid structures and evaluate their work to identify what can be improved on. The design sheets produced in all areas are of a good standard. For example, in a mechanical toy project the pupils' work reflected a high standard of graphic skills and good design presentation in their research and planning. They also demonstrated an understanding of marketing strategies in relation to manufacturing. In food technology lessons pupils demonstrated a good understanding of the properties of yeast dough and could explain using appropriate vocabulary and with clarity, why and how, they intended to modify it. Pupils with special educational needs demonstrate a confidence in what they are doing and produce simplified designs and products at least in line with their ability and often above. Higher attaining pupils produce designs for complex structures with a higher number of moving parts and with a refined finish. There is some limitation on the level of attainment in ICT due to the

lack of good software and of computers in classrooms able to be used for independent research in lessons.

120. Achievement across all abilities is good in Years 7 to 9. Pupils' knowledge of design and technology increases steadily because they have opportunities to solve problems and work independently or in groups to develop their practical and design skills and their skills of investigation and research. Pupils enter Year 7 with levels of attainment that are average overall. They make good progress in learning practical skills and the underlying theory through tasks that are precisely structured with clear learning objectives. In a textiles lesson on framing a quilted greetings card, pupils made good progress because the task was demonstrated to them and they were clearly told what they had to do in detail in order to produce a quality product. All pupils develop a good understanding of the design process because it is well taught and reinforced by all teachers in the different aspects of the subject. By Year 9, pupils are working at a standard above the national average. In lessons in Year 9, learning was predominantly very good. Because they learn very effectively about the materials they use, pupils are able to make informed choices about what to include in their projects. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress due to the high level of support given by teachers and the structured and appropriate levels of the tasks set. For example, templates help pupils do well.

121. Teaching is predominantly good and, in over a third of the lessons seen, very good. Teachers have a good relationship with pupils and high expectations of them. This is reflected in the good progress made over time by pupils in Years 7 to 9. In the very best lessons, teacher's very good knowledge of the subject strongly supports learning. This was evident in a Year 7 lesson, where the teacher's knowledge assisted in the better alignment of graphic components and the improved annotations of drawings, when using ICT to assemble a three dimensional drawing of a key ring with an electronic circuit. Good clear introductions and explanations were evident in all lessons. Teachers use a wide range of techniques such as demonstrations and discussion, building in an element of humour or personal experience to maintain pupils' interest and enthusiasm. For example, in a Year 9 resistant materials lesson, the teacher used a quiz show format to recap on pertinent points. In lessons, teachers continually evaluate, advise on and assess work giving pupils clear direction on how to improve. Higher achievers are encouraged to improve their work further. However, this would be better if extensions to work were built into projects and planning at the start. Work is sufficiently linked to the requirements of the National Curriculum. However, due to insufficient resources for computer aided design, pupils cannot be given the experiences needed to fully develop sufficient levels of skills in this area. Teachers use what resources they do have, competently.

122. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils are good and in half of the lessons seen very good. Teachers manage pupils very well and their high expectations of behaviour creates a very positive attitude in pupils, who want to do their best. The positive attitude of the pupils contributes significantly to the progress and achievement in all years. Pupils respond well to the effective teaching and are co-operative and mainly hard working; a significant number stay behind at the end of lessons to discuss work. They work co-operatively, share equipment maturely and organise their time efficiently when waiting to use larger machinery. A very good literacy strategy is in place and pupils respond very well to words displayed in classrooms using them assuredly and enthusiastically in discussion. Pupils contribute confidently at a class level and individually where they support each other in finding solutions to practical problems. Pride is reflected in their good standard of work.

123. The department is well led and teachers have a shared commitment towards raising standards. There are good schemes of work. These now need to be co-ordinated to ensure that all Y2000 National Curriculum Programmes of Study are being met. Systems for raising

achievement include assessment, target setting and monitoring systems but at present there are no formal strategies to monitor teaching and to set objectives for improvement. Accommodation is satisfactory. The department has carried out a safety audit to ensure the safe organisation of resources and accommodation but there are still a small but significant number of safety issues to be dealt with. Improvements since the last inspection have been very good and the department has addressed most issues. However, the department still needs to broaden the range of resistant materials to give the pupils a wider range of experience.

GEOGRAPHY

124. In 2000, at the end of Year 9, pupils' attainment was above national expectations. This represents good improvement since 1999. Pupils make good progress during their time at the school and achieve well. The highest attaining pupils are particularly well equipped to pursue their GCSE studies at Key Stage 4.

125. The standards of work seen show that appropriate demands are being made on most pupils. In Year 7 pupils develop a good understanding of basic geographical concepts and skills required in the National Curriculum. A range of topics such as map reading, drawing field sketches, compass points and bearings, the weather characteristics and climate are clearly and appropriately understood. Pupils have a sufficiently sure grasp of work about climate graphs, micro-climates and eco-systems to be able to apply their previous skills to new situations. In Year 8 the level of work is stepped up appreciably but the pupils are still able to cope confidently with detailed and varied studies such as settlements, transport, weathering, land features, erosion, volcanoes, Italy and the plate structure of the earth and design. In Year 9 the level is stepped up yet again, more significantly than is seen in most schools, but pupils continue to develop a thorough understanding of environmental geography such as pollution and global warming, population migration and the difference between countries.

126. Pupils have a consistently good attitude to their learning. They can work adequately in groups doing a mini-investigation on micro-climates around the school, investigate competently in pairs in the ICT room, using the Internet to study volcanoes, and study in a formal class situation when learning about weather graphs. This indicates a good level of self-discipline and a desire to learn.

127. The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory and is usually good. This is evident from the pupils' work on display and in exercise books and current lessons. This close-knit team of teachers, who also teach history, interact and support each other admirably. Their level of knowledge is totally adequate for any task within a closely worked syllabus and the long-term supply teacher has been able to slot into the team effectively. Many of the lessons are relatively formal class lessons but there is a constantly growing range of videos, ICT sources, textbooks and some geographical games to ensure that boredom does not undermine pupils' work. The teamwork amongst the teachers has several positive results. The highly structured schemes of work give them a shared focus and enable them to develop basic skills well. Hence, whilst literacy and numeracy are not formally built into the course, they are clearly apparent in the extended written work, graphs and ICT work. The periodic tests, given throughout the department, further enhance pupils' attainment. These and the ample written work are marked in such a way to enable pupils to know the level at which they are working and both what they do and do not understand about the topic being studied. Therefore, although most marking and assessments are simply a record of past achievements and do not directly influence the future planning except in general, they enable self-motivated pupils, in particular, to know what they can do to improve their work. Pupils with special educational needs generally cope with the reading materials and

simplified written tasks. It was impressive to see how confidently they used ICT to gain information about volcanoes.

128. The management and leadership of the department are good in every respect and improvements continue. There is cohesion between the development of geography and history as both are managed by the same head of department. Schemes of work, tests and resources have all been improved since the time of the last inspection.

HISTORY

129. In 2000, at the end of Year 9, pupils' attainment is above national expectations. Pupils make good progress. Almost 90 percent of pupils were assessed as having attained level 5 or above. The progress of the higher attaining pupils is such that they could successfully pass the GCSE examination at the end of Year 9. The standards of work seen during lessons and in pupils' workbooks showed that higher demands are made on most pupils than in many schools. This is especially apparent in Years 8 and 9 where more independent work is fostered. Pupils' progress is gauged by giving pupils a test on entry based on work done in the feeder primary schools. This is carefully marked to ascertain the pupils' levels of attainment. Periodically pupils are given further tests to indicate gains in their level of attainment.

130. Pupils follow a course that meets all of the requirements of the National Curriculum both in content and understanding of historical method. They gain a firm grasp of the nature and relative value of different types of source materials and are able to use them discriminatively. By the end of Year 9 they are very efficient in this respect. Topics give an overview of British history and insights into areas such as the history of the American peoples, prior to and during the coming of the Europeans. Pupils show from their work that they gain a sense of history and can pose moral and social questions, taking into account the issue of anachronisms and cultural change. They enjoy studying the extensive logs taken from a Victorian school and comparing some nineteenth century norms with their current situation. Such source materials gives scope for their imaginations to work on the content whereas much of the brief source material in textbooks does little more than test their power of comprehension and does not evoke the drama of history. The pupils also gain skills in self-assessment. They learn what level 5 means and what changes must be made to their work for it to become level 6 or 7. This not only motivates them but also causes them to look at their work more self-critically.

131. Pupils have a positive attitude to the subject and express their liking for both the teachers and the subject content. Their response to the courtesy and quiet humour of teachers was notable. Pupils with special educational needs are gradually coping with general reading and writing requirements and are ably supported by a diligent teacher and learning support assistant. They achieve better results and understanding than might have been expected when they entered the school.

132. Teaching is always at least satisfactory and usually good. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject matter. In Year 7, pupils develop an understanding of cause and effect, projection and evidence. They move progressively on to more independent work involving topics such as slavery (Year 8) and World Wars I and II (Year 9). Teaching is coherent and consistent as well as comprehensive. Teachers have scope for individuality as when, for example, one teacher produces short video films of class drama involving the Guy Fawkes plot, or group discussions about Cromwell which show how bias can develop in history. The support teacher is fully involved and is able to raise the level of the work of pupils with special educational needs. Also, the practice of teaching a common body of content to all but giving particular types of task to different attainment groups works well.

133. The key to the success of the department is the sustained, skilful work of the head of department. He leads the team of teachers and achieves a good balance between leadership and being a co-member of the history and geography teaching staff. Since the last inspection, he has organised the detailed schemes of work comprehensively and set up a system that supports his colleagues. A new monitoring system that is acceptable to all has been introduced. The periodic tests have been reviewed. Close links have been formed with the Key Stage 4 receiving school and three other co-feeding schools in order to achieve compatibility of standards. ICT is being used increasingly to study, for example, census figures.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

134. The improvements in equipment provision, management and use of ICT since the time of the last inspection has been very significant.

135. Overall standards in ICT are average. This is established on the basis of work done in a number of subject areas, some of which was seen during the course of the inspection and the contents of some department plans and schemes of work. There is evidence of past presentation work in science incorporating experimental data and graphs that is above average. There are no separate lessons using computers in Year 9 and so opportunities to ensure all pupils are sufficiently challenged to attain as well as they might, in this area of the curriculum are not secure. Standards also have to be set against standards in other subjects that are, in the main, well above or above national averages. In other words, pupils' attainment in ICT is below what they are capable of, so their overall achievement is not yet satisfactory.

136. The attainment of pupils in discrete ICT lessons in Years 7 and 8 is average though can be above this in some of the higher ability classes. This setting is done on the basis of prior attainment in mathematics or science and is not very applicable in ICT where previous experiences and opportunities at home have more impact on pupils' capabilities. Pupils in Year 7 are beginning to create 'Microsoft Powerpoint' presentations – sorting titles text and images and arranging them to pop up in an appropriate sequence on a computer screen; pupils in Year 8 are learning to use a database and frame questions to interrogate it so that they can identify the image of one face from many. Both these exercises are satisfactory and pupils are interested in them. Their attitudes and behaviour are at least very good; they work very well in pairs and get on with their work so the teacher can offer effective individual support. Both 'Microsoft Powerpoint' and database activities are limited, to an extent, by a lack of peripheral resources. For example: some palm computers would enable pupils to carry out interviews and research around the school and practise downloading the information to the personal computer network; more digital cameras would allow original

work to be digitised, incorporated into databases or used to support presentations and notes about work in hand.

137. The teaching of discrete ICT is very good. Very good knowledge of the software and systems allows pupils to learn well with the resources available. Very good management of pupils allows work to be done at a good pace. In higher attaining classes, individuals who are ahead of others, because of ICT experience from outside the classroom, are recognised and allowed to move ahead at their own pace, for example in developing 'Microsoft Powerpoint' presentations. The 'Key Bytes' scheme allows pupils to move through modules so that they do not have to get bogged down in work they are proficient in. Project work also contains additional exercises for faster, more skilled pupils. Individual support to pupils moves them on through good questioning and encouragement. In lower attaining classes the teacher's style changes appropriately. There is very clear enunciation of instructions and good use is made of a demonstration screen and the facility to 'take-over' the screens of pupils to show them what to do. Planning of the 'Our School' project has very good pre-prepared prompts and on-screen support that pupils can use if they need to. Consequently pupils acquire new skills, get their work done and feel some sense of achievement. In a typical Year 7 low attaining class about a quarter could move at a faster pace than the rest of the class and they need additional attention from the teacher. In all classes, homework is set to find out things, like details about the school, to enter onto presentations. This is efficient as it saves wasting valuable computer time in lessons. The intention to buy licensed software that will enable pupils to do the same ICT work at home and school, and eventually access it on – line, should increase the pace of learning further. The teacher responsible for ICT also demonstrated excellent use of the resource to teach science with his own 'Microsoft Powerpoint' presentation on digestion.

138. There is very good use of ICT to support literacy in Year 7. The use of spellings software motivated pupils and gave them confidence. Their spelling improved and they knew so from the rapid feedback given to them on screen. Pupils in Year 8 science show they can use a database satisfactorily to compare foodstuffs – nutrition and energy factors. Year 9 English pupils are able to search the Internet, with some guidance, for information on films. Year 7 design and technology pupils can use 'Paint' software to create three-dimensional annotated drawings of their work - an electronic key fob. Their work here is above average but could be lifted higher if better design software were available. Good equipment is available for pupils to learn about computer control though computer assisted machines are not available. Modern foreign languages teaching makes very good use of software to reinforce correct word use. The department is also developing e-mail links with the schools used on foreign exchanges. History, geography and science are making good use of CD-ROMs and the Internet for research, for example into World War II and for projects on Kenya and Japan. Subjects that provide no opportunities for the use of ICT are music, art and design and religious education. They have significantly less curriculum time than average and this may be one reason why it is not done. Science is not currently using ICT for measurement of things like temperature and time though it has in the past and has purchased new equipment in order to move forward.

139. The work either already done, or planned for in the future, using ICT in subject areas is broader than in many schools but does rely on teachers taking it up and following it through, rather than being put in place. The ICT department supports this process. The current Year 9 pupils have not had separate ICT lessons when in Year 7 or 8 and do not have it now. There is a particular need to ensure they have significant experiences of ICT before they leave. To ensure future Year 9 classes maintain progression in their ICT work, careful monitoring of the situation needs to be maintained and more resources are needed so that subject use of computers does not adversely affect computer lessons and vice versa. Pupils can access computers at lunch times and do so to complete work and undertake research.

140. The leadership and management of ICT are very good. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable, has managed very substantial improvements in resources and provides clear documentation, both for separate ICT lessons and to support work in other subject areas. Assessment of pupils' work is good and allows for some self-evaluation by pupils themselves, so that they begin to recognise what they need to do to improve. Assessment arrangements in Year 9 try to tie up pupils' ICT attainment in a number of subjects, exemplar standards are given to heads of department and the judgements compared before a decision is made. Whilst this leads to a level of attainment pupils have reached before they leave, it is not a mechanism by which individual achievement can be monitored so that pupils are helped to do the best they can. The co-ordinators vision for future developments is very good and their fulfilment is only hindered by the need to acquire yet more resources. He is sensible about this and takes a pragmatic view, actively looking for opportunities but making the best use of what is available. He has adopted and adapted a good scheme of work for Year 7 and 8 ICT that he keeps under review. He makes effective use of a student placed in the school as part of a degree course. This student helps both the school and its feeder schools very effectively through technical support, whilst completing projects for his degree. A useful project to move the school forwards would be the creation of a Web site for displaying pupils' work. The co-ordinator has undertaken New Opportunities Fund (NOF) training so that he can lead staff in their NOF training – designed to help them use ICT in their work with pupils – as it rolls forward. This should increase the opportunities pupils have to experience and use ICT. A local link with industry is promoted by pupils' visits to the 'Leicester Mercury' offices. This enables them to compare their desk top publishing with industrial standards and to produce interesting work of a good standard with the support of the newspaper company.

141. Both the main rooms for ICT are too small, one in particular, and this leads to pupils being too close together, preventing them acquiring good keyboard skills easily. Neither can they hold sufficient machines to enable pupils to have one each and whilst paired working is often good personal development, it does hinder the rapid acquisition of new skills.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

142. Pupils' attainment in French, based on teachers' assessments at the end of Key Stage 3, is above the national expectation, has improved on the previous year and has risen steadily since the last inspection. By the end of Year 9, the majority of pupils reach levels of attainment equal to the average achieved nationally, and a substantial minority reach higher than average levels. There is no difference in the attainment of boys and girls. Higher attaining pupils and those who request to do so study German as their second foreign language in Year 9. Their levels of attainment are understandably lower than in French, because of the later start.

143. These good standards correspond to the quality of the work done in class and seen in samples of written work. Current attainment is never less than satisfactory, and in the majority of lessons is good or very good. A minority of boys and girls display excellent levels of spoken language from their first term of learning French and German, and most pupils express themselves clearly with good levels of pronunciation, fluency and accuracy when talking about themselves, their families and their daily lives. A small number of less able

linguists can exchange greetings, give personal details and talk briefly about everyday topics such as food and drink.

144. Most pupils, including some with special educational needs, have good listening skills, developed through exposure to fluent French and German spoken continuously in the classroom. A minority gain real experience on study holidays in France and a German exchange organised by their teachers. Many can extract the gist and detail of conversations and statements on tape or conducted with a partner. A few pupils including some with special educational needs, require clarification and occasionally translation to understand new language.

145. Most can read authentic French and German texts, ranging from single words and captions to longer descriptive passages and short conversations. Bright displays of finished work and examples of the grammar points being studied further encourage pupils' reading skills.

146. By the end of Year 9, boys and girls have achieved very well and attained similarly high standards., Most pupils have developed good writing skills. They begin by collating vocabulary and key phrases and can eventually write grammar exercises and longer descriptions. They refer to past and future events and express opinions on topics such a school life, leisure activities and employment. Many write creatively, producing dialogues, posters and brochures, as well as informal letters. The writing of some lower attainers, who are hindered by limited levels of literacy or poor attendance, is scant, untidy and inaccurate.

147. The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory. All of the lessons seen were at least good and the majority were very good or excellent. Teachers have very good subject knowledge. They are fluent, use authentic and relevant language and are familiar with the requirements of the revised National Curriculum. They have very high expectations of their pupils, most of whom respond with interest and enthusiasm. Teachers work hard with their assistants to provide short, varied activities that exercise different language skills in turn. They usually present their lessons in a brisk, interactive style that allows less able pupils to learn from their more confident classmates. They provide an interesting range of published and specially made resources, including some adapted for higher attainers and those with special educational needs. The teaching of German to the most able and motivated linguists is appropriately challenging, largely based on conventional materials and reliant on learning skills previously acquired in French. In both French and German, many pupils are taught to use computers to present their work, visit Internet web-sites or send letters to partners abroad. Most pupils show good powers of concentration and persist or seek help when difficulties arise. Occasionally, when presentations or activities go on too long, some pupils lose interest, but react positively to firm, patient reminders to concentrate on their work.

148. Teachers assess their pupils' work informally by eliciting choral or individual spoken responses. The best examples are recorded on chart and designs as an example to others. A series of short tests and exercises, as well as more formal assessments, allows teachers and pupils to chart and design progress, confirm levels of achievement and set targets for future development. While pupils are writing or speaking in pairs, their teachers circulate to monitor and appraise their efforts. They give individual attention and assistance as required, ably supported by learning assistants in lower attaining classes. Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly, with helpful comments and advice, and indicating how pupils are performing in relation to national standards. They make satisfactory use of homework to prepare and extend the content of lessons.

149. The department is very well managed, with clear direction and co-operative work to maintain standards and raise them where possible. Teachers and support staff discuss

strategies for improvement both formally and informally. Schemes of work and policy documents have been revised to take account of external requirements and recent innovations in language teaching. In consequence, the quality of teaching and effectiveness of pupils' learning have become more consistent since the last inspection. Further work and training are required to make the use of computers more widespread. The department benefits from the close attention of the senior management of the school and makes profitable use of a generous allocation of time.

MUSIC

150. Since the previous inspection standards have been maintained. The head of department has worked closely with the visiting instrumentalists to provide instrumental tuition and has purchased new classroom percussion instruments and electronic keyboards.

151. By the end of Year 9, pupils are reaching standards at the national average. Most pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of performing, composing, listening and appraising and the majority of pupils meet average levels as set out in the National Curriculum. Some pupils, mainly with instrumental backgrounds, exceed requirements because they are confident and capable performers at Grade 4 and above of the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music. Other pupils, often without an instrumental competence, struggle to attain the required standards because they do not know how to perform, listen or appraise with sufficient skill or capability. Girls generally attain more highly than boys in the main, because they are the more competent and confident performers. In the end of Year 9 teacher assessments the school estimated that nine out of ten pupils attained Level 5 and above. The inspection found that the teacher's assessments were significantly inflated and that all pupils' performance skills were less well developed compared with their compositional skills. The strength of pupils' attainment lies in their ability to listen to a variety of musical styles and to appraise them critically, often using the correct and appropriate terminology. The pupils taking instrumental tuition are progressing but not as quickly and thoroughly as is often found in other schools. Pupils' ICT skills in music are a weakness because the department does not, as yet, have the resources or teacher capability to enhance the taught curriculum with computer aided composing and performing.

152. Pupils generally achieve satisfactorily. Although there is a school orchestra and a flute group, all high attainers do not have sufficient opportunities to make high quality instrumental ensemble extra curricular music on a weekly basis. The more able pupils, therefore, do not progress as well and as fast as they might. Middle ability pupils generally progress well in music lessons and although there is little in class support from additional teachers for the few with special educational needs these pupils are generally well catered for in music lessons.

153. The teaching of music is predominantly satisfactory and occasionally it is good. The teacher is very thorough in her preparation and record keeping and follows her schemes of work meticulously. These strengths are augmented by very good classroom procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. The teaching is on occasions very formal and theoretical and for this, and other reasons, some of the boys find the lessons unimaginative and lacking in challenge so they do not always learn satisfactorily. The range of musical performance opportunities during the inspection was in the main related to keyboard and tuned percussion instruments and this did not always engage all pupils, so reducing the quality of their learning. Singing opportunities are regularly presented but the range of the music is narrower than is often found elsewhere. The quality of the singing teaching is good and it emphasises the importance of being in tune, responsive to dynamics and to diction. Pupils learn singing well. Teachers' expectations are not sufficiently high or demanding and do not fully extend the keen and enthusiastic musicians either in class or in extra curricular activities. No opportunities for combined performance art and design activities, such as

musical productions, are currently provided for the pupils.

154. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils to music lessons are satisfactory. On occasions whole class groups are keen to get down to music lessons and are positive for the full lesson. These pupils work hard and work well together and compose with confidence. On other occasions, pupils display a lack of interest and sometimes, particularly boys, show signs of disaffection and boredom. When pupils are invited to bring their own instruments to lessons, the levels of pupils' motivation rises and the interests of other pupils are raised. Girls behave better than boys in most music lessons and usually sing with enthusiasm when presented with the opportunities. The attitudes of pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory and they join in with enthusiasm.

155. The leadership of the department is satisfactory. The schemes are well written and there are good links with feeder and other schools. The visiting teachers are well managed and the monitoring of instrumental pupils is satisfactory. The head of department has evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of the department and sought to instigate improvements such as in the ICT provision. The extra curricular provision is not broad or comprehensive and during the week of inspection it was very limited. The opportunities to combine music, dance and drama in extra curricular activities are not, as yet, grasped. The limited and unsatisfactory resources are well used and the accommodation although unsatisfactory, having no satisfactory recording facilities and only two practice rooms, is used efficiently. The department makes positive contributions to concerts in the summer term and services at Christmas and Easter and pupils sometimes perform for local primary schools.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

156. Overall, the attainment of almost all pupils by the end of Year 9 should be above average. A small minority of pupils will be below average, and a smaller number of pupils well above average.

157. The achievement of all pupils is good and there is little difference between the achievement of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.

158. The quality of teaching in 80 percent of lessons observed was good or better. Lessons are productive and promotes pupil achievement and progress. Teachers are keen, enthusiastic and give willingly of their time. They promote high standards and have a shared commitment to do well for the pupils. Teachers are very secure in their knowledge and understanding of the subject and in their teaching of basic physical skills. This was highlighted in a Year 8 table tennis lesson in which most pupils quickly grasped the skill of the backhand top spin. Expectations of their pupils are very high and reflected in the quality of the skills that the pupils learn and develop. This was apparent in a Year 7 mixed hockey lesson in the way the pupils were developing accuracy and control in their passing. The quality of incidental coaching in games situations is good.

159. Teachers' enthusiasm linked with very good control and management of classes, leads to lessons where pupils put in a great deal of effort to extend their physical capabilities. This was seen in a Year 9 volleyball lesson where 25 boys in a very restricted area organised themselves very well into small and large groups to define the skills of the volley and dig shots. Lesson aims are met and high levels of productivity are achieved in most lessons.

160. Very good relationships, combined with teachers' high levels of knowledge and understanding of their pupils, were evident in a Year 9 mixed hockey lesson where the quality of individual teaching points was good. However, there is an overriding emphasis on performance. More time must be given to the skills of planning and evaluation. This would help pupils to develop creative and independent learning skills. More emphasis also needs to be given to activity related warm up, expanding the pupils' understanding of Health Related Fitness.

161. The department is developing assessment procedures to incorporate the learning levels that now relate to physical education activities. This information, when finally established, needs to be used to inform teacher planning. The department must develop ways of setting individual pupil learning targets, through feedback in lessons at the end of units and in end of year reports that are currently too vague.

162. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive throughout the school. Pupils are very well behaved and enthusiastic, demonstrating real enjoyment for the lesson - promoting the department's foremost aim, that enjoyment leads to success. The pupils' levels of attention, concentration and enthusiasm are in most lessons very commendable. Relationships between pupils are positive which lead to a productive learning environment. There are very high levels of participation.

163. Curriculum time and staffing allocations are generous which helps promote the success of the department. The curriculum meets statutory requirements apart from in ICT. The quality and range of opportunity in the curriculum are good. However, there is a clear imbalance towards games that reflects, to some extent, the nature of the accommodation, but also teacher preference.

164. The very good range of extra-curricular activities and fixtures is a further strength of the department. The 'Practice Means You Play' policy towards school teams is commendable. The programme is open to all and appreciated by all pupils. The more able attainers go on to gain county and regional honours.

165. Management of the department is satisfactory. The department promotes enjoyment and success. Relationships are good and all staff play a part in the decision making process. The match of teachers to the demands of the curriculum is very good. However, the department is not adopting the new orders of Curriculum 2000 quickly enough. Schemes of work need to reflect language development and how they impact on both the less able and talented and gifted pupils. Each unit of work must indicate what levels of attainment it is aimed at. Policies for literacy and numeracy must be formulated. Monitoring of teaching needs to be introduced. Resources are satisfactory. More instructional posters in the changing rooms would enhance the learning environment and further support language development.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

166. Since the previous inspection there have been a number of changes that have affected standards and the progress made by pupils. The subject leader has changed and the new head of department has completely revised the schemes of work for the better. The pupils' religious education has been adversely affected by the unavoidable, yet extended, sickness leave of the head of department and the inconsistent teaching of a large number of supply teachers who have filled the gaps. Consequently standards of pupils' attainment by the end of Year 9 are below expectations. There is underachievement across the full ability range because expectations have not been high and the quality of teaching has been varied. Tests and examinations indicate that pupils have covered the syllabus broadly but have not studied the subject with sufficient depth. Pupils' knowledge and understanding is overall, therefore, generally superficial and inadequate. Improvement has been unsatisfactory.

167. During the week of inspection, very short-term supply teachers taught all religious education lessons and no lessons were visited. Following detailed examination and scrutiny of exercise books from all year groups it is evident that standards of teaching and learning have been variable. Where the full-time teacher has taught the pupils, there is a comprehensive coverage of the topics and the expected depth of work is evident. Pupils studying Christianity have received a good grounding in the biblical narrative of the birth, death and resurrection accounts in the gospels. The pupils have presented their work well, taken a pride in presentation and have heeded the advice given by the teacher. Where supply teachers have covered the lessons there is a wide variation in the pupils' standards, quality and quantity of work and little evidence of systematic completion of homework assignments. High and middle ability attainers have rarely been extended or challenged to think deeply and to present their work with pride. Pupils with special educational needs have often received personal and positive support on a one to one basis but here has been little evidence of specifically prepared work related to these pupils' specific and identified learning needs.

168. Learning is not as effective as it should be. Pupils lack detailed knowledge of the topics covered. Pupils' books showed a breadth of coverage in Year 7 including festivals in Christianity, Judaism and Hinduism. Year 8 pupils were able to identify the varied features of the places of worship and knew the correct terminology, such as church, synagogue, mosque and temple. In Year 9 the best work was about the various rites of passage in various world religions. Pupils' writings and sketches often demonstrated that they found the topic on rites of passage very interesting partly because they could relate some of the issues to their own lives. Few pupils could explain in detail the religious origins for the rites but all could explain what took place and could explain the responses of the faith communities. Pupils' exercise books exposed the inconsistency in teaching that the pupils had received. Some were well marked with positive, challenging and affirming teacher statements and marks. Other books had been marked without the sufficient rigour often observed and, for example, sometimes misspelled words were left uncorrected and pupils were not sufficiently challenged to present their best work.

169. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils to religious education lessons, indicated from work in books, are generally satisfactory. The subject was treated with respect and interest when the full time teacher was present. At other times, the lack of pupils' interest and enthusiasm showed in work that portrayed a casual and hurried approach.

170. The department's leadership and management have been satisfactory but hindered by unavoidable absence. The newly written schemes of work, the development of the Year 7 course, the implementation of individual record cards and the forging of closer links with other departments have all been positive and effective developments. The informative individual record cards, used by the department, promote self-evaluation and reflection. The department is poorly equipped with learning resources and has very little computer aided learning. Although some artefacts have been purchased, the range, quality and quantity are less than those found in other schools. The quality of the monitoring of the pupils' academic performance is satisfactory but has been erratic – ranging from good quality monitoring by the head of department to poor quality by some visiting supply teachers. Reports stress predominantly behavioural attitudes of pupils more than academic achievements and competencies. The department makes a very good contribution to school assemblies and works very closely and well with local churches and youth organisations.

171. The monitoring and support of the department by a vice principal has been valuable and must continue at least until the department establishes a consistency and stability of teaching and learning.